UNDERSTAND WHY YOU BELIEVE

The Apologetics Study Bible



- DOES SCIENCE SUPPORT THE BIBLE?
- IS THERE EVIDENCE FOR LIFE AFTER DEATH?
- ARE CHRIST'S CLAIMS UNIQUE?
- IS THE OLD TESTAMENT TRUSTWORTHY?

With Contributions from CHUCK COLSON, RAVI ZACHARIAS, NORMAN GEISLER, J.P. MORELAND *and others.*

REAL QUESTIONS, STRAIGHT ANSWERS, STRONGER FAITH



Understand Why You Believe

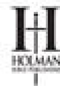
The Apologetics Study Bible

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Real Questions, Straight Answers, Stronger Faith





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PREFACE

The editors of the work in your hands are aware of the rich resources of the Christian faith. All too often, though, believers feel battered and helpless to answer skeptics and critics. Ironically, the Lord has been pleased to entrust the scholars of the church in our generation with the greatest wealth of biblical, theological, philosophical, historical, and scientific knowledge in history. Christian conviction, defense of the faith, and evangelization of unbelievers would profit vastly through exposure to this confirmation of biblical truth. Yet sadly, the church has had precious little contact with this treasure trove.

In response to this situation, *The Apologetics Study Bible* brings together in one resource the work of biblically faithful exegetes, historians, archaeologists, theologians, philosophers, and scientists—and all this work is wedded to the Bible. "Apologetics" comes from the Greek word *apologia*, meaning "defense" or "answer." Accordingly, Christian apologetics is the practice of giving reasons that support the Christian faith and responding to objections raised against it. Apologetics contributes to the restoration of a view of the Bible as a source of *knowledge* of its subject matter as opposed to a source of true belief to be accepted by a blind act of the will. Christian apologetics strengthens the church by answering the critics of biblical doctrines and by encouraging the believer's faith. *The Apologetics Study Bible* is designed to advance these ends by apologetics rooted in Holy Scripture.

The distinctiveness of *The Apologetics Study Bible* is its notes and articles appended to the biblical text at relevant points. Notes consist of commentary written by biblical scholars that relate specifically to apologetic issues raised by scriptural texts. Also related to specific biblical texts are over 50 examples of "Twisted Scripture." These explanations treat those instances where portions of the Bible have been misused by various religious movements such as Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons. You will find 12 profiles of notable Christian apologists in history. In addition, over 125 articles treat broader apologetic matters such as "How should we handle unresolved questions about the Bible?" and "Evolution: fact or fantasy?" Though the notes and articles are not written for academicians, you can be confident they distill and present the very best of current Christian scholarship.

As 1 Peter 3:15 reminds us, our apologetic must be prayerfully presented, having set Christ apart as Lord in our hearts. Also, we must present our reasons for belief with gentleness and respect. So, to be most fruitful, our defense of the Christian faith must be offered under Christ's Lordship, in humble dependence upon His Spirit, and in the context of loving and respectful personal relationships.

May it please the Lord, then, to exploit *The Apologetics Study Bible* in the service of His people's promotion and confirmation of the truth of His Word.

The Editors

Books of the Bible and Contributors

Old Testament

Genesis
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Notes: Chapters 1–11: Kenneth A. Mathews
Chapters 12–50: A. Boyd Luter Jr.

Exodus
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Leviticus
Introduction and Notes: Mark F. Rooker

Numbers
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Ruth
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1 Kings
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1 Chronicles
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INTRODUCTION TO THE HOLMAN CHRISTIAN STANDARD BIBLE®

The Bible is God's revelation to man. It is the only book that gives us accurate information about God, man's need, and God's provision for that need. It provides us with guidance for life and tells us how to receive eternal life. The Bible can do these things because it is God's inspired Word, inerrant in the original manuscripts.

The Bible describes God's dealings with the ancient Jewish people and the early Christian church. It tells us about the great gift of God's Son, Jesus Christ, who fulfilled Jewish prophecies of the Messiah. It tells us about the salvation He accomplished through His death on the cross, His triumph over death in the resurrection, and His promised return to earth. It is the only book that gives us reliable information about the future, about what will happen to us when we die, and about where history is headed.

Bible translation is both a science and an art. It is a bridge that brings God's Word from the ancient world to the world today. In dependence on God to accomplish this sacred task, Holman Bible Publishers presents the Holman Christian Standard Bible, a new English translation of God's Word.

Textual base of the Holman CSB®

The textual base for the New Testament [NT] is the Nestle-Aland *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 27th edition, and the United Bible Societies' *Greek New Testament*, 4th corrected edition. The text for the Old Testament [OT] is the *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia,* 5th edition. At times, however, the translators have followed an alternative manuscript tradition, disagreeing with the editors of these texts about the original reading.

Where there are significant differences among Hebrew [Hb] and Aramaic [Aram] manuscripts of the OT or among Greek [Gk] manuscripts of the NT, the translators have followed what they believe is the original reading and have indicated the main alternative(s) in footnotes. In a few places in the NT, large square brackets indicate texts that the translation team and most biblical scholars today believe were not part of the original text. However, these texts have been retained in brackets in the Holman CSB because of their undeniable antiquity and their value for tradition and the history of NT interpretation in the church. The Holman CSB uses traditional verse divisions found in most Protestant Bibles.

Goals of this translation

The goals of this translation are:

- to provide English-speaking people across the world with an accurate, readable Bible in contemporary English
- to equip serious Bible students with an accurate translation for personal study, private devotions, and memorization
- to give those who love God's Word a text that has numerous reader helps, is visually attractive on the page, and is appealing when heard
- to affirm the authority of Scripture as God's Word and to champion its absolute truth against social or cultural agendas that would compromise its accuracy

The name, Holman Christian Standard Bible, captures these goals: *Holman* Bible Publishers presents a new *Bible* translation, for *Christian* and English-speaking communities, which will be a *standard* in Bible translations for years to come.

Why is there a need for another English translation of the Bible?

There are several good reasons why Holman Bible publishers invested its resources in a modern language translation of the Bible:

1. Each generation needs a fresh translation of the Bible in its own language.

The Bible is the world's most important book, confronting each individual and each culture with issues that affect life, both now and forever. Since each new generation must be introduced to God's Word in its own language, there will always be a need for new translations such as the Holman Christian Standard Bible. The majority of Bible translations on the market today are revisions of translations from previous generations. The Holman CSB is a new translation for today's generation.

2. English, one of the world's greatest languages, is rapidly changing, and Bible translations must keep in step with those changes.

English is the first truly global language in history. It is the language of education, business, medicine, travel, research, and the Internet. More than 1.3 billion people around the world speak or read English as a primary or secondary language. The Holman CSB seeks to serve many of those people with a translation they can easily use and understand.

English is also the world's most rapidly changing language. The Holman CSB seeks to reflect recent changes in English by using modern punctuation, formatting, and vocabulary, while avoiding slang, regionalisms, or changes made specifically for the sake of political or social agendas. Modern linguistic and semantic advances have been incorporated into the Holman CSB, including modern grammar.

3. Rapid advances in biblical research provide new data for Bible translators.

This has been called the "information age," a term that accurately describes the field of biblical research. Never before in history has there been as much information about the Bible as there is today —from archaeo-logical discoveries to analysis of ancient manuscripts to years of study and statistical research on individual Bible books. Translations made as recently as 10 or 20 years ago do not reflect many of these advances in biblical research. The translators have taken into consideration as much of this new data as possible.

4. Advances in computer technology have opened a new door for Bible translation.

The Holman CSB has used computer technology and telecommunications in its creation perhaps more than any Bible translation in history. Electronic mail was used daily and sometimes hourly for communication and transmission of manuscripts. An advanced Bible software program, Accordance®, was used to create and revise the translation at each step in its production. A developmental copy of the translation itself was used within Accordance to facilitate cross-checking during the translation process—something never done before with a Bible translation.

Translation Philosophy of the Holman CSB

Most discussions of Bible translations speak of two opposite approaches: formal equivalence and dynamic equivalence. Although this terminology is meaningful, Bible translations cannot be neatly sorted into these two categories any more than people can be neatly sorted into two categories according to height or weight. Holman Bible Publishers is convinced there is room for another category of translation philosophies that capitalizes on the strengths of the other two.

1. <u>Formal Equivalence:</u>

Often called "word-for-word" (or "literal") translation, the principle of formal equivalence seeks as nearly as possible to preserve the structure of the original language. It seeks to represent each word of the original text with an exact equivalent word in the translation so that the reader can see word for word what the original human author wrote. The merits of this approach include its consistency with the conviction that the Holy Spirit did inspire the very words of Scripture in the original manuscripts. It also provides the English Bible student some access to the structure of the text in the original language. Formal equivalence can achieve accuracy to the degree that English has an exact equivalent for each word and that the grammatical patterns of the original language can be reproduced in understandable English. However, it can sometimes result in awkward, if not incomprehensible, English or in a misunderstanding of the author's intent. The literal rendering of ancient idioms is especially difficult.

2. <u>Dynamic or Functional Equivalence:</u>

Often called "thought-for-thought" translation, the principle of dynamic equivalence rejects as misguided the desire to preserve the structure of the original language. It proceeds by distinguishing the meaning of a text from its form and then translating the meaning so that it makes the same impact on modern readers that the ancient text made on its original readers. Strengths of this approach include a high degree of clarity and readability, especially in places where the original is difficult to render word for word. It also acknowledges that accurate and effective translation requires interpretation. However, the meaning of a text cannot always be neatly separated from its form, nor can it always be precisely determined. A biblical author may have intended multiple meanings. In striving for readability, dynamic equivalence also sometimes overlooks some of the less prominent elements of meaning. Furthermore, lack of formal correspondence to the original makes it difficult to verify accuracy and thus can affect the usefulness of the translation for in-depth Bible study.

3. <u>Optimal Equivalence:</u>

In practice, translations are seldom if ever purely formal or dynamic but favor one theory of Bible translation or the other to varying degrees. Optimal equivalence as a translation philosophy recognizes that form cannot be neatly separated from meaning and should not be changed (for example, nouns to verbs or third person "they" to second person "you") unless comprehension

demands it. The primary goal of translation is to convey the sense of the original with as much clarity as the original text and the translation language permit. Optimal equivalence appreciates the goals of formal equivalence but also recognizes its limitations.

Optimal equivalence starts with an exhaustive analysis of the text at every level (word, phrase, clause, sentence, discourse) in the original language to determine its original meaning and intention (or purpose). Then relying on the latest and best language tools and experts, the nearest corresponding semantic and linguistic equivalents are used to convey as much of the information and intention of the original text with as much clarity and readability as possible. This process assures the maximum transfer of both the words and thoughts contained in the original.

The Holman CSB uses optimal equivalence as its translation philosophy. When a literal translation meets these criteria, it is used. When clarity and readability demand an idiomatic translation, the reader can still access the form of the original text by means of a footnote with the abbreviation "Lit."

The gender language policy in Bible translation

Some people today ignore the Bible's teachings on distinctive roles of men and women in family and church and have an agenda to eliminate those distinctions in every arena of life. These people have begun a program to engineer the removal of a perceived male bias in the English language. The targets of this program have been such traditional linguistic practices as the generic use of "man" or "men," as well as "he," "him," and "his."

A group of Bible scholars, translators, and other evangelical leaders met in 1997 to respond to this issue as it affects Bible translation. This group produced the "Guidelines for Translation of Gender-Related Language in Scripture" (adopted May 27, 1997 and revised Sept. 9, 1997). The Holman Christian Standard Bible was produced in accordance with these guidelines.

The goal of the translators has not been to promote a cultural ideology but to faithfully translate the Bible. While the Holman CSB avoids using "man" or "he" unnecessarily, the translation does not restructure sentences to avoid them when they are in the text. For example, the translators have not changed "him" to "you" or to "them," neither have they avoided other masculine words such as "father" or "son" by translating them in generic terms such as "parent" or "child."

History of the Holman Christian Standard Bible

After several years of preliminary development, Holman Bible Publishers, the oldest Bible publisher in America, assembled an international, interdenominational team of 100 scholars, editors, stylists, and proofreaders, all of whom were committed to biblical inerrancy. Outside consultants and reviewers contributed valuable suggestions from their areas of expertise. An executive team then edited, polished, and reviewed the final manuscripts.

Traditional features found in the Holman CSB

In keeping with a long line of Bible publications, the Holman Christian Standard Bible has retained a number of features found in traditional Bibles:

1. Traditional theological vocabulary (such as *justification*, *sanctification*, *redemption*, etc.) has been retained since such terms have no translation equivalent that adequately

communicates their exact meaning.

2. Traditional spellings of names and places found in most Bibles have been used to make the Holman CSB compatible with most Bible study tools.
3. Some editions of the Holman CSB will print the words of Christ in red letters to help readers easily locate the spoken words of the Lord Jesus Christ.
4. Nouns and personal pronouns that clearly refer to any person of the Trinity are capitalized.
5. Descriptive headings, printed above each section of Scripture, help readers quickly identify the contents of that section.
6. Small lower corner brackets: indicate words supplied for clarity by the translators (but see below, under Substitution of words in sentences, for supplied words that are *not* bracketed).
7. Two common forms of punctuation are used in the Holman CSB to help with clarity and ease of reading: em dashes (a long dash —) are used to indicate sudden breaks in thought or to help clarify long or difficult sentences. Parentheses are used infrequently to indicate words that are parenthetical in the original languages.

How certain names and terms are translated

The names of God

The Holman Christian Standard Bible OT consistently translates the Hebrew names for God as follows:

Holman CSB English:	**Hebrew original:**
God	*Elohim*
LORD	*YHWH* (*Yahweh*)
Lord	*Adonai*
Lord GOD	*Adonai Yahweh*
LORD of Hosts	*Yahweh Sabaoth*
God Almighty	*El Shaddai*

However, the Holman CSB OT uses Yahweh, the personal name of God in Hebrew, when a biblical text emphasizes Yahweh as a name: “His name is Yahweh” (Ps 68:4). Yahweh is used more often in the Holman CSB than in most Bible translations because the word LORD in English is a title of God and does not accurately convey to modern readers the emphasis on God’s name in the original Hebrew.

The uses of Christ and Messiah

The Holman CSB translates the Greek word *Christos* (“anointed one”) as either “Christ” or “Messiah” based on its use in different NT contexts. Where the NT emphasizes *Christos* as a name of our Lord or has a Gentile context, “Christ” is used (Eph 1:1 “Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus . . . ”). Where the NT *Christos* has a Jewish context, the title “Messiah” is used (Eph 1:12 “. . . we who had already put our hope in the Messiah”). The first use of “Messiah” in each chapter is also marked with a bullet referring readers to the Bullet Note at the back of most editions.

Place-names

In the original text of the Bible, particularly in the OT, a number of well-known places have names different from the ones familiar to contemporary readers. For example, “the Euphrates” often appears in the original text simply as “the River.” In cases like this, the Holman Christian Standard Bible uses the modern name, “the Euphrates River,” in the text without a footnote or lower corner brackets.

Substitution of words in sentences

A literal translation of the biblical text sometimes violates standard rules of English grammar, such as the agreement of subject and verb or person and number. In order to conform to standard usage, the Holman CSB has often made these kinds of grammatical constructions agree in English without footnotes or lower corner brackets.

In addition, the Greek or Hebrew texts sometimes seem redundant or ambiguous by repeating nouns where modern writing substitutes pronouns or by using pronouns where we would supply nouns for clarity and good style. When a literal translation of the original would make the English unclear, the Holman CSB sometimes changes a pronoun to its corresponding noun or a noun to its corresponding pronoun without a footnote or lower corner brackets. For example, Jn 1:42 reads: “And he brought Simon to Jesus . . .” The original Greek of this sentence reads: “And he brought him to Jesus.”

Special Formatting Features

The Holman Christian Standard Bible has several distinctive formatting features:

1. OT passages quoted in the NT are set in boldface type. OT quotes consisting of two or more lines are block indented.
2. In dialogue, a new paragraph is used for each new speaker as in most modern publications.
3. Many passages, such as 1 Co 13, have been formatted as dynamic prose (separate block-indented lines like poetry) for ease in reading and comprehension. Special block-indented formatting has also been used extensively in both the OT and NT to increase readability and clarity in lists, series, genealogies and other parallel or repetitive texts.
4. Almost every Bible breaks lines in poetry using automatic typesetting programs with the result that words are haphazardly turned over to the next line. In the Holman CSB, special attention has been given to break every line in poetry and dynamic prose so that awkward or unsightly word wraps are avoided and complete units of thought turn over to the next line. The result is a Bible page that is much more readable and pleasing to the eye.
5. Certain foreign, geographical, cultural, or ancient words are preceded by a superscripted bullet (• *Abba*) at their first occurrence in each chapter. These words are listed in alphabetical order at the back of the Bible under the heading **Holman CSB Bullet Notes**. A few important or frequently misunderstood words (• slaves) are marked with a bullet more than one time per chapter.
6. Italics are used in the text for a transliteration of Greek and Hebrew words (“*Hosanna!*” in Jn 12:13) and in footnotes for direct quotations from the biblical text and for words in the original languages (the footnote at Jn 1:1 reads: “The *Word* (Gk *Logos*) is a title for Jesus . . .”).
7. Since the majority of English readers do not need to have numbers and fractions spelled out in the text, the Holman CSB uses a similar style to that of modern newspapers in using

Arabic numerals for the numbers 10 and above and in fractions, except in a small number of cases, such as when a number begins a sentence.

Footnotes

Footnotes are used to show readers how the original biblical language has been understood in the Holman Christian Standard Bible.

NT Textual Footnotes

NT textual notes indicate significant differences among Greek manuscripts (mss) and are normally indicated in one of three ways:

Other mss read _____

Other mss add _____

Other mss omit _____

In the NT, some textual footnotes that use the word "add" or "omit" also have square brackets before and after the corresponding verses in the biblical text (see the discussion above in the paragraph entitled "Textual base of the Holman CSB"). Examples of this use of square brackets are Mk 16:9-20, Jn 5:3-4, and Jn 7:53–8:11.

OT Textual Footnotes

OT textual notes show important differences among Hebrew manuscripts and among ancient OT versions, such as the Septuagint and the Vulgate. See the list of abbreviations on page xxiii for a list of other ancient versions used.

Some OT textual notes (like NT textual notes) give only an alternate textual reading. However, other OT textual notes also give the support for the reading chosen by the editors as well as for the alternate textual reading. For example, the Holman CSB text of Ps 12:7 reads:

You will protect us[a] from this generation forever.

The textual footnote for this verse reads:

[a]**12:7** Some Hb mss, LXX; other Hb mss read *him*

The textual note in this example means that there are two different readings found in the Hebrew manuscripts: some manuscripts read *us* and others read *him*. The Holman CSB translators chose the reading *us*, which is also found in the Septuagint (LXX), and placed the other Hebrew reading *him* in the footnote.

Two other OT textual notes are:

Alt Hb tradition reads _____	a variation given by scribes in the Hebrew manuscript tradition (known as *Kethiv/Qere* readings)
Hb uncertain	when it is uncertain what the original Hebrew text was

Other Kinds of Footnotes

Lit _____	a more literal rendering in English of the Hebrew, Aramaic, or Greek text
Or	an alternate or less likely English translation of the same Hebrew, Aramaic, or Greek

	text
=	an abbreviation for " it means" or "it is equivalent to"
Hb, Aram, Gk	the actual Hebrew, Aramaic, or Greek word is given using English letters
Hb obscure	the existing Hebrew text is especially difficult to translate
emend(ed) to _____	the original Hebrew text is so difficult to translate that competent scholars have conjectured or inferred a restoration of the original text based on the context, probable root meanings of the words, and uses in comparative languages

In some editions of the Holman Christian Standard Bible, additional footnotes clarify the meaning of certain biblical texts or explain biblical history, persons, customs, places, activities, and measurements. Cross-references are given for parallel passages or passages with similar wording, and in the NT, for passages quoted from the OT.

Commonly Used Abbreviations in the Holman CSB

A.D. in the year of our Lord
alt alternate
a.m. from midnight until noon
Aq Aquila
Aram Aramaic
B.C. before Christ
c. circa
chap chapter
DSS Dead Sea Scrolls
Eng English
Gk Greek
Hb Hebrew
Jer Latin translation of Psalms by Jerome
Lat Latin
Lit Literally
LXX Septuagint—an ancient translation of the Old Testament into Greek
MT Masoretic Text
NT New Testament
ms(s) manuscript(s)
OT Old Testament
p.m. from noon until midnight
pl plural
Ps(s) psalm(s)
Sam Samaritan Pentateuch
sg singular
syn. synonym
Sym Symmachus
Syr Syriac
Tg Targum
Theod Theodotian
v., vv. verse, verses
Vg Vulgate—an ancient translation of the Bible into Latin
vol(s). volume(s)

PLAN OF SALVATION

What do you understand it takes for a person to go to Heaven?

Consider how the Bible answers this question: It's a matter of **FAITH.**

F is for FORGIVENESS
We cannot have eternal life and heaven without God's forgiveness. —Read Ephesians 1:7a.

A is for AVAILABLE
Forgiveness is available. It is—

- Available for all. —Read John 3:16.
- But not automatic. —Read Matthew 7:21a.

I is for IMPOSSIBLE
It is impossible for God to allow sin into heaven.

- Because of who He is:
- God is loving and just. His judgment is against sin. —Read James 2:13a.
- Because of who we are:
- Every person is a sinner. —Read Romans 3:23.

But how can a sinful person enter heaven, when God allows no sin?

T is for TURN
Turn means to repent.

- Turn from something:
- sin and self. —Read Luke 13:3b.
- Turn to Someone:
- trust Christ only. —Read Romans 10:9.

H is for HEAVEN
Heaven is eternal life.

- Here. —Read John 10:10b.
- Hereafter. —Read John 14:3.

How can a person have God's forgiveness, heaven and eternal life, and Jesus as personal Savior and Lord? By trusting in Christ and asking Him for forgiveness. Take the step of faith described by another meaning of FAITH: **F**orsaking **A**ll **I** **T**rust **H**im.

Prayer:

> Lord Jesus, I know I am a sinner and have displeased You in many ways. I believe You died for my sin and only through faith in Your death and resurrection can I be forgiven. I want to turn from my sin and ask You to come into my life as my Savior and Lord. From this day on, I will follow You by living a life that pleases You. Thank You, Lord Jesus for saving me. Amen.

After you have received Jesus Christ into your life, tell a Christian friend about this important decision you have made. Follow Christ in believer's baptism and church membership. Grow in your faith and enjoy new friends in Christ by becoming part of His church. There, you'll find others who will love and support you.

WHAT IS APOLOGETICS?

by Kenneth D. Boa

Apologetics may be simply defined as the defense of the Christian faith. The simplicity of this definition, however, masks the complexity of the problem of defining apologetics. It turns out that a diversity of approaches has been taken in defining the meaning, scope, and purpose of apologetics.

The word "apologetics" derives from the Greek word *apologia*, which was originally used as a speech of defense. In ancient Athens it referred to a defense made in the courtroom as part of the normal judicial procedure. After the accusation, the defendant was allowed to refute the charges with a defense (*apologia*). The classic example of an *apologia* was Socrates's defense against the charge of preaching strange gods, a defense retold by his most famous pupil, Plato, in a dialogue called *The Apology*.

The word *apologia* appears 17 times in noun or verb form in the NT, and can be translated "defense" or "vindication" in every case. The idea of offering a reasoned defense of the faith is evident in Php 1:7,16; and especially 1 Pt 3:15, but no specific theory of apologetics is outlined in the NT.

In the second century this general word for "defense" began taking on a narrower sense to refer to a group of writers who defended the beliefs and practices of Christianity against various attacks. These men were known the *apologists* because of the titles of some of their treatises, but apparently not until 1794 was *apologetics* used to designate a specific theological discipline.

It has become customary to use the term *apology* to refer to a specific effort or work in defense of the faith. An apology might be a written document, a speech, or even a film. Apologists develop their defenses of the Christian faith in relation to scientific, historical, philosophical, ethical, religious, theological, or cultural issues.

We may distinguish four functions of apologetics, though not everyone agrees that apologetics involves all four. Such opinions notwithstanding, all four functions have historically been important in apologetics, and each has been championed by great Christian apologists throughout church history.

The first function may be called *vindication* or *proof*, and involves marshaling philosophical arguments as well as scientific and historical evidences for the Christian faith. The goal of this function is to develop a positive case for Christianity as a belief system that should be accepted. Philosophically, this means drawing out the logical implications of the Christian worldview so that they can be clearly seen and contrasted with alternate worldviews.

The second function is *defense*. This function is closest to the NT and early Christian use of the word *apologia,* defending Christianity against the plethora of attacks made against it in every generation by critics of varying belief systems. This function involves clarifying the Christian position in light of misunderstandings and misrepresentations; answering objections, criticisms, or questions from non-Christians; and in general clearing away any intellectual difficulties that nonbelievers claim stand in the way of their coming to faith.

The third function is *refutation* of opposing beliefs. This function focuses on answering the arguments non-Christians give in support of their own beliefs. Most apologists agree that refutation cannot stand alone, since proving a non-Christian religion or philosophy to be false does not prove that Christianity is true. Nevertheless, it is an essential function of apologetics.

The fourth function is *persuasion*. By this we do not mean merely convincing people that Christianity is true, but persuading them to apply its truth to their life. This function focuses on bringing non-Christians to the point of commitment. The apologist's intent is not merely to win an

intellectual argument, but to persuade people to commit their lives and eternal futures into the trust of the Son of God who died for them.

How Apologetics Changed My Life!

by Lee Strobel

Author, *The Case for Christ* and *The Case for the Real Jesus*

Skepticism is part of my DNA. That's probably why I ended up combining the study of law and journalism to become the legal editor of *The Chicago Tribune*—a career in which I relentlessly pursued hard facts in my investigations. And that's undoubtedly why I was later attracted to a thorough examination of the evidence—whether it proved to be positive or negative—as a way to probe the legitimacy of the Christian faith.

A spiritual cynic, I became an atheist in high school. To me the mere concept of an all-loving, all-knowing, all-powerful creator of the universe was so absurd on the surface that it didn't even warrant serious consideration. I believed that God didn't create people, but that people created God out of their fear of death and their desire to live forever in a utopia they called heaven.

I married an agnostic named Leslie. Several years later she came to me with the worst news I thought I could ever get: She had decided to become a follower of Jesus. My initial thought was that she was going to turn into an irrational holy roller who would waste all of her time serving the poor in a soup kitchen somewhere. Divorce, I figured, was inevitable.

Then something amazing occurred. During the ensuing months, I began to see positive changes in her character, her values, and the way she related to me and to the children. The transformation was winsome and attractive. So one day when she invited me to go to church with her, I decided to comply.

The pastor gave a talk called "Basic Christianity" in which he clearly spelled out the essentials of the faith. Did he shake me out of my atheism that day? No, not by a long shot. Still, I concluded that if what he was saying was true, it would have huge implications for my life.

That's when I decided to apply my experience as a journalist to investigating whether there is any credibility to Christianity or any other faith system. I resolved to keep an open mind and follow the evidence wherever it pointed—even if it took me to some uncomfortable conclusions. In a sense, I was checking out the biggest story of my career.

At first, I thought my investigation would be short-lived. In my opinion, having "faith" meant you believed something even though you knew in your heart that it couldn't be true. I anticipated that I would very quickly uncover facts that would devastate Christianity. Yet as I devoured books by atheists and Christians, interviewed scientists and theologians, and studied archaeology, ancient history, and world religions, I was stunned to find that Christianity's factual foundation was a lot firmer than I had once believed.

Much of my investigation focused on science, where more recent discoveries have only further cemented the conclusions that I drew in those studies. For instance, cosmologists now agree that the universe and time itself came into existence at some point in the finite past. The logic is inexorable: Whatever begins to exist has a cause, the universe began to exist, and therefore the universe has a cause. It makes sense that this cause must be immaterial, timeless, powerful, and intelligent.

What's more, physicists have discovered over the last 50 years that many of the laws and constants of the universe—such as the force of gravity and the cosmological constant—are finely tuned to an incomprehensible precision in order for life to exist. This exactitude is so incredible that it defies the explanation of mere chance.

The existence of biological information in DNA also points toward a Creator. Each of our cells contains the precise assembly instructions for every protein out of which our bodies are made, all spelled out in a four-letter chemical alphabet. Nature can produce patterns, but whenever we see information—whether it's in a book or a computer program—we know there's intelligence behind it. Furthermore, scientists are finding complex biological machines on the cellular level that defy a Darwinian explanation and instead are better explained as the work of an Intelligent Designer.

To my great astonishment, I became convinced *by the evidence* that science supports the belief in a Creator who looks suspiciously like the God of the Bible. Spurred on by my discoveries, I then turned my attention to history.

I found that Jesus, and Jesus alone, fulfilled ancient messianic prophecies against all mathematical odds. I concluded that the New Testament is rooted in eyewitness testimony and that it passes the tests that historians routinely use to determine reliability. I learned that the Bible has been passed down through the ages with remarkable fidelity.

However, the pivotal issue for me was the resurrection of Jesus. Anyone can claim to be the Son of God, as Jesus clearly did. The question was whether Jesus could back up that assertion by miraculously returning from the dead.

One by one, the facts built a convincing and compelling case. Jesus' death by crucifixion is as certain as anything in the ancient world. The accounts of His resurrection are too early to be the product of legendary development. Even the enemies of Jesus conceded that His tomb was empty on Easter morning. And the eyewitness encounters with the risen Jesus cannot be explained away as mere hallucinations or wishful thinking.

All of this just scratches the surface of what I uncovered in my nearly two-year investigation. Frankly, I was completely surprised by the depth and breadth of the case for Christianity. And as someone trained in journalism and law, I felt I had no choice but to respond to the facts.

So on November 8, 1981, I took a step of faith in the same direction that the evidence was pointing—which is utterly rational to do—and became a follower of Jesus. And just like the experience of my wife, over time my character, values, and priorities began to change—for the good.

For me, apologetics proved to be the turning point of my life and eternity. I'm thankful for the scholars who so passionately and effectively defend the truth of Christianity—and today my life's goal is to do my part in helping others get answers to the questions that are blocking them in their spiritual journey toward Christ.

Christ: The Fulfillment of Prophecy

by D. James Kennedy

Some time ago I had the opportunity to speak to a man who had no belief whatsoever in the Scriptures as any sort of divine revelation from God. He was a writer who was articulate and well-educated. While he was well-read, he was completely ignorant of any evidences for the truthfulness of the Christian faith and the Scriptures which reveal it. He said the Bible was simply a book written by men, just like any other book. I said, "That's very interesting. I would like to read some statements to you about someone and have you tell me, assuredly, without question, about whom I am reading."

He agreed and I began to read:

- "Those who hate me without cause are more numerous than the hairs of my head" (Ps 69:4).
- "The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers conspire together against the Lord and His Anointed One" (Ps 2:2).
- "Even my friend in whom I trusted, one who ate my bread, has lifted up his heel against me" (Ps 41:9).
- "Strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered" (Zch 13:7).
- "Then I said to them, 'If it seems right to you, give me my wages; but if not, keep them.' So they weighed my wages, 30 pieces of silver. 'Throw it to the potter,' the Lord said to me—this magnificent price I was valued by them. So I took the 30 pieces of silver and threw it into the house of the Lord, to the potter" (Zch 11:12-13).
- "They are striking the judge of Israel on the cheek with a rod" (Mc 5:1).
- "I gave My back to those who beat Me, and My cheeks to those who tore out My beard. I did not hide My face from scorn and spitting" (Is 50:6).
- "They pierced my hands and my feet" (Ps 22:16).
- "My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?" (Ps 22:1).
- "Everyone who sees me mocks me; they sneer and shake their heads: 'He relies on the Lord; let Him rescue him; let the Lord deliver him, since He takes pleasure in him'" (Ps 22:7-8).
- "They gave me gall for my food, and for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink" (Ps 69:21).
- "I am poured out like water, and all my bones are disjointed; my heart is like wax, melting within me" (Ps 22:14).
- "Yet He Himself bore our sicknesses, and He carried our pains; but we in turn regarded Him stricken, struck down by God, and afflicted" (Is 53:4).
- "He was oppressed and afflicted, yet He did not open His mouth. Like a lamb led to the slaughter and like a sheep silent before her shearers, He did not open His mouth" (Is 53:7).

- “They divided my garments among themselves, and they cast lots for my clothing” (Ps 22:18).
- “He submitted Himself to death” (Is 53:12).
- “He bore the sin of many and interceded for the rebels” (Is 53:12).
- “You may not break any of its bones” (Ex 12:46).
- “He protects all his bones; not one of them is broken” (Ps 34:20).
- “They will look at Me whom they pierced” (Zch 12:10).
- “They made His grave with the wicked, and with a rich man at His death, although He had done no violence and had not spoken deceitfully” (Is 53:9).
- “For You will not abandon me to Sheol; You will not allow Your Faithful One to see the Pit” (Ps 16:10).
- “You ascended to the heights, taking away captives; You received gifts from people, even from the rebellious, so that the LORD God might live there” (Ps 68:18).
- “The LORD declared to my Lord: ‘Sit at My right hand until I make Your enemies Your footstool’ ” (Ps 110:1).

I said to him, “About whom did I read?”

He replied, “Well, you obviously read of the life and ministry and suffering and death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth.”

I said, “Is there any question in your mind about that?”

He answered, “No, that could refer to no one else.”

I replied, “Well then, I would want you to understand that all of the Scriptures I just read to you are taken from the Old Testament, which was completed some four hundred years before Jesus was born. No critic, no atheist, no agnostic has ever once claimed that any one of those writings was written after His birth. In fact, they were translated from Hebrew into Greek in Alexandria some 150 years before He was born. If this is merely a book written by men, would you please explain to me how these words were written?”

He said, “I haven’t the faintest idea.” He was completely nonplussed. He had never heard those things before in his life. Indeed they cannot be explained by any purely humanistic presuppositions.

It is noteworthy that in no other religious writings in the world do we find any specific predictive prophecies like we find in the Scripture. You will find no predictive prophecies whatsoever in the writings of Buddha, Confucius, Mohammed, Lao-Tse, or Hinduism. Yet in the Scripture there are well over two thousand prophecies, most of which have already been fulfilled.

They are so specific in nature that they burn all the bridges behind them. If they are not fulfilled, it leaves no room for excuse. How can these be explained? Of all the attacks that have ever been made upon the Scripture, there has never been one book written by a skeptic to disprove the prophecies of the Scripture. Though the Bible has been attacked at every other place, the one place where God rests His inspiration is that the things He foretells come infallibly to pass.

The Bible prophecies are altogether unexpected! I know of no one ever prophesying that any other human being would rise from the dead and ascend into heaven. That is exceedingly improbable. The chance of it happening by coincidence is incalculable. No, the Bible is not merely a book written by men; it is a book written by God through men, and the heart of its prophetic message is Jesus Christ.

Writing History—Then and Now

by Kirk Lowery

Is the Bible "history"? Did the ancient biblical authors write "history" as we moderns understand it? These questions are essential elements of the debate about the trustworthiness and authority of the Bible. In recent years, the usefulness of the Bible for writing the history of the ancient Near East has come under attack as it has not been since the nineteenth century. And this attack is rooted in the intellectual winds of our time. Since the 1970s, people have been questioning whether science or history can tell us anything more than the ideology, politics, and biases of the scientist or historian, either individually or collectively. It is part of the so-called "postmodern" debate about the nature of "knowledge." Many postmodernists assert that the meaning of any particular biblical text (or any other literary text, for that matter) cannot be separated from the worldview and ideology of the reader. They deny that the original intention of the author can be recovered.

In order to evaluate the usefulness of the Bible for history and its trustworthiness as a source of both information and judgment on people and events, we must remember that there are two separate points of view—the ancient and the modern. Are we talking about modern ideas of history or ancient ones? Were the biblical writers attempting to write *history* as we understand it? If they were not attempting to write a modern history, just what were they trying to do?

The word *history* is normally understood in two senses: (1) what actually happened in the past, or (2) the telling (or writing) about what happened in the past. The first sense is objective (although some deny even this); the second necessarily filters those events through the personality of the historian. While the modern historian begins with a chronology and facts, the historian's evaluation hardly stops there. He reconstructs facts and events, fitting them together into a tapestry of telling a story. He evaluates his sources for their value and validity, much as a lawyer probes the credibility of a witness. Indeed, the historian is more like a prosecutor than a scientist in his method of work. After that examination, he makes conclusions about people and events, much like a judge or jury. The basic concern is that the Bible asserts certain facts or that certain events happened. Did they happen and in the way the Bible presents them? The Bible also makes judgments on people's actions, attitudes and deeds. Can we trust its judgment on events we cannot access?

Where did all this radical skepticism come from? There has always been skepticism about the Bible. Marcion (c. A.D. 85–160), for example, rejected just about all the New Testament except for Paul's writings and a highly edited Gospel of Luke. But modern (and postmodern) views of the Bible are rooted in the period known as the Enlightenment in the seventeenth century. This was a time when thoughtful persons began to distinguish between knowledge and superstition by using empirical methods. They struggled against state church authorities in their pursuit of truth. They pursued the original texts of not only the Bible but of the classics of Greek and Roman philosophy and literature. Their struggle polarized them from not just the contemporary church authorities, but galvanized them to regard any religious text as suspect. The seventeenth century was a time dedicated to the discovery of what was true and of what was superstition or chicanery. In that respect, the skepticism was healthy. Because many chose the cloak of religious authority to pander their intellectual wares, skepticism was a very powerful defense against this abuse. And a healthy skepticism is still useful, for superstition (in pursuit of money or adherents) is still used today against the unwary—that is, against those who uncritically trust whatever they are told. And it is important to remember that not everyone at that time embraced the "scientific" method accompanied by radical unbelief. Many of these early "scientists" were trained clergy, most notably Isaac Newton.

The modernist approach to writing history includes establishing events and a chronology, distinguishing between primary (original witness to the events) and secondary (dependent upon another) sources, and arranging those facts in some sort of a narrative. The modernist historian believes there is an objective reality in the past that can be accessed and known today. Critical scholars of the nineteenth century focused upon supposed "contradictions" and "errors" of fact to be found in the Bible. During the first half of the twentieth century, archaeological discoveries supported the presentation of fact found in many places of the Bible that previously had been challenged. At the end of World War II, scholars held the Bible to be much more trustworthy than they had believed at the beginning of the century.

In the past 50 years, the focus has changed. Once preoccupied with "contradictions" in the Bible, and "errors" of fact, now the emphasis is upon how the reader *responds* to the message of the text. One's understanding of the text is inevitably filtered through the previously existing biases of the reader. The original meaning of the text intended by the author is not accessible to the modern reader; indeed, "Truth" is not knowable. This brings us to the late 1980s and early 1990s when a new movement of historians arose to challenge the conclusions of their older colleagues; they have come to be known as the "Minimalists."

The controversy is all about *historiography*, the art of writing history. It is an art, not a science. One cannot repeat the "facts" of history in the same way that a scientist can reproduce the same events again and again in an experiment. But writing history is not simply telling a story. It is about the trustworthiness of the sources which one uses for telling that story. Are the sources that the historian uses to "prove" his point credible? The historian is much like the lawyer who constructs a tale about a crime (or lack of a crime), and uses witnesses and evidence to support his point of view and conclusion. And then it is the framework (often a story, but it could be a table of demographic facts) that relates all the events to one another. This involves selecting which facts will be included and which will be set aside as not relevant to the point being made.

The Minimalists assert that the Israel as depicted in the Hebrew Bible never existed, except in the minds of the Persian and Hellenistic writers who created the patriarchal narratives and the stories of the monarchy out of whole cloth. They were novelists in the modern sense who wrote fiction. Unless there is independent verification by "extra-biblical sources," they reject the Hebrew Bible's usefulness as a witness to the events written about. The biblical text is held to a higher standard of verification than are "extra-biblical" sources.

They believe that "unwritten" archaeological remains are more reliable than written documents, because they are "real," whereas the message contained in documents is created by humans with ideologies, misperceptions, incomplete information, etc. Immanuel Kant (1724–1804), an Enlightenment philosopher, said that reality—the thing in itself—cannot be truly known. The Minimalists explicitly cite Kant as one reason they rate the biblical text so low for knowledge of the past. However, while archaeological remains tell us what the material world was like and the context and constraints under which the people of the past lived, they cannot tell us what decisions people made or explain why people made the choices they did.

They insist that any assertion by an ancient text must be verified by an independent source. But insistence on a strict verification principle would leave us in the dark about almost everything. In point of fact, no one lives this way. We constantly make decisions based upon insufficient verification and make the "likely" choice. Better is the principle of "innocent until proven guilty," that a text is given the benefit of the doubt until and unless grounds for suspecting it are discovered.

How does one answer the Minimalist? Let's take the problem of the conquest of Canaan. Archaeological evidence is lacking for the Israelite conquest and occupation in the Iron Age. The Minimalists conclude it never happened, and certainly not as presented in the book of Joshua. Kenneth Kitchen, well-known and respected Egyptologist, is famous for his dictum: "The absence of

evidence is not the evidence of absence." Also, the biblical text helps explain it: Joshua 24:13 says, "I [the Lord] gave you a land you did not labor for, and cities you did not build, though you live in them; you are eating from vineyards and olive groves you did not plant." In other words, the Canaanite material culture—cities, farms, vineyards, and orchards—was not universally destroyed by the Israelites. Apparently, total destruction was the exception rather than the rule.

How should we evaluate these ancient texts? We should allow the ancient writers to speak in the manner that they wish. We should try to understand the ancient writers before posing questions of them that is outside of both their intention and their worldview. We should "translate" the message of the ancients from the ancient context to the modern. Finally, we must embrace humility: We do not have all the data; we do not have complete or even certain understanding to answer all our questions. Let us make a virtue of necessity and take what the ancient writers give and be content with that.

So what were the biblical writers doing, what did they expect to accomplish, and how ought the modern reader attempt to understand their literary output? The books of Kings and Chronicles, along with the other "historical" books of the Hebrew Bible, are not books written by modern historians for modern readers. Their literary nature is much different. For one thing, their purpose is *didactic* or *polemic*; that is, the authors are attempting to convince their readers about moral and spiritual principles. Their stories are intended to support this purpose and their various propositions. Second, their commitment to truth does not aspire to modern standards of reporting. What they valued as important and unimportant does not translate easily to third millennium A.D. values. For example, the recording of genealogies strikes many modern readers as irrelevant to the story. But it was critical to how these ancient peoples conceived of their identity. Genealogies may have had the function of establishing chronology or the framework for the story being told. It establishes precedence, relationship, and identity.

Allowance must be made for paraphrase, abbreviation, explanation, omission, rearrangement, and other techniques used by the ancient author that might offend modern principles of historiography. This is not to say that the ancients did not write history. To the contrary, they often show sensitivity to the events and corroborating witnesses to those events. But they also did not make a distinction between the writer's judgment or evaluation of events and the events themselves. They did not have precision—or, at least, modern notions of precision—in mind when they wrote. That does not mean the authors were not trying to tell a story that corresponds to real events! In order to understand the ancient texts, one must mentally and emotionally *become* an ancient and enter into their world. The process is very similar to watching a film where one must grant the filmmaker the premise of the film and even suspend belief in how the world should work before the message of the filmmaker can be perceived. The difference with the ancient writers is that we have much more work to do before we can enter into their world. Only then have we earned the right to form an opinion.

The ancient writer made choices: subject matter (events needing telling), point of view (theological purpose), and aesthetics (creative choices). These writers selected their material, glossed over less relevant events, simplified the story to meet space constraints and only included detail that illuminated the significance of the events as the writer understood them. This is true of modern professional historians as much as of ancient story tellers.

How, then, should we understand the intentions of the biblical writers? The first historians (that we have evidence of) were the Sumerians, for whom history was a matter of personal experience, not the analysis of sources or principles of interpretation. Later, Mesopotamian rulers desired to interpret the present or future in light of the past. Events on earth are controlled by the gods; hence, their decrees have a prominent place in their myths and legends. Indeed, that may have been the cultural function of the myths and legends. The earliest historiographers in the modern sense of the word were Manetho (third century B.C., Egypt) and Herodotus (*Histories,* c. 440 B.C.) and later, Aristotle (384-322 B.C., *Natural History of Animals*). The biblical writers were something in between: The

view of these ancient Hebrew writers is that history has a *planned* goal. History is not the result of forces or great men, but moves forward to an end planned by God. Their purpose in writing history was didactic: to teach the reader about how God acts in human affairs, what are His purposes and the consequences of obedience and disobedience to that purpose.

Numbers in the Bible

by Kirk Lowery

The modern reader of the Bible—especially of the Old Testament—often finds its use of numbers strange. The ancient world did not use numbers for every aspect of life. Their technology did not require many places past the decimal point of precision, or even a decimal point at all. The Bible has been closely read and interpreted by many cultures through more than four millennia. So the modern reader reads these ancient texts through the lens of all this history of interpretation. How others in the past have interpreted the numbers of the Bible influences a reader's understanding. How ought the numbers found in the Bible to be understood? They are to be understood in the same way that any other part of the text is understood: by how they are used and by keeping in mind both the textual context in which numbers occur and also the cultural context of how numbers were used by those ancient societies with which Israel lived and interacted.

Assyria, Egypt, Greece, and Rome used the decimal system for numbers. That is, numbers were expressed in base 10. ("Number" refers to the mathematical entity of quantity. "Numeral" refers to the symbol used to represent a number.) Sumerians and ancient Babylonians used the sexagesimal system, base 60, which is not unfamiliar to us since we use it every day—our system of timekeeping and navigation uses the sexagesimal system: 60 seconds to one minute, 60 minutes to one hour; 360 degrees to a circle subdivided into 60 minutes/degree and 60 seconds/minute. The ancient Israelites used the decimal system, as did their immediate neighbors in Canaan. For the most part, the major inscriptions of early Israel write out the numbers by words—"ten" rather than "10"—as is also true of the Old Testament itself. There is no instance of symbols being used, but all numbers are written out as words. The earliest (c. 140 B.C.) use of the Hebrew alphabet for numerals is to be found on Maccabean coins.

How did the biblical writers use numbers? They used them to count things and people. They used them for weights, measures, and time. They were familiar with arithmetic: addition (Gn 5:3-31; Nm 1:20-46), subtraction (Gn 18:26ff), and multiplication (Lv 25:8; Nm 3:46ff). Arithmetic processes are not mentioned in the New Testament. The frequent use of fractions shows a basic understanding of division: half (Ex 24:6); one fourth (Neh 9:3; Rv 6:8); one fifth (Gn 47:24); a tenth (Nm 18:26). Numbers are important in Daniel, Ezekiel, and Revelation. In summary, the biblical writers used numbers literally, rhetorically, and symbolically. They are never used mystically. Each use is addressed in turn below.

When the Bible uses numbers in the ordinary way, do they mean what they apparently mean? Some interpreters suppose that since the biblical writers were "pre-scientific," the numbers are not to be taken seriously. This supposition is flawed, however, for many non-scientific cultures record numbers that can be taken perfectly seriously (such as the astronomical observations of the Babylonians or the administrative records of the ancient Egyptians). The use of numbers is very culture-specific: Some languages have only the numbers "one, two, many," because they do not need greater precision than that. Modern society is permeated with numbers for every conceivable aspect of life. The ancient world was not that way. The ancients did not give a unique number to their citizens, did not number their roads, etc. But regardless of the level of technological development, every society has to deal with numbers in a real way to function. For some, the system may be simple, for others, very complex. Ancient Israel was no exception: Tolls and taxes were recorded, censuses were taken.

The biblical writers often used round numbers, a fact that should be noted in questions of reliability and trustworthiness of the biblical record. For example, we find "a hundred" (and "100")

used as a round number (Gn 26:12; Lv 26:8; 2 Sm 24:3; Ec 8:12; Mt 19:29), as well as "a thousand" (Dt 1:11; 7:9). The word "about" often precedes rounded numbers: "about 3,000 men" (Ex 32:28). On the other hand, numbers which could be interpreted as rounded numbers are often intended as actual amounts: "1,000 pieces of silver" (Gn 20:16). In general, one should assume a number is not rounded, unless there is reason to believe otherwise. Smaller numbers are less likely to be rounded than larger ones.

Much ink has been spilled debating the meaning of large numbers in the Bible. There are the large, indefinite numbers, and these do not present an interpretive problem. The highest recorded numbers are one million (2 Ch 14:9), ten thousand times ten thousand (Dn 7:10), thousands of thousands (Rv 5:11), and 200 million (Rv 9:16), the highest number recorded.

The long life spans of the pre-flood patriarchs have been compared to the Sumerian king list, whose life spans are recorded in the tens of thousands of years. The Sumerian kings' life spans have been called "mythical," so why not the biblical patriarchs' ages? After all, everyone knows humans rarely live beyond 100 years, never mind 500 or 1,000. The actual fact is that we don't know. The Sumerian king list records life spans on an order of magnitude greater than the biblical names. If both reflect a tradition about antediluvian times, what they may both be saying is that those ancient people lived an extraordinarily long time. Some have suggested that environmental conditions could explain it; others suggest mankind's closer proximity to its original sinless estate explains it. We just don't know how to explain the apparently impossible life spans. What we have is a witness (the Bible) that has proved trustworthy too often to dismiss.

The Bible records the number of men capable of bearing arms at the time of the exodus to be 603,550 (Nm 1:46). From this, it has been calculated that the entire population leaving Egypt would be about two million. Could such a number survive in the wilderness? The answer is no. Neither could a hundredth of that many survive on their own. It required God's provision because that part of the world would have been simply unable to support large numbers of nomads, especially without modern farming methods and technology. It required God to actively intervene in Israel's physical history in order for them to leave Egypt and subsequently survive. That is the point of the Exodus narrative.

There have been various attempts to reduce the real numbers of the exodus by understanding the Hebrew term for "thousand" (*eleph*) as "captain" or "family, clan." There is evidence for this use of the term in Nm 1:16; Jdg 6:15; 1 Sm 10:19; and Mc 5:2. But in the census lists of the book of Numbers, the numbers of the tribes is calculated in terms of thousands, hundreds, and fifties. Gad, for example, numbered 45,650 (Nm 1:25). And the total given to Israel's army (Nm 1:46) can only be arrived at if we calculate using *eleph* as meaning "thousand." Difficult to explain or not, the text is clear as to its intended meaning.

Numbers are also used in the Bible for rhetorical effect. They are used for contrast in poetic parallelism: "As they celebrated, the women sang: Saul has killed his thousands, but David his tens of thousands" (1 Sm 18:7). Perhaps the most common is to use the formula $x \ldots x + 1$ to express progression, intensification, completion, or some sort of climax: "The LORD says: I will not relent from punishing Israel for three crimes, even four . . ." (Am 2:6). Amos used the phrase in a string of condemnations of the sins of the surrounding lands. By using the same phrase for Israel and Judah, he was saying "you are no better than they," and so had a stronger impact upon his audience. The $x \ldots x + 1$ formula is also used in the NT (e.g., Mt 18:20). Perhaps the most popular interpretation of numbers in the Bible is their symbolic meaning. The numbers 1, 3, 5, 7, 10, 12, and 40 among others have been assigned various meanings such as "unity," "perfection," "completion," and "generation." Where do these interpretations come from? The surprising fact is that only one number in the entire Bible is explicitly said to be symbolic: "Here is wisdom: The one who has understanding must calculate the number of the beast, because it is the number of a man. His number is 666" (Rv 13:18).

Nowhere else are we told that numbers are used symbolically in any way. Any other symbolism for a number must be inferred from the biblical text itself by demonstrating a frequent association of a particular number with a particular concept. The only candidate for such an association is the number 7. And its usage is so diverse (seven days of creation; Jacob's seven years of service for Rachel; seven-fold curse of Cain; praising God seven times a day as in Ps 119:164) that it is hard to pin down a consistent meaning, but "completeness" or "perfection" appear to be the intended symbolism most of the time.

Where do all the other traditionally associated meanings and instances of symbolism come from? Modern lists of symbolic meanings of the biblical use of numbers most closely follow the system of meanings proposed by the sixth century B.C. Greek mathematician and philosopher, Pythagoras. Famous for his "Pythagorean Theorem," he also founded a religious cult with the belief that the "real" world was the realm of numbers and that those numbers explain why the physical world is the way it is. He speculated on the mystic and symbolic properties of numbers, which are the early origins of number theory. His ideas were picked up by the Gnostics in the apostolic and post-apostolic eras. Even the early church fathers were influenced by this approach to biblical interpretation, although not universally. Irenaeus (c. A.D. 140–200) classified it with other heresies: "Nor should they seek to prosecute inquiries respecting God by means of numbers, syllables, and letters. . . . For system does not spring out of numbers, but numbers from a system; nor does God derive His being from things made, but things made from God. For all things originate from one and the same God" (*Against Heresies,* Bk II:25:1). This is a direct refutation of Pythagorean metaphysics.

It is a small step from looking for symbolic meaning in numbers to seeking *hidden* meaning in numbers. After Alexander the Great conquered Palestine, Greek philosophies influenced Jewish thinking. From Pythagorean influence sprang Jewish *Gematria*, the system of interpretation that says there is hidden, intended meaning in the numeric values of a word. Since the Greeks had no separate writing system to express numerals, the ancients used Greek letters instead. Words could be broken up into letters, and mathematical operations could be done on the numeric values of those letters. Those numeric values were given mystical meanings loosely based upon Pythagorean numeric metaphysics described above. The Jews applied these procedures to the words of the Hebrew Bible using the letters of the Hebrew alphabet for numbers and claimed to discover hidden meaning and messages from God intended for the faithful. The church fathers were attracted to this form of interpretation of the Bible because of its apparent value in proving the inspiration and truth of the scriptures. In this way, *Gematria* passed into Christian circles and is still practiced today by many.

There is no historical or archaeological evidence of any culture using letters for numerals before the Greeks. The human authors of the Old Testament would have had no cultural model or literary form to suggest to them that they write a message in code. There is no hint in the Bible that there is any message encoded in the letters of the text. There is no procedure or mathematical operation common to the time of the writers of the Bible that the writers could conceivably expect a reader to know to use to discover the encoded meaning. We must conclude that the only way intelligible results can be obtained this way is by starting with the message one wishes to find! Then, using mathematical deduction, one proceeds to create the steps needed to get to that message from the numeric values of the biblical text, just like one would attempt to prove a theorem in number theory.

God's message of salvation for mankind was intended to be intelligible to everyone, of all ages and from all cultures. Certainly numbers in the Bible are sometimes difficult to understand, and there are "mysteries" about the future that are deliberately couched in ambiguous or symbolic wording. But at no time—with the one exception in Revelation noted above—is the reader exhorted to resort to mathematics. God does not speak to us in "code."

The Chronology of the Kings of Israel and Judah

by Kirk Lowery

Whether it is a simple story or a complex history, a key element is time. It establishes cause and effect, act and consequence. The books of Kings are not exempt from the need to relate one event to another in time. The author traces the action of kings and rulers throughout time by recording the beginning, end, and duration of one reign after another. Modern readers naturally want to relate the chronology of the books of Kings to the dating systems we use today so we can relate the events narrated there to each other and to contemporaneous events in the lands surrounding ancient Israel and Judah in order to recover the original context of those events.

The books of Kings synchronize the reigns of the northern and southern kingdoms of the divided monarchy as well as proving the number of years a king reigned. But there is a very significant problem. These numbers and the synchronomies appear to be in constant contradiction with one another. It appears difficult, if not impossible, to create a chronology that accounts for all these numbers and agrees with established chronologies of the ancient Near East. These conflicts of numbers have led many to conclude that the books of Kings cannot be faithful witnesses to the history of Israel. If the writer got the numbers wrong, what else did he get wrong?

Here is an example of one problem: Often the synchronomy given for the beginning of a reign does not correlate with the total number of years given for that reign. First Kings 15:25 says the reign of Nadab of Israel begins in the second year of Asa of Judah. First Kings 15:28 says Nadab died in the third year of Asa; that is, he reigned for one year. But 1 Kings 15:25 says he reigned for two years. This is one category of conflict. A second category of conflict is concerning the year a king is supposed to have begun his reign. Second Kings 3:1 says Joram began to reign in Israel in the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat of Judah. But 2 Kings 1:17 says he began to reign in the second year of Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat. The sum of regnal years for Israel and Judah is a third source of discrepancy. The total number of years for the kings of Israel from Jehu through Pekahiah is 114 years and 7 months. For the same period of time in Judah (from Athaliah through Azariah) the total comes to 128 years, a 14-year discrepancy. When we compare the sum of the regnal years for Israel as compared to the same period for Assyria, we find Israel's kings reigned 12 years longer than the Assyrian kings. And Judah's kings reigned longer by 25 years! Since the numbers do not match up, we must conclude that either someone made an error or the numbers mean something different than we suppose.

In 1951 Edwin Thiele published *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings* in which he presented solutions to the problems outlined above. His discoveries and principles used to harmonize the regnal years of Israel and Judah with an absolute chronology are summarized here.

In the northern kingdom, Israel, the regnal year was calculated from the month of Nisan in the spring, but in Judah, the regnal year began in the month of Tishri in the autumn. Both of these systems overlap the January new year of modern calendars. It must also be kept in mind that both calendar systems are lunar rather than the solar calendar used today; that is, each month consisted of exactly 30 days following the phases of the moon. An important consequence of all this is that a regnal year in Israel begins in the spring and will overlap parts of two regnal years in Judah which begin in the autumn. If a king of Judah came to the throne just before January, his accession year would synchronize with, for example, the third regnal year of a king in Israel. However, if the Judean

king came to the throne six months later in the following summer, his accession year would synchronize with the fourth year of the Israelite king.

A second principle used to resolve numeric conflicts is to understand that the method of calculating the regnal years was different in the two kingdoms. Is the first year of a king to include a partial year up to the next new year, or is the first year of a king's reign to be calculated from the following new year's beginning? In the ancient Near East, some countries followed the former method and others the latter. The former method is called "accession year" dating, and the partial year is not counted; it could be called "Year Zero." The latter method is called "non-accession year" dating and counts any partial year as "Year One." This means that nations using the non-accession year dating system are always one year ahead of those that use accession year dating. And for every new king, the years increase by one in absolute time. For non-accession year dating, one must subtract one year for every king, in order to keep in sync with absolute chronology.

Judah used the accession-year system for Rehoboam through Jehoshaphat; then the non-accession-year system was employed from Jehoram to Joash. Beginning with the next ruler, Amaziah, Judah returned to the accession-year system until the destruction of Jerusalem. In Israel, the non-accession-year system only was used throughout its history; that is, from Jeroboam to Jehoahaz. For example, the total number of official years of reign for the Judean kings Rehoboam through Jehoshaphat are 79; the total number of regnal years for the same period in Israel (Jeroboam through Ahaziah) is 86. But when we subtract one year for each of the seven kings of Israel because of Israel's use of the non-accession-year system, the final sum is 79 years, which agrees with the Judean record.

A further source of confusion is how the regnal years are reported. Since each nation had its own method of reporting (accession year or non-accession-year), it reported the numbers of the other kingdom according to its own method. Thus, Rehoboam had a 17-year reign according to Judah's accession-year recording system, but Israel's non-accession-year system reckoned 18 years for Rehoboam. First Kings 15:25 says Nadab's rule over Israel began in the second year of Asa of Judah. Since Israel used a non-accession-year system, the second year of Asa would be the first year according to Judean accession-year dating. Depending upon which source the author was using, the *Historical Record of Israel's Kings* (1 Kg 14:19) or the *Historical Record of Judah's Kings* (1 Kg 14:29), the calculation of the regnal years and the synchronization between two kings must take these differences into account.

A fourth principle used to resolve regnal year numeric conflicts is to recognize that some reigns overlap (especially in Israel) and some kings were coregents (especially in Judah). Sometimes these overlappings and coregencies are mentioned explicitly in the text (e.g., 1 Kg 16:21-23) in a form called "dual dating." More often, the overlapping reigns must be deduced and reconstructed. In all, nine overlapping reigns have been identified, six for Judah and three for Israel.

How is the relative chronology of the Hebrew kings correlated with contemporary historical events? Lists of Assyrian kings record an eclipse which astronomical calculations determine to have occurred on June 15, 763 B.C. This allows us to fix the absolute date of most of the Assyrian kings and hence the various events of their reigns from their court records. In the sixth year of Shalmaneser III, the Assyrians fought a coalition of Aramean kings (now modern Syria) called "the Battle of Qarqar" in 853 B.C., and among the names of the kings listed is Ahab of Israel. (This event is not recorded in the Bible.) In the eighteenth year of Shalmaneser III, in 841 B.C., Assyrian records show that Shalmaneser received tribute from Jehu, king of Israel. There are 12 years between the Battle of Qarqar and the receipt of Jehu's tribute and also 12 years between the death of Ahab and the ascension of Jehu (1 Kg 22:51). Thus, Ahab died in 853 B.C. and Jehu ascended the throne in 841 B.C. This allows for further calculations of absolute dates for many other kings of Israel and Judah. Another synchronization from Assyrian records is the year 701 B.C. when Sennacherib of Assyria

besieged Jerusalem during the fourteenth year of Hezekiah's reign (2 Kg 18:13). From the Battle of Qarqar in 853 B.C. to Sennacherib's campaign against Hezekiah in 701 B.C. is a span of 152 years, according to Assyrian chronology. According to the properly calculated years of Israelite and Judean kings from the death of Ahab to the fourteenth year of Hezekiah is also 152 years, proving the synchronization and method of reckoning regnal years is correct.

The history of biblical studies in the twentieth century has shown again and again that major "problems" of the biblical record have been the result of modern ignorance of the ancient world. The resolution of the apparent conflicts of the chronology of the books of Kings shows the reliability and trustworthiness of the biblical record to the history of the ancient Near East.

See the chart of kings in the section of charts and maps at the back of the Bible. This chart is an absolute chronology of the kings of Israel and Judah, taking into account the beginning of regnal years, overlapping reigns, coregencies, dual datings, and accession- and non-accession-year dating systems.

GENESIS

Introduction to Genesis

GENESIS

The Creation

1 [†] In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. [A]

TWISTED SCRIPTURE

Genesis 1:1-2

The creation story has been interpreted in various ways. Some Christians believe a time gap exists between these verses, with verse 1 referring to God's initial creative act and verse 2 describing a world plunged into chaos and darkness, possibly through the expulsion of Satan from heaven. Only later in the chapter does God choose to create human beings (v. 27). According to this gap theory, millions of years could have passed between verses 1 and 2.

Using similar logic, those followers of the New Age movement who believe in the existence of the lost continent of Atlantis place the rise and fall of the ancient civilization between verses 1-2. Edgar Cayce, known as the "sleeping prophet," taught that Atlantis existed 10 million years ago and was inhabited by spirit beings. After a cataclysmic destruction ("chaos and darkness"), the spirits of the inhabitants eventually took up residence in the bodies of Adam and Eve and the others who populated God's new creation (v. 27). Thus all earthlings originally resided in Atlantis.

2 Now the earth was [B] formless and empty, darkness covered the surface
of the watery depths, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of
the waters. 3 Then God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light.
4 God saw that the light was good, and God separated the light from the
darkness. 5 God called the light “day,” and He called the darkness “night.”
Evening came and then morning: the first day.

6 Then God said, “Let there be an expanse between the waters,
separating water from water.” 7 So God made the expanse and separated
the water under the expanse from the water above the expanse. And it was
so. 8 God called the expanse “sky.” [C] Evening came and then morning: the
second day.

9 Then God said, “Let the water under the sky be gathered into one
place, and let the dry land appear.” And it was so. 10 God called the dry

land “earth,” and He called the gathering of the water “seas.” And God saw that it was good. [11] Then God said, “Let the earth produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and fruit trees on the earth bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds.” And it was so. [12] The earth produced vegetation: seed-bearing plants according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good. [13] Evening came and then morning: the third day.

[14†] Then God said, “Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to separate the day from the night. They will serve as signs for festivals [D] and for days and years. [15] They will be lights in the expanse of the sky to provide light on the earth.” And it was so. [16] God made the two great lights — the greater light to have dominion over the day and the lesser light to have dominion over the night — as well as the stars. [17] God placed them in the expanse of the sky to provide light on the earth, [18] to dominate the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness. And God saw that it was good. [19] Evening came and then morning: the fourth day.

[20] Then God said, “Let the water swarm with [E] living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the sky.” [21] So God created the large sea-creatures [F] and every living creature that moves and swarms in the water, according to their kinds. He also created every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. [22] So God blessed them, “Be fruitful, multiply, and fill the waters of the seas, and let the birds multiply on the earth.” [23] Evening came and then morning: the fifth day.

[24] Then God said, “Let the earth produce living creatures according to their kinds: livestock, creatures that crawl, and the wildlife of the earth according to their kinds.” And it was so. [25] So God made the wildlife of the earth according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and creatures that crawl on the ground according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good.

[26†] Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness. They will rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, the

livestock, all the earth, and the creatures that crawl [G] on the earth.”

27 So God created man in His own image;
He created him in the image of God;
He created them male and female.

ARTICLE

Are the Days of Genesis to Be Interpreted Literally? ⇒

TWISTED SCRIPTURE

Genesis 1:27

Modern-day vampires trace their origins to this verse and the mythical figure of Lilith, who was supposedly created before Eve. The legend of Lilith derives from a theory that Genesis has two creation accounts (this verse and 2:7,20-22). The two stories allow for two different women. Lilith does not appear in the Bible (apart from a debatable reference comparing her to a screech owl in the Hb text of Is 34:14). Some rabbinic commentators, however, refer to Lilith as the first created woman, who refused to submit to Adam and fled from the garden. Eve was then created to be Adam's helper. After their expulsion from the garden, Adam reunited for a time with Lilith before finally returning to Eve. Lilith bore Adam a number of children, who became the demons of the Bible. According to kabbalistic legend, after Adam's reconciliation with Eve, Lilith took the title Queen of the Demons and became a murderer of infants and young boys, whom she turned into vampires.

28 God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful, multiply, fill the
earth, and subdue it. Rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, and every
creature that crawls [H] on the earth.” 29 God also said, “Look, I have given
you every seed-bearing plant on the surface of the entire earth and every
tree whose fruit contains seed. This food will be for you, 30 for all the
wildlife of the earth, for every bird of the sky, and for every creature that

crawls on the earth — everything having the breath of life in it. I have given
every green plant for food." And it was so. 31 God saw all that He had
made, and it was very good. Evening came and then morning: the sixth
day.

GENESIS

2 So the heavens and the earth and everything in them [A] were completed.
2† By the seventh day God completed His work that He had done, and
He rested [B] on the seventh day from all His work that He had done. 3 God
blessed the seventh day and declared it holy, for on it He rested from His
work of creation. [C]

Man and Woman in the Garden

4† These are the records of the heavens and the earth, concerning their
creation at the time [D] that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens.
5 No shrub of the field had yet grown on the land, [E] and no plant of the
field had yet sprouted, for the LORD God had not made it rain on the land,
and there was no man to work the ground. 6 But water would come out of
the ground and water the entire surface of the land. 7† Then the LORD God
formed the man out of the dust from the ground and breathed the breath of
life into his nostrils, and the man became a living being.

TWISTED SCRIPTURE

Genesis 2:7

According to modern-day psychics, this "breath of life" enables humans to exhibit supernatural abilities. Most people, however, do not know how to tap into this power. Such a bizarre conclusion cannot be derived from the text. A better interpretation is that the "breath of life" is simply the animating force of the body.

8 The LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there He
placed the man He had formed. 9 The LORD God caused to grow out of the
ground every tree pleasing in appearance and good for food, including the
tree of life in the middle of the garden, as well as the tree of the knowledge
of good and evil.

[10†] A river went [F] out from Eden to water the garden. From there it
divided and became the source of four rivers. [G] [11] The name of the first is
Pishon, which flows through the entire land of Havilah, [H], where there is
gold. [12] Gold from that land is pure; [I] bdellium and onyx are also there.
[13] The name of the second river is Gihon, which flows through the entire
land of •Cush. [14] The name of the third river is the Tigris, which runs east
of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.

ARTICLE

Evolution: Fact or Fantasy? ⇒

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[15] The LORD God took the man and placed him in the garden of Eden to
work it and watch over it. [16] And the LORD God commanded the man, "You
are free to eat from any tree of the garden, [17] but you must not eat [J] from
the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for on the day you eat from it,
you will certainly die." [18] Then the LORD God said, "It is not good for the
man to be alone. I will make a helper as his complement." [19†] So the LORD
God formed out of the ground every wild animal and every bird of the sky,
and brought each to the man to see what he would call it. And whatever the
man called a living creature, that was its name. [20] The man gave names to
all the livestock, to the birds of the sky, and to every wild animal; but for
the man [K] no helper was found as his complement. [21] So the LORD God
caused a deep sleep to come over the man, and he slept. God took one of
his ribs and closed the flesh at that place. [22] Then the LORD God made the
rib He had taken from the man into a woman and brought her to the man.
[23] And the man said:

This one, at last, is bone of my bone
and flesh of my flesh;
this one will be called "woman,"
for she was taken from man.

24 This is why a man leaves his father and mother and bonds with his
wife, and they become one flesh. 25 Both the man and his wife were naked,
yet felt no shame.

GENESIS

The Temptation and the Fall

3 Now the serpent was the most cunning of all the wild animals that the
Lord God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You
can’t eat from any tree in the garden’? ”

2 The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat the fruit from the trees in
the garden. 3 But about the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden, God
said, ‘You must not eat it or touch it, or you will die.’ ”

4† “No! You will not die,” the serpent said to the woman. 5 “In fact, God
knows that when [A] you eat it your eyes will be opened and you will be like
God, [B] knowing good and evil.” 6 Then the woman saw that the tree was
good for food and delightful to look at, and that it was desirable for
obtaining wisdom. So she took some of its fruit and ate it; she also gave
some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. 7 Then the eyes of
both of them were opened, and they knew they were naked; so they sewed
fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves.

TWISTED SCRIPTURE

Genesis 3:5

Mormons believe humans can reach godhood. This verse clearly shows that the idea originated with the serpent and is contrary to God's revelation (2:17).

Sin’s Consequences

8† Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God walking
in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, [C] and they hid themselves
from the Lord God among the trees of the garden. 9† So the Lord God
called out to the man and said to him, “Where are you? ”

10 And he said, “I heard You [D] in the garden and I was afraid because I
was naked, so I hid.”

11 Then He asked, "Who told you that you were naked? Did you eat from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from? "

12 Then the man replied, "The woman You gave to be with me — she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate."

13 So the LORD God asked the woman, "What is this you have done? "

And the woman said, "It was the serpent. He deceived me, and I ate."

14† Then the LORD God said to the serpent:

Because you have done this,
you are cursed more than any livestock
and more than any wild animal.
You will move on your belly
and eat dust all the days of your life.
15† I will put hostility between you and the woman,
and between your •seed and her seed.
He will strike your head,
and you will strike his heel.

16† He said to the woman:

TWISTED SCRIPTURE

Genesis 3:15

Many Pentecostal Oneness sects use this verse to promote the serpent seed theory. William Branham, a faith healing evangelist of the 1940s, taught that Eve's sin in the garden was an illicit sexual affair with the serpent, resulting in her pregnancy. The serpent's seed was Cain and his descendants. Scripture is clear that the first sin was not sexual but rather consisted of Adam's disobedience to God's command not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (2:16-17).

I will intensify your labor pains;
you will bear children in anguish.
Your desire will be for your husband,
yet he will rule over you.

17 And He said to Adam, “Because you listened to your wife’s voice and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, ‘Do not eat from it’:

The ground is cursed because of you.
You will eat from it by means of painful labor [E]
all the days of your life.
18 It will produce thorns and thistles for you,
and you will eat the plants of the field.
19 You will eat bread [F] by the sweat of your brow
until you return to the ground,
since you were taken from it.
For you are dust,
and you will return to dust.”

20† Adam named his wife Eve [G] because she was the mother of all the
living. 21 The LORD God made clothing out of skins for Adam and his wife, and He clothed them.

22† The LORD God said, “Since man has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil, he must not reach out, take from the tree of life, eat, and live
forever.” 23 So the LORD God sent him away from the garden of Eden to
work the ground from which he was taken. 24 He drove man out and stationed the •cherubim and the flaming, whirling sword east of the garden of Eden to guard the way to the tree of life.

GENESIS

Cain Murders Abel

4 Adam was intimate with his wife Eve, and she conceived and gave birth
to Cain. She said, "I have had a male child with the LORD's help." [A]
2 Then she also gave birth to his brother Abel. Now Abel became a
shepherd of flocks, but Cain worked the ground. 3 In the course of time
Cain presented some of the land's produce as an offering to the LORD.
4† And Abel also presented an offering — some of the firstborn of his flock
and their fat portions. The LORD had regard for Abel and his offering, 5 but
He did not have regard for Cain and his offering. Cain was furious, and he
looked despondent. [B]

6 Then the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you furious? And why do you
look despondent? [C] 7 If you do what is right, won't you be accepted? But if
you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is for
you, but you must rule over it."

8 Cain said to his brother Abel, "Let's go out to the field." And while
they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him.

9 Then the LORD said to Cain, "Where is your brother Abel? "

"I don't know," he replied. "Am I my brother's guardian? "

10 Then He said, "What have you done? Your brother's blood cries out to
Me from the ground! 11 So now you are cursed, alienated, from the ground
that opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood you have shed. [D]
12† If you work the ground, it will never again give you its yield. You will
be a restless wanderer on the earth."

13 But Cain answered the LORD, "My punishment [E] is too great to bear!
14 Since You are banishing me today from the soil, and I must hide myself
from Your presence and become a restless wanderer on the earth, whoever
finds me will kill me."

15† Then the LORD replied to him, "In that case, whoever kills Cain will
suffer vengeance seven times over." [F] And He placed a mark on Cain so

that whoever found him would not kill him. 16 Then Cain went out from the
LORD's presence and lived in the land of Nod, east of Eden.

The Line of Cain

17† Cain was intimate with his wife, and she conceived and gave birth to
Enoch. Then Cain became the builder of a city, and he named the city
Enoch after his son. 18 Irad was born to Enoch, Irad fathered Mehujael,
Mehujael fathered Methushael, and Methushael fathered Lamech.
19† Lamech took two wives for himself, one named Adah and the other
named Zillah. 20 Adah bore Jabal; he was the father of the nomadic
herdsmen. G 21 His brother was named Jubal; he was the father of all who
play the lyre and the flute. 22 Zillah bore Tubal-cain, who made all kinds of
bronze and iron tools. Tubal-cain's sister was Naamah.

TWISTED SCRIPTURE

Genesis 4:19

Mormons cite this verse and their own scriptures (Doctrines and Covenants, section 132) in order to justify polygamy. Polygamy, however, came into existence only after the fall in the garden. The creation mandate directs that a man shall be joined to one wife (2:24). Other verses that teach monogamy include Pr 5:18-19; Mal 2:14-15; Mk 10:2-8; 1 Co 7:2,10; 1 Tm 3:2,12; and Ti 1:6. While there are examples of polygamy in the OT (2 Sm 5:13; 1 Kg 11:3), they did not receive God's approval. Instead God, in His mercy, issued laws to protect the many wives and children of polygamists.

23 Lamech said to his wives:

Adah and Zillah, hear my voice;
wives of Lamech, pay attention to my words.
For I killed a man for wounding me,
a young man for striking me.
24 If Cain is to be avenged seven times over,

then for Lamech it will be seventy-seven times!

[25] Adam was intimate with his wife again, and she gave birth to a son and
named him Seth, for she said, “God has given me another child in place of
Abel, since Cain killed him.” [26] A son was born to Seth also, and he named
him Enosh. At that time people began to call on the name of •Yahweh.

GENESIS

The Line of Seth

5 These are the family [A] records of the descendants of Adam. On the day
that God created man, [B] He made him in the likeness of God; 2 He
created them male and female. When they were created, He blessed them
and called them man. [C]

3 Adam was 130 years old when he fathered a son in his likeness,
according to his image, and named him Seth. 4 Adam lived 800 years after
the birth of Seth, and he fathered other sons and daughters. 5 So Adam's life
lasted 930 years; then he died.

6 Seth was 105 years old when he fathered Enosh. 7 Seth lived 807 years
after the birth of Enosh, and he fathered other sons and daughters. 8 So
Seth's life lasted 912 years; then he died.

9 Enosh was 90 years old when he fathered Kenan. 10 Enosh lived 815
years after the birth of Kenan, and he fathered other sons and daughters.
11 So Enosh's life lasted 905 years; then he died.

12 Kenan was 70 years old when he fathered Mahalalel. 13 Kenan lived
840 years after the birth of Mahalalel, and he fathered other sons and
daughters. 14 So Kenan's life lasted 910 years; then he died.

15 Mahalalel was 65 years old when he fathered Jared. 16 Mahalalel lived
830 years after the birth of Jared, and he fathered other sons and daughters.
17 So Mahalalel's life lasted 895 years; then he died.

18 Jared was 162 years old when he fathered Enoch. 19 Jared lived 800
years after the birth of Enoch, and he fathered other sons and daughters.
20 So Jared's life lasted 962 years; then he died.

21 Enoch was 65 years old when he fathered Methuselah. 22 And after the
birth of Methuselah, Enoch walked with God 300 years and fathered other
sons and daughters. 23 So Enoch's life lasted 365 years. 24[†] Enoch walked
with God; then he was not there because God took him.

[25] Methuselah was 187 years old when he fathered Lamech.
[26] Methuselah lived 782 years after the birth of Lamech, and he fathered
other sons and daughters. [27] So Methuselah's life lasted 969 years; then he
died.

ARTICLE
Are the Biblical Genealogies Reliable? ⇒

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[28] Lamech was 182 years old when he fathered a son. [29] And he named
him Noah, saying, "This one will bring us relief from the agonizing labor
of our hands, caused by the ground the LORD has cursed." [30] Lamech lived
595 years after Noah's birth, and he fathered other sons and daughters.
[31] So Lamech's life lasted 777 years; then he died.

[32] Noah was 500 years old, and he fathered Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

GENESIS

Sons of God and Daughters of Men

6 When mankind began to multiply on the earth and daughters were born
to them, 2† the sons of God saw that the daughters of mankind were
beautiful, and they took any they chose as wives [A] for themselves. 3 And
the LORD said, "My Spirit will not remain [B] with [C] mankind forever,
because they are corrupt. [D] Their days will be 120 years." 4 The Nephilim
were on the earth both in those days and afterward, when the sons of God
came to the daughters of mankind, who bore children to them. They were
the powerful men of old, the famous men.

Judgment Decreed

5 When the LORD saw that man's wickedness was widespread on the earth
and that every scheme his mind thought of was nothing but evil all the
time, 6† the LORD regretted that He had made man on the earth, and He was
grieved in His heart. 7 Then the LORD said, "I will wipe off from the face of
the earth mankind, whom I created, together with the animals, creatures that
crawl, and birds of the sky — for I regret that I made them." 8 Noah,
however, found favor in the sight of the LORD.

God Warns Noah

9† These are the family records of Noah. Noah was a righteous man,
blameless among his contemporaries; Noah walked with God. 10 And
Noah fathered three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

11 Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight, and the earth was filled with
wickedness. [E] 12 God saw how corrupt the earth was, for every creature had
corrupted its way on the earth. 13 Then God said to Noah, "I have decided
to put an end to every creature, for the earth is filled with wickedness [F]
because of them; therefore I am going to destroy them along with the earth.

14† "Make yourself an ark of gopher wood. Make rooms in the ark, and
cover it with pitch inside and outside. 15 This is how you are to make it: The
ark will be 450 feet long, 75 feet wide, and 45 feet high. [G] 16 You are to
make a roof, [H] finishing the sides of the ark to within 18 inches [I] of the

roof. You are to put a door in the side of the ark. Make it with lower,
middle, and upper decks.

[17†] “Understand that I am bringing a flood — floodwaters on the earth to
destroy every creature under heaven with the breath of life in it. Everything
on earth will die. [18] But I will establish My covenant with you, and you
will enter the ark with your sons, your wife, and your sons’ wives. [19] You
are also to bring into the ark two of all the living creatures, male and
female, to keep them alive with you. [20] Two of everything — from the birds
according to their kinds, from the livestock according to their kinds, and
from the animals that crawl on the ground according to their kinds — will
come to you so that you can keep them alive. [21] Take with you every kind
of food that is eaten; gather it as food for you and for them.” [22] And Noah
did this. He did everything that God had commanded him.

GENESIS

Entering the Ark

7 Then the Lord said to Noah, “Enter the ark, you and all your household,
for I have seen that you alone are righteous before Me in this
generation. 2 You are to take with you seven pairs, a male and its female, of
all the •clean animals, and two of the animals that are not clean, a male and
its female, 3 and seven pairs, male and female, of the birds of the sky — in
order to keep •offspring alive on the face of the whole earth. 4† Seven days
from now I will make it rain on the earth 40 days and 40 nights, and I will
wipe off from the face of the earth every living thing I have made.” 5 And
Noah did everything that the Lord commanded him.

6 Noah was 600 years old when the flood came and water covered the
earth. 7 So Noah, his sons, his wife, and his sons’ wives entered the ark
because of the waters of the flood. 8 From the clean animals, •unclean
animals, birds, and every creature that crawls on the ground, 9 two of each,
male and female, entered the ark with Noah, just as God had commanded
him. 10 Seven days later the waters of the flood came on the earth.

The Flood

11 In the six hundredth year of Noah’s life, in the second month, on the
seventeenth day of the month, on that day all the sources of the watery
depths burst open, the floodgates of the sky were opened, 12† and the rain
fell on the earth 40 days and 40 nights. 13† On that same day Noah along
with his sons Shem, Ham, and Japheth, Noah’s wife, and his three sons’
wives entered the ark with him. 14 They entered it with all the wildlife
according to their kinds, all livestock according to their kinds, the creatures
that crawl on the earth according to their kinds, all birds, every fowl, and
everything with wings according to their kinds. 15 Two of all flesh that has
the breath of life in it entered the ark with Noah. 16 Those that entered, male
and female of all flesh, entered just as God had commanded him. Then the
Lord shut him in.

17 The flood continued for 40 days on the earth; the waters increased and
lifted up the ark so that it rose above the earth. 18 The waters surged and
increased greatly on the earth, and the ark floated on the surface of the

water. [19] Then the waters surged even higher on the earth, and all the high
mountains under the whole sky were covered. [20][†] The mountains were
covered as the waters surged above them more than 20 feet. [A] [21] Every
creature perished — those that crawl on the earth, birds, livestock, wildlife,
and those that swarm [B] on the earth, as well as all mankind. [22] Everything
with the breath of the spirit of life in its nostrils — everything on dry land
died. [23] He wiped out every living thing that was on the surface of the
ground, from mankind to livestock, to creatures that crawl, to the birds of
the sky, and they were wiped off the earth. Only Noah was left, and those
that were with him in the ark. [24] And the waters surged on the earth 150
days.

GENESIS

The Flood Recedes

8 God remembered Noah, as well as all the wildlife and all the livestock
that were with him in the ark. God caused a wind [A] to pass over the
earth, and the water began to subside. 2 The sources of the watery depths
and the floodgates of the sky were closed, and the rain from the sky
stopped. 3 The water steadily receded from the earth, and by the end of 150
days the waters had decreased significantly. 4 The ark came to rest in the
seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on the mountains of
Ararat.

5 The waters continued to recede until the tenth month; in the tenth
month, on the first day of the month, the tops of the mountains were visible.
6 After 40 days Noah opened the window of the ark that he had made, 7 and
he sent out a raven. It went back and forth until the waters had dried up
from the earth. 8 Then he sent out a dove to see whether the water on the
earth's surface had gone down, 9 but the dove found no resting place for her
foot. She returned to him in the ark because water covered the surface of the
whole earth. He reached out and brought her into the ark to himself. 10 So
Noah waited seven more days and sent out the dove from the ark again.
11 When the dove came to him at evening, there was a plucked olive leaf in
her beak. So Noah knew that the water on the earth's surface had gone
down. 12 After he had waited another seven days, he sent out the dove, but
she did not return to him again. 13[†] In the six hundred and first year, in the
first month, on the first day of the month, the water that had covered the
earth was dried up. Then Noah removed the ark's cover and saw that the
surface of the ground was drying. 14 By the twenty-seventh day of the
second month, the earth was dry.

The LORD's Promise

15 Then God spoke to Noah, 16 "Come out of the ark, you, your wife,
your sons, and your sons' wives with you. 17 Bring out all the living
creatures [B] that are with you — birds, livestock, those that crawl on the
ground — and they will spread over the earth and be fruitful and multiply
on the earth." 18 So Noah, along with his sons, his wife, and his sons'

wives, came out. 19 All wildlife, all livestock, every bird, and every creature
that crawls on the earth came out of the ark by their groups.

20 Then Noah built an altar to the LORD. He took some of every kind of
•clean animal and every kind of clean bird and offered •burnt offerings on
the altar. 21† When the LORD smelled the pleasing aroma, He said to
Himself, “I will never again curse the ground because of man, even though
man’s inclination is evil from his youth. And I will never again strike down
every living thing as I have done.

22 As long as the earth endures,
seedtime and harvest, cold and heat,
summer and winter, and day and night
will not cease.”

GENESIS

God's Covenant with Noah

9 God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, “Be fruitful and
multiply and fill the earth. 2† The fear and terror of you will be in every
living creature on the earth, every bird of the sky, every creature that crawls
on the ground, and all the fish of the sea. They are placed under your
authority. [A] 3 Every living creature will be food for you; as I gave the green
plants, I have given you everything. 4† However, you must not eat meat
with its lifeblood in it. 5 I will require the life of every animal and every
man for your life and your blood. I will require the life of each man’s
brother for a man’s life.

6 Whoever sheds man’s blood,
his blood will be shed by man,
for God made man in His image.

7 But you, be fruitful and multiply; spread out over the earth and multiply
on it.”

8 Then God said to Noah and his sons with him, 9 “Understand that I am
confirming My covenant with you and your descendants after you, 10 and
with every living creature that is with you — birds, livestock, and all
wildlife of the earth that are with you — all the animals of the earth that
came out of the ark. 11 I confirm My covenant with you that never again
will every creature be wiped out by the waters of a flood; there will never
again be a flood to destroy the earth.”

12† And God said, “This is the sign of the covenant I am making between
Me and you and every living creature with you, a covenant for all future
generations: 13 I have placed My bow in the clouds, and it will be a sign of
the covenant between Me and the earth. 14 Whenever I form clouds over the
earth and the bow appears in the clouds, 15 I will remember My covenant
between Me and you and all the living creatures: [B] water will never again
become a flood to destroy every creature. 16 The bow will be in the clouds,
and I will look at it and remember the everlasting covenant between God
and all the living creatures on [C] earth.” 17 God said to Noah, “This is the

sign of the covenant that I have confirmed between Me and every creature
on earth.”

Prophecies about Noah’s Family

18 Noah’s sons who came out of the ark were Shem, Ham, and Japheth.
Ham was the father of Canaan. 19 These three were Noah’s sons, and from
them the whole earth was populated.

20 Noah, a man of the soil, was the first to plant [D] a vineyard. 21 He drank
some of the wine, became drunk, and uncovered himself inside his tent.
22 Ham, the father of Canaan, saw his father naked and told his two brothers
outside. 23 Then Shem and Japheth took a cloak and placed it over both
their shoulders, and walking backward, they covered their father’s
nakedness. Their faces were turned away, and they did not see their father
naked.

24 When Noah awoke from his drinking and learned what his youngest
son had done to him, 25[†] he said:

Canaan will be cursed.
He will be the lowest of slaves to his brothers.

26 He also said:

Praise the LORD, the God of Shem;
Canaan will be his slave.
27 God will extend Japheth;
he will dwell in the tents of Shem;
Canaan will be his slave.

28 Now Noah lived 350 years after the flood. 29 So Noah’s life lasted 950
years; then he died.

GENESIS

The Table of Nations

10 These are the family records of Noah's sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth. They also had sons after the flood.

2 Japheth's sons: Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech, and
Tiras. 3 Gomer's sons: Ashkenaz, Riphath, and Togarmah. 4 And Javan's
sons: Elishah, Tarshish, Kittim, and Dodanim. 5† The coastland peoples
spread out into their lands. These are Japheth's sons by their clans, in their nations. Each group had its own language.

6 Ham's sons: Cush, Egypt, Put, and Canaan. 7 Cush's sons: Seba,
Havilah, Sabtah, Raamah, and Sabteca. And Raamah's sons: Sheba and Dedan.

8 Cush fathered Nimrod, who was the first powerful man on earth. 9 He
was a powerful hunter in the sight of the LORD. That is why it is said, "Like
Nimrod, a powerful hunter in the sight of the LORD." 10 His kingdom started
with Babylon, Erech, [A] Accad, [B] and Calneh, [C] in the land of •Shinar. [D]
11 From that land he went to Assyria and built Nineveh, Rehoboth-ir,
Calah, 12 and Resen, between Nineveh and the great city Calah.

13 Mizraim fathered Ludim, Anamim, Lehabim, Naphtuhim,
14 Pathrusim, Casluhim (the Philistines came from them), and Caphtorim.

15 Canaan fathered Sidon his firstborn, then Heth, 16 the Jebusites, the
Amorites, the Girgashites, 17 the Hivites, the Arkites, the Sinites, 18 the
Arvadites, the Zemarites, and the Hamathites. Afterward the Canaanite
clans scattered. 19 The Canaanite border went from Sidon going toward
Gerar as far as Gaza, and going toward Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboiim as far as Lasha.

20 These are Ham's sons, by their clans, according to their languages, in their own lands and their nations.

21 And Shem, Japheth's older brother, also had sons. Shem was the father
of all the sons of Eber. 22† Shem's sons were Elam, Asshur, [E] Arpachshad,

Lud, and Aram.

23 Aram’s sons: Uz, Hul, Gether, and Mash.

24 Arpachshad fathered Shelah, and Shelah fathered Eber. 25 Eber had
two sons. One was named Peleg, for during his days the earth was divided;
his brother was named Joktan. 26 And Joktan fathered Almodad, Sheleph,
Hazarmaveth, Jerah, 27 Hadoram, Uzal, Diklah, 28 Obal, Abimael, Sheba,
29 Ophir, Havilah, and Jobab. All these were Joktan’s sons. 30 Their
settlements extended from Mesha to Sephar, the eastern hill country.

31 These are Shem’s sons by their clans, according to their languages, in their lands and their nations.

32 These are the clans of Noah’s sons, according to their family records, in their nations. The nations on earth spread out from these after the flood.

GENESIS

The Tower of Babylon

11 At one time the whole earth had the same language and vocabulary. [A]
2 As people [B] migrated from the east, [C] they found a valley in the land
of •Shinar and settled there. 3 They said to each other, “Come, let us make
oven-fired bricks.” They used brick for stone and asphalt for mortar. 4 And
they said, “Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the
sky. Let us make a name for ourselves; otherwise, we will be scattered over
the face of the whole earth.”

5 Then the LORD came down to look over the city and the tower that the
•men were building. 6 The LORD said, “If they have begun to do this as one
people all having the same language, then nothing they plan to do will be
impossible for them. 7[†] Come, let Us go down there and confuse [D] their
language [E] so that they will not understand one another’s speech.” [F] 8 So
from there the LORD scattered them over the face of the whole earth, and
they stopped building the city. 9 Therefore its name is called Babylon, for
there the LORD confused the language of the whole earth, and from there the
LORD scattered them over the face of the whole earth.

From Shem to Abram

10[†] These are the family records of Shem. Shem lived 100 years and
fathered Arpachshad two years after the flood. 11 After he fathered
Arpachshad, Shem lived 500 years and fathered other sons and daughters.
12 Arpachshad lived 35 years and fathered Shelah. 13 After he fathered
Shelah, Arpachshad lived 403 years and fathered other sons and daughters.
14 Shelah lived 30 years and fathered Eber. 15 After he fathered Eber, Shelah
lived 403 years and fathered other sons and daughters. 16 Eber lived 34
years and fathered Peleg. 17 After he fathered Peleg, Eber lived 430 years
and fathered other sons and daughters. 18 Peleg lived 30 years and fathered
Reu. 19 After he fathered Reu, Peleg lived 209 years and fathered other sons
and daughters. 20 Reu lived 32 years and fathered Serug. 21 After he
fathered Serug, Reu lived 207 years and fathered other sons and daughters.
22 Serug lived 30 years and fathered Nahor. 23 After he fathered Nahor,
Serug lived 200 years and fathered other sons and daughters. 24 Nahor lived

29 years and fathered Terah. 25 After he fathered Terah, Nahor lived 119
years and fathered other sons and daughters. 26† Terah lived 70 years and
fathered Abram, Nahor, and Haran.

27 These are the family records of Terah. Terah fathered Abram, Nahor,
and Haran, and Haran fathered Lot. 28 Haran died in his native land, in Ur
of the Chaldeans, during his father Terah's lifetime. 29 Abram and Nahor
took wives: Abram's wife was named Sarai, and Nahor's wife was named
Milcah. She was the daughter of Haran, the father of both Milcah and
Iscah. 30 Sarai was unable to conceive; she did not have a child.

31 Terah took his son Abram, his grandson Lot (Haran's son), and his
daughter-in-law Sarai, his son Abram's wife, and they set out together from
Ur of the Chaldeans to go to the land of Canaan. But when they came to
Haran, they settled there. 32 Terah lived 205 years and died in Haran.

GENESIS

The Call of Abram

12 The LORD said to Abram:

Go out from your land,
your relatives,
and your father's house
to the land that I will show you.
2† I will make you into a great nation,
I will bless you,
I will make your name great,
and you will be a blessing. [A],
3† I will bless those who bless you,
I will curse those who treat you with contempt,
and all the peoples [B] on earth
will be blessed [C] through you. [D]

4 So Abram went, as the LORD had told him, and Lot went with him.
Abram was 75 years old when he left Haran. 5† He took his wife Sarai, his
nephew Lot, all the possessions they had accumulated, and the people he
had acquired in Haran, and they set out for the land of Canaan. When they
came to the land of Canaan, 6† Abram passed through the land to the site of
Shechem, at the oak of Moreh. At that time the Canaanites were in the
land. 7 Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, "I will give this land to
your •offspring." So he built an altar there to the LORD who had appeared to
him. 8 From there he moved on to the hill country east of Bethel and pitched
his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east. He built an altar to
•Yahweh there, and he called on the name of Yahweh. 9 Then Abram
journeyed by stages to the •Negev.

Abram in Egypt

TWISTED SCRIPTURE
Genesis 12:10-20

Mormons claim that while Abraham was in Egypt he wrote The Book of Abraham, one of the Mormon sacred scriptures, which had been lost until it fell into the hands of Joseph Smith in 1835. After Smith allegedly translated the papyrus into English, it passed through several hands before landing at the New York Metropolitan Museum of Art. Egyptologists immediately identified it as a portion of the Egyptian Book of the Dead, dealing with funeral customs and worship of the various Egyptian gods. Smith's identification of the manuscript and his translation were completely wrong. To this day Mormons refuse to accept the scholarly evaluation and cling to Smith's erroneous claims.

10† There was a famine in the land, so Abram went down to Egypt to live
there for a while because the famine in the land was severe. 11 When he was
about to enter Egypt, he said to his wife Sarai, “Look, I know what a
beautiful woman you are. 12 When the Egyptians see you, they will say,
‘This is his wife.’ They will kill me but let you live. 13 Please say you’re
my sister so it will go well for me because of you, and my life will be
spared on your account.” 14 When Abram entered Egypt, the Egyptians saw
that the woman was very beautiful. 15 Pharaoh’s officials saw her and
praised her to Pharaoh, so the woman was taken to Pharaoh’s household.
16 He treated Abram well because of her, and Abram acquired flocks and
herds, male and female donkeys, male and female slaves, and camels.

17 But the LORD struck Pharaoh and his household with severe plagues
because of Abram’s wife Sarai. 18 So Pharaoh sent for Abram and said,
“What have you done to me? Why didn’t you tell me she was your wife?
19 Why did you say, ‘She’s my sister,’ so that I took her as my wife? Now,
here is your wife. Take her and go! ” 20 Then Pharaoh gave his men orders
about him, and they sent him away with his wife and all he had.

GENESIS

Abram and Lot Separate

13 Then Abram went up from Egypt to the •Negev — he, his wife, and
all he had, and Lot with him. 2 Abram was very rich [A] in livestock,
silver, and gold. 3 He went by stages from the Negev to Bethel, to the place
between Bethel and Ai where his tent had formerly been, 4 to the site where
he had built the altar. And Abram called on the name of •Yahweh there.

5 Now Lot, who was traveling with Abram, also had flocks, herds, and
tents. 6 But the land was unable to support them as long as they stayed
together, for they had so many possessions that they could not stay
together, 7† and there was quarreling between the herdsmen of Abram's
livestock and the herdsmen of Lot's livestock. At that time the Canaanites
and the Perizzites were living in the land.

8 Then Abram said to Lot, "Please, let's not have quarreling between you
and me, or between your herdsmen and my herdsmen, since we are
relatives. [B] 9 Isn't the whole land before you? Separate from me: if you go
to the left, I will go to the right; if you go to the right, I will go to the left."

10 Lot looked out and saw that the entire Jordan Valley as far as [C] Zoar
was well watered everywhere like the LORD's garden and the land of Egypt.
This was before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah. 11 So Lot chose
the entire Jordan Valley for himself. Then Lot journeyed eastward, and they
separated from each other. 12 Abram lived in the land of Canaan, but Lot
lived in the cities of the valley and set up his tent near Sodom. 13 Now the
men of Sodom were evil, sinning greatly [D] against the LORD.

14 After Lot had separated from him, the LORD said to Abram, "Look
from the place where you are. Look north and south, east and west, 15 for I
will give you and your •offspring forever all the land that you see. 16 I will
make your offspring like the dust of the earth, so that if anyone could count
the dust of the earth, then your offspring could be counted. 17 Get up and
walk around the land, through its length and width, for I will give it to you."

18 So Abram moved his tent and went to live near the oaks of Mamre at
Hebron, where he built an altar to the LORD.

GENESIS

Abram Rescues Lot

14 [†] In those days Amraphel king of •Shinar, Arioch king of Ellasar,
Chedorlaomer king of Elam, and Tidal king of Goiim [A] 2 waged war
against Bera king of Sodom, Birsha king of Gomorrah, Shinab king of
Admah, and Shemeber king of Zeboiim, as well as the king of Bela (that is,
Zoar). 3 [†] All of these came as allies to the Valley of Siddim (that is, the
Dead Sea). 4 They were subject to Chedorlaomer for 12 years, but in the
thirteenth year they rebelled. 5 In the fourteenth year Chedorlaomer and the
kings who were with him came and defeated the Rephaim in Ashteroth-
karnaim, the Zuzim in Ham, the Emim in Shaveh-kiriathaim, 6 and the
Horites in the mountains of Seir, as far as El-paran by the wilderness.
7 Then they came back to invade En-mishpat (that is, Kadesh), and they
defeated all the territory of the Amalekites, as well as the Amorites who
lived in Hazazon-tamar.

ARTICLE

Did Those Places Really Exist? ⇒

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8 Then the king of Sodom, the king of Gomorrah, the king of Admah, the
king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar) went out and lined up
for battle in the Valley of Siddim 9 against Chedorlaomer king of Elam,
Tidal king of Goiim, Amraphel king of Shinar, and Arioch king of
Ellasar — four kings against five. 10 Now the Valley of Siddim contained
many asphalt pits, and as the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, some fell
into them, but the rest fled to the mountains. 11 The four kings took all the
goods of Sodom and Gomorrah and all their food and went on. 12 They also
took Abram’s nephew Lot and his possessions, for he was living in Sodom,
and they went on.

13 One of the survivors came and told Abram the Hebrew, who lived
near the oaks belonging to Mamre the Amorite, the brother of Eshcol and
the brother of Aner. They were bound by a treaty with [B] Abram. 14 [†] When
Abram heard that his relative had been taken prisoner, he assembled his

318 trained men, born in his household, and they went in pursuit as far as
Dan. [15] And he and his servants deployed against them by night, attacked
them, and pursued them as far as Hobah to the north of Damascus. [16] He
brought back all the goods and also his relative Lot and his goods, as well
as the women and the other people.

Melchizedek's Blessing

[17] After Abram returned from defeating Chedorlaomer and the kings who
were with him, the king of Sodom went out to meet him in the Valley of
Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley). [18] Then Melchizedek, king of Salem,
brought out bread and wine; he was a priest to God •Most High. [19] He
blessed him and said:

Abram is blessed by God Most High,
Creator [C] of heaven and earth,
[20] and I give praise to [D] God Most High
who has handed over your enemies to you.

And Abram gave him a tenth of everything.

[21] Then the king of Sodom said to Abram, "Give me the people, but take
the possessions for yourself."

[22] But Abram said to the king of Sodom, "I have raised my hand in an
oath to •Yahweh, God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth, [23] that I will
not take a thread or sandal strap or anything that belongs to you, so you can
never say, 'I made Abram rich.' [24] I will take nothing [E] except what the
servants have eaten. But as for the share of the men who came with
me — Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre — they can take their share."

GENESIS

The Abrahamic Covenant

15 After these events, the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision:

Do not be afraid, Abram.
I am your shield;
your reward will be very great.

2† But Abram said, “Lord GOD, what can You give me, since I am
childless and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus? ” [A] 3 Abram
continued, “Look, You have given me no •offspring, so a slave born in [B] my
house will be my heir.”

4† Now the word of the LORD came to him: “This one will not be your
heir; instead, one who comes from your own body [C] will be your heir.” 5 He
took him outside and said, “Look at the sky and count the stars, if you are
able to count them.” Then He said to him, “Your offspring will be that
numerous.”

6 Abram believed the LORD, and He credited it to him as righteousness.

7† He also said to him, “I am •Yahweh who brought you from Ur of the
Chaldeans to give you this land to possess.”

8† But he said, “Lord GOD, how can I know that I will possess it? ”

9 He said to him, “Bring Me a three-year-old cow, a three-year-old female
goat, a three-year-old ram, a turtledove, and a young pigeon.”

10 So he brought all these to Him, split them down the middle, and laid
the pieces opposite each other, but he did not cut up the birds. 11 Birds of
prey came down on the carcasses, but Abram drove them away. 12 As the
sun was setting, a deep sleep fell on Abram, and suddenly great terror and
darkness descended on him.

13† Then the LORD said to Abram, “Know this for certain: Your offspring
will be foreigners in a land that does not belong to them; they will be
enslaved and oppressed [D] 400 years. 14 However, I will judge the nation

they serve, and afterward they will go out with many possessions. 15 But
you will go to your fathers in peace and be buried at a ripe old age. 16 In
the fourth generation they will return here, for the iniquity of the Amorites
has not yet reached its full measure.” [E]

17 When the sun had set and it was dark, a smoking fire pot and a flaming
torch appeared and passed between the divided animals. 18[†] On that day the
LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, “I give this land to your
offspring, from the brook of Egypt to the Euphrates River: [F] 19[†] the land of
the Kenites, Kenizzites, Kadmonites, 20 Hittites, Perizzites, Rephaim,
21 Amorites, Canaanites, Girgashites, and Jebusites.”

GENESIS

Hagar and Ishmael

16 † Abram’s wife Sarai had not borne any children for him, but she
owned an Egyptian slave named Hagar. 2 Sarai said to Abram, “Since
the LORD has prevented me from bearing children, go to my slave; perhaps
through her I can build a family.” And Abram agreed to what Sarai said. [A]
3 So Abram’s wife Sarai took Hagar, her Egyptian slave, and gave her to her
husband Abram as a wife for him. This happened after Abram had lived in
the land of Canaan 10 years. 4 He slept with [B] Hagar, and she became
pregnant. When she realized that she was pregnant, she treated her mistress
with contempt. 5 Then Sarai said to Abram, “You are responsible for my
suffering! [C] I put my slave in your arms, [D] and ever since she saw that she
was pregnant, she has treated me with contempt. May the LORD judge
between me and you.”

6† Abram replied to Sarai, “Here, your slave is in your hands; do whatever you want with her.” Then Sarai mistreated her so much that she ran away from her.

7† The Angel of the LORD found her by a spring of water in the
wilderness, the spring on the way to Shur. 8 He said, “Hagar, slave of Sarai,
where have you come from and where are you going? ”

She replied, “I’m running away from my mistress Sarai.”

9 Then the Angel of the LORD said to her, “You must go back to your
mistress and submit to her mistreatment.” [E] 10 The Angel of the LORD also
said to her, “I will greatly multiply your •offspring, and they will be too
many to count.”

11† Then the Angel of the LORD said to her:

You have conceived and will have a son.
You will name him Ishmael,
for the LORD has heard your cry of affliction.
12† This man will be like a wild donkey.
His hand will be against everyone,
and everyone’s hand will be against him;

he will live at odds with [F] all his brothers.

[13] So she called the LORD who spoke to her: The God Who Sees, [G] for
she said, "In this place, have I actually seen the One who sees me? " [H]
[14] That is why she named the spring, "A Well of the Living One Who Sees
Me." [I] It is located between Kadesh and Bered.

[15] So Hagar gave birth to Abram's son, and Abram gave the name
Ishmael to the son Hagar had. [16] Abram was 86 years old when Hagar bore
Ishmael to him.

GENESIS

Covenant Circumcision

17 † When Abram was 99 years old, the Lord appeared to him, saying, “I
am •God Almighty. Live in My presence and be blameless. [2] I will
establish My covenant between Me and you, and I will multiply you
greatly.”

[3] Then Abram fell facedown and God spoke with him: [4] “As for Me, My
covenant is with you: you will become the father of many nations. [5]† Your
name will no longer be Abram, but your name will be Abraham, for I will
make you the father of many nations. [6] I will make you extremely fruitful
and will make nations and kings come from you. [7] I will keep My covenant
between Me and you, and your future •offspring throughout their
generations, as an everlasting covenant to be your God and the God of your
offspring after you. [8] And to you and your future offspring I will give the
land where you are residing — all the land of Canaan — as an eternal
possession, and I will be their God.”

ARTICLE

Does the Old Testament Teach Salvation by Works? ⇒

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[9]† God also said to Abraham, “As for you, you and your offspring after
you throughout their generations are to keep My covenant. [10] This is My
covenant, which you are to keep, between Me and you and your offspring
after you: Every one of your males must be circumcised. [11] You must
circumcise the flesh of your foreskin to serve as a sign of the covenant
between Me and you. [12] Throughout your generations, every male among
you at eight days old is to be circumcised. This includes a slave born in
your house and one purchased with money from any foreigner. The one
who is not your offspring, [13] a slave born in your house, as well as one
purchased with money, must be circumcised. My covenant will be marked
in your flesh as an everlasting covenant. [14] If any male is not circumcised in
the flesh of his foreskin, that man will be cut off from his people; he has
broken My covenant.”

15 God said to Abraham, “As for your wife Sarai, do not call her Sarai,
for Sarah will be her name. 16 I will bless her; indeed, I will give you a son
by her. I will bless her, and she will produce nations; kings of peoples will
come from her.”

17† Abraham fell facedown. Then he laughed and said to himself, “Can a
child be born to a hundred-year-old man? Can Sarah, a ninety-year-old
woman, give birth? ” 18† So Abraham said to God, “If only Ishmael were
acceptable to You! ”[A]

19 But God said, “No. Your wife Sarah will bear you a son, and you will
name him Isaac. I will confirm My covenant with him as an everlasting
covenant for his future offspring. 20 As for Ishmael, I have heard you. I will
certainly bless him; I will make him fruitful and will multiply him greatly.
He will father 12 tribal leaders, and I will make him into a great nation.
21 But I will confirm My covenant with Isaac, whom Sarah will bear to you
at this time next year.” 22 When He finished talking with him, God
withdrew [B] from Abraham.

23 Then Abraham took his son Ishmael and all the slaves born in his
house or purchased with his money — every male among the members of
Abraham’s household — and he circumcised the flesh of their foreskin on
that very day, just as God had said to him. 24 Abraham was 99 years old
when the flesh of his foreskin was circumcised, 25 and his son Ishmael was
13 years old when the flesh of his foreskin was circumcised. 26 On that
same day Abraham and his son Ishmael were circumcised. 27 And all the
men of his household — both slaves born in his house and those purchased
with money from a foreigner — were circumcised with him.

GENESIS

Abraham's Three Visitors

18 [†] Then the LORD appeared to Abraham at the oaks of Mamre while he
was sitting in the entrance of his tent during the heat of the day. 2 He
looked up, and he saw three men standing near him. When he saw them, he
ran from the entrance of the tent to meet them and bowed to the ground.
3 Then he said, “My lord, [A] if I have found favor in your sight, please do
not go on past your servant. 4 Let a little water be brought, that you may
wash your feet and rest yourselves under the tree. 5 I will bring a bit of
bread so that you may strengthen yourselves. [B] This is why you have passed
your servant’s way. Later, you can continue on.”

“Yes,” they replied, “do as you have said.”

6 So Abraham hurried into the tent and said to Sarah, “Quick! Knead
three measures [C] of fine flour and make bread.” 7 Meanwhile, Abraham ran
to the herd and got a tender, choice calf. He gave it to a young man, who
hurried to prepare it. 8 Then Abraham took curds [D] and milk, and the calf
that he had prepared, and set them before the men. He served [E] them as they
ate under the tree.

Sarah Laughs

9[†] “Where is your wife Sarah? ” they asked him.

“There, in the tent,” he answered.

10 The LORD said, “I will certainly come back to you in about a year’s
time, and your wife Sarah will have a son! ” Now Sarah was listening at
the entrance of the tent behind him.

11 Abraham and Sarah were old and getting on in years. [F] Sarah had
passed the age of childbearing. [G] 12 So she laughed to herself: “After I have
become shriveled up and my lord is old, will I have delight? ”

13 But the LORD asked Abraham, “Why did Sarah laugh, saying, ‘Can I
really have a baby when I’m old? ’ 14 Is anything impossible for the LORD?

At the appointed time I will come back to you, and in about a year she will
have a son."

15 Sarah denied it. "I did not laugh," she said, because she was afraid.

But He replied, "No, you did laugh."

Abraham's Plea for Sodom

16 The men got up from there and looked out over Sodom, and Abraham
was walking with them to see them off. 17 Then the LORD said, "Should I
hide what I am about to do from Abraham? 18 Abraham is to become a
great and powerful nation, and all the nations of the earth will be blessed
through him. 19 For I have chosen [H] him so that he will command his
children and his house after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing what
is right and just. This is how the LORD will fulfill to Abraham what He
promised him." 20[†] Then the LORD said, "The outcry against Sodom and
Gomorrah is immense, and their sin is extremely serious. 21 I will go down
to see if what they have done justifies the cry that has come up to Me. If
not, I will find out."

22 The men turned from there and went toward Sodom while Abraham
remained standing before the LORD. 23[†] Abraham stepped forward and said,
"Will You really sweep away the righteous with the wicked? 24 What if
there are 50 righteous people in the city? Will You really sweep it away
instead of sparing the place for the sake of the 50 righteous people who are
in it? 25 You could not possibly do such a thing: to kill the righteous with
the wicked, treating the righteous and the wicked alike. You could not
possibly do that! Won't the Judge of all the earth do what is just? "

26 The LORD said, "If I find 50 righteous people in the city of Sodom, I
will spare the whole place for their sake."

27 Then Abraham answered, "Since I have ventured to speak to the
Lord — even though I am dust and ashes — 28 suppose the 50 righteous
lack five. Will you destroy the whole city for lack of five? "

He replied, “I will not destroy it if I find 45 there.”

29 Then he spoke to Him again, “Suppose 40 are found there? ”

He answered, “I will not do it on account of 40.”

30 Then he said, “Let the Lord not be angry, and I will speak further.
Suppose 30 are found there? ”

He answered, “I will not do it if I find 30 there.”

31 Then he said, “Since I have ventured to speak to the Lord, suppose 20
are found there? ”

He replied, “I will not destroy it on account of 20.”

32 Then he said, “Let the Lord not be angry, and I will speak one more
time. Suppose 10 are found there? ”

He answered, “I will not destroy it on account of 10.”
33 When the LORD
had finished speaking with Abraham, He departed, and Abraham returned
to his place.

GENESIS

The Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah

19 The two angels entered Sodom in the evening as Lot was sitting at
Sodom's •gate. When Lot saw them, he got up to meet them. He
bowed with his face to the ground 2 and said, "My lords, turn aside to your
servant's house, wash your feet, and spend the night. Then you can get up
early and go on your way."

"No," they said. "We would rather spend the night in the square." 3 But
he urged them so strongly that they followed him and went into his house.
He prepared a feast and baked unleavened bread for them, and they ate.

4† Before they went to bed, the men of the city of Sodom, both young and
old, the whole population, surrounded the house. 5 They called out to Lot
and said, "Where are the men who came to you tonight? Send them out to
us so we can have sex with them! "

6 Lot went out to them at the entrance and shut the door behind him. 7 He
said, "Don't do this evil, my brothers. 8 Look, I've got two daughters who
haven't had sexual relations with a man. I'll bring them out to you, and you
can do whatever you want [A] to them. However, don't do anything to these
men, because they have come under the protection of my roof."

9 "Get out of the way! " they said, adding, "This one came here as a
foreigner, but he's acting like a judge! Now we'll do more harm to you
than to them." They put pressure on Lot and came up to break down the
door. 10 But the angels [B] reached out, brought Lot into the house with them,
and shut the door. 11† They struck the men who were at the entrance of the
house, both young and old, with a blinding light so that they were unable to
find the entrance.

12† Then the angels [C] said to Lot, "Do you have anyone else here: a son-
in-law, your sons and daughters, or anyone else in the city who belongs to
you? Get them out of this place, 13 for we are about to destroy this place
because the outcry against its people is so great before the LORD, that the
LORD has sent us to destroy it."

14 So Lot went out and spoke to his sons-in-law, who were going to
marry [D] his daughters. “Get up,” he said. “Get out of this place, for the
LORD is about to destroy the city! ” But his sons-in-law thought he was
joking.

15 At daybreak the angels urged Lot on: “Get up! Take your wife and
your two daughters who are here, or you will be swept away in the
punishment [E] of the city.” 16 But he hesitated. Because of the LORD’s
compassion for him, the men grabbed his hand, his wife’s hand, and the
hands of his two daughters. Then they brought him out and left him outside
the city.

17 As soon as the angels got them outside, one of them said, “Run for
your lives! Don’t look back and don’t stop anywhere on the plain! Run to
the mountains, or you will be swept away! ”

18 But Lot said to them, “No, my lords [F] — please. 19 Your servant has
indeed found favor in your sight, and you have shown me great kindness by
saving my life. But I can’t run to the mountains; the disaster will overtake
me, and I will die. 20 Look, this town is close enough for me to run to. It is a
small place. Please let me go there — it’s only a small place, isn’t it? — so
that I can survive.”

21 And he said to him, “All right, [G] I’ll grant your request [H] about this
matter too and will not demolish the town you mentioned. 22 Hurry up! Run
there, for I cannot do anything until you get there.” Therefore the name of
the city is Zoar.

23 The sun had risen over the land when Lot reached Zoar. 24[†] Then out
of the sky the LORD rained burning sulfur on Sodom and Gomorrah from the
LORD. 25 He demolished these cities, the entire plain, all the inhabitants of
the cities, and whatever grew on the ground. 26 But his wife looked back
and became a pillar of salt.

27 Early in the morning Abraham went to the place where he had stood
before the LORD. 28 He looked down toward Sodom and Gomorrah and all

the land of the plain, and he saw that smoke was going up from the land like
the smoke of a furnace. [29] So it was, when God destroyed the cities of the
plain, He remembered Abraham and brought Lot out of the middle of the
upheaval when He demolished the cities where Lot had lived.

The Origin of Moab and Ammon

[30†] Lot departed from Zoar and lived in the mountains along with his two
daughters, because he was afraid to live in Zoar. Instead, he and his two
daughters lived in a cave. [31] Then the firstborn said to the younger, “Our
father is old, and there is no man in the land to sleep with us as is the
custom of all the land. [32] Come, let’s get our father to drink wine so that we
can sleep with him and preserve our father’s line.” [33] So they got their
father to drink wine that night, and the firstborn came and slept with her
father; he did not know when she lay down or when she got up.

[34] The next day the firstborn said to the younger, “Look, I slept with my
father last night. Let’s get him to drink wine again tonight so you can go
sleep with him and we can preserve our father’s line.” [35] That night they
again got their father to drink wine, and the younger went and slept with
him; he did not know when she lay down or when she got up.

[36] So both of Lot’s daughters became pregnant by their father. [37] The
firstborn gave birth to a son and named him Moab. He is the father of the
Moabites of today. [38] The younger also gave birth to a son, and she named
him Ben-ammi. He is the father of the Ammonites of today.

GENESIS

Sarah Rescued from Abimelech

20 [†] From there Abraham traveled to the region of the •Negev and settled
between Kadesh and Shur. While he lived in Gerar, 2 Abraham said
about his wife Sarah, “She is my sister.” So Abimelech king of Gerar had
Sarah brought to him.

3 But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night and said to him, “You
are about to die because of the woman you have taken, for she is a married
woman.” [A]

4 Now Abimelech had not approached her, so he said, “Lord, would You
destroy a nation even though it is innocent? 5 Didn’t he himself say to me,
‘She is my sister’? And she herself said, ‘He is my brother.’ I did this with a
clear conscience [B] and •clean [C] hands.”

6 Then God said to him in the dream, “Yes, I know that you did this with
a clear conscience. [D] I have also kept you from sinning against Me.
Therefore I have not let you touch her. 7 Now return the man’s wife, for he
is a prophet, and he will pray for you and you will live. But if you do not
return her, know that you will certainly die, you and all who are yours.”

8 Early in the morning Abimelech got up, called all his servants together,
and personally [E] told them all these things, and the men were terrified.

9 Then Abimelech called Abraham in and said to him, “What have you
done to us? How did I sin against you that you have brought such enormous
•guilt on me and on my kingdom? You have done things to me that should
never be done.” 10 Abimelech also said to Abraham, “What did you intend
when you did this thing? ”

11 Abraham replied, “I thought, ‘There is absolutely no •fear of God in
this place. They will kill me because of my wife.’ 12 Besides, she really is
my sister, the daughter of my father though not the daughter of my mother,
and she became my wife. 13 So when God had me wander from my father’s
house, I said to her: Show your loyalty to me wherever we go and say
about me: ‘He’s my brother.’ ”

[14] Then Abimelech took sheep and cattle and male and female slaves,
gave them to Abraham, and returned his wife Sarah to him. [15] Abimelech
said, “Look, my land is before you. Settle wherever you want.” [F] [16] And he
said to Sarah, “Look, I am giving your brother 1,000 pieces of silver. It is a
verification of your honor [G] to all who are with you. You are fully
vindicated.”

[17][†] Then Abraham prayed to God, and God healed Abimelech, his wife,
and his female slaves so that they could bear children, [18] for the LORD had
completely closed all the wombs in Abimelech’s household on account of
Sarah, Abraham’s wife.

GENESIS

The Birth of Isaac

21 [†] The LORD came to Sarah as He had said, and the LORD did for Sarah
what He had promised. 2 Sarah became pregnant and bore a son to
Abraham in his old age, at the appointed time God had told him.
3 Abraham named his son who was born to him — the one Sarah bore to
him — Isaac. 4 When his son Isaac was eight days old, Abraham
circumcised him, as God had commanded him. 5 Abraham was 100 years
old when his son Isaac was born to him.

6 Sarah said, “God has made me laugh, and everyone who hears will
laugh with me.” 7 She also said, “Who would have told Abraham that
Sarah would nurse children? Yet I have borne a son for him in his old age.”

Hagar and Ishmael Sent Away

8 The child grew and was weaned, and Abraham held a great feast on the
day Isaac was weaned. 9[†] But Sarah saw the son mocking — the one Hagar
the Egyptian had borne to Abraham. 10 So she said to Abraham, “Drive out
this slave with her son, for the son of this slave will not be a co-heir with
my son Isaac! ”

11 Now this was a very difficult thing for [A] Abraham because of his son.
12 But God said to Abraham, “Do not be concerned [B] about the boy and
your slave. Whatever Sarah says to you, listen to her, because your
•offspring will be traced through Isaac. 13 But I will also make a nation of
the slave’s son because he is your offspring.”

14 Early in the morning Abraham got up, took bread and a waterskin, put
them on Hagar’s shoulders, and sent her and the boy away. She left and
wandered in the Wilderness of Beer-sheba. 15 When the water in the skin
was gone, she left the boy under one of the bushes. 16 Then she went and sat
down nearby, about a bowshot away, for she said, “I can’t bear to watch the
boy die! ” So as she sat nearby, she wept loudly.

17 God heard the voice of the boy, and the [C] angel of God called to Hagar
from heaven and said to her, “What’s wrong, Hagar? Don’t be afraid, for

God has heard the voice of the boy from the place where he is. [18] Get up, help the boy up, and support him, for I will make him a great nation."
[19] Then God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water. So she went and filled the waterskin and gave the boy a drink. [20] God was with the boy, and he grew; he settled in the wilderness and became an archer. [21] He settled in the Wilderness of Paran, and his mother got a wife for him from the land of Egypt.

Abraham's Covenant with Abimelech

[22†] At that time Abimelech, accompanied by Phicol the commander of his army, said to Abraham, "God is with you in everything you do. [23] Swear to me by God here and now, that you will not break an agreement with me or with my children and descendants. As I have been loyal to you, so you will be loyal to me and to the country where you are a foreign resident."

[24] And Abraham said, "I swear it." [25] But Abraham complained to Abimelech because of the water well that Abimelech's servants had seized.

[26] Abimelech replied, "I don't know who did this thing. You didn't report anything to me, so I hadn't heard about it until today."

[27] Abraham took sheep and cattle and gave them to Abimelech, and the two of them made a covenant. [28] Abraham separated seven ewe lambs from the flock. [29] And Abimelech said to Abraham, "Why have you separated these seven ewe lambs? "

[30] He replied, "You are to accept the seven ewe lambs from my hand so that this act [D] will serve as my witness that I dug this well." [31] Therefore that place was called Beer-sheba because it was there that the two of them swore an oath. [32] After they had made a covenant at Beer-sheba, Abimelech and Phicol, the commander of his army, left and returned to the land of the Philistines.

[33] Abraham planted a tamarisk tree in Beer-sheba, and there he called on the name of •Yahweh, the Everlasting God. [34] And Abraham lived as a

foreigner in the land of the Philistines for many days.

GENESIS

The Sacrifice of Isaac

22 After these things God tested Abraham and said to him, “Abraham! ”

“Here I am,” he answered.

2† “Take your son,” He said, “your only son Isaac, whom you love, go to
the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a •burnt offering on one of the
mountains I will tell you about.”

3 So Abraham got up early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took
with him two of his young men and his son Isaac. He split wood for a burnt
offering and set out to go to the place God had told him about. 4 On the
third day Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance. 5 Then
Abraham said to his young men, “Stay here with the donkey. The boy and I
will go over there to worship; then we’ll come back to you.” 6 Abraham
took the wood for the burnt offering and laid it on his son Isaac. In his hand
he took the fire and the sacrificial knife, and the two of them walked on
together.

7 Then Isaac spoke to his father Abraham and said, “My father.”

And he replied, “Here I am, my son.”

Isaac said, “The fire and the wood are here, but where is the lamb for the
burnt offering? ”

8 Abraham answered, “God Himself will provide [A] the lamb for the
burnt offering, my son.” Then the two of them walked on together.

9 When they arrived at the place that God had told him about, Abraham
built the altar there and arranged the wood. He bound his son Isaac [B] and
placed him on the altar on top of the wood. 10 Then Abraham reached out
and took the knife to slaughter his son.

11 But the Angel of the Lord called to him from heaven and said,
“Abraham, Abraham! ”

He replied, “Here I am.”

[12†] Then He said, “Do not lay a hand on the boy or do anything to him.
For now I know that you •fear God, since you have not withheld your only
son from Me.” [13] Abraham looked up and saw a ram caught in the thicket
by its horns. So Abraham went and took the ram and offered it as a burnt
offering in place of his son. [14] And Abraham named that place The LORD
Will Provide, [C] so today it is said: “It will be provided [D] on the LORD’s
mountain.”

[15†] Then the Angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time from
heaven [16] and said, “By Myself I have sworn,” this is the LORD’s
declaration: “Because you have done this thing and have not withheld your
only son, [17] I will indeed bless you and make your •offspring as numerous
as the stars of the sky and the sand on the seashore. Your offspring will
possess the gates of their enemies. [18] And all the nations of the earth will
be blessed [E] by your offspring because you have obeyed My command.”

[19] Abraham went back to his young men, and they got up and went
together to Beer-sheba. And Abraham settled in Beer-sheba.

Rebekah’s Family

[20†] Now after these things Abraham was told, “Milcah also has borne
sons to your brother Nahor: [21] Uz his firstborn, his brother Buz, Kemuel
the father of Aram, [22] Chesed, Hazo, Pildash, Jidlaph, and Bethuel.” [23] And
Bethuel fathered Rebekah. Milcah bore these eight to Nahor, Abraham’s
brother. [24] His concubine, whose name was Reumah, also bore Tebah,
Gaham, Tahash, and Maacah.

GENESIS

Sarah's Burial

23 † Now Sarah lived 127 years; these were all the years of her life.
2 Sarah died in Kiriath-arba (that is, Hebron) in the land of Canaan,
and Abraham went to mourn for Sarah and to weep for her.

3 Then Abraham got up from beside his dead wife and spoke to the
Hittites: [A] 4 “I am a foreign resident among you. Give me a burial site
among you so that I can bury my dead.” [B]

5 The Hittites replied to Abraham, [C] 6 “Listen to us, lord. [D] You are God’s
chosen one [E] among us. Bury your dead in our finest burial place. [F] None of
us will withhold from you his burial place for burying your dead.”

7 Then Abraham rose and bowed down to the Hittites, the people of the
land. 8 He said to them, “If you are willing for me to bury my dead, listen to
me and ask Ephron son of Zohar on my behalf 9 to give me the cave of
Machpelah that belongs to him; it is at the end of his field. Let him give it
to me in your presence, for the full price, as a burial place.”

10 Ephron was sitting among the Hittites. So in the presence [G] of all the
Hittites who came to the •gate of his city, Ephron the Hittite answered
Abraham: 11 “No, my lord. Listen to me. I give you the field, and I give you
the cave that is in it. I give it to you in the presence [H] of my people. Bury
your dead.”

12 Abraham bowed down to the people of the land 13 and said to Ephron
in the presence [I] of the people of the land, “Please listen to me. Let me pay
the price of the field. Accept it from me, and let me bury my dead there.”

14 Ephron answered Abraham and said to him, 15 “My lord, listen to me.
Land worth 400 •shekels of silver — what is that between you and me?
Bury your dead.” 16 Abraham agreed with Ephron, and Abraham weighed
out to Ephron the silver that he had agreed to in the presence [J] of the
Hittites: 400 shekels of silver at the current commercial rate. 17 So
Ephron’s field at Machpelah near Mamre — the field with its cave and all
the trees anywhere within the boundaries of the field — became

[18] Abraham's possession in the presence of all the Hittites who came to the
gate of his city. [19] After this, Abraham buried his wife Sarah in the cave of
the field at Machpelah near Mamre (that is, Hebron) in the land of Canaan.
[20] The field with its cave passed from the Hittites to Abraham as a burial
place.

GENESIS

A Wife for Isaac

24 Abraham was now old, getting on in years, [A], and the LORD had
blessed him in everything. [2†] Abraham said to his servant, the elder of
his household who managed all he owned, "Place your hand under my
thigh, [3] and I will have you swear by the LORD, God of heaven and God of
earth, that you will not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the
Canaanites among whom I live, [4] but will go to my land and my family to
take a wife for my son Isaac."

ARTICLE

Is Mormonism Compatible with the Bible? ⇒

[5†] The servant said to him, "Suppose the woman is unwilling to follow
me to this land? Should I have your son go back to the land you came
from? "

[6] Abraham answered him, "Make sure that you don't take my son back
there. [7] The LORD, the God of heaven, who took me from my father's house
and from my native land, who spoke to me and swore to me, 'I will give
this land to your •offspring' — He will send His angel before you, and you
can take a wife for my son from there. [8] If the woman is unwilling to follow
you, then you are free from this oath to me, but don't let my son go back
there." [9] So the servant placed his hand under his master Abraham's thigh
and swore an oath to him concerning this matter.

[10†] The servant took 10 of his master's camels and departed with all
kinds of his master's goods in hand. Then he set out for Nahor's town
Aram-naharaim. [11] He made the camels kneel beside a well of water outside
the town at evening. This was the time when the women went out to draw
water.

[12] "LORD, God of my master Abraham," he prayed, "give me success
today, and show kindness to my master Abraham. [13] I am standing here at

the spring where the daughters of the men of the town are coming out to
draw water. [14] Let the girl to whom I say, ‘Please lower your water jug so
that I may drink,’ and who responds, ‘Drink, and I’ll water your camels
also’ — let her be the one You have appointed for Your servant Isaac. By
this I will know that You have shown kindness to my master.”

[15] Before he had finished speaking, there was Rebekah — daughter of
Bethuel son of Milcah, the wife of Abraham’s brother Nahor — coming
with a jug on her shoulder. [16] Now the girl was very beautiful, a young
woman who had not known a man intimately. She went down to the spring,
filled her jug, and came up. [17] Then the servant ran to meet her and said,
“Please let me have a little water from your jug.”

[18] She replied, “Drink, my lord.” She quickly lowered her jug to her hand
and gave him a drink. [19] When she had finished giving him a drink, she
said, “I’ll also draw water for your camels until they have had enough to
drink.” [B] [20] She quickly emptied her jug into the trough and hurried to the
well again to draw water. She drew water for all his camels [21] while the
man silently watched her to see whether or not the LORD had made his
journey a success.

[22] After the camels had finished drinking, the man took a gold ring
weighing half a •shekel, and for her wrists two bracelets weighing 10
shekels of gold. [23] “Whose daughter are you? ” he asked. “Please tell me, is
there room in your father’s house for us to spend the night? ”

[24] She answered him, “I am the daughter of Bethuel son of Milcah,
whom she bore to Nahor.” [25] She also said to him, “We have plenty of straw
and feed and a place to spend the night.”

[26] Then the man bowed down, worshiped the LORD, [27] and said, “Praise
the LORD, the God of my master Abraham, who has not withheld His
kindness and faithfulness from my master. As for me, the LORD has led me
on the journey to the house of my master’s relatives.”

28 The girl ran and told her mother's household about these things.
29 Now Rebekah had a brother named Laban, and Laban ran out to the man
at the spring. 30 As soon as he had seen the ring and the bracelets on his
sister's wrists, and when he had heard his sister Rebekah's words — "The
man said this to me! " — he went to the man. He was standing there by the
camels at the spring.

31 Laban said, "Come, you who are blessed by the LORD. Why are you
standing out here? I have prepared the house and a place for the camels."
32 So the man came to the house, and the camels were unloaded. Straw and
feed were given to the camels, and water was brought to wash his feet and
the feet of the men with him.

33 A meal was set before him, but he said, "I will not eat until I have said
what I have to say."

So Laban said, "Please speak."

34 "I am Abraham's servant," he said. 35 "The LORD has greatly blessed
my master, and he has become rich. He has given him sheep and cattle,
silver and gold, male and female slaves, and camels and donkeys. 36 Sarah,
my master's wife, bore a son to my master in her old age, and he has given
him everything he owns. 37 My master put me under this oath: 'You will
not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites in whose
land I live 38 but will go to my father's household and to my family to take
a wife for my son.' 39 But I said to my master, 'Suppose the woman will not
come back with me? ' 40 He said to me, 'The LORD before whom I have
walked will send His angel with you and make your journey a success, and
you will take a wife for my son from my family and from my father's
household. 41 Then you will be free from my oath if you go to my family
and they do not give her to you — you will be free from my oath.'

42 "Today when I came to the spring, I prayed: LORD, God of my master
Abraham, if only You will make my journey successful! 43 I am standing
here at a spring. Let the virgin who comes out to draw water, and I say to

her: Please let me drink a little water from your jug, 44 and who responds to
me, ‘Drink, and I’ll draw water for your camels also’ — let her be the
woman the LORD has appointed for my master’s son.

45 “Before I had finished praying silently, there was Rebekah coming
with her jug on her shoulder, and she went down to the spring and drew
water. So I said to her: Please let me have a drink. 46 She quickly lowered
her jug from her shoulder and said, ‘Drink, and I’ll water your camels also.’
So I drank, and she also watered the camels. 47 Then I asked her: Whose
daughter are you? She responded, ‘The daughter of Bethuel son of Nahor,
whom Milcah bore to him.’ So I put the ring on her nose and the bracelets
on her wrists. 48 Then I bowed down, worshiped the LORD, and praised the
LORD, the God of my master Abraham, who guided me on the right way to
take the granddaughter of my master’s brother for his son. 49 Now, if you
are going to show kindness and faithfulness to my master, tell me; if not,
tell me, and I will go elsewhere.” [C]

50 Laban and Bethuel answered, “This is from the LORD; we have no
choice in the matter. [D] 51 Rebekah is here in front of you. Take her and go,
and let her be a wife for your master’s son, just as the LORD has spoken.”

52 When Abraham’s servant heard their words, he bowed to the ground
before the LORD. 53 Then he brought out objects of silver and gold, and
garments, and gave them to Rebekah. He also gave precious gifts to her
brother and her mother. 54 Then he and the men with him ate and drank and
spent the night.

When they got up in the morning, he said, “Send me to my master.”

55 But her brother and mother said, “Let the girl stay with us for about 10
days. [E] Then she [F] can go.”

56 But he responded to them, “Do not delay me, since the LORD has made
my journey a success. Send me away so that I may go to my master.”

57 So they said, “Let’s call the girl and ask her opinion.” [G]

[58] They called Rebekah and said to her, “Will you go with this man? ”

She replied, “I will go.” [59] So they sent away their sister Rebekah with the one who had nursed and raised her, [H] and Abraham’s servant and his men.

[60] They blessed Rebekah, saying to her:

Our sister, may you become
thousands upon ten thousands.
May your offspring possess
the gates of their [I] enemies.

[61] Then Rebekah and her female servants got up, mounted the camels, and followed the man. So the servant took Rebekah and left.

[62] Now Isaac was returning from Beer-lahai-roi, for he was living in the
•Negev region. [63] In the early evening Isaac went out to walk [J] in the field,
and looking up he saw camels coming. [64] Rebekah looked up, and when she
saw Isaac, she got down from her camel [65] and asked the servant, “Who is that man in the field coming to meet us? ”

The servant answered, “It is my master.” So she took her veil and
covered herself. [66] Then the servant told Isaac everything he had done.

[67] And Isaac brought her into the tent of his mother Sarah and took Rebekah to be his wife. Isaac loved her, and he was comforted after his mother’s death.

GENESIS

Abraham's Other Wife and Sons

25 [†] Now Abraham had taken another wife, whose name was Keturah,
2 and she bore him Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, and
Shuah. 3 Jokshan fathered Sheba and Dedan. Dedan's sons were the
Asshurim, Letushim, and Leummim. 4 And Midian's sons were Ephah,
Epher, Hanoch, Abida, and Eldaah. All these were sons of Keturah.
5 Abraham gave everything he owned to Isaac. 6 And Abraham gave gifts
to the sons of his concubines, but while he was still alive he sent them
eastward, away from his son Isaac, to the land of the East.

Abraham's Death

7 This is the length of Abraham's life: [A] 175 years. 8 He took his last
breath and died at a ripe old age, old and contented, and he was gathered
to his people. 9 His sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of
Machpelah near Mamre, in the field of Ephron son of Zohar the Hittite.
10 This was the field that Abraham bought from the Hittites. Abraham was
buried there with his wife Sarah. 11 After Abraham's death, God blessed his
son Isaac, who lived near Beer-lahai-roi.

Ishmael's Family Records

12[†] These are the family records of Abraham's son Ishmael, whom
Hagar the Egyptian, Sarah's slave, bore to Abraham. 13 These are the names
of Ishmael's sons; their names according to the family records are:
Nebaioth, Ishmael's firstborn, then Kedar, Adbeel, Mibsam, 14 Mishma,
Dumah, Massa, 15 Hadad, Tema, Jetur, Naphish, and Kedemah. 16 These are
Ishmael's sons, and these are their names by their villages and
encampments: 12 leaders [B], of their clans. [C] 17 This is the length [D] of
Ishmael's life: 137 years. He took his last breath and died, and was gathered
to his people. 18 And they settled from Havilah to Shur, which is opposite
Egypt as you go toward Asshur. He lived in opposition to [E] all his
brothers.

The Birth of Jacob and Esau

19[†] These are the family records of Isaac son of Abraham. Abraham
fathered Isaac. 20 Isaac was 40 years old when he took as his wife Rebekah
daughter of Bethuel the Aramean from Paddan-aram and sister of Laban
the Aramean. 21 Isaac prayed to the LORD on behalf of his wife because she
was childless. The LORD heard his prayer, and his wife Rebekah
conceived. 22 But the children inside her struggled with each other, and she
said, “Why is this happening to me? ” [F] So she went to inquire of the LORD.
23 And the LORD said to her:

Two nations are in your womb;
two people will come from you and be separated.
One people will be stronger than the other,
and the older will serve the younger.

24 When her time came to give birth, there were indeed twins in her
womb. 25 The first one came out red-looking, covered with hair like a fur
coat, and they named him Esau. 26 After this, his brother came out grasping
Esau’s heel with his hand. So he was named Jacob. Isaac was 60 years old
when they were born.

Esau Sells His Birthright

27[†] When the boys grew up, Esau became an expert hunter, an
outdoorsman, [G] but Jacob was a quiet man who stayed at home. [H] 28 Isaac
loved Esau because he had a taste for wild game, but Rebekah loved Jacob.

29 Once when Jacob was cooking a stew, Esau came in from the field
exhausted. 30 He said to Jacob, “Let me eat some of that red stuff, because
I’m exhausted.” That is why he was also named Edom.

31 Jacob replied, “First sell me your birthright.”

32 “Look,” said Esau, “I’m about to die, so what good is a birthright to
me? ”

33 Jacob said, “Swear to me first.” So he swore to Jacob and sold his
birthright to him. 34 Then Jacob gave bread and lentil stew to Esau; he ate,
drank, got up, and went away. So Esau despised his birthright.

GENESIS

The Promise Reaffirmed to Isaac

26 [†] There was another famine in the land in addition to the one that had
occurred in Abraham's time. And Isaac went to Abimelech, king of
the Philistines, at Gerar. 2 The LORD appeared to him and said, "Do not go
down to Egypt. Live in the land that I tell you about; 3 stay in this land as a
foreigner, and I will be with you and bless you. For I will give all these
lands to you and your •offspring, and I will confirm the oath that I swore to
your father Abraham. 4 I will make your offspring as numerous as the stars
of the sky, I will give your offspring all these lands, and all the nations of
the earth will be blessed [A] by your offspring, 5 because Abraham listened
to My voice and kept My mandate, My commands, My statutes, and My
instructions." 6 So Isaac settled in Gerar.

Isaac's Deception

7 When the men of the place asked about his wife, he said, "She is my
sister," for he was afraid to say "my wife," thinking, "The men of the place
will kill me on account of Rebekah, for she is a beautiful woman." 8 When
Isaac had been there for some time, Abimelech king of the Philistines
looked down from the window and was surprised to see [B] Isaac caressing
his wife Rebekah.

9 Abimelech sent for Isaac and said, "So she is really your wife! How
could you say, 'She is my sister'? "

Isaac answered him, "Because I thought I might die on account of her."

10 Then Abimelech said, "What is this you've done to us? One of the
people could easily have slept with your wife, and you would have brought
•guilt on us." 11 So Abimelech warned all the people with these words:
"Whoever harms this man or his wife will certainly die."

Conflicts over Wells

12[†] Isaac sowed seed in that land, and in that year he reaped [C] a hundred
times what was sown. The LORD blessed him, 13 and the man became rich
and kept getting richer until he was very wealthy. 14 He had flocks of sheep,

herds of cattle, and many slaves, and the Philistines were envious of him.
[15] The Philistines stopped up all the wells that his father's slaves had dug in
the days of his father Abraham, filling them with dirt. [16] And Abimelech
said to Isaac, "Leave us, for you are much too powerful for us." [D]

[17] So Isaac left there, camped in the Valley of Gerar, and lived there.
[18] Isaac reopened the water wells that had been dug in the days of his father
Abraham and that the Philistines had stopped up after Abraham died. He
gave them the same names his father had given them. [19] Then Isaac's slaves
dug in the valley and found a well of spring [E] water there. [20] But the
herdsmen of Gerar quarreled with Isaac's herdsmen and said, "The water is
ours! " So he named the well Quarrel [F] because they quarreled with him.
[21] Then they dug another well and quarreled over that one also, so he named
it Hostility. [G] [22] He moved from there and dug another, and they did not
quarrel over it. He named it Open Spaces [H] and said, "For now the LORD
has made room for us, and we will be fruitful in the land."

The LORD Appears to Isaac

[23] From there he went up to Beer-sheba, [24] and the LORD appeared to him
that night and said, "I am the God of your father Abraham. Do not be
afraid, for I am with you. I will bless you and multiply your offspring
because of My servant Abraham."

[25] So he built an altar there, called on the name of •Yahweh, and pitched
his tent there. Isaac's slaves also dug a well there.

Covenant with Abimelech

[26] Now Abimelech came to him from Gerar with Ahuzzath his adviser
and Phicol the commander of his army. [27] Isaac said to them, "Why have
you come to me? You hated me and sent me away from you."

[28] They replied, "We have clearly seen how the LORD has been with you.
We think there should be an oath between two parties — between us and

you. Let us make a covenant with you: 29 You will not harm us, just as we have not harmed you but have only done what was good to you, sending you away in peace. You are now blessed by the LORD.”

30 So he prepared a banquet for them, and they ate and drank. 31 They got up early in the morning and swore an oath to each other.[I], Then Isaac sent them on their way, and they left him in peace. 32 On that same day Isaac’s slaves came to tell him about the well they had dug, saying to him, “We have found water! ” 33 He called it Sheba. [J] Therefore the name of the city is Beer-sheba to this day.

Esau’s Wives

34[†] When Esau was 40 years old, he took as his wives Judith daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and Basemath daughter of Elon the Hittite. 35 They made life bitter [K] for Isaac and Rebekah.

GENESIS

The Stolen Blessing

27 [†] When Isaac was old and his eyes were so weak that he could not
see, he called his older son Esau and said to him, “My son.”

And he answered, “Here I am.”

[2] He said, “Look, I am old and do not know the day of my death. [3] Take
your hunting gear, your quiver and bow, and go out in the field to hunt some
game for me. [4] Then make me a delicious meal that I love and bring it to
me to eat, so that I can bless you before I die.”

[5] Now Rebekah was listening to what Isaac said to his son Esau. So while
Esau went to the field to hunt some game to bring in, [6] Rebekah said to her
son Jacob, “Listen! I heard your father talking with your brother Esau. He
said, [7] ‘Bring me the game and make a delicious meal for me to eat so that I
can bless you in the LORD’s presence before I die.’ [8] Now obey every order I
give you, my son. [9] Go to the flock and bring me two choice young goats,
and I will make them into a delicious meal for your father — the kind he
loves. [10] Then take it to your father to eat so that he may bless you before
he dies.”

[11] Jacob answered Rebekah his mother, “Look, my brother Esau is a
hairy man, but I am a man with smooth skin. [12] Suppose my father touches
me. Then I will be revealed to him as a deceiver and bring a curse rather
than a blessing on myself.”

[13] His mother said to him, “Your curse be on me, my son. Just obey me
and go get them for me.”

[14] So he went and got the goats and brought them to his mother, and his
mother made the delicious food his father loved. [15] Then Rebekah took the
best clothes of her older son Esau, which were in the house, and had her
younger son Jacob wear them. [16] She put the skins of the young goats on his
hands and the smooth part of his neck. [17] Then she handed the delicious
food and the bread she had made to her son Jacob.

[18] When he came to his father, he said, “My father.”

And he answered, “Here I am. Who are you, my son? ”

[19] Jacob replied to his father, “I am Esau, your firstborn. I have done as you told me. Please sit up and eat some of my game so that you may bless me.”

[20] But Isaac said to his son, “How did you ever find it so quickly, my son? ”

He replied, “Because the LORD your God worked it out for me.”

[21] Then Isaac said to Jacob, “Please come closer so I can touch you, my son. Are you really my son Esau or not? ”

[22] So Jacob came closer to his father Isaac. When he touched him, he
said, “The voice is the voice of Jacob, but the hands are the hands of Esau.”
[23] He did not recognize him, because his hands were hairy like those of his
brother Esau; so he blessed him. [24] Again he asked, “Are you really my son
Esau? ”

And he replied, “I am.”

[25] Then he said, “Serve me, and let me eat some of my son’s game so that I can bless you.” Jacob brought it to him, and he ate; he brought him wine, and he drank.

[26] Then his father Isaac said to him, “Please come closer and kiss me, my
son.” [27] So he came closer and kissed him. When Isaac smelled [A] his
clothes, he blessed him and said:

Ah, the smell of my son
is like the smell of a field
that the LORD has blessed.
[28] May God give to you —
from the dew of the sky

and from the richness of the land —
an abundance of grain and new wine.
[29] May peoples serve you
and nations bow down to you.
Be master over your brothers;
may your mother's sons bow down to you.
Those who curse you will be cursed,
and those who bless you will be blessed.

[30]† As soon as Isaac had finished blessing Jacob and Jacob had left the presence of his father Isaac, his brother Esau arrived from the hunt. [31] He had also made some delicious food and brought it to his father. Then he said to his father, "Let my father get up and eat some of his son's game, so that you may bless me."

[32] But his father Isaac said to him, "Who are you? "

He answered, "I am Esau your firstborn son."

[33] Isaac began to tremble uncontrollably. "Who was it then," he said, "who hunted game and brought it to me? I ate it all before you came in, and I blessed him. Indeed, he will be blessed! "

[34] When Esau heard his father's words, he cried out with a loud and bitter cry and said to his father, "Bless me too, my father! "

[35] But he replied, "Your brother came deceitfully and took your blessing."

[36] So he said, "Isn't he rightly named Jacob? For he has cheated me twice now. He took my birthright, and look, now he has taken my blessing." Then he asked, "Haven't you saved a blessing for me? "

[37] But Isaac answered Esau: "Look, I have made him a master over you, have given him all of his relatives as his servants, and have sustained him with grain and new wine. What then can I do for you, my son? "

[38] Esau said to his father, “Do you only have one blessing, my father? Bless me too, my father! ” And Esau wept loudly. [B]

[39] Then his father Isaac answered him:

Look, your dwelling place will be
away from the richness of the land,
away from the dew of the sky above.
[40] You will live by your sword,
and you will serve your brother.
But when you rebel, [C]
you will break his yoke from your neck.

Esau’s Anger

[41] Esau held a grudge against Jacob because of the blessing his father had given him. And Esau determined in his heart: “The days of mourning for my father are approaching; then I will kill my brother Jacob.”

[42] When the words of her older son Esau were reported to Rebekah, she
summoned her younger son Jacob and said to him, “Listen, your brother
Esau is consoling himself by planning to kill you. [43] So now, my son, listen
to me. Flee at once to my brother Laban in Haran, [44] and stay with him for a
few days until your brother’s anger subsides — [45] until your brother’s rage
turns away from you and he forgets what you have done to him. Then I will send for you and bring you back from there. Why should I lose you both in one day? ”

[46†] So Rebekah said to Isaac, “I’m sick of my life because of these Hittite women. If Jacob marries a Hittite woman like one of them, [D] what good is my life? ”

GENESIS

Jacob's Departure

28 Isaac summoned Jacob, blessed him, and commanded him: “Don’t
take a wife from the Canaanite women. 2 Go at once to Paddan-aram,
to the house of Bethuel, your mother’s father. Marry one of the daughters of
Laban, your mother’s brother. 3 May •God Almighty bless you and make
you fruitful and multiply you so that you become an assembly of peoples.
4 May God give you and your •offspring the blessing of Abraham so that
you may possess the land where you live as a foreigner, the land God gave
to Abraham.” 5 So Isaac sent Jacob to Paddan-aram, to Laban son of
Bethuel the Aramean, the brother of Rebekah, the mother of Jacob and
Esau.

6† Esau noticed that Isaac blessed Jacob and sent him to Paddan-aram to
get a wife there. When he blessed him, Isaac commanded Jacob, “Do not
marry a Canaanite woman.” 7 And Jacob listened to his father and mother
and went to Paddan-aram. 8 Esau realized that his father Isaac disapproved
of the Canaanite women, 9 so Esau went to Ishmael and married, in
addition to his other wives, Mahalath daughter of Ishmael, Abraham’s son.
She was the sister of Nebaioth.

Jacob at Bethel

10† Jacob left Beer-sheba and went toward Haran. 11 He reached a certain
place and spent the night there because the sun had set. He took one of the
stones from the place, put it there at his head, and lay down in that place.
12 And he dreamed: A stairway was set on the ground with its top reaching
heaven, and God’s angels were going up and down on it. 13 •Yahweh was
standing there beside him,[A] saying, “I am Yahweh, the God of your father
Abraham and the God of Isaac. I will give you and your offspring the land
that you are now sleeping on. 14 Your offspring will be like the dust of the
earth, and you will spread out toward the west, the east, the north, and the
south. All the peoples on earth will be blessed through you and your
offspring. 15 Look, I am with you and will watch over you wherever you
go. I will bring you back to this land, for I will not leave you until I have
done what I have promised you.”

16 When Jacob awoke from his sleep, he said, “Surely the LORD is in this
place, and I did not know it.” 17 He was afraid and said, “What an
awesome place this is! This is none other than the house of God. This is the
gate of heaven.”

18 Early in the morning Jacob took the stone that was near his head and
set it up as a marker. He poured oil on top of it 19 and named the place
Bethel, though previously the city was named Luz. 20 Then Jacob made a
vow: “If God will be with me and watch over me on this journey, if He
provides me with food to eat and clothing to wear, 21 and if I return safely
to my father’s house, then the LORD will be my God. 22 This stone that I
have set up as a marker will be God’s house, and I will give to You a tenth
of all that You give me.”

GENESIS

Jacob Meets Rachel

29 [†] Jacob resumed his journey [A] and went to the eastern country. [B] 2 He
looked and saw a well in a field. Three flocks of sheep were lying
there beside it because the sheep were watered from this well. A large stone
covered the opening of the well. 3 When all the flocks were gathered there,
the shepherds would roll the stone from the opening of the well and water
the sheep. The stone was then placed back on the well's opening.

4 Jacob asked the men at the well, "My brothers! Where are you from? "

"We're from Haran," they answered.

5 "Do you know Laban grandson of Nahor? " Jacob asked them.

They answered, "We know him."

6 "Is he well? " Jacob asked.

"Yes," they said, "and here is his daughter Rachel, coming with his sheep."

7 Then Jacob said, "Look, it is still broad daylight. It's not time for the animals to be gathered. Water the flock, then go out and let them graze."

8 But they replied, "We can't until all the flocks have been gathered and the stone is rolled from the well's opening. Then we will water the sheep."

9 While he was still speaking with them, Rachel came with her father's
sheep, for she was a shepherdess. 10 As soon as Jacob saw his uncle Laban's
daughter Rachel with his sheep, [C] he went up and rolled the stone from the
opening and watered his uncle Laban's sheep. 11 Then Jacob kissed Rachel
and wept loudly. [D] 12 He told Rachel that he was her father's relative,
Rebekah's son. She ran and told her father.

Jacob Deceived

13[†] When Laban heard the news about his sister's son Jacob, he ran to meet him, hugged him, and kissed him. Then he took him to his house, and

Jacob told him all that had happened.

[14] Laban said to him, “Yes, you are my own flesh and blood.” [E]

After Jacob had stayed with him a month, [15] Laban said to him, “Just
because you’re my relative, should you work for me for nothing? Tell me
what your wages should be.”

[16] Now Laban had two daughters: the older was named Leah, and the
younger was named Rachel. [17] Leah had ordinary [F] eyes, but Rachel was
shapely and beautiful. [18] Jacob loved Rachel, so he answered Laban, “I’ll
work for you seven years for your younger daughter Rachel.”

[19] Laban replied, “Better that I give her to you than to some other man.
Stay with me.” [20] So Jacob worked seven years for Rachel, and they
seemed like only a few days to him because of his love for her.

[21] Then Jacob said to Laban, “Give me my wife, for my time is
completed. I want to sleep with [G] her.” [22] So Laban invited all the men of
the place to a feast. [23] That evening, Laban took his daughter Leah and gave
her to Jacob, and he slept with her. [24] And Laban gave his slave Zilpah to
his daughter Leah as her slave.

[25] When morning came, there was Leah! So he said to Laban, “What is
this you have done to me? Wasn’t it for Rachel that I worked for you? Why
have you deceived me? ”

[26] Laban answered, “It is not the custom in this place to give the younger
daughter in marriage before the firstborn. [27] Complete this week of wedding
celebration, and we will also give you this younger one in return for
working yet another seven years for me.”

[28] And Jacob did just that. He finished the week of celebration, and
Laban gave him his daughter Rachel as his wife. [29] And Laban gave his
slave Bilhah to his daughter Rachel as her slave. [30] Jacob slept with Rachel

also, and indeed, he loved Rachel more than Leah. And he worked for Laban another seven years.

Jacob's Sons

31† When the LORD saw that Leah was unloved, He opened her womb;
but Rachel was unable to conceive. 32 Leah conceived, gave birth to a son,
and named him Reuben, for she said, "The LORD has seen my affliction;
surely my husband will love me now."

33 She conceived again, gave birth to a son, and said, "The LORD heard that I am unloved and has given me this son also." So she named him Simeon.

34 She conceived again, gave birth to a son, and said, "At last, my husband will become attached to me because I have borne three sons for him." Therefore he was named Levi.

35 And she conceived again, gave birth to a son, and said, "This time I will praise the LORD." Therefore she named him Judah. Then Leah stopped having children.

GENESIS

30 When Rachel saw that she was not bearing Jacob any children, she
envied her sister. “Give me sons, or I will die! ” she said to Jacob.

2 Jacob became angry with Rachel and said, “Am I in God’s place, who
has withheld children [A] from you? ”

3 Then she said, “Here is my slave Bilhah. Go sleep with her, and she’ll
bear children for me [B] so that through her I too can build a family.” 4 So
Rachel gave her slave Bilhah to Jacob as a wife, and he slept with her.
5 Bilhah conceived and bore Jacob a son. 6 Rachel said, “God has
vindicated me; yes, He has heard me and given me a son,” and she named
him Dan.

7 Rachel’s slave Bilhah conceived again and bore Jacob a second son.
8 Rachel said, “In my wrestlings with God, [C] I have wrestled with my sister
and won,” and she named him Naphtali.

9 When Leah saw that she had stopped having children, she took her
slave Zilpah and gave her to Jacob as a wife. 10 Leah’s slave Zilpah bore
Jacob a son. 11 Then Leah said, “What good fortune! ” and she named him
Gad.

12 When Leah’s slave Zilpah bore Jacob a second son, 13 Leah said, “I am
happy that the women call me happy,” so she named him Asher.

14 Reuben went out during the wheat harvest and found some mandrakes
in the field. When he brought them to his mother Leah, Rachel asked,
“Please give me some of your son’s mandrakes.”

ARTICLE

Does the Bible Provide Guidance Regarding Genetic Engineering?



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15 But Leah replied to her, "Isn't it enough that you have taken my
husband? Now you also want to take my son's mandrakes? "

"Well," Rachel said, "you can sleep with him tonight in exchange for
your son's mandrakes."

16 When Jacob came in from the field that evening, Leah went out to
meet him and said, "You must come with me, for I have hired you with my
son's mandrakes." So Jacob slept with her that night.

17 God listened to Leah, and she conceived and bore Jacob a fifth son.
18 Leah said, "God has rewarded me for giving my slave to my husband,"
and she named him Issachar.

19 Then Leah conceived again and bore Jacob a sixth son. 20 "God has
given me a good gift," Leah said. "This time my husband will honor me
because I have borne six sons for him," and she named him Zebulun.
21 Later, Leah bore a daughter and named her Dinah.

22 Then God remembered Rachel. He listened to her and opened her
womb. 23 She conceived and bore a son, and said, "God has taken away my
shame." 24 She named him Joseph: "May the LORD add another son to
me."

Jacob's Flocks Multiply

25† After Rachel gave birth to Joseph, Jacob said to Laban, "Send me on
my way so that I can return to my homeland. 26 Give me my wives and my
children that I have worked for, and let me go. You know how hard I have
worked for you."

27 But Laban said to him, "If I have found favor in your sight, stay. I have
learned by •divination that the LORD has blessed me because of you."
28 Then Laban said, "Name your wages, and I will pay them."

29 So Jacob said to him, “You know what I have done for you and your
herds. 30 For you had very little before I came, but now your wealth has
increased. The LORD has blessed you because of me. And now, when will I
also do something for my own family? ”

31 Laban asked, “What should I give you? ”

And Jacob said, “You don’t need to give me anything. If you do this one
thing for me, I will continue to shepherd and keep your flock. 32 Let me go
through all your sheep today and remove every sheep that is speckled or
spotted, every dark-colored sheep among the lambs, and the spotted and
speckled among the female goats. Such will be my wages. 33 In the future
when you come to check on my wages, my honesty will testify for me. If I
have any female goats that are not speckled or spotted, or any lambs that are
not black, they will be considered stolen.”

34 “Good,” said Laban. “Let it be as you have said.”

35 That day Laban removed the streaked and spotted male goats and all
the speckled and spotted female goats — every one that had any white on
it — and every dark-colored one among the lambs, and he placed his sons
in charge of them. 36 He put a three-day journey between himself and Jacob.
Jacob, meanwhile, was shepherding the rest of Laban’s flock.

37 Jacob then took branches of fresh poplar, almond, and plane wood, and
peeled the bark, exposing white stripes on the branches. 38 He set the peeled
branches in the troughs in front of the sheep — in the water channels where
the sheep came to drink. And the sheep bred when they came to drink.
39 The flocks bred in front of the branches and bore streaked, speckled, and
spotted young. 40 Jacob separated the lambs and made the flocks face the
streaked and the completely dark sheep in Laban’s flocks. Then he set his
own stock apart and didn’t put them with Laban’s sheep.

41 Whenever the stronger of the flock were breeding, Jacob placed the
branches in the troughs, in full view of the flocks, and they would breed in
front of the branches. 42 As for the weaklings of the flocks, he did not put

out the branches. So it turned out that the weak sheep belonged to Laban
and the stronger ones to Jacob. 43 And the man became very rich. [D] He had
many flocks, male and female slaves, and camels and donkeys.

GENESIS

Jacob Separates from Laban

31 † Now Jacob heard what Laban’s sons were saying: “Jacob has taken
all that was our father’s and has built this wealth from what belonged
to our father.” [2] And Jacob saw from Laban’s face that his attitude toward
him was not the same.

[3] Then the LORD said to him, “Go back to the land of your fathers and to
your family, and I will be with you.”

[4]† Jacob had Rachel and Leah called to the field where his flocks were.
[5] He said to them, “I can see from your father’s face that his attitude toward
me is not the same, but the God of my father has been with me. [6] You know
that I’ve worked hard [A] for your father [7] and that he has cheated me and
changed my wages 10 times. But God has not let him harm me. [8] If he said,
‘The spotted sheep will be your wages,’ then all the sheep were born
spotted. If he said, ‘The streaked sheep will be your wages,’ then all the
sheep were born streaked. [9] God has taken away your father’s herds and
given them to me.

[10] “When the flocks were breeding, I saw in a dream that the streaked,
spotted, and speckled males were mating with the females. [11] In that dream
the Angel of God said to me, ‘Jacob! ’ and I said, ‘Here I am.’ [12] And He
said, ‘Look up and see: all the males that are mating with the flocks are
streaked, spotted, and speckled, for I have seen all that Laban has been
doing to you. [13] I am the God of Bethel, where you poured oil on the stone
marker and made a solemn vow to Me. Get up, leave this land, and return
to your native land.’ ”

[14] Then Rachel and Leah answered him, “Do we have any portion or
inheritance in our father’s household? [15] Are we not regarded by him as
outsiders? For he has sold us and has certainly spent our money. [16] In fact,
all the wealth that God has taken away from our father belongs to us and to
our children. So do whatever God has said to you.”

[17] Then Jacob got up and put his children and wives on the camels. [18] He
took all the livestock and possessions he had acquired in Paddan-aram, and

he drove his herds to go to the land of his father Isaac in Canaan. [19†] When
Laban had gone to shear his sheep, Rachel stole her father's household
idols. [20] And Jacob deceived [B] Laban the Aramean, not telling him that he
was fleeing. [21] He fled with all his possessions, crossed the Euphrates, and
headed for [C] the hill country of Gilead.

Laban Overtakes Jacob

[22] On the third day Laban was told that Jacob had fled. [23] So he took his
relatives with him, pursued Jacob for seven days, and overtook him at
Mount Gilead. [24] But God came to Laban the Aramean in a dream at night.
"Watch yourself! " God warned him. "Don't say anything to Jacob, either
good or bad."

[25] When Laban overtook Jacob, Jacob had pitched his tent in the hill
country, and Laban and his brothers also pitched their tents in the hill
country of Gilead. [26] Then Laban said to Jacob, "What have you done? You
have deceived me and taken my daughters away like prisoners of war!
[27] Why did you secretly flee from me, deceive me, and not tell me? I would
have sent you away with joy and singing, with tambourines and lyres, [28] but
you didn't even let me kiss my grandchildren and my daughters. You have
acted foolishly. [29] I could do you great harm, but last night the God of your
father said to me: 'Watch yourself. Don't say anything to Jacob, either good
or bad.' [30†] Now you have gone off because you long for your father — but
why have you stolen my gods? "

[31] Jacob answered, "I was afraid, for I thought you would take your
daughters from me by force. [32] If you find your gods with anyone here, he
will not live! Before our relatives, point out anything that is yours and take
it." Jacob did not know that Rachel had stolen the idols.

[33] So Laban went into Jacob's tent, then Leah's tent, and then the tents of
the two female slaves, but he found nothing. Then he left Leah's tent and
entered Rachel's. [34] Now Rachel had taken Laban's household idols, put

them in the saddlebag of the camel, and sat on them. Laban searched the
whole tent but found nothing.

35 She said to her father, “Sir, don’t be angry that I cannot stand up in
your presence; I am having my period.” So Laban searched, but could not
find the household idols.

Jacob’s Covenant with Laban

36 Then Jacob became incensed and brought charges against Laban.
“What is my crime? ” he said to Laban. “What is my sin, that you have
pursued me? 37 You’ve searched all my possessions! Have you found
anything of yours? Put it here before my relatives and yours, and let them
decide between the two of us. 38 I’ve been with you these 20 years. Your
ewes and female goats have not miscarried, and I have not eaten the rams
from your flock. 39 I did not bring you any of the flock torn by wild beasts;
I myself bore the loss. You demanded payment from me for what was stolen
by day or by night. 40 There I was — the heat consumed me by day and the
frost by night, and sleep fled from my eyes. 41 For 20 years I have worked
in your household — 14 years for your two daughters and six years for your
flocks — and you have changed my wages 10 times! 42 If the God of my
father, the God of Abraham, the Fear of Isaac, had not been with me,
certainly now you would have sent me off empty-handed. But God has seen
my affliction and my hard work, [D] and He issued His verdict last night.”

43 Then Laban answered Jacob, “The daughters are my daughters; the
sons, my sons; and the flocks, my flocks! Everything you see is mine! But
what can I do today for these daughters of mine or for the children they
have borne? 44 Come now, let’s make a covenant, you and I. Let it be a
witness between the two of us.”

45 So Jacob picked out a stone and set it up as a marker. 46 Then Jacob
said to his relatives, “Gather stones.” And they took stones and made a
mound, then ate there by the mound. 47 Laban named the mound Jegar-
sahadutha, but Jacob named it Galeed.

48 Then Laban said, “This mound is a witness between you and me
today.” Therefore the place was called Galeed 49 and also Mizpah, for he
said, “May the LORD watch between you and me when we are out of each
other’s sight. 50 If you mistreat my daughters or take other wives, though no
one is with us, understand that God will be a witness between you and me.”
51 Laban also said to Jacob, “Look at this mound and the marker I have set
up between you and me. 52 This mound is a witness and the marker is a
witness that I will not pass beyond this mound to you, and you will not pass
beyond this mound and this marker to do me harm. 53 The God of Abraham,
and the gods of Nahor — the gods of their father — will judge between
us.” And Jacob swore by the Fear of his father Isaac. 54 Then Jacob offered
a sacrifice on the mountain and invited his relatives to eat a meal. So they
ate a meal and spent the night on the mountain. 55 Laban got up early in the
morning, kissed his grandchildren and daughters, and blessed them. Then
Laban left to return home.

GENESIS

Preparing to Meet Esau

32 † Jacob went on his way, and God’s angels met him. 2 When he saw
them, Jacob said, “This is God’s camp.” So he called that place
Mahanaim.

3 Jacob sent messengers ahead of him to his brother Esau in the land of
Seir, the country of Edom. 4 He commanded them, “You are to say to my
lord Esau, ‘This is what your servant Jacob says. I have been staying with
Laban and have been delayed until now. 5 I have oxen, donkeys, flocks,
male and female slaves. I have sent this message to inform my lord, in order
to seek your favor.’ ”

6 When the messengers returned to Jacob, they said, “We went to your
brother Esau; he is coming to meet you — and he has 400 men with him.”
7 Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed; he divided the people with him
into two camps, along with the flocks, cattle, and camels. 8 He thought, “If
Esau comes to one camp and attacks it, the remaining one can escape.”

9 Then Jacob said, “God of my father Abraham and God of my father
Isaac, the LORD who said to me, ‘Go back to your land and to your family,
and I will cause you to prosper,’ 10 I am unworthy of all the kindness and
faithfulness You have shown Your servant. Indeed, I crossed over this
Jordan with my staff, and now I have become two camps. 11 Please rescue
me from the hand of my brother Esau, for I am afraid of him; otherwise, he
may come and attack me, the mothers, and their children. 12 You have said,
‘I will cause you to prosper, and I will make your •offspring like the sand of
the sea, which cannot be counted.’ ”

13 He spent the night there and took part of what he had brought with him
as a gift for his brother Esau: 14 200 female goats, 20 male goats, 200 ewes,
20 rams, 15 30 milk camels with their young, 40 cows, 10 bulls, 20 female
donkeys, and 10 male donkeys. 16 He entrusted them to his slaves as
separate herds and said to them, “Go on ahead of me, and leave some
distance between the herds.”

17 And he told the first one: "When my brother Esau meets you and asks, 'Who do you belong to? Where are you going? And whose animals are these ahead of you? ' 18 then tell him, 'They belong to your servant Jacob. They are a gift sent to my lord Esau. And look, he is behind us.' "

19 He also told the second one, the third, and everyone who was walking behind the animals, "Say the same thing to Esau when you find him. 20 You are also to say, 'Look, your servant Jacob is right behind us.' " For he thought, "I want to appease Esau with the gift that is going ahead of me. After that, I can face him, and perhaps he will forgive me."

21 So the gift was sent on ahead of him while he remained in the camp that night. 22 During the night Jacob got up and took his two wives, his two female slaves, and his 11 sons, and crossed the ford of Jabbok. 23 He took them and sent them across the stream, along with all his possessions.

Jacob Wrestles with God

24[†] Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him until daybreak. 25 When the man saw that He could not defeat him, He struck Jacob's hip socket as they wrestled and dislocated his hip. 26 Then He said to Jacob, "Let Me go, for it is daybreak."

But Jacob said, "I will not let You go unless You bless me."

27 "What is your name? " the man asked.

"Jacob," he replied.

28 "Your name will no longer be Jacob," He said. "It will be Israel because you have struggled with God and with men and have prevailed."

29 Then Jacob asked Him, "Please tell me Your name."

But He answered, "Why do you ask My name? " And He blessed him there.

[30] Jacob then named the place Peniel, "For I have seen God face to
face," he said, "and I have been delivered." [31] The sun shone on him as he
passed by Penuel [A], — limping because of his hip. [32†] That is why, to this
day, the Israelites don't eat the thigh muscle that is at the hip socket:
because He struck Jacob's hip socket at the thigh muscle. [B]

GENESIS

Jacob Meets Esau

33 † Now Jacob looked up and saw Esau coming toward him with 400
men. So he divided the children among Leah, Rachel, and the two
female slaves. 2 He put the female slaves and their children first, Leah and
her children next, and Rachel and Joseph last. 3 He himself went on ahead
and bowed to the ground seven times until he approached his brother.

4 But Esau ran to meet him, hugged him, threw his arms around him, and
kissed him. Then they wept. 5 When Esau looked up and saw the women
and children, he asked, "Who are these with you? "

He answered, "The children God has graciously given your servant."
6 Then the female slaves and their children approached him and bowed
down. 7 Leah and her children also approached and bowed down, and then
Joseph and Rachel approached and bowed down.

8† So Esau said, "What do you mean by this whole procession [A] I met? "

"To find favor with you, my lord," he answered.

9 "I have enough, my brother," Esau replied. "Keep what you have."

10 But Jacob said, "No, please! If I have found favor with you, take this
gift from my hand. For indeed, I have seen your face, and it is like seeing
God's face, since you have accepted me. 11 Please take my present that was
brought to you, because God has been gracious to me and I have everything
I need." So Jacob urged him until he accepted.

12† Then Esau said, "Let's move on, and I'll go ahead of you."

13 Jacob replied, "My lord knows that the children are weak, and I have
nursing sheep and cattle. If they are driven hard for one day, the whole herd
will die. 14 Let my lord go ahead of his servant. I will continue on slowly, at
a pace suited to the livestock and the children, until I come to my lord at
Seir."

15 Esau said, "Let me leave some of my people with you."

But he replied, "Why do that? Please indulge me, [B] my lord."

[16] That day Esau started on his way back to Seir, [17] but Jacob went on to Succoth. He built a house for himself and stalls for his livestock; that is why the place was called Succoth.

[18] After Jacob came from Paddan-aram, he arrived safely at Shechem in the land of Canaan and camped in front of the city. [19] He purchased a section of the field where he had pitched his tent from the sons of Hamor, Shechem's father, for 100 *qesitahs*. [20] And he set up an altar there and called it "God, the God of Israel." [C]

GENESIS

Dinah Defiled

34 † Dinah, Leah's daughter whom she bore to Jacob, went out to see
some of the young women of the area. 2 When Shechem son of
Hamor the Hivite, a prince of the region, saw her, he took her and raped her.
3† He became infatuated with Dinah, daughter of Jacob. He loved the young
girl and spoke tenderly to her. [A] 4 "Get me this girl as a wife," he told his
father Hamor.

5 Jacob heard that Shechem had defiled his daughter Dinah, but since his
sons were with his livestock in the field, he remained silent until they
returned. 6 Meanwhile, Shechem's father Hamor came to speak with Jacob.
7 Jacob's sons returned from the field when they heard about the incident
and were deeply grieved and angry. For Shechem had committed an outrage
against Israel by raping Jacob's daughter, and such a thing should not be
done.

8 Hamor said to Jacob's sons, "My son Shechem is strongly attracted to
your daughter. Please give her to him as a wife. 9 Intermarry with us; give
your daughters to us, and take our daughters for yourselves. 10 Live with us.
The land is before you. Settle here, move about, and acquire property in it."

11 Then Shechem said to Dinah's father and brothers, "Grant me this
favor, [B] and I'll give you whatever you say. 12 Demand of me a high
compensation [C] and gift; I'll give you whatever you ask me. Just give the
girl to be my wife! "

13† But Jacob's sons answered Shechem and his father Hamor deceitfully
because he had defiled their sister Dinah. 14 "We cannot do this thing," they
said to them. "Giving our sister to an uncircumcised man is a disgrace to us.
15 We will agree with you only on this condition: if all your males are
circumcised as we are. 16 Then we will give you our daughters, take your
daughters for ourselves, live with you, and become one people. 17 But if
you will not listen to us and be circumcised, then we will take our daughter
and go."

[18] Their words seemed good to Hamor and his son Shechem. [19] The
young man did not delay doing this, because he was delighted with Jacob's
daughter. Now he was the most important in all his father's house. [20] So
Hamor and his son Shechem went to the •gate of their city and spoke to the
men there.

[21] "These men are peaceful toward us," they said. "Let them live in our
land and move about in it, for indeed, the region is large enough for them.
Let us take their daughters as our wives and give our daughters to them.
[22] But the men will agree to live with us and be one people only on this
condition: if all our men are circumcised as they are. [23] Won't their
livestock, their possessions, and all their animals become ours? Only let us
agree with them, and they will live with us."

[24] All the able-bodied men [D], listened to Hamor and his son Shechem,
and all the able-bodied men [E] were circumcised. [25] On the third day, when
they were still in pain, two of Jacob's sons, Simeon and Levi, Dinah's
brothers, took their swords, went into the unsuspecting city, and killed
every male. [26] They killed Hamor and his son Shechem with their swords,
took Dinah from Shechem's house, and went away. [27] Jacob's other sons
came to the slaughter and plundered the city because their sister had been
defiled. [28] They took their sheep, cattle, donkeys, and whatever was in the
city and in the field. [29] They captured all their possessions, children, and
wives and plundered everything in the houses.

[30] Then Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, "You have brought trouble on
me, making me odious to the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites and
the Perizzites. We are few in number; if they unite against me and attack
me, I and my household will be destroyed."

[31] But they answered, "Should he have treated our sister like a
prostitute? "

GENESIS

Return to Bethel

35 † God said to Jacob, "Get up! Go to Bethel and settle there. Build an
altar there to the God who appeared to you when you fled from your
brother Esau."

2 So Jacob said to his family and all who were with him, "Get rid of the
foreign gods that are among you. Purify yourselves and change your
clothes. 3 We must get up and go to Bethel. I will build an altar there to the
God who answered me in my day of distress. He has been with me
everywhere I have gone."

4 Then they gave Jacob all their foreign gods and their earrings, and
Jacob hid them under the oak near Shechem. 5 When they set out, a terror
from God came over the cities around them, and they did not pursue Jacob's
sons. 6 So Jacob and all who were with him came to Luz (that is, Bethel)
in the land of Canaan. 7 Jacob built an altar there and called the place God
of Bethel [A] because it was there that God had revealed Himself to him when
he was fleeing from his brother.

8 Deborah, the one who had nursed and raised Rebekah, [B], died and was
buried under the oak south of Bethel. So Jacob named it Oak of Weeping. [C]

9† God appeared to Jacob again after he returned from Paddan-aram, and
He blessed him. 10 God said to him:

Your name is Jacob;
you will no longer be named Jacob,
but your name will be Israel.

So He named him Israel. 11 God also said to him:

I am •God Almighty.
Be fruitful and multiply.
A nation, indeed an assembly of nations,
will come from you,
and kings will descend from you. [D]
12 I will give to you the land

that I gave to Abraham and Isaac.
And I will give the land
to your future descendants.

13 Then God withdrew [E] from him at the place where He had spoken to
him.

14 Jacob set up a marker at the place where He had spoken to him — a
stone marker. He poured a drink offering on it and anointed it with oil.
15 Jacob named the place where God had spoken with him Bethel.

Rachel's Death

16† They set out from Bethel. When they were still some distance from
Ephrath, Rachel began to give birth, and her labor was difficult. 17 During
her difficult labor, the midwife said to her, "Don't be afraid, for you have
another son." 18 With her last breath — for she was dying — she named
him Ben-oni, but his father called him Benjamin. 19 So Rachel died and
was buried on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem). 20 Jacob set up a
marker on her grave; it is the marker at Rachel's grave to this day.

Israel's Sons

21 Israel set out again and pitched his tent beyond the Tower of Eder. [F]
22† While Israel was living in that region, Reuben went in and slept with his
father's concubine Bilhah, and Israel heard about it.

Jacob had 12 sons:

23 Leah's sons were Reuben (Jacob's firstborn),
Simeon, Levi, Judah,
Issachar, and Zebulun.
24 Rachel's sons were
Joseph and Benjamin.
25 The sons of Rachel's slave Bilhah

were Dan and Naphtali.
[26] The sons of Leah's slave Zilpah
were Gad and Asher.

These are the sons of Jacob, who were born to him in Paddan-aram.

Isaac's Death

[27]† Jacob came to his father Isaac at Mamre in Kiriath-arba (that is,
Hebron), where Abraham and Isaac had stayed. [28] Isaac lived 180 years.
[29] He took his last breath and died, and was gathered to his people, old and
full of days. His sons Esau and Jacob buried him.

Esau's Family

36 † These are the family records of Esau (that is, Edom). 2 Esau took
his wives from the Canaanite women: Adah daughter of Elon the
Hittite, Oholibamah daughter of Anah and granddaughter of Zibeon the
Hivite, 3 and Basemath daughter of Ishmael and sister of Nebaioth. 4 Adah
bore Eliphaz to Esau, Basemath bore Reuel, 5 and Oholibamah bore Jeush,
Jalam, and Korah. These were Esau's sons, who were born to him in the
land of Canaan.

6† Esau took his wives, sons, daughters, and all the people of his
household, as well as his herds, all his livestock, and all the property he had
acquired in Canaan; he went to a land away from his brother Jacob. 7 For
their possessions were too many for them to live together, and because of
their herds, the land where they stayed could not support them. 8 So Esau
(that is, Edom) lived in the mountains of Seir.

9 These are the family records of Esau, father of the Edomites in the
mountains of Seir.

10 These are the names of Esau's sons:
Eliphaz son of Esau's wife Adah,
and Reuel son of Esau's wife Basemath.
11 The sons of Eliphaz were
Teman, Omar, Zepho, Gatam, and Kenaz.
12 Timna, a concubine of Esau's son Eliphaz,
bore Amalek to Eliphaz.
These were the sons of Esau's wife Adah.

13 These are Reuel's sons:
Nahath, Zerah, Shammah, and Mizzah.
These were the sons of Esau's wife Basemath.

14 These are the sons of Esau's wife Oholibamah
daughter of Anah and granddaughter of Zibeon:
She bore Jeush, Jalam, and Korah to Edom.

15 These are the chiefs of Esau's sons:
the sons of Eliphaz, Esau's firstborn:
Chiefs Teman, Omar, Zepho, Kenaz,
16 Korah, Gatam, and Amalek.
These are the chiefs of Eliphaz
in the land of Edom.
These are the sons of Adah.

17 These are the sons of Reuel, Esau's son:
Chiefs Nahath, Zerah, Shammah, and Mizzah.
These are the chiefs of Reuel
in the land of Edom.
These are the sons of Esau's wife Basemath.

18 These are the sons of Esau's wife Oholibamah:
Chiefs Jeush, Jalam, and Korah.
These are the chiefs of Esau's wife Oholibamah
daughter of Anah.
19 These are the sons of Esau (that is, Edom),
and these are their chiefs.

Seir's Family

20 These are the sons of Seir the Horite,
the inhabitants of the land:
Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon, Anah,
21 Dishon, Ezer, and Dishan.
These are the chiefs of the Horites,
the sons of Seir, in the land of Edom.
22 The sons of Lotan were Hori and Heman.
Timna was Lotan's sister.
23 These are Shobal's sons:
Alvan, Manahath, Ebal, Shepho, and Onam.
24 These are Zibeon's sons: Aiah and Anah.

This was the Anah who found the hot springs in the wilderness
while he was pasturing the donkeys of his father Zibeon.
25 These are the children of Anah:
Dishon and Oholibamah daughter of Anah.
26 These are Dishon's sons:
Hemdan, Eshban, Ithran, and Cheran.
27 These are Ezer's sons:
Bilhan, Zaavan, and Akan.
28 These are Dishan's sons: Uz and Aran.

29 These are the chiefs of the Horites:
Chiefs Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon, Anah,
30 Dishon, Ezer, and Dishan.
These are the chiefs of the Horites,
according to their divisions, in the land of Seir.

Rulers of Edom

31 These are the kings who ruled in the land of Edom
before any king ruled over the Israelites:
32 Bela son of Beor ruled in Edom;
the name of his city was Dinhabah.
33 When Bela died, Jobab son of Zerah from Bozrah became king in his place.
34 When Jobab died, Husham from the land of the Temanites became king in his place.
35 When Husham died, Hadad son of Bedad became king in his place.
He defeated Midian in the field of Moab;
the name of his city was Avith.
36 When Hadad died, Samlah from Masrekah became king in his place.
37 When Samlah died, Shaul from Rehoboth on the Euphrates River became king in his place.
38 When Shaul died, Baal-hanan son of Achbor became king in his place.
39 When Baal-hanan son of Achbor died, Hadar became king in his

place.
His city was Pau, and his wife's name was Mehetabel
daughter of Matred daughter of Me-zahab.

40 These are the names of Esau's chiefs,
according to their families and their localities,
by their names:
Chiefs Timna, Alvah, Jetheth,
41 Oholibamah, Elah, Pinon,
42 Kenaz, Teman, Mibzar,
43 Magdiel, and Iram.
These are Edom's chiefs,
according to their settlements in the land they possessed.
Esau [A] was father of the Edomites.

GENESIS

Joseph’s Dreams

37 † Jacob lived in the land where his father had stayed, the land of
Canaan. 2† These are the family records of Jacob.

At 17 years of age, Joseph tended sheep with his brothers. The young
man was working with the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah, his father’s wives,
and he brought a bad report about them to their father.

3 Now Israel loved Joseph more than his other sons because Joseph was a
son born to him in his old age, and he made a robe of many colors [A] for
him. 4 When his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his
brothers, they hated him and could not bring themselves to speak peaceably
to him.

5† Then Joseph had a dream. When he told it to his brothers, they hated
him even more. 6 He said to them, “Listen to this dream I had: 7 There we
were, binding sheaves of grain in the field. Suddenly my sheaf stood up,
and your sheaves gathered around it and bowed down to my sheaf.”

8 “Are you really going to reign over us? ” his brothers asked him. “Are
you really going to rule us? ” So they hated him even more because of his
dream and what he had said.

9 Then he had another dream and told it to his brothers. “Look,” he said,
“I had another dream, and this time the sun, moon, and 11 stars were
bowing down to me.”

10 He told his father and brothers, but his father rebuked him. “What kind
of dream is this that you have had? ” he said. “Are your mother and
brothers and I going to come and bow down to the ground before you? ”
11 His brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the matter in mind.

Joseph Sold into Slavery

12† His brothers had gone to pasture their father’s flocks at Shechem.
13 Israel said to Joseph, “Your brothers, you know, are pasturing the flocks
at Shechem. Get ready. I’m sending you to them.”

"I'm ready," Joseph replied.

14 Then Israel said to him, "Go and see how your brothers and the flocks
are doing, and bring word back to me." So he sent him from the Valley of
Hebron, and he went to Shechem.

15† A man found him there, wandering in the field, and asked him, "What
are you looking for? "

16 "I'm looking for my brothers," Joseph said. "Can you tell me where
they are pasturing their flocks? "

17 "They've moved on from here," the man said. "I heard them say, 'Let's
go to Dothan.' " So Joseph set out after his brothers and found them at
Dothan.

18 They saw him in the distance, and before he had reached them, they
plotted to kill him. 19 They said to one another, "Here comes that
dreamer! [B] 20 Come on, let's kill him and throw him into one of the pits. We
can say that a vicious animal ate him. Then we'll see what becomes of his
dreams! "

21† When Reuben heard this, he tried to save him from them. [C] He said,
"Let's not take his life." 22 Reuben also said to them, "Don't shed blood.
Throw him into this pit in the wilderness, but don't lay a hand on
him" — intending to rescue him from their hands and return him to his
father.

23 When Joseph came to his brothers, they stripped off his robe, the robe
of many colors that he had on. 24† Then they took him and threw him into
the pit. The pit was empty; there was no water in it.

25† Then they sat down to eat a meal. They looked up, and there was a
caravan of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead. Their camels were carrying
aromatic gum, balsam, and resin, going down to Egypt.

26 Then Judah said to his brothers, “What do we gain if we kill our
brother and cover up his blood? 27 Come, let’s sell him to the Ishmaelites
and not lay a hand on him, for he is our brother, our own flesh,” and they
agreed. 28 When Midianite traders passed by, his brothers pulled Joseph out
of the pit and sold him for 20 pieces of silver to the Ishmaelites, who took
Joseph to Egypt.

29 When Reuben returned to the pit and saw that Joseph was not there, he
tore his clothes. 30 He went back to his brothers and said, “The boy is gone!
What am I going to do? ” [D] 31 So they took Joseph’s robe, slaughtered a
young goat, and dipped the robe in its blood. 32 They sent the robe of many
colors to their father and said, “We found this. Examine it. Is it your son’s
robe or not? ”

33 His father recognized it. “It is my son’s robe,” he said. “A vicious
animal has devoured him. Joseph has been torn to pieces! ” 34 Then Jacob
tore his clothes, put •sackcloth around his waist, and mourned for his son
many days. 35[†] All his sons and daughters tried to comfort him, but he
refused to be comforted. “No,” he said. “I will go down to •Sheol to my
son, mourning.” And his father wept for him.

36 Meanwhile, the Midianites sold Joseph in Egypt to Potiphar, an officer
of Pharaoh and the captain of the guard.

GENESIS

Judah and Tamar

38 † At that time Judah left his brothers and settled near an Adullamite
named Hirah. 2 There Judah saw the daughter of a Canaanite named
Shua; he took her as a wife and slept with her. 3 She conceived and gave
birth to a son, and he named him Er. 4 She conceived again, gave birth to a
son, and named him Onan. 5 She gave birth to another son and named him
Shelah. It was at Chezib that she gave birth to him.

6 Judah got a wife for Er, his firstborn, and her name was Tamar. 7 Now
Er, Judah's firstborn, was evil in the LORD's sight, and the LORD put him to
death. 8† Then Judah said to Onan, "Sleep with your brother's wife.
Perform your duty as her brother-in-law and produce •offspring for your
brother." 9 But Onan knew that the offspring would not be his, so whenever
he slept with his brother's wife, he released his semen on the ground so that
he would not produce offspring for his brother. 10 What he did was evil in
the LORD's sight, so He put him to death also.

11† Then Judah said to his daughter-in-law Tamar, "Remain a widow in
your father's house until my son Shelah grows up." For he thought, "He
might die too, like his brother." So Tamar went to live in her father's house.

12 After a long time [B] Judah's wife, the daughter of Shua, died. When
Judah had finished mourning, he and his friend Hirah the Adullamite went
up to Timnah to the sheepshearers. 13 Tamar was told, "Your father-in-law
is going up to Timnah to shear his sheep." 14 So she took off her widow's
clothes, veiled her face, covered herself, and sat at the entrance to Enaim, [C]
which is on the way to Timnah. For she saw that, though Shelah had grown
up, she had not been given to him as a wife. 15 When Judah saw her, he
thought she was a prostitute, for she had covered her face.

16 He went over to her and said, "Come, let me sleep with you," for he
did not know that she was his daughter-in-law.

She said, "What will you give me for sleeping with me? "

17 "I will send you a young goat from my flock," he replied.

But she said, “Only if you leave something with me until you send it.”

18[†] “What should I give you? ” he asked.

She answered, “Your signet ring, your cord, and the staff in your hand.” So he gave them to her and slept with her, and she got pregnant by him.
19 She got up and left, then removed her veil and put her widow’s clothes back on.

20 When Judah sent the young goat by his friend the Adullamite in order to get back the items he had left with the woman, he could not find her.
21 He asked the men of the place, “Where is the cult prostitute who was beside the road at Enaim? ”

“There has been no cult prostitute here,” they answered.

22 So the Adullamite returned to Judah, saying, “I couldn’t find her, and furthermore, the men of the place said, ‘There has been no cult prostitute here.’ ”

23 Judah replied, “Let her keep the items for herself; otherwise we will become a laughingstock. After all, I did send this young goat, but you couldn’t find her.”

24 About three months later Judah was told, “Your daughter-in-law, Tamar, has been acting like a prostitute, and now she is pregnant.”

“Bring her out! ” Judah said. “Let her be burned to death! ”

25 As she was being brought out, she sent her father-in-law this message: “I am pregnant by the man to whom these items belong.” And she added, “Examine them. Whose signet ring, cord, and staff are these? ”

26 Judah recognized them and said, “She is more in the right [D] than I, since I did not give her to my son Shelah.” And he did not know her intimately again.

27† When the time came for her to give birth, there were twins in her
womb. 28 As she was giving birth, one of them put out his hand, and the
midwife took it and tied a scarlet thread around it, announcing, “This one
came out first.” 29 But then he pulled his hand back, and his brother came
out. Then she said, “You have broken out first! ” So he was named Perez.
30 Then his brother, who had the scarlet thread tied to his hand, came out,
and was named Zerah.

GENESIS

Joseph in Potiphar's House

39 [†] Now Joseph had been taken to Egypt. An Egyptian named Potiphar,
an officer of Pharaoh and the captain of the guard, bought him from
the Ishmaelites who had brought him there. [2] The LORD was with Joseph,
and he became a successful man, serving [A] in the household of his Egyptian
master. [3] When his master saw that the LORD was with him and that the
LORD made everything he did successful, [4] Joseph found favor in his
master's sight and became his personal attendant. Potiphar also put him in
charge of his household and placed all that he owned under his authority. [B]
[5] From the time that he put him in charge of his household and of all that he
owned, the LORD blessed the Egyptian's house because of Joseph. The
LORD's blessing was on all that he owned, in his house and in his fields.
[6†] He left all that he owned under Joseph's authority; [C] he did not concern
himself with anything except the food he ate.

Now Joseph was well-built and handsome. [7] After some time [D] his
master's wife looked longingly at Joseph and said, "Sleep with me."

[8] But he refused. "Look," he said to his master's wife, "with me here my
master does not concern himself with anything in his house, and he has put
all that he owns under my authority. [E] [9] No one in this house is greater than
I am. He has withheld nothing from me except you, because you are his
wife. So how could I do such a great evil and sin against God? "

[10] Although she spoke to Joseph day after day, he refused [F] to go to bed
with her.[G] [11†] Now one day he went into the house to do his work, and none
of the household servants were there. [H] [12] She grabbed him by his garment
and said, "Sleep with me! " But leaving his garment in her hand, he escaped
and ran outside. [13] When she saw that he had left his garment with her and
had run outside, [14] she called the household servants. "Look," she said to
them, "my husband brought a Hebrew man to make fools of us. He came to
me so he could sleep with me, and I screamed as loud as I could. [15] When
he heard me screaming for help, [I] he left his garment with me and ran
outside."

[16] She put Joseph's garment beside her until his master came home.
[17] Then she told him the same story: "The Hebrew slave you brought to us
came to make a fool of me, [18] but when I screamed for help, [J] he left his
garment with me and ran outside."

[19] When his master heard the story his wife told him — "These are the
things your slave did to me" — he was furious [20] and had him thrown into
prison, where the king's prisoners were confined. So Joseph was there in
prison.

Joseph in Prison

[21] But the LORD was with Joseph and extended kindness to him. He
granted him favor in the eyes of the prison warden. [22] The warden put all
the prisoners who were in the prison under Joseph's authority, [K] and he was
responsible for everything that was done there. [23] The warden did not
bother with anything under Joseph's authority, [L] because the LORD was with
him, and the LORD made everything that he did successful.

GENESIS

Joseph Interprets Two Prisoners’ Dreams

40 † After this, the Egyptian king's cupbearer and baker offended their
master, the king of Egypt. 2 Pharaoh was angry with his two officers,
the chief cupbearer and the chief baker, 3 and put them in custody in the
house of the captain of the guard in the prison where Joseph was confined.
4 The captain of the guard assigned Joseph to them, and he became their
personal attendant. And they were in custody for some time. [A]

5† The Egyptian king's cupbearer and baker, who were confined in the
prison, each had a dream. Both had a dream on the same night, and each
dream had its own meaning. 6 When Joseph came to them in the morning,
he saw that they looked distraught. 7 So he asked Pharaoh's officers who
were in custody with him in his master's house, "Why do you look so sad
today? "

8 "We had dreams," they said to him, "but there is no one to interpret
them."

Then Joseph said to them, "Don't interpretations belong to God? Tell me
your dreams."

9† So the chief cupbearer told his dream to Joseph: "In my dream there
was a vine in front of me. 10 On the vine were three branches. As soon as it
budded, its blossoms came out and its clusters ripened into grapes.
11 Pharaoh's cup was in my hand, and I took the grapes, squeezed them into
Pharaoh's cup, and placed the cup in Pharaoh's hand."

12 "This is its interpretation," Joseph said to him. "The three branches
are three days. 13 In just three days Pharaoh will lift up your head and
restore you to your position. You will put Pharaoh's cup in his hand the way
you used to when you were his cupbearer. 14 But when all goes well for
you, remember that I was with you. Please show kindness to me by
mentioning me to Pharaoh, and get me out of this prison. 15 For I was
kidnapped from the land of the Hebrews, and even here I have done
nothing that they should put me in the dungeon."

[16] When the chief baker saw that the interpretation was positive, he said to Joseph, “I also had a dream. Three baskets of white bread were on my head. [17] In the top basket were all sorts of baked goods for Pharaoh, but the birds were eating them out of the basket on my head.”

[18] “This is its interpretation,” Joseph replied. “The three baskets are three days. [19] In just three days Pharaoh will lift up your head — from off you — and hang you on a tree. [B] Then the birds will eat the flesh from your body.” [C]

[20] On the third day, which was Pharaoh’s birthday, he gave a feast for all his servants. He lifted up the heads of the chief cupbearer and the chief baker. [21] Pharaoh restored the chief cupbearer to his position as cupbearer, and he placed the cup in Pharaoh’s hand. [22] But Pharaoh hanged [D] the chief baker, just as Joseph had explained to them. [23] Yet the chief cupbearer did not remember Joseph; he forgot him.

GENESIS

Joseph Interprets Pharaoh's Dreams

41

[†] Two years later Pharaoh had a dream: He was standing beside the
Nile, 2 when seven healthy-looking, well-fed cows came up from the
Nile and began to graze among the reeds. 3 After them, seven other cows,
sickly and thin, came up from the Nile and stood beside those cows along
the bank of the Nile. 4 The sickly, thin cows ate the healthy, well-fed cows.
Then Pharaoh woke up. 5 He fell asleep and dreamed a second time: Seven
heads of grain, plump and ripe, came up on one stalk. 6 After them, seven
heads of grain, thin and scorched by the east wind, sprouted up. 7 The thin
heads of grain swallowed up the seven plump, ripe ones. Then Pharaoh
woke up, and it was only a dream.

8 When morning came, he was troubled, so he summoned all the
magicians of Egypt and all its wise men. Pharaoh told them his dreams, but
no one could interpret them for him.

9[†] Then the chief cupbearer said to Pharaoh, “Today I remember my
faults. 10 Pharaoh had been angry with his servants, and he put me and the
chief baker in the custody of the captain of the guard. 11 He and I had
dreams on the same night; each dream had its own meaning. 12 Now a
young Hebrew, a slave of the captain of the guards, was with us there. We
told him our dreams, he interpreted our dreams for us, and each had its own
interpretation. 13 It turned out just the way he interpreted them to us: I was
restored to my position, and the other man was hanged.”

14 Then Pharaoh sent for Joseph, and they quickly brought him from the
dungeon. He shaved, changed his clothes, and went to Pharaoh.

15 Pharaoh said to Joseph, “I have had a dream, and no one can interpret
it. But I have heard it said about you that you can hear a dream and interpret
it.”

16 “I am not able to,” Joseph answered Pharaoh. “It is God who will give
Pharaoh a favorable answer.” [A]

17[†] So Pharaoh said to Joseph: “In my dream I was standing on the bank
of the Nile, 18 when seven well-fed, healthy-looking cows came up from the
Nile and began to graze among the reeds. 19 After them, seven other
cows — ugly, very sickly, and thin — came up. I’ve never seen such ugly
ones as these in all the land of Egypt. 20 Then the thin, ugly cows ate the
first seven well-fed cows. 21 When they had devoured them, you could not
tell that they had devoured them; their appearance was as bad as it had been
before. Then I woke up. 22 In my dream I had also seen seven heads of
grain, plump and ripe, coming up on one stalk. 23 After them, seven heads
of grain — withered, thin, and scorched by the east wind — sprouted up.
24 The thin heads of grain swallowed the seven plump ones. I told this to the
magicians, but no one can tell me what it means.”

25 Then Joseph said to Pharaoh, “Pharaoh’s dreams mean the same thing.
God has revealed to Pharaoh what He is about to do. 26 The seven good
cows are seven years, and the seven ripe heads are seven years. The dreams
mean the same thing. 27 The seven thin, ugly cows that came up after them
are seven years, and the seven worthless, scorched heads of grain are seven
years of famine.

28 “It is just as I told Pharaoh: God has shown Pharaoh what He is about
to do. 29 Seven [B] years of great abundance are coming throughout the land
of Egypt. 30 After them, seven years of famine will take place, and all the
abundance in the land of Egypt will be forgotten. The famine will devastate
the land. 31 The abundance in the land will not be remembered because of
the famine that follows it, for the famine will be very severe. 32 Since the
dream was given twice to Pharaoh, it means that the matter has been
determined by God, and He will carry it out soon.

33[†] “So now, let Pharaoh look for a discerning and wise man and set him
over the land of Egypt. 34 Let Pharaoh do this: Let him appoint overseers
over the land and take a fifth of the harvest of the land of Egypt during the
seven years of abundance. 35 Let them gather all the excess food during
these good years that are coming. Under Pharaoh’s authority, store the grain

in the cities, so they may preserve it as food. [36] The food will be a reserve
for the land during the seven years of famine that will take place in the land
of Egypt. Then the country will not be wiped out by the famine.”

Joseph Exalted

[37†] The proposal pleased Pharaoh and all his servants. [38†] Then Pharaoh
said to his servants, “Can we find anyone like this, a man who has God’s
spirit [C] in him? ” [39] So Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Since God has made all
this known to you, there is no one as intelligent and wise as you are. [40†] You
will be over my house, and all my people will obey your commands. [D],
Only with regard to the throne will I be greater than you.” [41] Pharaoh also
said to Joseph, “See, I am placing you over all the land of Egypt.”
[42] Pharaoh removed his signet ring from his hand and put it on Joseph’s
hand, clothed him with fine linen garments, and placed a gold chain around
his neck. [43] He had Joseph ride in his second chariot, and servants called
out before him, *“Abrek!”* So he placed him over all the land of Egypt.
[44] Pharaoh said to Joseph, “I am Pharaoh, but no one will be able to raise
his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt without your permission.”
[45†] Pharaoh gave Joseph the name Zaphenath-paneah and gave him a wife,
Asenath daughter of Potiphera, priest at On. [E] And Joseph went
throughout [F] the land of Egypt.

Joseph’s Administration

[46] Joseph was 30 years old when he entered the service of Pharaoh king
of Egypt. Joseph left Pharaoh’s presence and traveled throughout the land
of Egypt.

[47] During the seven years of abundance the land produced outstanding
harvests. [48] Joseph gathered all the excess food in the land of Egypt during
the seven years and put it in the cities. He put the food in every city from
the fields around it. [49] So Joseph stored up grain in such abundance — like
the sand of the sea — that he stopped measuring it because it was beyond
measure.

[50] Two sons were born to Joseph before the years of famine arrived.
Asenath daughter of Potiphera, priest at On, [G] bore them to him. [51] Joseph
named the firstborn Manasseh, meaning, “God has made me forget all my
hardship in my father’s house.” [52] And the second son he named Ephraim,
meaning, “God has made me fruitful in the land of my affliction.”

[53†] Then the seven years of abundance in the land of Egypt came to an
end, [54] and the seven years of famine began, just as Joseph had said. There
was famine in every country, but throughout the land of Egypt there was
food. [55] Extreme hunger came to all the land of Egypt, and the people cried
out to Pharaoh for food. Pharaoh told all Egypt, “Go to Joseph and do
whatever he tells you.” [56] Because the famine had spread across the whole
country, Joseph opened up all the storehouses and sold grain to the
Egyptians, for the famine was severe in the land of Egypt. [57] Every nation
came to Joseph in Egypt to buy grain, for the famine was severe in every
land.

GENESIS

Joseph's Brothers in Egypt

42 When Jacob learned that there was grain in Egypt, he said to his sons,
"Why do you keep looking at each other? 2 Listen," he went on, "I
have heard there is grain in Egypt. Go down there and buy some for us so
that we will live and not die." 3 So 10 of Joseph's brothers went down to
buy grain from Egypt. 4[†] But Jacob did not send Joseph's brother Benjamin
with his brothers, for he thought, "Something might happen to him."

5 The sons of Israel were among those who came to buy grain, for the
famine was in the land of Canaan. 6 Joseph was in charge of the country; he
sold grain to all its people. His brothers came and bowed down before him
with their faces to the ground. 7[†] When Joseph saw his brothers, he
recognized them, but he treated them like strangers and spoke harshly to
them.

"Where do you come from? " he asked.

"From the land of Canaan to buy food," they replied.

8 Although Joseph recognized his brothers, they did not recognize him.
9 Joseph remembered his dreams about them and said to them, "You are
spies. You have come to see the weakness [A] of the land."

10 "No, my lord. Your servants have come to buy food," they said. 11 "We
are all sons of one man. We are honest; your servants are not spies."

12 "No," he said to them. "You have come to see the weakness of the
land."

13 But they replied, "We, your servants, were 12 brothers, the sons of one
man in the land of Canaan. The youngest is now [B] with our father, and one
is no longer living."

14 Then Joseph said to them, "I have spoken: [C] 'You are spies! ' 15 This is
how you will be tested: As surely as Pharaoh lives, you will not leave this
place unless your youngest brother comes here. 16 Send one from among
you to get your brother. The rest of you will be imprisoned so that your

words can be tested to see if they are true. If they are not, then as surely as
Pharaoh lives, you are spies! ” 17 So Joseph imprisoned them together for
three days.

18 On the third day Joseph said to them, “I •fear God — do this and you
will live. 19 If you are honest, let one of you [D] be confined to the
guardhouse, while the rest of you go and take grain to relieve the hunger of
your households. 20[†] Bring your youngest brother to me so that your words
can be confirmed; then you won’t die.” And they consented to this.

21[†] Then they said to each other, “Obviously, we are being punished for
what we did to our brother. We saw his deep distress when he pleaded with
us, but we would not listen. That is why this trouble has come to us.”

22 But Reuben replied: “Didn’t I tell you not to harm the boy? But you
wouldn’t listen. Now we must account for his blood! ” [E]

23 They did not realize that Joseph understood them, since there was an
interpreter between them. 24 He turned away from them and wept. Then he
turned back and spoke to them. He took Simeon from them and had him
bound before their eyes. 25[†] Joseph then gave orders to fill their containers
with grain, return each man’s money to his sack, and give them provisions
for their journey. This order was carried out. 26 They loaded the grain on
their donkeys and left there.

The Brothers Return Home

27 At the place where they lodged for the night, one of them opened his
sack to get feed for his donkey, and he saw his money there at the top of the
bag. 28 He said to his brothers, “My money has been returned! It’s here in
my bag.” Their hearts sank. Trembling, they turned to one another and said,
“What is this that God has done to us? ”

29 When they reached their father Jacob in the land of Canaan, they told
him all that had happened to them: 30 “The man who is the lord of the
country spoke harshly to us and accused us of spying on the country. 31 But

we told him: We are honest and not spies. 32 We were 12 brothers, sons of
the same [F] father. One is no longer living, and the youngest is now [G] with
our father in the land of Canaan. 33 The man who is the lord of the country
said to us, 'This is how I will know if you are honest: Leave one brother
with me, take food to relieve the hunger of your households, and go.
34 Bring back your youngest brother to me, and I will know that you are not
spies but honest men. I will then give your brother back to you, and you can
trade in the country.' "

35 As they began emptying their sacks, there in each man's sack was his
bag of money! When they and their father saw their bags of money, they
were afraid.

36 Their father Jacob said to them, "You have deprived me of my sons.
Joseph is gone and Simeon is gone. Now you want to take Benjamin.
Everything happens to me! "

37 Then Reuben said to his father, "You can kill my two sons if I don't
bring him back to you. Put him in my care, [H] and I will return him to you."

38 But Jacob answered, "My son will not go down with you, for his
brother is dead and he alone is left. If anything happens to him on your
journey, you will bring my gray hairs down to •Sheol in sorrow."

GENESIS

Decision to Return to Egypt

43 [†] Now the famine in the land was severe. [2] When they had used up the grain they had brought back from Egypt, their father said to them, “Go back and buy us some food.”

[3] But Judah said to him, “The man specifically warned us: ‘You will not see me again unless your brother is with you.’ [4] If you will send our brother with us, we will go down and buy food for you. [5] But if you will not send him, we will not go, for the man said to us, ‘You will not see me again unless your brother is with you.’ ”

[6] “Why did you cause me so much trouble? ” Israel asked. “Why did you tell the man that you had another brother? ”

[7] They answered, “The man kept asking about us and our family: ‘Is your father still alive? Do you have another brother? ’ And we answered him accordingly. How could we know that he would say, ‘Bring your brother here’? ”

[8] Then Judah said to his father Israel, “Send the boy with me. We will be on our way so that we may live and not die — neither we, nor you, nor our children. [9] I will be responsible for him. You can hold me personally accountable! [A] If I do not bring him back to you and set him before you, I will be •guilty before you forever. [10] If we had not wasted time, we could have come back twice by now.”

[11] Then their father Israel said to them, “If it must be so, then do this: Put some of the best products of the land in your packs and take them down to the man as a gift — some balsam and some honey, aromatic gum and resin, pistachios and almonds. [12] Take twice as much money with you. Return the money that was returned to you in the top of your bags. Perhaps it was a mistake. [13] Take your brother also, and go back at once to the man. [14] May •God Almighty cause the man to be merciful to you so that he will release your other brother and Benjamin to you. As for me, if I am deprived of my sons, then I am deprived.”

The Return to Egypt

[15][†] The men took this gift, double the amount of money, and Benjamin. They made their way down to Egypt and stood before Joseph.

[16] When Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to his steward, [B] “Take the men to my house. Slaughter an animal and prepare it, for they will eat with me at noon.” [17] The man did as Joseph had said and brought them to Joseph’s house.

[18] But the men were afraid because they were taken to Joseph’s house. They said, “We have been brought here because of the money that was returned in our bags the first time. They intend to overpower us, seize us, make us slaves, and take our donkeys.” [19] So they approached Joseph’s steward [C] and spoke to him at the doorway of the house.

[20] They said, “Sir, we really did come down here the first time only to buy food. [21] When we came to the place where we lodged for the night and opened our bags of grain, each one’s money was at the top of his bag! It was the full amount of our money, and we have brought it back with us.
[22] We have brought additional money with us to buy food. We don’t know who put our money in the bags.”

[23] Then the steward said, “May you be well. Don’t be afraid. Your God and the God of your father must have put treasure in your bags. I received your money.” Then he brought Simeon out to them. [24] The steward brought the men into Joseph’s house, gave them water to wash their feet, and got feed for their donkeys. [25] Since the men had heard that they were going to eat a meal there, they prepared their gift for Joseph’s arrival at noon.
[26] When Joseph came home, they brought him the gift they had carried into the house, and they bowed to the ground before him.

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Notable Christian Apologist: William Paley ⇒

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27 He asked if they were well, and he said, “How is your elderly father that you told me about? Is he still alive? ”

28 They answered, “Your servant our father is well. He is still alive.” And they bowed down to honor him.

29 When he looked up and saw his brother Benjamin, his mother’s son, he
asked, “Is this your youngest brother that you told me about? ” Then he
said, “May God be gracious to you, my son.” 30 Joseph hurried out because
he was overcome with emotion for his brother, and he was about to weep.
He went into an inner room to weep. 31 Then he washed his face and came
out. Regaining his composure, he said, “Serve the meal.”

32 They served him by himself, his brothers by themselves, and the
Egyptians who were eating with him by themselves, because Egyptians
could not eat with Hebrews, since that is abhorrent to them. 33 They were
seated before him in order by age, from the firstborn to the youngest. The
men looked at each other in astonishment. 34† Portions were served to them
from Joseph’s table, and Benjamin’s portion was five times larger than any
of theirs. They drank, and they got drunk with Joseph.

GENESIS

Joseph's Final Test

44 [†] Then Joseph commanded his steward: “Fill the men’s bags with as much food as they can carry, and put each one’s money at the top of his bag. [2] Put my cup, the silver one, at the top of the youngest one’s bag, along with his grain money.” So he did as Joseph told him.

[3] At morning light, the men were sent off with their donkeys. [4] They had not gone very far from the city when Joseph said to his steward, “Get up. Pursue the men, and when you overtake them, say to them, ‘Why have you repaid evil for good? [5†] Isn’t this the cup that my master drinks from and uses for •divination? What you have done is wrong! ’ ”

[6] When he overtook them, he said these words to them. [7] They said to him, “Why does my lord say these things? Your servants could not possibly do such a thing. [8] We even brought back to you from the land of Canaan the money we found at the top of our bags. How could we steal gold and silver from your master’s house? [9] If any of us is [A] found to have it, he must die, and we also will become my lord’s slaves.”

[10] The steward replied, “What you have said is right, but only the one who is found to have it will be my slave, and the rest of you will be blameless.”

[11] So each one quickly lowered his sack to the ground and opened it.
[12] The steward searched, beginning with the oldest and ending with the youngest, and the cup was found in Benjamin’s sack. [13] Then they tore their clothes, and each one loaded his donkey and returned to the city.

[14] When Judah and his brothers reached Joseph’s house, he was still there. They fell to the ground before him. [15] “What is this you have done? ” Joseph said to them. “Didn’t you know that a man like me could uncover the truth by divination? ”

[16] “What can we say to my lord? ” Judah replied. “How can we plead? How can we justify ourselves? God has exposed your servants’ iniquity. We are now my lord’s slaves — both we and the one in whose possession the cup was found.”

17 Then Joseph said, “I swear that I will not do this. The man in whose
possession the cup was found will be my slave. The rest of you can go in
peace to your father.”

Judah’s Plea for Benjamin

18 But Judah approached him and said, “Sir, please let your servant speak
personally to my lord. [B] Do not be angry with your servant, for you are like
Pharaoh. 19 My lord asked his servants, ‘Do you have a father or a
brother? ’ 20 and we answered my lord, ‘We have an elderly father and a
younger brother, the child of his old age. The boy’s brother is dead. He is
the only one of his mother’s sons left, and his father loves him.’ 21 Then
you said to your servants, ‘Bring him to me so that I can see him.’ 22 But
we said to my lord, ‘The boy cannot leave his father. If he were to leave, his
father would die.’ 23 Then you said to your servants, ‘If your younger
brother does not come down with you, you will not see me again.’

24 “This is what happened when we went back to your servant my father:
We reported your words to him. 25 But our father said, ‘Go again, and buy
us some food.’ 26 We told him, ‘We cannot go down unless our younger
brother goes with us. So if our younger brother isn’t with us, we cannot see
the man.’ 27 Your servant my father said to us, ‘You know that my wife bore
me two sons. 28 One left — I said that he must have been torn to
pieces — and I have never seen him again. 29 If you also take this one from
me and anything happens to him, you will bring my gray hairs down to
•Sheol in sorrow.’

30 “So if I come to your servant my father and the boy is not with
us — his life is wrapped up with the boy’s life — 31 when he sees that the
boy is not with us, he will die. Then your servants will have brought the
gray hairs of your servant our father down to Sheol in sorrow. 32 Your
servant became accountable to my father for the boy, saying, ‘If I do not
return him to you, I will always bear the •guilt for sinning against you, my
father.’ 33 Now please let your servant remain here as my lord’s slave, in
place of the boy. Let him go back with his brothers. 34 For how can I go

back to my father without the boy? I could not bear to see the grief that would overwhelm my father.”

GENESIS

Joseph Reveals His Identity

45 Joseph could no longer keep his composure in front of all his
attendants, [A] so he called out, “Send everyone away from me! ” No
one was with him when he revealed his identity to his brothers. 2 But he
wept so loudly that the Egyptians heard it, and also Pharaoh’s household
heard it. 3 Joseph said to his brothers, “I am Joseph! Is my father still
living? ” But they could not answer him because they were terrified in his
presence.

4[†] Then Joseph said to his brothers, “Please, come near me,” and they
came near. “I am Joseph, your brother,” he said, “the one you sold into
Egypt. 5 And now don’t be worried or angry with yourselves for selling me
here, because God sent me ahead of you to preserve life. 6[†] For the famine
has been in the land these two years, and there will be five more years
without plowing or harvesting. 7 God sent me ahead of you to establish you
as a remnant within the land and to keep you alive by a great deliverance. [B]
8[†] Therefore it was not you who sent me here, but God. He has made me a
father to Pharaoh, lord of his entire household, and ruler over all the land of
Egypt.

9 “Return quickly to my father and say to him, ‘This is what your son
Joseph says: “God has made me lord of all Egypt. Come down to me
without delay. 10 You can settle in the land of Goshen and be near
me — you, your children, and grandchildren, your sheep, cattle, and all you
have. 11 There I will sustain you, for there will be five more years of
famine. Otherwise, you, your household, and everything you have will
become destitute.” ’ 12 Look! Your eyes and my brother Benjamin’s eyes
can see that it is I , Joseph, who am [C] speaking to you. 13 Tell my father
about all my glory in Egypt and about all you have seen. And bring my
father here quickly.”

14 Then Joseph threw his arms around Benjamin and wept, and Benjamin
wept on his shoulder. 15 Joseph kissed each of his brothers as he wept, [D]
and afterward his brothers talked with him.

The Return for Jacob

[16] When the news reached Pharaoh’s palace, “Joseph’s brothers have
come,” Pharaoh and his servants were pleased. [17] Pharaoh said to Joseph,
“Tell your brothers, ‘Do this: Load your animals and go on back to the land
of Canaan. [18] Get your father and your families, and come back to me. I
will give you the best of the land of Egypt, and you can eat from the
richness of the land.’ [19] You are also commanded, ‘Do this: Take wagons
from the land of Egypt for your young children and your wives and bring
your father here. [20] Do not be concerned about your belongings, for the
best of all the land of Egypt is yours.’ ”

[21] The sons of Israel did this. Joseph gave them wagons as Pharaoh had
commanded, and he gave them provisions for the journey. [22] He gave each
of the brothers changes of clothes, but he gave Benjamin 300 pieces of
silver and five changes of clothes. [23] He sent his father the following: 10
donkeys carrying the best products of Egypt and 10 female donkeys
carrying grain, food, and provisions for his father on the journey. [24] So
Joseph sent his brothers on their way, and as they were leaving, he said to
them, “Don’t argue on the way.”

[25] So they went up from Egypt and came to their father Jacob in the land
of Canaan. [26] They said, “Joseph is still alive, and he is ruler over all the
land of Egypt! ” Jacob was stunned, [E] for he did not believe them. [27] But
when they told Jacob all that Joseph had said to them, and when he saw the
wagons that Joseph had sent to transport him, the spirit of their father Jacob
revived.

[28][†] Then Israel said, “Enough! My son Joseph is still alive. I will go to
see him before I die.”

GENESIS

Jacob Leaves for Egypt

46 Israel set out with all that he had and came to Beer-sheba, and he
offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac. 2 That night God
spoke to Israel in a vision: "Jacob, Jacob! " He said.

And Jacob replied, "Here I am."

3 God said, "I am God, the God of your father. Do not be afraid to go
down to Egypt, for I will make you into a great nation there. 4 I will go
down with you to Egypt, and I will also bring you back. Joseph will put his
hands on your eyes."

5 Jacob left Beer-sheba. The sons of Israel took their father Jacob in the
wagons Pharaoh had sent to carry him, along with their children and their
wives. 6 They also took their cattle and possessions they had acquired in the
land of Canaan. Then Jacob and all his children went with him to Egypt.
7 His sons and grandsons, his daughters and granddaughters, indeed all his
•offspring, he brought with him to Egypt.

Jacob's Family

8† These are the names of the Israelites, Jacob and his sons, who went to
Egypt:

Jacob's firstborn: Reuben.
9 Reuben's sons: Hanoch, Pallu, Hezron, and Carmi.
10 Simeon's sons: Jemuel, Jamin, Ohad, Jachin, Zohar, and Shaul, the
son of a Canaanite woman.
11 Levi's sons: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari.
12 Judah's sons: Er, Onan, Shelah, Perez, and Zerah; but Er and Onan
died in the land of Canaan.
Perez's sons: Hezron and Hamul.
13 Issachar's sons: Tola, Puvah, Jashub, and Shimron.
14 Zebulun's sons: Sered, Elon, and Jahleel.
15 These were Leah's sons born to Jacob in Paddan-aram, as well as his
daughter Dinah. The total number of persons: [A] 33.

[16] Gad's sons: Ziphion, Haggi, Shuni, Ezbon, Eri, Arodi, and Areli.
[17] Asher's sons: Imnah, Ishvah, Ishvi, Beriah, and their sister Serah. Beriah's sons were Heber and Malchiel.
[18] These were the sons of Zilpah — whom Laban gave to his daughter Leah — that she bore to Jacob: 16 persons.
[19] The sons of Jacob's wife Rachel: Joseph and Benjamin.
[20] Manasseh and Ephraim were born to Joseph in the land of Egypt. They were born to him by Asenath daughter of Potiphera, a priest at On. [B]
[21] Benjamin's sons: Bela, Becher, Ashbel, Gera, Naaman, Ehi, Rosh, Muppim, Huppim, and Ard.
[22] These were Rachel's sons who were born to Jacob: 14 persons.
[23] Dan's son: Hushim.
[24] Naphtali's sons: Jahzeel, Guni, Jezer, and Shillem.
[25] These were the sons of Bilhah, whom Laban gave to his daughter Rachel. She bore to Jacob: seven persons.
[26] The total number of persons belonging to Jacob — his direct descendants, [C] not including the wives of Jacob's sons — who came to Egypt: 66.
[27] And Joseph's sons who were born to him in Egypt: two persons. All those of Jacob's household who had come to Egypt: 70 persons.

Jacob Arrives in Egypt

[28†] Now Jacob had sent Judah ahead of him to Joseph to prepare for his
arrival [D] at Goshen. When they came to the land of Goshen, [29] Joseph
hitched the horses to his chariot and went up to Goshen to meet his father Israel. Joseph presented himself to him, threw his arms around him, and wept for a long time.

[30] Then Israel said to Joseph, "At last I can die, now that I have seen your face and know you are still alive! "

[31] Joseph said to his brothers and to his father's household, "I will go up and inform Pharaoh, telling him: My brothers and my father's household,
who were in the land of Canaan, have come to me. [32] The men are

shepherds; they also raise livestock. They have brought their sheep and
cattle and all that they have. 33 When Pharaoh addresses you and asks,
‘What is your occupation? ’ 34 you are to say, ‘Your servants, both we and
our fathers, have raised livestock [E] from our youth until now.’ Then you
will be allowed to settle in the land of Goshen, since all shepherds are
abhorrent to Egyptians.”

GENESIS

Pharaoh Welcomes Jacob

47 So Joseph went and informed Pharaoh: “My father and my brothers,
with their sheep and cattle and all that they own, have come from the
land of Canaan and are now in the land of Goshen.”

[2] He took five of his brothers and presented them before Pharaoh. [3] Then
Pharaoh asked his brothers, “What is your occupation? ”

And they said to Pharaoh, “Your servants, both we and our fathers, are
shepherds.” [4] Then they said to Pharaoh, “We have come to live in the land
for a while because there is no grazing land for your servants’ sheep, since
the famine in the land of Canaan has been severe. So now, please let your
servants settle in the land of Goshen.”

[5] Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Now that your father and brothers have
come to you, [6†] the land of Egypt is open before you; settle your father and
brothers in the best part of the land. They can live in the land of Goshen. If
you know of any capable men among them, put them in charge of my
livestock.”

[7†] Joseph then brought his father Jacob and presented him before
Pharaoh, and Jacob blessed Pharaoh. [8†] Then Pharaoh said to Jacob, “How
many years have you lived? ” [A]

[9] Jacob said to Pharaoh, “My pilgrimage has lasted 130 years. My years
have been few and hard, and they have not surpassed the years of my
fathers during their pilgrimages.” [10] So Jacob blessed Pharaoh and departed
from Pharaoh’s presence.

[11] Then Joseph settled his father and brothers in the land of Egypt and
gave them property in the best part of the land, the land of Rameses, as
Pharaoh had commanded. [12†] And Joseph provided his father, his brothers,
and all his father’s household with food for their dependents.

The Land Becomes Pharaoh’s

[13][†] But there was no food in that entire region, for the famine was very severe. The land of Egypt and the land of Canaan were exhausted by the famine. [14] Joseph collected all the money to be found in the land of Egypt and the land of Canaan in exchange for the grain they were purchasing, and he brought the money to Pharaoh's palace. [15] When the money from the land of Egypt and the land of Canaan was gone, all the Egyptians came to Joseph and said, "Give us food. Why should we die here in front of you? The money is gone! "

[16] But Joseph said, "Give me your livestock. Since the money is gone, I will give you food in exchange for your livestock." [17] So they brought their livestock to Joseph, and he gave them food in exchange for the horses, the herds of sheep, the herds of cattle, and the donkeys. That year he provided them with food in exchange for all their livestock.

[18] When that year was over, they came the next year and said to him, "We cannot hide from our lord that the money is gone and that all our livestock belongs to our lord. There is nothing left for our lord except our bodies and our land. [19] Why should we die here in front of you — both us and our land? Buy us and our land in exchange for food. Then we with our land will become Pharaoh's slaves. Give us seed so that we can live and not die, and so that the land won't become desolate."

[20] In this way, Joseph acquired all the land in Egypt for Pharaoh, because every Egyptian sold his field since the famine was so severe for them. The land became Pharaoh's, [21] and Joseph moved the people to the cities from one end of Egypt to the other. [22] The only land he didn't acquire was the priests' portion, for it was given to them by Pharaoh. They lived off[B] the rations Pharaoh had given them; therefore they did not sell their land.

[23] Then Joseph said to the people, "Understand today that I have acquired you and your land for Pharaoh. Here is seed for you. Sow it in the land. [24] At harvest, you are to give a fifth of it to Pharaoh, and four-fifths will be yours as seed for the field and as food for yourselves, your households, and your dependents."

[25] And they said, “You have saved our lives. We have found favor in our
lord’s eyes and will be Pharaoh’s slaves.” [26] So Joseph made it a law, still in
effect today in the land of Egypt, that a fifth of the produce belongs to
Pharaoh. Only the priests’ land does not belong to Pharaoh.

Israel Settles in Goshen

[27] Israel settled in the land of Egypt, in the region of Goshen. They
acquired property in it and became fruitful and very numerous. [28] Now
Jacob lived in the land of Egypt 17 years, and his life span was 147 years.
[29†] When the time drew near for him to die, he called his son Joseph and
said to him, “If I have found favor in your eyes, put your hand under my
thigh and promise me that you will deal with me in kindness and
faithfulness. Do not bury me in Egypt. [30] When I rest with my fathers,
carry me away from Egypt and bury me in their burial place.”

Joseph answered, “I will do what you have asked.”

[31] And Jacob said, “Swear to me.” So Joseph swore to him. Then Israel
bowed in thanks at the head of his bed. [C]

GENESIS

Jacob Blesses Ephraim and Manasseh

48 [†] Some time after this, Joseph was told, “Your father is weaker.” So
he set out with his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim. [2] When Jacob
was told, “Your son Joseph has come to you,” Israel summoned his strength
and sat up in bed.

[3†] Jacob said to Joseph, “•God Almighty appeared to me at Luz in the
land of Canaan and blessed me. [4] He said to me, ‘I will make you fruitful
and numerous; I will make many nations come from you, and I will give
this land as an eternal possession to your future descendants.’ [5] Your two
sons born to you in the land of Egypt before I came to you in Egypt are
now mine. Ephraim and Manasseh belong to me just as Reuben and
Simeon do. [6] Children born to you after them will be yours and will be
recorded under the names of their brothers with regard to their inheritance.
[7] When I was returning from Paddan, to my sorrow Rachel died along the
way, some distance from Ephrath in the land of Canaan. I buried her there
along the way to Ephrath,” (that is, Bethlehem).

[8†] When Israel saw Joseph’s sons, he said, “Who are these? ”

[9] And Joseph said to his father, “They are my sons God has given me
here.”

So Jacob said, “Bring them to me and I will bless them.” [10] Now his
eyesight was poor because of old age; he could hardly [A] see. Joseph
brought them to him, and he kissed and embraced them. [11†] Israel said to
Joseph, “I never expected to see your face again, but now God has even let
me see your •offspring.” [12] Then Joseph took them from his father’s knees
and bowed with his face to the ground.

Ephraim’s Greater Blessing

[13] Then Joseph took them both — with his right hand Ephraim toward
Israel’s left, and with his left hand Manasseh toward Israel’s right — and
brought them to Israel. [14] But Israel stretched out his right hand and put it
on the head of Ephraim, the younger, and crossing his hands, put his left on

Manasseh's head, although Manasseh was the firstborn. [15] Then he blessed
Joseph and said:

The God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked,
the God who has been my shepherd all my life to this day,
[16] the Angel who has redeemed me from all harm —
may He bless these boys.
And may they be called by my name
and the names of my fathers Abraham and Isaac,
and may they grow to be numerous within the land.

[17] When Joseph saw that his father had placed his right hand on
Ephraim's head, he thought it was a mistake [B] and took his father's hand to
move it from Ephraim's head to Manasseh's. [18] Joseph said to his father,
"Not that way, my father! This one is the firstborn. Put your right hand on
his head."

[19] But his father refused and said, "I know, my son, I know! He too will
become a tribe, [C] and he too will be great; nevertheless, his younger brother
will be greater than he, and his offspring will become a populous nation." [D]
[20] So he blessed them that day with these words:

The nation Israel will invoke blessings by you, saying,
"May God make you like Ephraim and Manasseh,"
putting Ephraim before Manasseh.

[21] Then Israel said to Joseph, "Look, I am about to die, but God will be
with you and will bring you back to the land of your fathers. [22†] Over and
above what I am giving your brothers, I am giving you the one mountain
slope [E] that I took from the hand of the Amorites with my sword and bow."

GENESIS

Jacob's Last Words

49 [†] Then Jacob called his sons and said, "Gather around, and I will tell
you what will happen to you in the days to come. [A]

2 Come together and listen, sons of Jacob;
listen to your father Israel:

3[†] Reuben, you are my firstborn,
my strength and the firstfruits of my virility,
excelling in prominence, excelling in power.
4 Turbulent as water, you will no longer excel,
because you got into your father's bed
and you defiled it — he got into my bed.

5 Simeon and Levi are brothers;
their knives are vicious weapons.
6 May I never enter their council;
may I never join their assembly.
For in their anger they kill men,
and on a whim they hamstring oxen.
7 Their anger is cursed, for it is strong,
and their fury, for it is cruel!
I will disperse them throughout Jacob
and scatter them throughout Israel.

8[†] Judah, your brothers will praise you.
Your hand will be on the necks of your enemies;
your father's sons will bow down to you.
9 Judah is a young lion —
my son, you return from the kill.
He crouches; he lies down like a lion
or a lioness — who dares to rouse him?
10 The scepter will not depart from Judah
or the staff from between his feet
until He whose right it is comes [B]
and the obedience of the peoples belongs to Him.
11 He ties his donkey to a vine,
and the colt of his donkey to the choice vine.

He washes his clothes in wine
and his robes in the blood of grapes.
12 His eyes are darker than wine,
and his teeth are whiter than milk.

13 Zebulun will live by the seashore
and will be a harbor for ships,
and his territory will be next to Sidon.

14 Issachar is a strong donkey
lying down between the saddlebags. [C]
15 He saw that his resting place was good
and that the land was pleasant,
so he leaned his shoulder to bear a load
and became a forced laborer.

16† Dan will judge his people
as one of the tribes of Israel.
17 He will be a snake by the road,
a viper beside the path,
that bites the horses' heels
so that its rider falls backward.

18 I wait for Your salvation, LORD.

19 Gad will be attacked by raiders,
but he will attack their heels.

20 Asher's food will be rich,
and he will produce royal delicacies.

21 Naphtali is a doe set free
that bears beautiful fawns.

22† Joseph is a fruitful vine,
a fruitful vine beside a spring;
its branches [D] climb over the wall. [E]
23 The archers attacked him,
shot at him, and were hostile toward him.

[24] Yet his bow remained steady,
and his strong [F] arms were made agile
by the hands of the Mighty One of Jacob,
by the name of the Shepherd, the Rock of Israel,
[25] by the God of your father who helps you,
and by the •Almighty who blesses you
with blessings of the heavens above,
blessings of the deep that lies below,
and blessings of the breasts and the womb.
[26] The blessings of your father excel
the blessings of my ancestors [G]
and [H] the bounty of the eternal hills. [I]
May they rest on the head of Joseph,
on the crown of the prince of his brothers.

[27†] Benjamin is a wolf; he tears his prey.
In the morning he devours the prey,
and in the evening he divides the plunder."

[28] These are the tribes of Israel, 12 in all, and this was what their father said to them. He blessed them, and he blessed each one with a suitable blessing.

Jacob's Burial Instructions

[29†] Then he commanded them: "I am about to be gathered to my people.
Bury me with my fathers in the cave in the field of Ephron the Hittite.
[30] The cave is in the field of Machpelah near Mamre, in the land of Canaan.
This is the field Abraham purchased from Ephron the Hittite as a burial
site. [31] Abraham and his wife Sarah are buried there, Isaac and his wife
Rebekah are buried there, and I buried Leah there. [32] The field and the
cave in it were purchased from the Hittites." [33] When Jacob had finished
instructing his sons, he drew his feet into the bed and died. He was gathered
to his people.

GENESIS

Jacob's Burial

50 † Then Joseph, leaning over his father's face, wept and kissed him.
2 He commanded his servants who were physicians to embalm his
father. So they embalmed Israel. 3 They took 40 days to complete this, for
embalming takes that long, and the Egyptians mourned for him 70 days.

4† When the days of mourning were over, Joseph said to Pharaoh's
household, "If I have found favor with you, please tell [A] Pharaoh that 5 my
father made me take an oath, saying, 'I am about to die. You must bury me
there in the tomb that I made for myself in the land of Canaan.' Now let me
go and bury my father. Then I will return."

6 So Pharaoh said, "Go and bury your father in keeping with your oath."

7 Then Joseph went to bury his father, and all Pharaoh's servants, the
elders of his household, and all the elders of the land of Egypt went with
him, 8 along with all Joseph's household, his brothers, and his father's
household. Only their children, their sheep, and their cattle were left in the
land of Goshen. 9 Horses and chariots went up with him; it was a very
impressive procession. 10 When they reached the threshing floor of Atad,
which is across the Jordan, they lamented and wept loudly, and Joseph
mourned seven days for his father. 11 When the Canaanite inhabitants of the
land saw the mourning at the threshing floor of Atad, they said, "This is a
solemn mourning on the part of the Egyptians." Therefore the place is
named Abel-mizraim. It is across the Jordan.

12 So Jacob's sons did for him what he had commanded them. 13 They
carried him to the land of Canaan and buried him in the cave at Machpelah
in the field near Mamre, which Abraham had purchased as a burial site
from Ephron the Hittite. 14 After Joseph buried his father, he returned to
Egypt with his brothers and all who had gone with him to bury his father.

Joseph's Kindness

15† When Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead, they said to
one another, "If Joseph is holding a grudge against us, he will certainly
repay us for all the suffering we caused him."

[16] So they sent this message to Joseph, “Before he died your father gave a command: [17] ‘Say this to Joseph: Please forgive your brothers’ transgression and their sin — the suffering they caused you.’ Therefore, please forgive the transgression of the servants of the God of your father.” Joseph wept when their message came to him. [18] Then his brothers also came to him, bowed down before him, and said, “We are your slaves! ”

[19] But Joseph said to them, “Don’t be afraid. Am I in the place of God? [20] You planned evil against me; God planned it for good to bring about the present result — the survival of many people. [21] Therefore don’t be afraid. I will take care of you and your little ones.” And he comforted them and spoke kindly to them. [B]

Joseph’s Death

[22†] Joseph and his father’s household remained in Egypt. Joseph lived 110 years. [23] He saw Ephraim’s sons to the third generation; the sons of Manasseh’s son Machir were recognized by [C] Joseph.

[24] Joseph said to his brothers, “I am about to die, but God will certainly come to your aid and bring you up from this land to the land He promised Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.” [25] So Joseph made the sons of Israel take an oath: “When God comes to your aid, you are to carry my bones up from here.”

[26] Joseph died at the age of 110. They embalmed him and placed him in a coffin in Egypt.

EXODUS

Introduction to Exodus

EXODUS

Israel Oppressed in Egypt

1 These are the names of the sons of Israel who came to Egypt with Jacob;
each came with his family:

2 Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah;
3 Issachar, Zebulun, and Benjamin;
4 Dan and Naphtali; Gad and Asher.

5[†] The total number of Jacob's descendants [A] was 70; Joseph was already
in Egypt.

6 Then Joseph and all his brothers and all that generation died. 7[†] But the
Israelites were fruitful, increased rapidly, multiplied, and became extremely
numerous so that the land was filled with them.

8[†] A new king, who had not known Joseph, came to power in Egypt. 9 He
said to his people, "Look, the Israelite people are more numerous and
powerful than we are. 10 Let us deal shrewdly with them; otherwise they
will multiply further, and if war breaks out, they may join our enemies,
fight against us, and leave the country." 11[†] So the Egyptians assigned
taskmasters over the Israelites to oppress them with forced labor. They
built Pithom and Rameses as supply cities for Pharaoh. 12 But the more
they oppressed them, the more they multiplied and spread so that the
Egyptians came to dread [B] the Israelites. 13 They worked the Israelites
ruthlessly 14 and made their lives bitter with difficult labor in brick and
mortar and in all kinds of fieldwork. They ruthlessly imposed all this work
on them.

15[†] Then the king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives, one of whom
was named Shiphrah and the other Puah, 16 "When you help the Hebrew
women give birth, observe them as they deliver. [C] If the child is a son, kill
him, but if it's a daughter, she may live." 17 The Hebrew midwives,
however, •feared God and did not do as the king of Egypt had told them;
they let the boys live. 18 So the king of Egypt summoned the midwives and
asked them, "Why have you done this and let the boys live? "

[19]† The midwives said to Pharaoh, “The Hebrew women are not like the Egyptian women, for they are vigorous and give birth before a midwife can get to them.”

[20] So God was good to the midwives, and the people multiplied and
became very numerous. [21] Since the midwives feared God, He gave them
families. [22] Pharaoh then commanded all his people: “You must throw
every son born to the Hebrews into the Nile, but let every daughter live.”

EXODUS

Moses' Birth and Adoption

2 Now a man from the family of Levi married a Levite woman. 2 The
woman became pregnant and gave birth to a son; when she saw that he
was beautiful, [A] she hid him for three months. 3 But when she could no
longer hide him, she got a papyrus basket for him and coated it with asphalt
and pitch. She placed the child in it and set it among the reeds by the bank
of the Nile. 4 Then his sister stood at a distance in order to see what would
happen to him.

5 Pharaoh’s daughter went down to bathe at the Nile while her servant
girls walked along the riverbank. Seeing the basket among the reeds, she
sent her slave girl to get it. 6 When she opened it, she saw the child — a
little boy, crying. She felt sorry for him and said, “This is one of the
Hebrew boys.”

7 Then his sister said to Pharaoh’s daughter, “Should I go and call a
woman from the Hebrews to nurse the boy for you? ”

8 “Go,” Pharaoh’s daughter told her. So the girl went and called the boy’s
mother. 9 Then Pharaoh’s daughter said to her, “Take this child and nurse
him for me, and I will pay your wages.” So the woman took the boy and
nursed him. 10† When the child grew older, she brought him to Pharaoh’s
daughter, and he became her son. She named him Moses, “Because,” she
said, “I drew him out of the water.”

Moses in Midian

11 Years later, [B] after Moses had grown up, he went out to his own
people [C] and observed their forced labor. He saw an Egyptian beating a
Hebrew, one of his people. 12 Looking all around and seeing no one, he
struck the Egyptian dead and hid him in the sand. 13 The next day he went
out and saw two Hebrews fighting. He asked the one in the wrong, “Why
are you attacking your neighbor? ” [D]

14† “Who made you a leader and judge over us? ” the man replied. “Are
you planning to kill me as you killed the Egyptian? ”

Then Moses became afraid and thought: What I did is certainly known.
15 When Pharaoh heard about this, he tried to kill Moses. But Moses fled
from Pharaoh and went to live in the land of Midian, and sat down by a
well.

16 Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters. They came to draw
water and filled the troughs to water their father's flock. 17 Then some
shepherds arrived and drove them away, but Moses came to their rescue and
watered their flock. 18 When they returned to their father Reuel he asked,
"Why have you come back so quickly today? "

19 They answered, "An Egyptian rescued us from the shepherds. He even
drew water for us and watered the flock."

20 "So where is he? " he asked his daughters. "Why then did you leave
the man behind? Invite him to eat dinner."

21 Moses agreed to stay with the man, and he gave his daughter Zipporah
to Moses in marriage. 22 She gave birth to a son whom he named Gershom,
for he said, "I have been a foreigner in a foreign land."

23 After a long time, the king of Egypt died. The Israelites groaned
because of their difficult labor, and they cried out; and their cry for help
ascended to God because of the difficult labor. 24 So God heard their
groaning, and He remembered His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and
Jacob. 25 God saw the Israelites, and He took notice.

EXODUS

Moses and the Burning Bush

3 † Meanwhile, Moses was shepherding the flock of his father-in-law
Jethro, the priest of Midian. He led the flock to the far side of the
wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. 2† Then the Angel of
the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire within a bush. As Moses
looked, he saw that the bush was on fire but was not consumed. 3 So Moses
thought: I must go over and look at this remarkable sight. Why isn't the
bush burning up?

4 When the LORD saw that he had gone over to look, God called out to
him from the bush, "Moses, Moses! "

"Here I am," he answered.

5 "Do not come closer," He said. "Remove the sandals from your feet, for
the place where you are standing is holy ground." 6† Then He continued, "I
am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the
God of Jacob." Moses hid his face because he was afraid to look at God.

ARTICLE
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7 Then the LORD said, "I have observed the misery of My people in
Egypt, and have heard them crying out because of their oppressors, and I
know about their sufferings. 8† I have come down to rescue them from the
power of the Egyptians and to bring them from that land to a good and
spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey — the territory of the
Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites. 9 The
Israelites' cry for help has come to Me, and I have also seen the way the
Egyptians are oppressing them. 10 Therefore, go. I am sending you to
Pharaoh so that you may lead My people, the Israelites, out of Egypt."

11 But Moses asked God, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and that
I should bring the Israelites out of Egypt? "

[12] He answered, "I will certainly be with you, and this will be the sign to you that I have sent you: when you bring the people out of Egypt, you will all worship [A] God at this mountain."

[13] Then Moses asked God, "If I go to the Israelites and say to them: The God of your fathers has sent me to you, and they ask me, 'What is His name? ' what should I tell them? "

[14†] God replied to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM. [B], This is what you are to say to the Israelites: I AM has sent me to you." [15] God also said to Moses, "Say this to the Israelites: •Yahweh, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you. This is My name forever; this is how I am to be remembered in every generation.

TWISTED SCRIPTURE

Exodus 3:14

Using the terminology of this verse, many Theosophy-based sects such as the Saint Germain Foundation and the Church Universal and Triumphant teach that through a series of secret disciplines humans can attain I AM consciousness or experience their oneness with God (pantheism). Exodus 3:14 actually teaches a distinction between God and humans. God alone is the eternal, self-existing one. Humans are created beings. While we may have a relationship with God, we never attain godhood ourselves.

[16] "Go and assemble the elders of Israel and say to them: Yahweh, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, has appeared to me and said: I have paid close attention to you and to what has been done to you in Egypt. [17] And I have promised you that I will bring you up from the misery of Egypt to the land of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites — a land flowing with milk and honey.
[18] They will listen to what you say. Then you, along with the elders of

Israel, must go to the king of Egypt and say to him: Yahweh, the God of the
Hebrews, has met with us. Now please let us go on a three-day trip into the
wilderness so that we may sacrifice to Yahweh our God.

19 “However, I know that the king of Egypt will not allow you to go,
unless he is forced by a strong hand. 20 I will stretch out My hand and
strike Egypt with all My miracles that I will perform in it. After that, he will
let you go. 21 And I will give these people such favor in the sight of the
Egyptians that when you go, you will not go empty-handed. 22† Each
woman will ask her neighbor and any woman staying in her house for silver
and gold jewelry, and clothing, and you will put them on your sons and
daughters. So you will plunder the Egyptians.”

EXODUS

Miraculous Signs for Moses

4 Then Moses answered, “What if they won’t believe me and will not
obey me but say, ‘The LORD did not appear to you’? ”

2 The LORD asked him, “What is that in your hand? ”

“A staff,” he replied.

3† Then He said, “Throw it on the ground.” He threw it on the ground,
and it became a snake. Moses ran from it, 4 but the LORD told him, “Stretch
out your hand and grab it by the tail.” So he stretched out his hand and
caught it, and it became a staff in his hand. 5 “This will take place,” He
continued, “so they will believe that •Yahweh, the God of their fathers, the
God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has appeared to
you.”

6 In addition the LORD said to him, “Put your hand inside your cloak.” So
he put his hand inside his cloak, and when he took it out, his hand was
diseased, white as snow. 7 Then He said, “Put your hand back inside your
cloak.” He put his hand back inside his cloak, and when he took it out, [A] it
had again become like the rest of his skin. 8 “If they will not believe you
and will not respond to the evidence of the first sign, they may believe the
evidence of the second sign. 9 And if they don’t believe even these two
signs or listen to what you say, take some water from the Nile and pour it on
the dry ground. The water you take from the Nile will become blood on the
ground.”

10 But Moses replied to the LORD, “Please, Lord, I have never been
eloquent — either in the past or recently or since You have been speaking to
Your servant — because I am slow and hesitant in speech.” [B]

11† Yahweh said to him, “Who made the human mouth? Who makes him
mute or deaf, seeing or blind? Is it not I, Yahweh? 12 Now go! I will help [C]
you speak and I will teach you what to say.”

13 Moses said, “Please, Lord, send someone else.” [D]

14 Then the LORD's anger burned against Moses, and He said, "Isn't
Aaron the Levite your brother? I know that he can speak well. And also, he
is on his way now to meet you. He will rejoice when he sees you. 15 You
will speak with him and tell him what to say. I will help [E] both you and him
to speak and will teach you both what to do. 16 He will speak to the people
for you. He will be your spokesman, and you will serve as God to him.
17 And take this staff in your hand that you will perform the signs with."

Moses' Return to Egypt

18 Then Moses went back to his father-in-law Jethro and said to him,
"Please let me return to my relatives in Egypt and see if they are still
living."

Jethro said to Moses, "Go in peace."

19 Now in Midian the LORD told Moses, "Return to Egypt, for all the men
who wanted to kill you are dead." 20 So Moses took his wife and sons, put
them on a donkey, and returned to the land of Egypt. And Moses took
God's staff in his hand.

21[†] The LORD instructed Moses, "When you go back to Egypt, make sure
you do all the wonders before Pharaoh that I have put within your power.
But I will harden his heart [F] so that he won't let the people go. 22 Then you
will say to Pharaoh: This is what Yahweh says: Israel is My firstborn son.
23 I told you: Let My son go so that he may worship Me, but you refused to
let him go. Now I will kill your firstborn son! "

24[†] On the trip, at an overnight campsite, it happened that the LORD
confronted him and sought to put him to death. 25 So Zipporah took a flint,
cut off her son's foreskin, and threw it at Moses' feet. Then she said, "You
are a bridegroom of blood to me! " 26 So He let him alone. At that time she
said, "You are a bridegroom of blood," referring to the circumcision.

Reunion of Moses and Aaron

27 Now the LORD had said to Aaron, “Go and meet Moses in the
wilderness.” So he went and met him at the mountain of God and kissed
him. 28 Moses told Aaron everything the LORD had sent him to say, and
about all the signs He had commanded him to do. 29 Then Moses and Aaron
went and assembled all the elders of the Israelites. 30 Aaron repeated
everything the LORD had said to Moses and performed the signs before the
people. 31 The people believed, and when they heard that the LORD had paid
attention to them and that He had seen their misery, they bowed down and
worshiped.

EXODUS

Moses Confronts Pharaoh

5 † Later, Moses and Aaron went in and said to Pharaoh, “This is what
•Yahweh, the God of Israel, says: Let My people go, so that they may
hold a festival for Me in the wilderness.”

2 But Pharaoh responded, “Who is Yahweh that I should obey Him by
letting Israel go? I do not know anything about Yahweh, and besides, I will
not let Israel go.”

3 Then they answered, “The God of the Hebrews has met with us. Please
let us go on a three-day trip into the wilderness so that we may sacrifice to
Yahweh our God, or else He may strike us with plague or sword.”

4 The king of Egypt said to them, “Moses and Aaron, why are you
causing the people to neglect their work? Get to your work! ” 5 Pharaoh
also said, “Look, the people of the land are so numerous, and you would
stop them from working.”

Further Oppression of Israel

6 That day Pharaoh commanded the overseers of the people as well as
their foremen: 7† “Don’t continue to supply the people with straw for
making bricks, as before. They must go and gather straw for themselves.
8 But require the same quota of bricks from them as they were making
before; do not reduce it. For they are slackers — that is why they are crying
out, ‘Let us go and sacrifice to our God.’ 9 Impose heavier work on the
men. Then they will be occupied with it and not pay attention to deceptive
words.”

10 So the overseers and foremen of the people went out and said to them,
“This is what Pharaoh says: ‘I am not giving you straw. 11 Go get straw
yourselves wherever you can find it, but there will be no reduction at all in
your workload.’ ” 12 So the people scattered throughout the land of Egypt to
gather stubble for straw. 13 The overseers insisted, “Finish your assigned
work each day, just as you did when straw was provided.” 14 Then the
Israelite foremen, whom Pharaoh’s slave drivers had set over the people,

were beaten and asked, "Why haven't you finished making your prescribed
number of bricks yesterday or today, as you did before? "

[15] So the Israelite foremen went in and cried for help to Pharaoh: "Why
are you treating your servants this way? [16] No straw has been given to your
servants, yet they say to us, 'Make bricks! ' Look, your servants are being
beaten, but it is your own people who are at fault."

[17] But he said, "You are slackers. Slackers! That is why you are saying,
'Let us go sacrifice to the LORD.' [18] Now get to work. No straw will be
given to you, but you must produce the same quantity of bricks."

[19] The Israelite foremen saw that they were in trouble when they were
told, "You cannot reduce your daily quota of bricks." [20] When they left
Pharaoh, they confronted Moses and Aaron, who stood waiting to meet
them.

[21] "May the LORD take note of you and judge," they said to them,
"because you have made us reek in front of Pharaoh and his
officials — putting a sword in their hand to kill us! "

[22] So Moses went back to the LORD and asked, "Lord, why have You
caused trouble for this people? And why did You ever send me? [23] Ever
since I went in to Pharaoh to speak in Your name he has caused trouble for
this people, and You haven't delivered Your people at all."

EXODUS

6 But the LORD replied to Moses, "Now you are going to see what I will do to Pharaoh: he will let them go because of My strong hand; he will drive them out of his land because of My strong hand."

God Promises Freedom

2 Then God spoke to Moses, telling him, "I am •Yahweh. 3† I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as •God Almighty, but I did not reveal My name Yahweh to them. 4 I also established My covenant with them to give them the land of Canaan, the land they lived in as foreigners. 5 Furthermore, I have heard the groaning of the Israelites, whom the Egyptians are forcing to work as slaves, and I have remembered My covenant.

6 "Therefore tell the Israelites: I am Yahweh, and I will deliver you from the forced labor of the Egyptians and free you from slavery to them. I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and great acts of judgment. 7 I will take you as My people, and I will be your God. You will know that I am Yahweh your God, who delivered you from the forced labor of the Egyptians. 8 I will bring you to the land that I swore [A] to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and I will give it to you as a possession. I am Yahweh."
9 Moses told this to the Israelites, but they did not listen to him because of their broken spirit and hard labor.

10 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, 11 "Go and tell Pharaoh king of Egypt to let the Israelites go from his land."

12 But Moses said in the LORD's presence: "If the Israelites will not listen to me, then how will Pharaoh listen to me, since I am such a poor speaker? " [B] 13 Then the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron and gave them commands concerning both the Israelites and Pharaoh king of Egypt to bring the Israelites out of the land of Egypt.

Genealogy of Moses and Aaron

14 These are the heads of their fathers' families:

The sons of Reuben, the firstborn of Israel:
Hanoch and Pallu, Hezron and Carmi.
These are the clans of Reuben.

15 The sons of Simeon:
Jemuel, Jamin, Ohad, Jachin,
Zohar, and Shaul, the son of a Canaanite woman.
These are the clans of Simeon.

16† These are the names of the sons of Levi
according to their genealogy:
Gershon, Kohath, and Merari.
Levi lived 137 years.
17 The sons of Gershon:
Libni and Shimei, by their clans.
18† The sons of Kohath:
Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel.
Kohath lived 133 years.
19 The sons of Merari:
Mahli and Mushi.
These are the clans of the Levites
according to their genealogy.
20 Amram married his father's sister Jochebed,
and she bore him Aaron and Moses.
Amram lived 137 years.
21 The sons of Izhar:
Korah, Nepheg, and Zichri.
22 The sons of Uzziel:
Mishael, Elzaphan, and Sithri.
23 Aaron married Elisheba,
daughter of Amminadab and sister of Nahshon.
She bore him Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar.
24 The sons of Korah:
Assir, Elkanah, and Abiasaph.
These are the clans of the Korahites.

25 Aaron's son Eleazar married
one of the daughters of Putiel
and she bore him Phinehas.
These are the heads of the Levite families by their clans.

26 It was this Aaron and Moses whom the LORD told, "Bring the Israelites
out of the land of Egypt according to their divisions." 27 Moses and Aaron
were the ones who spoke to Pharaoh king of Egypt in order to bring the
Israelites out of Egypt.

Moses and Aaron before Pharaoh

28 On the day the LORD spoke to Moses in the land of Egypt, 29 He said to
him, "I am Yahweh; tell Pharaoh king of Egypt everything I am telling
you."

30 But Moses replied in the LORD's presence, "Since I am such a poor
speaker, [C] how will Pharaoh listen to me? "

EXODUS

7 The LORD answered Moses, “See, I have made you like God to Pharaoh,
and Aaron your brother will be your prophet. 2 You must say whatever I
command you; then Aaron your brother must declare it to Pharaoh so that
he will let the Israelites go from his land. 3† But I will harden Pharaoh’s
heart and multiply My signs and wonders in the land of Egypt. 4 Pharaoh
will not listen to you, but I will put My hand on Egypt and bring the
divisions of My people the Israelites out of the land of Egypt by great acts
of judgment. 5 The Egyptians will know that I am •Yahweh when I stretch
out My hand against Egypt, and bring out the Israelites from among them.”

6 So Moses and Aaron did this; they did just as the LORD commanded
them. 7 Moses was 80 years old and Aaron 83 when they spoke to Pharaoh.

8 The LORD said to Moses and Aaron, 9† “When Pharaoh tells you,
‘Perform a miracle,’ tell Aaron, ‘Take your staff and throw it down before
Pharaoh. It will become a serpent.’ ” 10 So Moses and Aaron went in to
Pharaoh and did just as the LORD had commanded. Aaron threw down his
staff before Pharaoh and his officials, and it became a serpent. 11 But then
Pharaoh called the wise men and sorcerers — the magicians of Egypt, and
they also did the same thing by their occult practices. 12 Each one threw
down his staff, and it became a serpent. But Aaron’s staff swallowed their
staffs. 13 However, Pharaoh’s heart hardened, and he did not listen to them,
as the LORD had said.

The First Plague: Water Turned to Blood

14 Then the LORD said to Moses, “Pharaoh’s heart is hard: he refuses to let
the people go. 15 Go to Pharaoh in the morning. When you see him walking
out to the water, stand ready to meet him by the bank of the Nile. Take in
your hand the staff that turned into a snake. 16 Tell him: Yahweh, the God
of the Hebrews, has sent me to tell you: Let My people go, so that they may
worship [A] Me in the wilderness, but so far you have not listened. 17 This is
what Yahweh says: Here is how you will know that I am Yahweh. Watch. I
will strike the water in the Nile with the staff in my hand, and it will turn to

blood. 18 The fish in the Nile will die, the river will stink, and the Egyptians
will be unable to drink water from it.”

19 So the LORD said to Moses, “Tell Aaron: Take your staff and stretch
out your hand over the waters of Egypt — over their rivers, canals, ponds,
and all their water reservoirs — and they will become blood. There will be
blood throughout the land of Egypt, even in wooden and stone containers.”

20† Moses and Aaron did just as the LORD had commanded; in the sight of
Pharaoh and his officials, he raised the staff and struck the water in the Nile,
and all the water in the Nile was turned to blood. 21 The fish in the Nile
died, and the river smelled so bad the Egyptians could not drink water from
it. There was blood throughout the land of Egypt.

ARTICLE
Are Miracles Believable? ⇒

22† But the magicians of Egypt did the same thing by their occult
practices. So Pharaoh’s heart hardened, and he would not listen to them, as
the LORD had said. 23 Pharaoh turned around, went into his palace, and
didn’t even take this to heart. 24 All the Egyptians dug around the Nile for
water to drink because they could not drink the water from the river.
25 Seven days passed after the LORD struck the Nile.

EXODUS

Chapter 8 *The Second Plague: Frogs*

1 Then the LORD said to Moses, “Go in to Pharaoh and tell him: This is what
•Yahweh says: Let My people go, so that they may worship Me. 2 But if
you refuse to let them go, then I will plague all your territory with frogs.
3 The Nile will swarm with frogs; they will come up and go into your
palace, into your bedroom and on your bed, into the houses of your officials
and your people, and into your ovens and kneading bowls. 4 The frogs will
come up on you, your people, and all your officials.”

5 The LORD then said to Moses, “Tell Aaron: Stretch out your hand with
your staff over the rivers, canals, and ponds, and cause the frogs to come up
onto the land of Egypt.” 6 When Aaron stretched out his hand over the
waters of Egypt, the frogs came up and covered the land of Egypt. 7[†] But
the magicians did the same thing by their occult practices and brought frogs
up onto the land of Egypt.

8 Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron and said, “Ask Yahweh to
remove the frogs from me and my people. Then I will let the people go and
they can sacrifice to Yahweh.”

9 Moses said to Pharaoh, “You make the choice rather than me. When
should I ask on behalf of you, your officials, and your people, that the frogs
be taken away from you and your houses, and remain only in the Nile?”

10 “Tomorrow,” he answered.

Moses replied, “As you have said, so you may know there is no one like
Yahweh our God, 11 the frogs will go away from you, your houses, your
officials, and your people. The frogs will remain only in the Nile.” 12 After
Moses and Aaron went out from Pharaoh, Moses cried out to the LORD for
help concerning the frogs that He had brought against [A] Pharaoh. 13 The
LORD did as Moses had said: the frogs in the houses, courtyards, and fields
died. 14 They piled them in countless heaps, and there was a terrible odor in

the land. 15 But when Pharaoh saw there was relief, he hardened his heart
and would not listen to them, as the LORD had said.

The Third Plague: Gnats

16 Then the LORD said to Moses, “Tell Aaron: Stretch out your staff and
strike the dust of the earth, and it will become gnats throughout the land of
Egypt.” 17 And they did this. Aaron stretched out his hand with his staff,
and when he struck the dust of the earth, gnats were on man and beast. All
the dust of the earth became gnats throughout the land of Egypt. 18 The
magicians tried to produce gnats using their occult practices, but they could
not. The gnats remained on man and beast.

19 “This is the finger of God,” the magicians said to Pharaoh. But
Pharaoh’s heart hardened, and he would not listen to them, as the LORD had
said.

The Fourth Plague: Swarms of Flies

20 The LORD said to Moses, “Get up early in the morning and present
yourself to Pharaoh when you see him going out to the water. Tell him: This
is what Yahweh says: Let My people go, so that they may worship [B] Me.
21 But if you will not let My people go, then I will send swarms of flies [C]
against you, your officials, your people, and your houses. The Egyptians’
houses will swarm with flies, and so will the land where they live. [D] 22 But
on that day I will give special treatment to the land of Goshen, where My
people are living; no flies will be there. This way you will know that I,
Yahweh, am in the land. 23 I will make a distinction between My people
and your people. This sign will take place tomorrow.”

24 And the LORD did this. Thick swarms of flies went into Pharaoh’s
palace and his officials’ houses. Throughout Egypt the land was ruined
because of the swarms of flies. 25 Then Pharaoh summoned Moses and
Aaron and said, “Go sacrifice to your God within the country.”

26† But Moses said, “It would not be right [E] to do that, because what we
will sacrifice to the LORD our God is detestable to the Egyptians. If we
sacrifice what the Egyptians detest in front of them, won’t they stone us?
27 We must go a distance of three days into the wilderness and sacrifice to
the LORD our God as He instructs us.”

28 Pharaoh responded, “I will let you go and sacrifice to the LORD your
God in the wilderness, but don’t go very far. Make an appeal for me.”

29 “As soon as I leave you,” Moses said, “I will appeal to the LORD, and
tomorrow the swarms of flies will depart from Pharaoh, his officials, and
his people. But Pharaoh must not act deceptively again by refusing to let the
people go and sacrifice to the LORD.” 30 Then Moses left Pharaoh’s presence
and appealed to the LORD. 31 The LORD did as Moses had said: He removed
the swarms of flies from Pharaoh, his officials, and his people; not one was
left. 32 But Pharaoh hardened his heart this time also and did not let the
people go.

EXODUS

The Fifth Plague: Death of Livestock

9 Then the LORD said to Moses, “Go in to Pharaoh and say to him: This is
what •Yahweh, the God of the Hebrews, says: Let My people go, so that
they may worship Me. 2 But if you refuse to let them go and keep holding
them, 3 then the LORD’s hand will bring a severe plague against your
livestock in the field — the horses, donkeys, camels, herds, and flocks.
4 But the LORD will make a distinction between the livestock of Israel and
the livestock of Egypt, so that nothing of all that the Israelites own will
die.” 5 And the LORD set a time, saying, “Tomorrow the LORD will do this
thing in the land.” 6[†] The LORD did this the next day. All the Egyptian
livestock died, but none among the Israelite livestock died. 7[†] Pharaoh sent
messengers who saw that not a single one of the Israelite livestock was
dead. But Pharaoh’s heart was hardened, and he did not let the people go.

The Sixth Plague: Boils

8 Then the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, “Take handfuls of furnace
soot, and Moses is to throw it toward heaven in the sight of Pharaoh. 9[†] It
will become fine dust over the entire land of Egypt. It will become festering
boils on man and beast throughout the land of Egypt.” 10 So they took
furnace soot and stood before Pharaoh. Moses threw it toward heaven, and
it became festering boils on man and beast. 11 The magicians could not
stand before Moses because of the boils, for the boils were on the magicians
as well as on all the Egyptians. 12 But the LORD hardened Pharaoh’s heart
and he did not listen to them, as the LORD had told Moses.

The Seventh Plague: Hail

13 Then the LORD said to Moses, “Get up early in the morning and present
yourself to Pharaoh. Tell him: This is what Yahweh, the God of the
Hebrews says: Let My people go, so that they may worship Me.
14 Otherwise, I am going to send all My plagues against you, [A] your
officials, and your people. Then you will know there is no one like Me in all
the earth. 15 By now I could have stretched out My hand and struck you and
your people with a plague, and you would have been obliterated from the
earth. 16 However, I have let you live for this purpose: to show you My

power and to make My name known in all the earth. 17 You are still acting
arrogantly against [B] My people by not letting them go. 18 Tomorrow at this
time I will rain down the worst hail that has ever occurred in Egypt from
the day it was founded until now. 19 Therefore give orders to bring your
livestock and all that you have in the field into shelters. Every person and
animal that is in the field and not brought inside will die when the hail falls
on them." 20 Those among Pharaoh's officials who •feared the word of the
LORD made their servants and livestock flee to shelters, 21 but those who
didn't take the LORD's word seriously left their servants and livestock in the
field.

22 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand toward heaven
and let there be hail throughout the land of Egypt — on man and beast and
every plant of the field in the land of Egypt." 23 So Moses stretched out his
staff toward heaven, and the LORD sent thunder and hail. Lightning struck
the earth, and the LORD rained hail on the land of Egypt. 24 The hail, with
lightning flashing through it, was so severe that nothing like it had occurred
in the land of Egypt since it had become a nation. 25[†] Throughout the land
of Egypt, the hail struck down everything in the field, both man and beast.
The hail beat down every plant of the field and shattered every tree in the
field. 26 The only place it didn't hail was in the land of Goshen where the
Israelites were.

27 Pharaoh sent for Moses and Aaron. "I have sinned this time," he said
to them. "Yahweh is the Righteous One, and I and my people are the
•guilty ones. 28 Make an appeal to Yahweh. There has been enough of
God's thunder and hail. I will let you go; you don't need to stay any
longer."

29 Moses said to him, "When I have left the city, I will extend my hands
to Yahweh. The thunder will cease, and there will be no more hail, so that
you may know the earth belongs to Yahweh. 30 But as for you and your
officials, I know that you still do not fear Yahweh our God."

[31] The flax and the barley were destroyed because the barley was ripe [C]
and the flax was budding, [32] but the wheat and the spelt were not destroyed
since they are later crops. [D]

[33] Moses went out from Pharaoh and the city, and extended his hands to
the LORD. Then the thunder and hail ceased, and rain no longer poured
down on the land. [34] When Pharaoh saw that the rain, hail, and thunder had
ceased, he sinned again and hardened his heart, he and his officials. [35] So
Pharaoh’s heart hardened, and he did not let the Israelites go, as the LORD
had said through Moses.

EXODUS

The Eighth Plague: Locusts

10 † Then the LORD said to Moses, "Go to Pharaoh, for I have hardened
his heart and the hearts of his officials so that I may do these
miraculous signs of Mine among them, [A], 2 and so that you may tell [B] your
son and grandson how severely I dealt with the Egyptians and performed
miraculous signs among them, and you will know that I am •Yahweh."

3 So Moses and Aaron went in to Pharaoh and told him, "This is what
Yahweh, the God of the Hebrews, says: How long will you refuse to humble
yourself before Me? Let My people go, that they may worship Me. 4 But if
you refuse to let My people go, then tomorrow I will bring locusts into
your territory. 5 They will cover the surface of the land so that no one will
be able to see the land. They will eat the remainder left to you that escaped
the hail; they will eat every tree you have growing in the fields. 6 They will
fill your houses, all your officials' houses, and the houses of all the
Egyptians — something your fathers and ancestors never saw since the time
they occupied the land until today." Then he turned and left Pharaoh's
presence.

7 Pharaoh's officials asked him, "How long must this man be a snare to
us? Let the men go, so that they may worship Yahweh their God. Don't you
realize yet that Egypt is devastated? "

8 So Moses and Aaron were brought back to Pharaoh. "Go, worship
Yahweh your God," Pharaoh said. "But exactly who will be going? "

9 Moses replied, "We will go with our young and our old; we will go with
our sons and daughters and with our flocks and herds because we must hold
Yahweh's festival."

10 He said to them, "May Yahweh be with you if I ever let you and your
families go! Look out — you are planning evil. 11 No, only the men may
go and worship Yahweh, for that is what you have been asking for." And
they were driven from Pharaoh's presence.

12 The LORD then said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the land of
Egypt and the locusts will come up over it and eat every plant in the land,

everything that the hail left.” 13 So Moses stretched out his staff over the
land of Egypt, and the LORD sent an east wind over the land all that day and
through the night. By morning the east wind had brought in the locusts.
14 The locusts went up over the entire land of Egypt and settled on the
whole territory of Egypt. Never before had there been such a large number
of locusts, and there never will be again. 15 They covered the surface of the
whole land so that the land was black, and they consumed all the plants on
the ground and all the fruit on the trees that the hail had left. Nothing green
was left on the trees or the plants in the field throughout the land of Egypt.

16 Pharaoh urgently sent for Moses and Aaron and said, “I have sinned
against Yahweh your God and against you. 17 Please forgive my sin once
more and make an appeal to Yahweh your God, so that He will take this
death away from me.” 18 Moses left Pharaoh’s presence and appealed to the
LORD. 19[†] Then the LORD changed the wind to a strong west [C] wind, and it
carried off the locusts and blew them into the •Red Sea. Not a single locust
was left in all the territory of Egypt. 20 But the LORD hardened Pharaoh’s
heart, and he did not let the Israelites go.

The Ninth Plague: Darkness

21 Then the LORD said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand toward heaven,
and there will be darkness over the land of Egypt, a darkness that can be
felt.” 22 So Moses stretched out his hand toward heaven, and there was
thick darkness throughout the land of Egypt for three days. 23 One person
could not see another, and for three days they did not move from where they
were. Yet all the Israelites had light where they lived.

24 Pharaoh summoned Moses and said, “Go, worship Yahweh. Even your
families may go with you; only your flocks and herds must stay behind.”

25 Moses responded, “You must also let us have [D] sacrifices and •burnt
offerings to prepare for Yahweh our God. 26 Even our livestock must go
with us; not a hoof will be left behind because we will take some of them to
worship Yahweh our God. We will not know what we will use to worship
Yahweh until we get there.”

27 But the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he was unwilling to let
them go. 28 Pharaoh said to him, "Leave me! Make sure you never see my
face again, for on the day you see my face, you will die."

29 "As you have said," Moses replied, "I will never see your face again."

EXODUS

The Tenth Plague: Death of the Firstborn

11 The LORD said [A] to Moses, “I will bring one more plague on Pharaoh
and on Egypt. After that, he will let you go from here. When he lets
you go, [B] he will drive you out of here. 2 Now announce to the people that
both men and women should ask their neighbors for silver and gold
jewelry.” 3† The LORD gave [C] the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians.
And the man Moses was highly regarded [D] in the land of Egypt by [E]
Pharaoh’s officials and the people.

4 So Moses said, “This is what •Yahweh says: ‘About midnight I will go
throughout Egypt, 5 and every firstborn male in the land of Egypt will die,
from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sits on his throne to the firstborn of the
servant girl who is behind the millstones, as well as every firstborn of the
livestock. 6 Then there will be a great cry of anguish through all the land of
Egypt such as never was before, or ever will be again. 7 But against all the
Israelites, whether man or beast, not even a dog will snarl, [F] so that you
may know that Yahweh makes a distinction between Egypt and Israel. 8 All
these officials of yours will come down to me and bow before me, saying:
Leave, you and all the people who follow you. [G] After that, I will leave.’ ”
And he left Pharaoh’s presence in fierce anger.

9 The LORD said to Moses, “Pharaoh will not listen to you, so that My
wonders may be multiplied in the land of Egypt.” 10† Moses and Aaron did
all these wonders before Pharaoh, but the LORD hardened Pharaoh’s heart,
and he would not let the Israelites go out of his land.

EXODUS

Instructions for the Passover

12 The LORD said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt: 2 “This month is to be the beginning of months for you; it is the first month of your year. 3† Tell the whole community of Israel that on the tenth day of this month they must each select an animal of the flock according to their fathers’ households, one animal per household. 4 If the household is too small for a whole animal, that person and the neighbor nearest his house are to select one based on the combined number of people; you should apportion the animal according to what each person [A] will eat. 5† You must have an unblemished animal, a year-old male; you may take it from either the sheep or the goats. 6 You are to keep it until the fourteenth day of this month; then the whole assembly of the community of Israel will slaughter the animals at twilight. 7† They must take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses where they eat them. 8 They are to eat the meat that night; they should eat it, roasted over the fire along with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. 9 Do not eat any of it raw or cooked in boiling [B] water, but only roasted over fire — its head as well as its legs and inner organs. 10 Do not let any of it remain until morning; you must burn up any part of it that does remain before morning. 11 Here is how you must eat it: you must be dressed for travel, [C] your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. You are to eat it in a hurry; it is the LORD’s •Passover.

12† “I will pass through the land of Egypt on that night and strike every firstborn male in the land of Egypt, both man and beast. I am •Yahweh; I will execute judgments against all the gods of Egypt. 13† The blood on the houses where you are staying will be a distinguishing mark for you; when I see the blood, I will pass over you. No plague will be among you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt.

14 “This day is to be a memorial for you, and you must celebrate it as a festival to the LORD. You are to celebrate it throughout your generations as a permanent statute. 15 You must eat unleavened bread for seven days. On the first day you must remove yeast from your houses. Whoever eats what is leavened from the first day through the seventh day must be cut off from Israel. 16 You are to hold a sacred assembly on the first day and another

sacred assembly on the seventh day. No work may be done on those days
except for preparing what people need to eat — you may do only that.

[17] “You are to observe the Festival of •Unleavened Bread because on this
very day I brought your divisions out of the land of Egypt. You must
observe this day throughout your generations as a permanent statute. [18] You
are to eat unleavened bread in the first month, from the evening of the
fourteenth day of the month until the evening of the twenty-first day.
[19] Yeast must not be found in your houses for seven days. If anyone eats
something leavened, that person, whether a foreign resident or native of the
land, must be cut off from the community of Israel. [20] Do not eat anything
leavened; eat unleavened bread in all your homes.” [D]

[21] Then Moses summoned all the elders of Israel and said to them, “Go,
select an animal from the flock according to your families, and slaughter the
Passover animal. [22] Take a cluster of hyssop, dip it in the blood that is in
the basin, and brush the lintel and the two doorposts with some of the blood
in the basin. None of you may go out the door of his house until morning.
[23] When the LORD passes through to strike Egypt and sees the blood on the
lintel and the two doorposts, He will pass over the door and not let the
destroyer enter your houses to strike you.

[24] “Keep this command permanently as a statute for you and your
descendants. [25] When you enter the land that the LORD will give you as He
promised, you are to observe this ritual. [26] When your children ask you,
‘What does this ritual mean to you? ’ [27] you are to reply, ‘It is the Passover
sacrifice to the LORD, for He passed over the houses of the Israelites in
Egypt when He struck the Egyptians and spared our homes.’ ” So the people
bowed down and worshiped. [28] Then the Israelites went and did this; they
did just as the LORD had commanded Moses and Aaron.

The Exodus

[29] Now at midnight the LORD struck every firstborn male in the land of
Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sat on his throne to the firstborn
of the prisoner who was in the dungeon, and every firstborn of the

livestock. 30 During the night Pharaoh got up, he along with all his officials
and all the Egyptians, and there was a loud wailing throughout Egypt
because there wasn't a house without someone dead. 31† He summoned
Moses and Aaron during the night and said, "Get up, leave my people, both
you and the Israelites, and go, worship Yahweh as you have asked. 32 Take
even your flocks and your herds as you asked and leave, and also bless me."

33 Now the Egyptians pressured the people in order to send them quickly
out of the country, for they said, "We're all going to die! " 34 So the people
took their dough before it was leavened, with their kneading bowls wrapped
up in their clothes on their shoulders.

35† The Israelites acted on Moses' word and asked the Egyptians for
silver and gold jewelry and for clothing. 36 And the LORD gave the people
such favor in the Egyptians' sight that they gave them what they requested.
In this way they plundered the Egyptians.

37† The Israelites traveled from Rameses to Succoth, about 600,000
soldiers on foot, besides their families. 38 An ethnically diverse crowd also
went up with them, along with a huge number of livestock, both flocks and
herds. 39 The people baked the dough they had brought out of Egypt into
unleavened loaves, since it had no yeast; for when they had been driven out
of Egypt they could not delay and had not prepared any provisions for
themselves.

40† The time that the Israelites lived in Egypt was 430 years. 41 At the
end of 430 years, on that same day, all the LORD's divisions went out from
the land of Egypt. 42 It was a night of vigil in honor of the LORD, because
He would bring them out of the land of Egypt. This same night is in honor
of the LORD, a night vigil for all the Israelites throughout their generations.

Passover Instruction

43† The LORD said to Moses and Aaron, "This is the statute of the
Passover: no foreigner may eat it. 44 But any slave a man has purchased
may eat it, after you have circumcised him. 45 A temporary resident or hired

hand may not eat the Passover. 46 It is to be eaten in one house. You may
not take any of the meat outside the house, and you may not break any of its
bones. 47 The whole community of Israel must celebrate [E] it. 48 If a
foreigner resides with you and wants to celebrate the LORD's Passover,
every male in his household must be circumcised, and then he may
participate; [F] he will become like a native of the land. But no uncircumcised
person may eat it. 49 The same law will apply to both the native and the
foreigner who resides among you."

50 Then all the Israelites did this; they did just as the LORD had
commanded Moses and Aaron. 51 On that same day the LORD brought the
Israelites out of the land of Egypt according to their divisions.

EXODUS

13 The LORD spoke to Moses: 2 “Consecrate every firstborn male to Me,
the firstborn from every womb among the Israelites, both man and
domestic animal; it is Mine.”

3 Then Moses said to the people, “Remember this day when you came
out of Egypt, out of the place of slavery, for the LORD brought you out of
here by the strength of His hand. Nothing leavened may be eaten. 4 Today,
in the month of Abib, you are leaving. 5 When the LORD brings you into the
land of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Hivites, and Jebusites, which He
swore to your fathers that He would give you, a land flowing with milk and
honey, you must carry out this ritual in this month. 6 For seven days you
must eat unleavened bread, and on the seventh day there is to be a festival
to the LORD. 7 Unleavened bread is to be eaten for those seven days.
Nothing leavened may be found among you, and no yeast may be found
among you in all your territory. 8 On that day explain to your son, ‘This is
because of what the LORD did for me when I came out of Egypt.’ 9 Let it
serve as a sign for you on your hand and as a reminder on your forehead, [A]
so that the LORD’s instruction may be in your mouth; for the LORD brought
you out of Egypt with a strong hand. 10 Keep this statute at its appointed
time from year to year.

11 “When the LORD brings you into the land of the Canaanites, as He
swore to you and your fathers, and gives it to you, 12[†] you are to present to
the LORD every firstborn male of the womb. All firstborn offspring of the
livestock you own that are males will be the LORD’s. 13 You must redeem
every firstborn of a donkey with a flock animal, but if you do not redeem it,
break its neck. However, you must redeem every firstborn among your
sons.

14 “In the future, when your son asks you, ‘What does this mean? ’ say
to him, ‘By the strength of His hand the LORD brought us out of Egypt, out
of the place of slavery. 15 When Pharaoh stubbornly refused to let us go, the
LORD killed every firstborn male in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of
man to the firstborn of livestock. That is why I sacrifice to the LORD all the
firstborn of the womb that are males, but I redeem all the firstborn of my

sons.’ 16 So let it be a sign on your hand and a symbol [B] on your forehead,
for the LORD brought us out of Egypt by the strength of His hand.”

The Route of the Exodus

17 When Pharaoh let the people go, God did not lead them along the road
to the land of the Philistines, even though it was nearby; for God said, “The
people will change their minds and return to Egypt if they face war.” 18[†] So
He led the people around toward the •Red Sea along the road of the
wilderness. And the Israelites left the land of Egypt in battle formation.

19 Moses took the bones of Joseph with him, because Joseph had made
the Israelites swear a solemn oath, saying, “God will certainly come to your
aid; then you must take my bones with you from this place.”

20 They set out from Succoth and camped at Etham on the edge of the
wilderness. 21[†] The LORD went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud to lead
them on their way during the day and in a pillar of fire to give them light at
night, so that they could travel day or night. 22 The pillar of cloud by day
and the pillar of fire by night never left its place in front of the people.

EXODUS

14 Then the LORD spoke to Moses: 2 “Tell the Israelites to turn back and
camp in front of Pi-hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea; you must
camp in front of Baal-zephon, facing it by the sea. 3 Pharaoh will say of the
Israelites: They are wandering around the land in confusion; the wilderness
has boxed them in. 4† I will harden Pharaoh’s heart so that he will pursue
them. Then I will receive glory by means of Pharaoh and all his army, and
the Egyptians will know that I am •Yahweh.” So the Israelites did this.

The Egyptian Pursuit

5 When the king of Egypt was told that the people had fled, Pharaoh and
his officials changed their minds about the people and said: “What have we
done? We have released Israel from serving us.” 6 So he got his chariot
ready and took his troops [A] with him; 7 he took 600 of the best chariots and
all the rest of the chariots of Egypt, with officers in each one. 8 The LORD
hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and he pursued the Israelites,
who were going out triumphantly. [B], 9† The Egyptians — all Pharaoh’s
horses and chariots, his horsemen, [C] and his army — chased after them and
caught up with them as they camped by the sea beside Pi-hahiroth, in front
of Baal-zephon.

10 As Pharaoh approached, the Israelites looked up and saw the Egyptians
coming after them. Then the Israelites were terrified and cried out to the
LORD for help. 11 They said to Moses: “Is it because there are no graves in
Egypt that you took us to die in the wilderness? What have you done to us
by bringing us out of Egypt? 12 Isn’t this what we told you in Egypt: Leave
us alone so that we may serve the Egyptians? It would have been better for
us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness.”

13 But Moses said to the people, “Don’t be afraid. Stand firm and see the
LORD’s salvation He will provide for you today; for the Egyptians you see
today, you will never see again. 14 The LORD will fight for you; you must be
quiet.”

Escape through the Red Sea

15 The LORD said to Moses, “Why are you crying out to Me? Tell the
Israelites to break camp. 16[†] As for you, lift up your staff, stretch out your
hand over the sea, and divide it so that the Israelites can go through the sea
on dry ground. 17 I am going to harden the hearts of the Egyptians so that
they will go in after them, and I will receive glory by means of Pharaoh, all
his army, and his chariots and horsemen. 18 The Egyptians will know that I
am Yahweh when I receive glory through Pharaoh, his chariots, and his
horsemen.”

19 Then the Angel of God, who was going in front of the Israelite forces,
moved and went behind them. The pillar of cloud moved from in front of
them and stood behind them. 20 It came between the Egyptian and Israelite
forces. The cloud was there in the darkness, yet it lit up the night. So
neither group came near the other all night long.

21[†] Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea. The LORD drove the
sea back with a powerful east wind all that night and turned the sea into dry
land. So the waters were divided, 22 and the Israelites went through the sea
on dry ground, with the waters like a wall to them on their right and their
left.

23 The Egyptians set out in pursuit — all Pharaoh’s horses, his chariots,
and his horsemen — and went into the sea after them. 24 Then during the
morning watch, the LORD looked down on the Egyptian forces from the
pillar of fire and cloud, and threw them into confusion. 25[†] He caused their
chariot wheels to swerve and made them drive [E] with difficulty. “Let’s get
away from Israel,” the Egyptians said, “because Yahweh is fighting for
them against Egypt! ”

26 Then the LORD said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand over the sea so
that the waters may come back on the Egyptians, on their chariots and
horsemen.” 27 So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and at
daybreak the sea returned to its normal depth. While the Egyptians were
trying to escape from it, the LORD threw them into the sea. 28 The waters

came back and covered the chariots and horsemen, the entire army of
Pharaoh, that had gone after them into the sea. None of them survived.

29 But the Israelites had walked through the sea on dry ground, with the
waters like a wall to them on their right and their left. 30 That day the LORD
saved Israel from the power of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians
dead on the seashore. 31 When Israel saw the great power that the LORD
used against the Egyptians, the people •feared the LORD and believed in
Him and in His servant Moses.

EXODUS

Israel's Song

15 Then Moses and the Israelites sang this song to the LORD. They said:

I will sing to the LORD,
for He is highly exalted;
He has thrown the horse
and its rider into the sea.
2 The LORD is my strength and my song; [A]
He has become my salvation.
This is my God, and I will praise Him,
my father's God, and I will exalt Him.
3† The LORD is a warrior;
•Yahweh is His name.

4 He threw Pharaoh's chariots
and his army into the sea;
the elite of his officers
were drowned in the •Red Sea.
5 The floods covered them;
they sank to the depths like a stone.
6 LORD, Your right hand is glorious in power.
LORD, Your right hand shattered the enemy.
7 You overthrew Your adversaries
by Your great majesty.
You unleashed Your burning wrath;
it consumed them like stubble.
8 The waters heaped up at the blast of Your nostrils;
the currents stood firm like a dam.
The watery depths congealed in the heart of the sea.
9 The enemy said:
"I will pursue, I will overtake,
I will divide the spoil.
My desire will be gratified at their expense.
I will draw my sword;
my hand will destroy [B] them."
10 But You blew with Your breath,
and the sea covered them.

They sank like lead
in the mighty waters.

11† LORD, who is like You among the gods?
Who is like You, glorious in holiness,
revered with praises, performing wonders?
12 You stretched out Your right hand,
and the earth swallowed them.
13 You will lead the people
You have redeemed
with Your faithful love;
You will guide them to Your holy dwelling
with Your strength.

14 When the peoples hear, they will shudder;
anguish will seize the inhabitants of Philistia.
15 Then the chiefs of Edom will be terrified;
trembling will seize the leaders of Moab;
the inhabitants of Canaan will panic;
16 and terror and dread will fall on them.
They will be as still [C] as a stone
because of Your powerful arm
until Your people pass by, LORD,
until the people whom You purchased [D] pass by.

17 You will bring them in and plant them
on the mountain of Your possession;
LORD, You have prepared the place
for Your dwelling;
Lord, Your hands have established the sanctuary.
18 The LORD will reign forever and ever!

19 When Pharaoh's horses with his chariots and horsemen went into the
sea, the LORD brought the waters of the sea back over them. But the
Israelites walked through the sea on dry ground. 20† Then Miriam the
prophetess, Aaron's sister, took a tambourine in her hand, and all the

women followed her with their tambourines and danced. 21 Miriam sang to
them:

Sing to the LORD,
for He is highly exalted;
He has thrown the horse
and its rider into the sea.

Water Provided

22 Then Moses led Israel on from the Red Sea, and they went out to the
Wilderness of Shur. They journeyed for three days in the wilderness without
finding water. 23 They came to Marah, but they could not drink the water at
Marah because it was bitter — that is why it was named Marah. 24 The
people grumbled to Moses, “What are we going to drink? ” 25 So he cried
out to the LORD, and the LORD showed him a tree. When he threw it into the
water, the water became drinkable.

He made a statute and ordinance for them at Marah and He tested them
there. 26 He said, “If you will carefully obey the LORD your God, do what is
right in His eyes, pay attention to His commands, and keep all His statutes,
I will not inflict any illnesses on you that I inflicted on the Egyptians. For I
am Yahweh who heals you.”

27 Then they came to Elim, where there were 12 springs of water and 70
date palms, and they camped there by the waters.

EXODUS

Manna and Quail Provided

16 The entire Israelite community departed from Elim and came to the
Wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth
day of the second month after they had left the land of Egypt. 2 The entire
Israelite community grumbled against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness.
3 The Israelites said to them, “If only we had died by the LORD’s hand in the
land of Egypt, when we sat by pots of meat and ate all the bread we wanted.
Instead, you brought us into this wilderness to make this whole assembly
die of hunger! ”

4 Then the LORD said to Moses, “I am going to rain bread from heaven for
you. The people are to go out each day and gather enough for that day. This
way I will test them to see whether or not they will follow My instructions.
5 On the sixth day, when they prepare what they bring in, it will be twice as
much as they gather on other days.” [A]

6 So Moses and Aaron said to all the Israelites: “This evening you will
know that it was the LORD who brought you out of the land of Egypt; 7 in
the morning you will see the LORD’s glory because He has heard your
complaints about Him. For who are we that you complain about us? ”
8 Moses continued, “The LORD will give you meat to eat this evening and
more than enough bread in the morning, for He has heard the complaints
that you are raising against Him. Who are we? Your complaints are not
against us but against the LORD.”

9 Then Moses told Aaron, “Say to the entire Israelite community, ‘Come
before the LORD, for He has heard your complaints.’ ” 10 As Aaron was
speaking to the entire Israelite community, they turned toward the
wilderness, and there in a cloud the LORD’s glory appeared.

11 The LORD spoke to Moses, 12 “I have heard the complaints of the
Israelites. Tell them: At twilight you will eat meat, and in the morning you
will eat bread until you are full. Then you will know that I am •Yahweh
your God.”

13 So at evening quail came and covered the camp. In the morning there
was a layer of dew all around the camp. 14 When the layer of dew

evaporated, there were fine flakes on the desert surface, as fine as frost on the ground. 15 When the Israelites saw it, they asked one another, “What is it? ” because they didn’t know what it was.

Moses told them, “It is the bread the LORD has given you to eat. 16[†] This is what the LORD has commanded: ‘Gather as much of it as each person needs to eat. You may take two quarts [B] per individual, according to the number of people each of you has in his tent.’ ”

17 So the Israelites did this. Some gathered a lot, some a little. 18 When they measured it by quarts, [C] the person who gathered a lot had no surplus, and the person who gathered a little had no shortage. Each gathered as much as he needed to eat. 19 Moses said to them, “No one is to let any of it remain until morning.” 20 But they didn’t listen to Moses; some people left part of it until morning, and it bred worms and smelled. Therefore Moses was angry with them.

21 They gathered it every morning. Each gathered as much as he needed to eat, but when the sun grew hot, it melted. 22 On the sixth day they gathered twice as much food, four quarts [D] apiece, and all the leaders of the community came and reported this to Moses. 23 He told them, “This is what the LORD has said: ‘Tomorrow is a day of complete rest, a holy Sabbath to the LORD. Bake what you want to bake, and boil what you want to boil, and set aside everything left over to be kept until morning.’ ”

24 So they set it aside until morning as Moses commanded, and it didn’t smell or have any maggots in it. 25 “Eat it today,” Moses said, “because today is a Sabbath to the LORD. Today you won’t find any in the field. 26 For six days you may gather it, but on the seventh day, the Sabbath, there will be none.”

27 Yet on the seventh day some of the people went out to gather, but they did not find any. 28 Then the LORD said to Moses, “How long will you refuse to keep My commands and instructions? 29 Understand that the LORD has given you the Sabbath; therefore on the sixth day He will give you

two days’ worth of bread. Each of you stay where you are; no one is to
leave his place on the seventh day.” 30 So the people rested on the seventh
day.

31[†] The house of Israel named the substance manna. It resembled
coriander seed, was white, and tasted like wafers made with honey.
32 Moses said, “This is what the LORD has commanded: ‘Two quarts [E] of it
are to be preserved throughout your generations, so that they may see the
bread I fed you in the wilderness when I brought you out of the land of
Egypt.’ ”

33 Moses told Aaron, “Take a container and put two quarts [F] of manna in
it. Then place it before the LORD to be preserved throughout your
generations.” 34 As the LORD commanded Moses, Aaron placed it before the
•testimony to be preserved.

35 The Israelites ate manna for 40 years, until they came to an inhabited
land. They ate manna until they reached the border of the land of Canaan.
36 (Two quarts are [G] a tenth of an ephah.)

EXODUS

Water from the Rock

17 The entire Israelite community left the Wilderness of Sin, moving
from one place to the next according to the LORD's command. They
camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. 2 So
the people complained to Moses, "Give us water to drink."

"Why are you complaining to me? " Moses replied to them. "Why are
you testing the LORD? "

3 But the people thirsted there for water, and grumbled against Moses.
They said, "Why did you ever bring us out of Egypt to kill us and our
children and our livestock with thirst? "

4 Then Moses cried out to the LORD, "What should I do with these
people? In a little while they will stone me! "

5† The LORD answered Moses, "Go on ahead of the people and take some
of the elders of Israel with you. Take the staff you struck the Nile with in
your hand and go. 6 I am going to stand there in front of you on the rock at
Horeb; when you hit the rock, water will come out of it and the people will
drink." Moses did this in the sight of the elders of Israel. 7 He named the
place Massah and Meribah because the Israelites complained, and because
they tested the LORD, saying, "Is the LORD among us or not? "

The Amalekites Attack

8 At Rephidim, Amalek came and fought against Israel. 9 Moses said to
Joshua, "Select some men for us and go fight against Amalek. Tomorrow I
will stand on the hilltop with God's staff in my hand."

10 Joshua did as Moses had told him, and fought against Amalek, while
Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill. 11 While Moses held
up his hand, Israel prevailed, but whenever he put his hand down, Amalek
prevailed. 12 When Moses' hands grew heavy, they took a stone and put it
under him, and he sat down on it. Then Aaron and Hur supported his hands,
one on one side and one on the other so that his hands remained steady until

the sun went down. [13] So Joshua defeated Amalek and his army [A] with the
sword.

[14†] The LORD then said to Moses, "Write this down on a scroll as a
reminder and recite it to Joshua: I will completely blot out the memory of
Amalek under heaven."

[15] And Moses built an altar and named it, "The LORD Is My Banner." [B]
[16] He said, "Indeed, my hand is lifted up toward [C] the LORD's throne. The
LORD will be at war with Amalek from generation to generation."

EXODUS

Jethro's Visit

18 Moses' father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian, heard about
everything that God had done for Moses and His people Israel, and
how the LORD had brought Israel out of Egypt.

2 Now Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, had taken in Zipporah, Moses' wife,
after he had sent her back, 3 along with her two sons, one of whom was
named Gershom (because Moses had said, "I have been a foreigner in a
foreign land") 4 and the other Eliezer (because he had said, "The God of
my father was my helper and delivered me from Pharaoh's sword").

5† Moses' father-in-law Jethro, along with Moses' wife and sons, came to
him in the wilderness where he was camped at the mountain of God. 6 He
sent word to Moses, "I, your father-in-law Jethro, am coming to you with
your wife and her two sons."

7 So Moses went out to meet his father-in-law, bowed down, and then
kissed him. They asked each other how they had been [A] and went into the
tent. 8 Moses recounted to his father-in-law all that the LORD had done to
Pharaoh and the Egyptians for Israel's sake, all the hardships that
confronted them on the way, and how the LORD delivered them.

9 Jethro rejoiced over all the good things the LORD had done for Israel
when He rescued them from the power of the Egyptians. 10 "Praise the
LORD," Jethro exclaimed, "who rescued you from Pharaoh and the power of
the Egyptians and snatched the people from the power of the Egyptians.
11 Now I know that •Yahweh is greater than all gods, because He did
wonders when the Egyptians acted arrogantly against Israel." [B]

12 Then Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, brought a •burnt offering and
sacrifices to God, and Aaron came with all the elders of Israel to eat a meal
with Moses' father-in-law in God's presence.

13 The next day Moses sat down to judge the people, and they stood
around Moses from morning until evening. 14 When Moses' father-in-law
saw everything he was doing for them he asked, "What is this thing you're

doing for the people? Why are you alone sitting as judge, while all the
people stand around you from morning until evening? ”

15 Moses replied to his father-in-law, “Because the people come to me to
inquire of God. 16 Whenever they have a dispute, it comes to me, and I
make a decision between one man and another. I teach them God’s statutes
and laws.”

17 “What you’re doing is not good,” Moses’ father-in-law said to him.
18 “You will certainly wear out both yourself and these people who are with
you, because the task is too heavy for you. You can’t do it alone. 19 Now
listen to me; I will give you some advice, and God be with you. You be the
one to represent the people before God and bring their cases to Him.
20 Instruct them about the statutes and laws, and teach them the way to live
and what they must do. 21 But you should select from all the people able
men, God-fearing, trustworthy, and hating bribes. Place them over the
people as commanders of thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens. 22 They
should judge the people at all times. Then they can bring you every
important case but judge every minor case themselves. In this way you will
lighten your load, [C] and they will bear it with you. 23 If you do this, and
God so directs you, you will be able to endure, and also all these people will
be able to go home satisfied.” [D]

24 Moses listened to his father-in-law and did everything he said. 25 So
Moses chose able men from all Israel and made them leaders over the
people as commanders of thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens. 26 They
judged the people at all times; they would bring the hard cases to Moses,
but they would judge every minor case themselves.

27 Then Moses said good-bye to his father-in-law, and he journeyed to his
own land.

EXODUS

Israel at Sinai

19 † In the third month, on the same day of the month that the Israelites
had left the land of Egypt, they entered the Wilderness of Sinai.
2† After they departed from Rephidim, they entered the Wilderness of Sinai
and camped in the wilderness, and Israel camped there in front of the
mountain.

3 Moses went up the mountain to God, and the LORD called to him from
the mountain: “This is what you must say to the house of Jacob, and explain
to the Israelites: 4 ‘You have seen what I did to the Egyptians and how I
carried you on eagles’ wings and brought you to Me. 5 Now if you will
listen to Me and carefully keep My covenant, you will be My own
possession out of all the peoples, although all the earth is Mine, 6 and you
will be My kingdom of priests and My holy nation.’ These are the words
that you are to say to the Israelites.”

7 After Moses came back, he summoned the elders of the people and set
before them all these words that the LORD had commanded him. 8 Then all
the people responded together, “We will do all that the LORD has spoken.”
So Moses brought the people’s words back to the LORD.

9 The LORD said to Moses, “I am going to come to you in a dense cloud,
so that the people will hear when I speak with you and will always believe
you.” Then Moses reported the people’s words to the LORD. 10 And the LORD
told Moses, “Go to the people and consecrate them today and tomorrow.
They must wash their clothes 11† and be prepared by the third day, for on
the third day the LORD will come down on Mount Sinai in the sight of all the
people. 12 Put boundaries for the people all around the mountain and say:
Be careful that you don’t go up on the mountain or touch its base. Anyone
who touches the mountain will be put to death. 13 No hand may touch him;
instead he will be stoned or shot with arrows. No animal or man will live.
When the ram’s horn sounds a long blast, they may go up the mountain.”

14 Then Moses came down from the mountain to the people and
consecrated them, and they washed their clothes. 15 He said to the people,
“Be prepared by the third day. Do not have sexual relations with women.”

16 On the third day, when morning came, there was thunder and
lightning, a thick cloud on the mountain, and a loud trumpet sound, so that
all the people in the camp shuddered. 17 Then Moses brought the people out
of the camp to meet God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain.
18 Mount Sinai was completely enveloped in smoke because the LORD came
down on it in fire. Its smoke went up like the smoke of a furnace, and the
whole mountain shook violently. 19 As the sound of the trumpet grew
louder and louder, Moses spoke and God answered him in the thunder.

20 The LORD came down on Mount Sinai at the top of the mountain. Then
the LORD summoned Moses to the top of the mountain, and he went up.
21 The LORD directed Moses, "Go down and warn the people not to break
through to see the LORD; otherwise many of them will die. 22† Even the
priests who come near the LORD must purify themselves or the LORD will
break out in anger against them."

23 But Moses responded to the LORD, "The people cannot come up Mount
Sinai, since You warned us: Put a boundary around the mountain and
consider it holy." 24 And the LORD replied to him, "Go down and come back
with Aaron. But the priests and the people must not break through to come
up to the LORD, or He will break out in anger against them." 25 So Moses
went down to the people and told them.

EXODUS

The Ten Commandments

20 † Then God spoke all these words:

2 I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out
of the place of slavery.
3† Do not have other gods besides Me.
4† Do not make an idol for yourself, whether in the shape of anything in
the heavens above or on the earth below or in the waters under the earth.
5† You must not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your
God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the fathers' sin, to the
third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, 6 but showing faithful
love to a thousand generations of those who love Me and keep My
commands.
7 Do not misuse the name of the LORD your God, because the LORD will
not leave anyone unpunished who misuses His name.
8† Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy: 9 You are to labor six days
and do all your work, 10 but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD
your God. You must not do any work — you, your son or daughter, your
male or female slave, your livestock, or the foreigner who is within your
gates. 11 For the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and
everything in them in six days; then He rested on the seventh day.
Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and declared it holy.
12† Honor your father and your mother so that you may have a long life
in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.
13† Do not murder.
14† Do not commit adultery.
15† Do not steal.
16† Do not give false testimony against your neighbor.
17† Do not covet your neighbor's house. Do not covet your neighbor's
wife, his male or female slave, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs
to your neighbor.

ARTICLE
Is the Old Testament Ethical? ⇒

The People's Reaction

18 All the people witnessed [A] the thunder and lightning, the sound of the
trumpet, and the mountain surrounded by smoke. When the people saw it
they trembled and stood at a distance. 19 "You speak to us, and we will
listen," they said to Moses, "but don't let God speak to us, or we will die."

20 Moses responded to the people, "Don't be afraid, for God has come to
test you, so that you will •fear Him and will not [B] sin." 21 And the people
remained standing at a distance as Moses approached the thick darkness
where God was.

Moses Receives Additional Laws

22 Then the LORD told Moses, "This is what you are to say to the
Israelites: You have seen that I have spoken to you from heaven. 23 You
must not make gods of silver to rival Me; you must not make gods of gold
for yourselves. [C]

24† "You must make an earthen altar for Me and sacrifice on it your
•burnt offerings and •fellowship offerings, your sheep and goats, as well as
your cattle. I will come to you and bless you in every place where I cause
My name to be remembered. 25 If you make a stone altar for Me, you must
not build it out of cut stones. If you use your chisel on it, you will defile it.
26† You must not go up to My altar on steps, so that your nakedness is not
exposed on it.

EXODUS

21 “These are the ordinances that you must set before them:

Laws about Slaves

2† “When you buy a Hebrew slave, he is to serve for six years; then in the
seventh he is to leave as a free man [A] without paying anything. 3 If he
arrives alone, he is to leave alone; if he arrives with [B] a wife, his wife is to
leave with him. 4 If his master gives him a wife and she bears him sons or
daughters, the wife and her children belong to her master, and the man must
leave alone.

5 “But if the slave declares: ‘I love my master, my wife, and my children;
I do not want to leave as a free man,’ 6 his master is to bring him to the
judges [C] and then bring him to the door or doorpost. His master must pierce
his ear with an awl, and he will serve his master for life.

7† “When a man sells his daughter as a slave, [D] she is not to leave as the
male slaves do. 8 If she is displeasing to her master, who chose her for
himself, then he must let her be redeemed. He has no right to sell her to
foreigners because he has acted treacherously toward her. 9 Or if he chooses
her for his son, he must deal with her according to the customary treatment
of daughters. 10† If he takes an additional wife, he must not reduce the food,
clothing, or marital rights of the first wife. 11 And if he does not do these
three things for her, she may leave free of charge, without any exchange of
money.

Laws about Personal Injury

12 “Whoever strikes a person so that he dies must be put to death. 13 But
if he didn’t intend any harm, [E] and yet God caused it to happen by his hand,
I will appoint a place for you where he may flee. 14 If a person schemes
and willfully [F] acts against his neighbor to murder him, you must take him
from My altar to be put to death.

15 “Whoever strikes his father or his mother must be put to death.

[16] “Whoever kidnaps a person must be put to death, whether he sells him
or the person is found in his possession.

[17] “Whoever curses his father or his mother must be put to death.

[18] “When men quarrel and one strikes the other with a stone or his fist,
and the injured man does not die but is confined to bed, [19] if he can later get
up and walk around outside leaning on his staff, then the one who struck
him will be exempt from punishment. Nevertheless, he must pay for his lost
work time [G] and provide for his complete recovery.

[20†] “When a man strikes his male or female slave with a rod, and the
slave dies under his abuse, [H] the owner must be punished. [I] [21] However, if
the slave can stand up after a day or two, the owner should not be
punished [J] because he is his owner’s property. [K]

[22] “When men get in a fight and hit a pregnant woman so that her
children are born prematurely but there is no injury, the one who hit her
must be fined as the woman’s husband demands from him, and he must pay
according to judicial assessment. [23†] If there is an injury, then you must give
life for life, [24] eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot,
[25] burn for burn, bruise for bruise, wound for wound.

[26] “When a man strikes the eye of his male or female slave and destroys
it, he must let the slave go free in compensation for his eye. [27] If he knocks
out the tooth of his male or female slave, he must let the slave go free in
compensation for his tooth.

[28] “When an ox [L] gores a man or a woman to death, the ox must be
stoned, and its meat may not be eaten, but the ox’s owner is innocent.
[29†] However, if the ox was in the habit of goring, and its owner has been
warned yet does not restrain it, and it kills a man or a woman, the ox must
be stoned, and its owner must also be put to death. [30] If instead a ransom is
demanded of him, he can pay a redemption price for his life in the full
amount demanded from him. [31] If it gores a son or a daughter, he is to be

dealt with according to this same law. 32 If the ox gores a male or female
slave, he must give 30 •shekels of silver to the slave’s master, and the ox
must be stoned.

33 “When a man uncovers a pit or digs a pit, and does not cover it, and an
ox or a donkey falls into it, 34 the owner of the pit must give compensation;
he must pay money to its owner, but the dead animal will become his.

35 “When a man’s ox injures his neighbor’s ox and it dies, they must sell
the live ox and divide its proceeds; they must also divide the dead animal.
36 If, however, it is known that the ox was in the habit of goring, yet its
owner has not restrained it, he must compensate fully, ox for ox; the dead
animal will become his.

EXODUS

Chapter 22 *Laws about Theft*

[1]"When a man steals an ox or a sheep and butchers it or sells it, he must
repay five cattle for the ox or four sheep for the sheep. [2] If a thief is caught
in the act of breaking in, and he is beaten to death, no one is •guilty of
bloodshed. [3] But if this happens after sunrise, [A] there is guilt of bloodshed.
A thief must make full restitution. If he is unable, he is to be sold because
of his theft. [4] If what was stolen — whether ox, donkey, or sheep — is
actually found alive in his possession, he must repay double.

Laws about Crop Protection

[5] "When a man lets a field or vineyard be grazed in, and then allows his animals to go and graze in someone else's field, he must repay with the best of his own field or vineyard.

[6] "When a fire gets out of control, spreads to thornbushes, and consumes stacks of cut grain, standing grain, or a field, the one who started the fire must make full restitution for what was burned.

Laws about Personal Property

[7] "When a man gives his neighbor money or goods to keep, but they are
stolen from that person's house, the thief, if caught, must repay double. [8] If
the thief is not caught, the owner of the house must present himself to the
judges [B] to determine whether or not he has taken his neighbor's property.
[9] In any case of wrongdoing involving an ox, a donkey, a sheep, a garment,
or anything else lost, and someone claims, 'That's mine,' [C] the case
between the two parties is to come before the judges. [D] The one the judges
condemn [E] must repay double to his neighbor.

[10] "When a man gives his neighbor a donkey, an ox, a sheep, or any other
animal to care for, but it dies, is injured, or is stolen, while no one is
watching, [11] there must be an oath before the LORD between the two of them
to determine whether or not he has taken his neighbor's property. Its owner

must accept the oath, and the other man does not have to make restitution.
12 But if, in fact, the animal was stolen from his custody, he must make
restitution to its owner. 13 If it was actually torn apart by a wild animal, he
is to bring it as evidence; he does not have to make restitution for the torn
carcass.

14 “When a man borrows an animal from his neighbor, and it is injured or
dies while its owner is not there with it, the man must make full restitution.
15 If its owner is there with it, the man does not have to make restitution. If
it was rented, the loss is covered by [F] its rental price.

Laws about Seduction

16 “If a man seduces a virgin who is not engaged, and he has sexual
relations with her, he must certainly pay the bridal price for her to be his
wife. 17 If her father absolutely refuses to give her to him, he must pay an
amount in silver equal to the bridal price for virgins.

Capital Offenses

18 “You must not allow a sorceress to live.

19 “Whoever has sexual intercourse with an animal must be put to death.

20 “Whoever sacrifices to any gods, except the LORD alone, is to be •set
apart for destruction.

Laws Protecting the Vulnerable

21 “You must not exploit a foreign resident or oppress him, since you
were foreigners in the land of Egypt.

22 “You must not mistreat any widow or fatherless child. 23 If you do
mistreat them, they will no doubt cry to Me, and I will certainly hear their
cry. 24 My anger will burn, and I will kill you with the sword; then your
wives will be widows and your children fatherless.

25† "If you lend money to My people, to the poor person among you, you must not be like a moneylender to him; you must not charge him interest.

26 "If you ever take your neighbor's cloak as collateral, return it to him
before sunset. 27 For it is his only covering; it is the clothing for his body. [G]
What will he sleep in? And if he cries out to Me, I will listen because I am compassionate.

Respect for God

28 "You must not blaspheme God [H] or curse a leader among your people.

29† "You must not hold back offerings from your harvest or your vats.
Give Me the firstborn of your sons. 30 Do the same with your cattle and
your flock. Let them stay with their mothers for seven days, but on the eighth day you are to give them to Me.

31 "Be My holy people. You must not eat the meat of a mauled animal found in the field; throw it to the dogs.

EXODUS

Laws about Honesty and Justice

23 “You must not spread a false report. Do not join [A] the wicked to be a malicious witness.

[2] “You must not follow a crowd in wrongdoing. Do not testify in a
lawsuit and go along with a crowd to pervert justice. [3] Do not show
favoritism to a poor person in his lawsuit.

[4] “If you come across your enemy’s stray ox or donkey, you must return it to him.

[5] “If you see the donkey of someone who hates you lying helpless under its load, and you want to refrain from helping it, you must help with it. [B]

[6] “You must not deny justice to a poor person among you in his lawsuit.
[7†] Stay far away from a false accusation. Do not kill the innocent and the
just, because I will not justify the •guilty. [8] You must not take a bribe, for a
bribe blinds the clear-sighted and corrupts the words [C] of the righteous.
[9] You must not oppress a foreign resident; you yourselves know how it
feels to be a foreigner because you were foreigners in the land of Egypt.

Sabbaths and Festivals

[10†] “Sow your land for six years and gather its produce. [11] But during the
seventh year you are to let it rest and leave it uncultivated, so that the poor
among your people may eat from it and the wild animals may consume
what they leave. Do the same with your vineyard and your olive grove.

[12] “Do your work for six days but rest on the seventh day so that your ox and your donkey may rest, and the son of your female slave as well as the foreign resident may be refreshed.

[13] “Pay strict attention to everything I have said to you. You must not invoke the names of other gods; they must not be heard on your lips. [D]

[14] “Celebrate a festival in My honor three times a year. [15] Observe the
Festival of •Unleavened Bread. As I commanded you, you are to eat

unleavened bread for seven days at the appointed time in the month of
Abib, because you came out of Egypt in that month. No one is to appear
before Me empty-handed. 16 Also observe the Festival of Harvest with the
•firstfruits of your produce from what you sow in the field, and observe the
Festival of Ingathering at the end of the year, when you gather your
produce [E] from the field. 17 Three times a year all your males are to appear
before the Lord God.

18 "You must not offer the blood of My sacrifices with anything
leavened. The fat of My festival offering must not remain until morning.

19 "Bring the best of the firstfruits of your land to the house of the Lord
your God.

"You must not boil a young goat in its mother's milk.

Promises and Warnings

20† "I am going to send an angel before you to protect you on the way
and bring you to the place I have prepared. 21 Be attentive to him and listen
to his voice. Do not defy [F] him, because he will not forgive your acts of
rebellion, for My name is in him. 22 But if you will carefully obey him and
do everything I say, then I will be an enemy to your enemies and a foe to
your foes. 23 For My angel will go before you and bring you to the land of
the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Canaanites, Hivites, and Jebusites, and I
will wipe them out. 24 You must not bow down to their gods or worship
them. Do not imitate their practices. Instead, demolish them and smash
their sacred pillars to pieces. 25 Worship the Lord your God, and He will
bless your bread and your water. I will remove illnesses from you. 26 No
woman will miscarry or be childless in your land. I will give you the full
number of your days.

27 "I will cause the people ahead of you to feel terror [G] and throw into
confusion all the nations you come to. I will make all your enemies turn
their backs to you in retreat. 28 I will send the hornet [H], in front of you, and
it will drive the Hivites, Canaanites, and Hittites away from you. 29 I will

not drive them out ahead of you in a single year; otherwise, the land would
become desolate, and wild animals would multiply against you. 30 I will
drive them out little by little ahead of you until you have become
numerous [I] and take possession of the land. 31 I will set your borders from
the •Red Sea to the Mediterranean Sea, [J] and from the wilderness to the
Euphrates River. [K] For I will place the inhabitants of the land under your
control, and you will drive them out ahead of you. 32 You must not make a
covenant with them or their gods. 33 They must not remain in your land, or
else they will make you sin against Me. If you worship their gods, it will be
a snare for you.”

EXODUS

The Covenant Ceremony

24 Then He said to Moses, “Go up to the LORD, you and Aaron, Nadab,
and Abihu, and 70 of Israel’s elders, and bow in worship at a
distance. 2 Moses alone is to approach the LORD, but the others are not to
approach, and the people are not to go up with him.”

3 Moses came and told the people all the commands of the LORD and all
the ordinances. Then all the people responded with a single voice, “We will
do everything that the LORD has commanded.” 4 And Moses wrote down
all the words of the LORD. He rose early the next morning and set up an altar
and 12 pillars for the 12 tribes of Israel at the base of the mountain. 5 Then
he sent out young Israelite men, and they offered •burnt offerings and
sacrificed bulls as •fellowship offerings to the LORD. 6 Moses took half the
blood and set it in basins; the other half of the blood he sprinkled on the
altar. 7 He then took the covenant scroll and read it aloud to the people.
They responded, “We will do and obey everything that the LORD has
commanded.”

8 Moses took the blood, sprinkled it on the people, and said, “This is the
blood of the covenant that the LORD has made with you concerning all these
words.”

9[†] Then Moses went up with Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and 70 of Israel’s
elders, 10 and they saw the God of Israel. Beneath His feet was something
like a pavement made of sapphire [A] stone, as clear as the sky itself. 11 God
did not harm [B] the Israelite nobles; they saw Him, and they ate and drank.

12 The LORD said to Moses, “Come up to Me on the mountain and stay
there so that I may give you the stone tablets with the law and
commandments I have written for their instruction.”

13 So Moses arose with his assistant Joshua and went up the mountain of
God. 14 He told the elders, “Wait here for us until we return to you. Aaron
and Hur are here with you. Whoever has a dispute should go to them.”
15 When Moses went up the mountain, the cloud covered it. 16 The glory of
the LORD settled on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it for six days. On

the seventh day He called to Moses from the cloud. [17] The appearance of
the LORD's glory to the Israelites was like a consuming fire on the
mountaintop. [18] Moses entered the cloud as he went up the mountain, and
he remained on the mountain 40 days and 40 nights.

EXODUS

Offerings to Build the Tabernacle

25 The LORD spoke to Moses: 2 “Tell the Israelites to take an offering for
Me. You are to take My offering from everyone who is willing to
give. 3† This is the offering you are to receive from them: gold, silver, and
bronze; 4 blue, purple, and scarlet yarn; fine linen and goat hair; 5 ram skins
dyed red and manatee skins; [A] acacia wood; 6 oil for the light; spices for
the anointing oil and for the fragrant incense; 7 and onyx [B] along with other
gemstones for mounting on the •ephod and breastpiece. [C]

8 “They are to make a sanctuary for Me so that I may dwell among
them. 9 You must make it according to all that I show you — the pattern of
the tabernacle as well as the pattern of all its furnishings.

The Ark

10† “They are to make an ark of acacia wood, 45 inches long, 27 inches
wide, and 27 inches high. [D] 11 Overlay it with pure gold; overlay it both
inside and out. Also make a gold molding all around it. 12 Cast four gold
rings for it and place them on its four feet, two rings on one side and two
rings on the other side. 13 Make poles of acacia wood and overlay them
with gold. 14 Insert the poles into the rings on the sides of the ark in order to
carry the ark with them. 15† The poles are to remain in the rings of the ark;
they must not be removed from it. 16 Put the tablets of the •testimony that I
will give you into the ark. 17 Make a •mercy seat of pure gold, 45 inches
long and 27 inches wide. [E] 18† Make two •cherubim of gold; make them of
hammered work at the two ends of the mercy seat. 19 Make one cherub at
one end and one cherub at the other end. At its two ends, make the
cherubim of one piece with the mercy seat. 20 The cherubim are to have
wings spread out above, covering the mercy seat with their wings, and are
to face one another. The faces of the cherubim should be toward the mercy
seat. 21 Set the mercy seat on top of the ark and put the testimony that I will
give you into the ark. 22 I will meet with you there above the mercy seat,
between the two cherubim that are over the ark of the testimony; I will
speak with you from there about all that I command you regarding the
Israelites.

ARTICLE
The Uniqueness of Israel's Religion ⇒

The Table

23 “You are to construct a table of acacia wood, 36 inches long, 18
inches wide, and 27 inches high. [F] 24 Overlay it with pure gold and make a
gold molding all around it. 25 Make a three-inch [G] frame all around it and
make a gold molding for it all around its frame. 26 Make four gold rings for
it, and attach the rings to the four corners at its four legs. 27 The rings
should be next to the frame as holders for the poles to carry the table.
28 Make the poles of acacia wood and overlay them with gold, and the table
can be carried by them. 29 You are also to make its plates and cups, as well
as its pitchers and bowls for pouring •drink offerings. Make them out of
pure gold. 30 Put the •bread of the Presence on the table before Me at all
times.

The Lampstand

31 “You are to make a lampstand out of pure, hammered gold. It is to be
made of one piece: its base and shaft, its ornamental cups, and its calyxes
and petals. 32 Six branches are to extend from its sides, three branches of
the lampstand from one side and three branches of the lampstand from the
other side. 33 There are to be three cups shaped like almond blossoms, each
with a calyx and petals, on the first branch, and three cups shaped like
almond blossoms, each with a calyx and petals, on the next branch. It is to
be this way for the six branches that extend from the lampstand. 34 There
are to be four cups shaped like almond blossoms on the lampstand shaft
along with its calyxes and petals. 35 For the six branches that extend from
the lampstand, a calyx must be under the first pair of branches from it, a
calyx under the second pair of branches from it, and a calyx under the third
pair of branches from it. 36 Their calyxes and branches are to be of one
piece. [H] All of it is to be a single hammered piece of pure gold.

37 “Make seven lamps on it. Its lamps are to be set up so they illuminate
the area in front of it. 38 Its snuffers and firepans must be of pure gold.
39 The lampstand [I] with all these utensils is to be made from 75 pounds [J] of
pure gold. 40 Be careful to make them according to the pattern you have
been shown on the mountain.

EXODUS

The Tabernacle

26 “You are to construct the tabernacle itself with 10 curtains. You must
make them of finely spun linen, and blue, purple, and scarlet yarn,
with a design of •cherubim worked into them. 2 The length of each curtain
should be 42 feet, [A] and the width of each curtain six feet; [B] all the curtains
are to have the same measurements. 3 Five of the curtains should be joined
together, and the other five curtains joined together. 4 Make loops of blue
yarn on the edge of the last curtain [C] in the first set, and do the same on the
edge of the outermost curtain in the second set. 5 Make 50 loops on the one
curtain and make 50 loops on the edge of the curtain in the second set, so
that the loops line up together. 6 Also make 50 gold clasps and join the
curtains together with the clasps, so that the tabernacle may be a single unit.

7 “You are to make curtains of goat hair for a tent over the tabernacle;
make 11 of these curtains. 8 The length of each curtain should be 45 feet [D]
and the width of each curtain six feet. [E] All 11 curtains are to have the same
measurements. 9 Join five of the curtains by themselves, and the other six
curtains by themselves. Then fold the sixth curtain double at the front of the
tent. 10 Make 50 loops on the edge of the one curtain, the outermost in the
first set, and make 50 loops on the edge of the corresponding curtain of the
second set. 11 Make 50 bronze clasps; put the clasps through the loops and
join the tent together so that it is a single unit. 12 As for the flap that is left
over from the tent curtains, the leftover half curtain is to hang down over
the back of the tabernacle. 13 The half yard [F] on one side and the half yard [G]
on the other of what is left over along the length of the tent curtains should
be hanging down over the sides of the tabernacle on either side to cover it.
14 Make a covering for the tent from ram skins dyed red and a covering of
manatee skins [H] on top of that.

15 “You are to make upright planks [I] of acacia wood for the tabernacle.
16 The length of each plank is to be 15 feet, [J] and the width of each plank 27
inches. [K] 17 Each plank must be connected together with two tenons. Do the
same for all the planks of the tabernacle. 18 Make the planks for the
tabernacle as follows: 20 planks for the south side, 19 and make 40 silver
bases under the 20 planks, two bases under the first plank for its two tenons,

and two bases under the next plank for its two tenons; [20] 20 planks for the
second side of the tabernacle, the north side, [21] along with their 40 silver
bases, two bases under the first plank and two bases under each plank;
[22] and make six planks for the west side of the tabernacle. [23] Make two
additional planks for the two back corners of the tabernacle. [24] They are to
be paired at the bottom, and joined together [L] at the top in a single ring. So
it should be for both of them; they will serve as the two corners. [25] There
are to be eight planks with their silver bases: 16 bases; two bases under the
first plank and two bases under each plank.

[26] “You are to make five crossbars of acacia wood for the planks on one
side of the tabernacle, [27] five crossbars for the planks on the other side of
the tabernacle, and five crossbars for the planks of the back side of the
tabernacle on the west. [28] The central crossbar is to run through the middle
of the planks from one end to the other. [29] Then overlay the planks with
gold, and make their rings of gold as the holders for the crossbars. Also
overlay the crossbars with gold. [30] You are to set up the tabernacle
according to the plan for it that you have been shown on the mountain.

[31] “You are to make a veil of blue, purple, and scarlet yarn, and finely
spun linen with a design of cherubim worked into it. [32] Hang it on four
gold-plated posts of acacia wood that have gold hooks and that stand on
four silver bases. [33] Hang the veil under the clasps and bring the ark of the
•testimony there behind the veil, so the veil will make a separation for you
between the holy place and the most holy place. [34] Put the •mercy seat on
the ark of the testimony in the most holy place. [35] Place the table outside
the veil and the lampstand on the south side of the tabernacle, opposite the
table; put the table on the north side.

[36] “For the entrance to the tent you are to make a screen embroidered
with blue, purple, and scarlet yarn, and finely spun linen. [37] Make five posts
of acacia wood for the screen and overlay them with gold; their hooks are to
be gold, and you are to cast five bronze bases for them.

EXODUS

The Altar of Burnt Offering

27 “You are to construct the altar of acacia wood. The altar must be
square, 7 1/2 feet long, and 7 1/2 feet wide; [A] it must be 4 1/2 feet
high. [B] 2 Make horns for it on its four corners; the horns are to be of one
piece. [C] Overlay it with bronze. 3 Make its pots for removing ashes, and its
shovels, basins, meat forks, and firepans; make all its utensils of bronze.
4 Construct a grate for it of bronze mesh, and make four bronze rings on the
mesh at its four corners. 5 Set it below, under the altar’s ledge, so that the
mesh comes halfway up [D] the altar. 6 Then make poles for the altar, poles of
acacia wood, and overlay them with bronze. 7 The poles are to be inserted
into the rings so that the poles are on two sides of the altar when it is
carried. 8 Construct the altar with boards so that it is hollow. They are to
make it just as it was shown to you on the mountain.

The Courtyard

9 “You are to make the courtyard for the tabernacle. Make the hangings
on the south of the courtyard out of finely spun linen, 150 feet [E] long on
that side. 10 There are to be 20 posts and 20 bronze bases. The hooks and
bands [F] of the posts must be silver. 11 Then make the hangings on the north
side 150 feet [G] long. There are to be 20 posts and 20 bronze bases. The
hooks and bands [H] of the posts must be silver. 12 Make the hangings of the
courtyard on the west side 75 feet [I] long, including their 10 posts and 10
bases. 13 Make the hangings of the courtyard on the east side toward the
sunrise 75 feet. [J] 14 Make the hangings on one side of the gate 22 1/2 feet, [K]
including their three posts and their three bases. 15 And make the hangings
on the other side 22 1/2 feet, [L] including their three posts and their three
bases. 16 The gate of the courtyard is to have a thirty-foot [M] screen
embroidered with blue, purple, and scarlet yarn, and finely spun linen. It is
to have four posts including their four bases.

17 “All the posts around the courtyard are to be banded with silver and
have silver hooks and bronze bases. 18 The length of the courtyard is to be
150 feet, the width 75 feet at each end, and the height 7 1/2 feet, [N] all of it
made of finely spun linen. The bases of the posts must be bronze. 19 All the

tools of the tabernacle for every use and all its tent pegs as well as all the tent pegs of the courtyard are to be made of bronze.

The Lampstand Oil

[20] "You are to command the Israelites to bring you pure oil from crushed
olives for the light, in order to keep the lamp burning continually. [21] In the
tent of meeting outside the veil that is in front of the •testimony, Aaron and
his sons are to tend the lamp from evening until morning before the LORD.
This is to be a permanent statute for the Israelites throughout their
generations.

EXODUS

The Priestly Garments

28 “Have your brother Aaron, with his sons, come to you from the
Israelites to serve Me as priest — Aaron, his sons Nadab and Abihu,
Eleazar and Ithamar. 2 Make holy garments for your brother Aaron, for
glory and beauty. 3 You are to instruct all the skilled craftsmen, [A], whom I
have filled with a spirit of wisdom, to make Aaron’s garments for
consecrating him to serve Me as priest. 4 These are the garments that they
must make: a breastpiece, an •ephod, a robe, a specially woven tunic, [B] a
turban, and a sash. They are to make holy garments for your brother Aaron
and his sons so that they may serve Me as priests. 5 They should use [C] gold;
blue, purple, and scarlet yarn; and fine linen.

The Ephod

6 “They are to make the ephod of finely spun linen embroidered with
gold, and with blue, purple, and scarlet yarn. 7 It must have two shoulder
pieces attached to its two edges so that it can be joined together. 8 The
artistically woven waistband that is on the ephod [D] must be of one piece, [E]
according to the same workmanship of gold, of blue, purple, and scarlet
yarn, and of finely spun linen.

9 “Take two onyx stones and engrave on them the names of Israel’s sons:
10 six of their names on the first stone and the remaining six names on the
second stone, in the order of their birth. 11 Engrave the two stones with the
names of Israel’s sons as a gem cutter engraves a seal. Mount them,
surrounded with gold filigree settings. 12 Fasten both stones on the shoulder
pieces of the ephod as memorial stones for the Israelites. Aaron will carry
their names on his two shoulders before the LORD as a reminder. 13 Fashion
gold filigree settings 14 and two chains of pure gold; you will make them of
braided cord work, and attach the cord chains to the settings.

The Breastpiece

15 “You are to make an embroidered breastpiece for making decisions.
Make it with the same workmanship as the ephod; make it of gold, of blue,
purple, and scarlet yarn, and of finely spun linen. 16 It must be square and

folded double, nine inches long and nine inches wide. [F] 17 Place a setting of
gemstones on it, four rows of stones:

The first row should be
a row of carnelian, topaz, and emerald; [G]
18 the second row,
a turquoise, [H] a sapphire, [I] and a diamond; [J]
19 the third row,
a jacinth, [K] an agate, and an amethyst;
20 and the fourth row,
a beryl, an onyx, and a jasper.

They should be adorned with gold filigree in their settings. 21 The 12 stones
are to correspond to the names of Israel’s sons. Each stone must be
engraved like a seal, with one of the names of the 12 tribes.

22 “You are to make braided chains of pure gold cord work for the
breastpiece. 23 Fashion two gold rings for the breastpiece and attach them to
its two corners. 24 Then attach the two gold cords to the two gold rings at
the corners of the breastpiece. 25 Attach the other ends of the two cords to
the two filigree settings, and in this way attach them to the ephod’s shoulder
pieces in the front. 26 Make two other gold rings and put them at the two
other corners of the breastpiece on the edge that is next to the inner border
of the ephod. 27 Make two more gold rings and attach them to the bottom of
the ephod’s two shoulder pieces on its front, close to its seam, and above
the ephod’s woven waistband. 28 The craftsmen are to tie the breastpiece
from its rings to the rings of the ephod with a cord of blue yarn, so that the
breastpiece is above the ephod’s waistband and does not come loose from
the ephod.

29 “Whenever he enters the sanctuary, Aaron is to carry the names of
Israel’s sons over his heart on the breastpiece for decisions, as a continual
reminder before the LORD. 30 Place the •Urim and Thummim in the
breastpiece for decisions, so that they will also be over Aaron’s heart

whenever he comes before the LORD. Aaron will continually carry the means of decisions for the Israelites over his heart before the LORD.

The Robe

31 “You are to make the robe of the ephod entirely of blue yarn. 32 There
should be an opening at its top in the center of it. Around the opening, there should be a woven collar with an opening like that of body armor [L] so that it does not tear. 33 Make pomegranates of blue, purple, and scarlet yarn on its lower hem and all around it. Put gold bells between them all the way around, 34 so that gold bells and pomegranates alternate around the lower hem of the robe. 35 The robe must be worn by Aaron whenever he ministers, and its sound will be heard when he enters the sanctuary before the LORD and when he exits, so that he does not die.

The Turban

36 “You are to make a pure gold medallion and engrave it, like the engraving of a seal:

HOLY TO THE LORD.

37 Fasten it to a cord of blue yarn so it can be placed on the turban; the medallion is to be on the front of the turban. 38 It will be on Aaron’s forehead so that Aaron may bear the •guilt connected with the holy offerings that the Israelites consecrate as all their holy gifts. It is always to be on his forehead, so that they may find acceptance with the LORD.

Other Priestly Garments

39 “You are to weave the tunic from fine linen, make a turban of fine linen, and make an embroidered sash. 40 Make tunics, sashes, and headbands for Aaron’s sons to give them glory and beauty. 41 Put these on your brother Aaron and his sons; then anoint, ordain, [M] and consecrate them, so that they may serve Me as priests. 42 Make them linen undergarments to cover their naked bodies; they must extend from the

waist [N] to the thighs. [43] These must be worn by Aaron and his sons
whenever they enter the tent of meeting or approach the altar to minister in
the sanctuary area, so that they do not incur guilt and die. This is to be a
permanent statute for Aaron and for his future descendants.

EXODUS

Instructions about Consecration

29 “This is what you are to do for them to consecrate them to serve Me as priests. Take a young bull and two unblemished rams, 2 with unleavened bread, unleavened cakes mixed with oil, and unleavened wafers coated with oil. Make them out of fine wheat flour, 3 put them in a basket, and bring them in the basket, along with the bull and two rams. 4 Bring Aaron and his sons to the entrance to the tent of meeting and wash them with water. 5 Then take the garments and clothe Aaron with the tunic, the robe for the •ephod, the ephod itself, and the breastpiece; fasten the ephod on him with its woven waistband. 6 Put the turban on his head and place the holy diadem on the turban. 7 Take the anointing oil, pour it on his head, and anoint him. 8 You must also bring his sons, clothe them with tunics. 9 Tie the sashes on Aaron and his sons and fasten headbands on them. The priesthood is to be theirs by a permanent statute. This is the way you will ordain Aaron and [A] his sons.

10 “You are to bring the bull to the front of the tent of meeting, and Aaron and his sons must lay their hands on the bull’s head. 11 Slaughter the bull before the LORD at the entrance to the tent of meeting. 12 Take some of the bull’s blood and apply it to the horns of the altar with your finger; then pour out all the rest of the blood at the base of the altar. 13 Take all the fat that covers the entrails, the fatty lobe of the liver, and the two kidneys with the fat on them, and burn them on the altar. 14 But burn up the bull’s flesh, its hide, and its dung outside the camp; it is a •sin offering.

15 “Take one ram, and Aaron and his sons are to lay their hands on the ram’s head. 16 You are to slaughter the ram, take its blood, and sprinkle it on all sides of the altar. 17 Cut the ram into pieces. Wash its entrails and shanks, and place them with its head and its pieces on the altar. 18 Then burn the whole ram on the altar; it is a •burnt offering to the LORD. It is a pleasing aroma, a fire offering to the LORD.

19 “You are to take the second ram, and Aaron and his sons must lay their hands on the ram’s head. 20 Slaughter the ram, take some of its blood, and put it on Aaron’s right earlobe, on his sons’ right earlobes, on the thumbs of

their right hands, and on the big toes of their right feet. Sprinkle the
remaining blood on all sides of the altar. [21] Take some of the blood that is
on the altar and some of the anointing oil, and sprinkle them on Aaron and
his garments, as well as on his sons and their garments. In this way, he and
his garments will become holy, as well as his sons and their garments.

[22] "Take the fat from the ram, the fat tail, the fat covering the entrails, the
fatty lobe of the liver, the two kidneys and the fat on them, and the right
thigh (since this is a ram for ordination); [23] take one loaf of bread, one cake
of bread made with oil, and one wafer from the basket of unleavened bread
that is before the LORD; [24] and put all of them in the hands of Aaron and
his [B] sons and wave them as a presentation offering before the LORD.
[25] Take them from their hands and burn them on the altar on top of the burnt
offering, as a pleasing aroma before the LORD; it is a fire offering to the
LORD.

[26] "Take the breast from the ram of Aaron's ordination and wave it as a
presentation offering before the LORD; it is to be your portion.
[27] Consecrate for Aaron and his sons the breast of the presentation offering
that is waved and the thigh of the contribution that is lifted up from the ram
of ordination. [28] This will belong to Aaron and his sons as a regular portion
from the Israelites, for it is a contribution. It will be the Israelites'
contribution from their •fellowship sacrifices, their contribution to the
LORD.

[29] "The holy garments that belong to Aaron are to belong to his sons after
him, so that they can be anointed and ordained [C] in them. [30] Any priest who
is one of his sons and who succeeds him and enters the tent of meeting to
minister in the sanctuary must wear them for seven days.

[31] "You are to take the ram of ordination and boil its flesh in a holy place.
[32] Aaron and his sons are to eat the meat of the ram and the bread that is in
the basket at the entrance to the tent of meeting. [33] They must eat those
things by which •atonement was made at the time of their ordination [D] and
consecration. An unauthorized person must not eat them, for these things

are holy. 34 If any of the meat of ordination or any of the bread is left until
morning, burn up what is left over. It must not be eaten because it is holy.

35 “This is what you are to do for Aaron and his sons based on all I have
commanded you. Take seven days to ordain them. 36 Sacrifice a bull as a sin
offering each day for atonement. Purify [E] the altar when you make
atonement for it, and anoint it in order to consecrate it. 37 For seven days
you must make atonement for the altar and consecrate it. The altar will
become especially holy; whatever touches the altar will become holy.

38 “This is what you are to offer regularly on the altar every day: two
year-old lambs. 39 In the morning offer one lamb, and at twilight offer the
other lamb. 40 With the first lamb offer two quarts [F] of fine flour mixed
with one quart [G] of oil from crushed olives, and a •drink offering of one
quart [H] of wine. 41 You are to offer the second lamb at twilight. Offer a
•grain offering and a drink offering with it, like the one in the morning, as a
pleasing aroma, a fire offering to the LORD. 42 This will be a regular burnt
offering throughout your generations at the entrance to the tent of meeting
before the LORD, where I will meet you to speak with you. 43 I will also
meet with the Israelites there, and that place will be consecrated by My
glory. 44 I will consecrate the tent of meeting and the altar; I will also
consecrate Aaron and his sons to serve Me as priests. 45 I will dwell among
the Israelites and be their God. 46 And they will know that I am •Yahweh
their God, who brought them out of the land of Egypt, so that I might dwell
among them. I am Yahweh their God.

EXODUS

The Incense Altar

30 “You are to make an altar for the burning of incense; make it of acacia
wood. 2 It must be square, 18 inches long and 18 inches wide; [A] it
must be 36 inches high. [B] Its horns must be of one piece. [C] 3 Overlay its
top, all around its sides, and its horns with pure gold; make a gold molding
all around it. 4 Make two gold rings for it under the molding on two of its
sides; put these on opposite sides of it to be holders for the poles to carry it
with. 5 Make the poles of acacia wood and overlay them with gold.

6 “You are to place the altar in front of the veil by the ark of the
•testimony — in front of the •mercy seat that is over the testimony — where
I will meet with you. 7 Aaron must burn fragrant incense on it; he must burn
it every morning when he tends the lamps. 8 When Aaron sets up the lamps
at twilight, he must burn incense. There is to be an incense offering before
the LORD throughout your generations. 9 You must not offer unauthorized
incense on it, or a •burnt or •grain offering; you are not to pour a •drink
offering on it.

10 “Once a year Aaron is to perform the purification rite [D] on the horns of
the altar. Throughout your generations he is to perform the purification
rite [E] for [F] it once a year, with the blood of the •sin offering for •atonement.
The altar is especially holy to the LORD.”

The Atonement Money

11 The LORD spoke to Moses: 12 “When you take a census of the
Israelites to register them, each of the men must pay a ransom for himself
to the LORD as they are registered. Then no plague will come on them as
they are registered. 13 Everyone who is registered must pay half a •shekel
according to the sanctuary shekel (20 *gerahs* to the shekel). This half shekel
is a contribution to the LORD. 14 Each man who is registered, 20 years old
or more, must give this contribution to the LORD. 15 The wealthy may not
give more and the poor may not give less than half a shekel when giving
the contribution to the LORD to atone for [G] your lives. 16 Take the atonement
money [H] from the Israelites and use it for the service of the tent of meeting.

It will serve as a reminder for the Israelites before the LORD to atone for [I]
your lives."

The Bronze Basin

17 The LORD spoke to Moses: 18 "Make a bronze basin for washing and a
bronze stand for it. Set it between the tent of meeting and the altar, and put
water in it. 19 Aaron and his sons must wash their hands and feet from the
basin. 20 Whenever they enter the tent of meeting or approach the altar to
minister by burning up an offering to the LORD, they must wash with water
so that they will not die. 21 They must wash their hands and feet so that they
will not die; this is to be a permanent statute for them, for Aaron and his
descendants throughout their generations."

The Anointing Oil

22 The LORD spoke to Moses: 23 "Take for yourself the finest spices:
12 1/2 pounds [J] of liquid myrrh, half as much (6 1/4 pounds [K]) of fragrant
cinnamon, 6 1/4 pounds [L] of fragrant cane, 24 12 1/2 pounds [M] of cassia (by
the sanctuary shekel), and one gallon [N] of olive oil. 25 Prepare from these a
holy anointing oil, a scented blend, the work of a perfumer; it will be holy
anointing oil.

26 "With it you are to anoint the tent of meeting, the ark of the testimony,
27 the table with all its utensils, the lampstand with its utensils, the altar of
incense, 28 the altar of burnt offering with all its utensils, and the basin with
its stand. 29 Consecrate them and they will be especially holy. Whatever
touches them will be consecrated. 30 Anoint Aaron and his sons and
consecrate them to serve Me as priests.

31 "Tell the Israelites: This will be My holy anointing oil throughout your
generations. 32 It must not be used for ordinary anointing on a person's
body, and you must not make anything like it using its formula. It is holy,
and it must be holy to you. 33 Anyone who blends something like it or puts
some of it on an unauthorized person must be cut off from his people."

The Sacred Incense

34 The LORD said to Moses: "Take fragrant spices: stacte, onycha, and
galbanum; the spices and pure frankincense are to be in equal measures.
35 Prepare expertly blended incense from these; it is to be seasoned with
salt, pure and holy. 36 Grind some of it into a fine powder and put some in
front of the testimony in the tent of meeting, where I will meet with you. It
must be especially holy to you. 37 As for the incense you are making, you
must not make any for yourselves using its formula. It is to be regarded by
you as sacred to the LORD. 38 Anyone who makes something like it to smell
its fragrance must be cut off from his people."

EXODUS

God's Provision of the Skilled Workers

31 The LORD also spoke to Moses: 2 “Look, I have appointed by name
Bezalel son of Uri, son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah. 3 I have filled
him with God’s Spirit, with wisdom, understanding, and ability in every
craft 4 to design artistic works in gold, silver, and bronze, 5 to cut
gemstones for mounting, and to carve wood for work in every craft. 6 I have
also selected Oholiab son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan, to be with
him. I have placed wisdom within every skilled craftsman [A] in order to
make all that I have commanded you: 7 the tent of meeting, the ark of the
•testimony, the •mercy seat that is on top of it, and all the other furnishings
of the tent — 8 the table with its utensils, the pure gold lampstand with all
its utensils, the altar of incense, 9 the altar of •burnt offering with all its
utensils, the basin with its stand — 10 the specially woven [B] garments, both
the holy garments for Aaron the priest and the garments for his sons to
serve as priests, 11 the anointing oil, and the fragrant incense for the
sanctuary. They must make them according to all that I have commanded
you.”

Observing the Sabbath

12 The LORD said to Moses: 13 “Tell the Israelites: You must observe My
Sabbaths, for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations,
so that you will know that I am •Yahweh who sets you apart. 14[†] Observe
the Sabbath, for it is holy to you. Whoever profanes it must be put to death.
If anyone does work on it, that person must be cut off from his people.
15 Work may be done for six days, but on the seventh day there must be a
Sabbath of complete rest, dedicated to the LORD. Anyone who does work
on the Sabbath day must be put to death. 16 The Israelites must observe the
Sabbath, celebrating it throughout their generations as a perpetual covenant.
17 It is a sign forever between Me and the Israelites, for in six days the LORD
made the heavens and the earth, but on the seventh day He rested and was
refreshed.”

TWISTED SCRIPTURE

Exodus 31:12-17

According to the Seventh-day Adventists and other sabbatarian sects, the fourth commandment is an eternal decree to be obeyed by all throughout the ages. Since the Sabbath is Saturday, the sabbatarians deduce that Christians should be worshiping on the seventh day of the week, not the first. This passage, however, was not addressed to the church but to the children of Israel. Being under the new covenant, Christians are freed from the law of Moses (Rm 6:14; 14:5; Gl 3:24). The primitive church worshiped on the first day of the week (Ac 20:7; 1 Co 16:1-2), commemorating the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Two Stone Tablets

18† When He finished speaking with Moses on Mount Sinai, He gave him the two tablets of the testimony, stone tablets inscribed by the finger of God.

EXODUS

The Gold Calf

32 When the people saw that Moses delayed in coming down from the
mountain, they gathered around Aaron and said to him, “Come, make
us a god [A] who will go before us because this Moses, the man who brought
us up from the land of Egypt — we don’t know what has happened to
him! ”

2 Then Aaron replied to them, “Take off the gold rings that are on the
ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters and bring them to me.”
3 So all the people took off the gold rings that were on their ears and
brought them to Aaron. 4 He took the gold from their hands, fashioned it
with an engraving tool, and made it into an image of a calf.

Then they said, “Israel, this is your God, [B] who brought you up from the
land of Egypt! ”

5 When Aaron saw this, he built an altar before it; then he made an
announcement: “There will be a festival to the LORD tomorrow.” 6 Early the
next morning they arose, offered •burnt offerings, and presented •fellowship
offerings. The people sat down to eat and drink, then got up to play.

7 The LORD spoke to Moses: “Go down at once! For your people you
brought up from the land of Egypt have acted corruptly. 8 They have
quickly turned from the way I commanded them; they have made for
themselves an image of a calf. They have bowed down to it, sacrificed to it,
and said, ‘Israel, this is your God, [C] who brought you up from the land of
Egypt.’ ” 9 The LORD also said to Moses: “I have seen this people, and they
are indeed a stiff-necked people. 10 Now leave Me alone, so that My anger
can burn against them and I can destroy them. Then I will make you into a
great nation.”

11 But Moses interceded with the LORD his God: “LORD, why does Your
anger burn against Your people You brought out of the land of Egypt with
great power and a strong hand? 12 Why should the Egyptians say, ‘He
brought them out with an evil intent to kill them in the mountains and wipe
them off the face of the earth’? Turn from Your great anger and relent

concerning this disaster planned for Your people. 13 Remember Your
servants Abraham, Isaac, and Israel — You swore to them by Your very
self and declared, ‘I will make your •offspring as numerous as the stars of
the sky and will give your offspring all this land that I have promised, and
they will inherit it forever.’ ” 14† So the LORD relented concerning the
disaster He said He would bring on His people.

15 Then Moses turned and went down the mountain with the two tablets
of the •testimony in his hands. They were inscribed on both
sides — inscribed front and back. 16 The tablets were the work of God, and
the writing was God’s writing, engraved on the tablets.

17 When Joshua heard the sound of the people as they shouted, he said to
Moses, “There is a sound of war in the camp.”

18 But Moses replied:

It’s not the sound of a victory cry
and not the sound of a cry of defeat;
I hear the sound of singing!

19 As he approached the camp and saw the calf and the dancing, Moses
became enraged and threw the tablets out of his hands, smashing them at
the base of the mountain. 20 Then he took the calf they had made, burned it
up, and ground it to powder. He scattered the powder over the surface of the
water and forced the Israelites to drink the water.

21 Then Moses asked Aaron, “What did these people do to you that you
have led them into such a grave sin? ”

22 “Don’t be enraged, my lord,” Aaron replied. “You yourself know that
the people are intent on evil. 23 They said to me, ‘Make us a god [D] who
will go before us because this Moses, the man who brought us up from the
land of Egypt — we don’t know what has happened to him! ’ 24 So I said to
them, ‘Whoever has gold, take it off,’ and they gave it to me. When I threw
it into the fire, out came this calf! ”

25 Moses saw that the people were out of control, for Aaron had let them
get out of control, resulting in weakness before their enemies. [E] 26 And
Moses stood at the camp's entrance and said, "Whoever is for the LORD,
come to me." And all the Levites gathered around him. 27† He told them,
"This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says, 'Every man fasten his
sword to his side; go back and forth through the camp from entrance to
entrance, and each of you kill his brother, his friend, and his neighbor.' "
28 The Levites did as Moses commanded, and about 3,000 men fell dead
that day among the people. 29 Afterward Moses said, "Today you have been
dedicated to the LORD, since each man went against his son and his brother.
Therefore you have brought a blessing on yourselves today."

30 The following day Moses said to the people, "You have committed a
grave sin. Now I will go up to the LORD; perhaps I will be able to atone for
your sin."

31 So Moses returned to the LORD and said, "Oh, these people have
committed a grave sin; they have made a god of gold for themselves.
32† Now if You would only forgive their sin. But if not, please erase me
from the book You have written."

33 The LORD replied to Moses: "I will erase whoever has sinned against
Me from My book. 34 Now go, lead the people to the place I told you
about; see, My angel will go before you. But on the day I settle accounts, I
will hold them accountable for their sin." 35 And the LORD inflicted a
plague on the people for what they did with the calf Aaron had made.

EXODUS

The Tent Outside the Camp

33 The LORD spoke to Moses: "Go, leave here, you and the people you
brought up from the land of Egypt, to the land I promised to
Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, saying: I will give it to your •offspring. 2 I will
send an angel ahead of you and will drive out the Canaanites, Amorites,
Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites. 3 Go up to a land flowing with
milk and honey. But I will not go with you because you are a stiff-necked
people; otherwise, I might destroy you on the way." 4 When the people
heard this bad news, they mourned and didn't put on their jewelry.

5 For the LORD said to Moses: "Tell the Israelites: You are a stiff-necked
people. If I went with you for a single moment, I would destroy you. Now
take off your jewelry, and I will decide what to do with you." 6 So the
Israelites remained stripped of their jewelry from Mount Horeb onward.

7 Now Moses took a tent and set it up outside the camp, far away from
the camp; he called it the tent of meeting. Anyone who wanted to consult
the LORD would go to the tent of meeting that was outside the camp.
8 Whenever Moses went out to the tent, all the people would stand up, each
one at the door of his tent, and they would watch Moses until he entered the
tent. 9 When Moses entered the tent, the pillar of cloud would come down
and remain at the entrance to the tent, and the LORD would speak with
Moses. 10 As all the people saw the pillar of cloud remaining at the
entrance to the tent, they would stand up, then bow in worship, each one at
the door of his tent. 11† The LORD spoke with Moses face to face, just as a
man speaks with his friend. Then Moses would return to the camp, but his
assistant, the young man Joshua son of Nun, would not leave the inside of
the tent.

The LORD's Glory

12 Moses said to the LORD, "Look, You have told me, 'Lead this people
up,' but You have not let me know whom You will send with me. You said,
'I know you by name, and you have also found favor in My sight.' 13 Now
if I have indeed found favor in Your sight, please teach me Your ways, and
I will know You and find favor in Your sight. Now consider that this nation
is Your people."

[14] Then He replied, “My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.”

[15] “If Your presence does not go,” Moses responded to Him, “don’t make
us go up from here. [16] How will it be known that I and Your people have
found favor in Your sight unless You go with us? I and Your people will be
distinguished by this from all the other people on the face of the earth.”

[17] The LORD answered Moses, “I will do this very thing you have asked, for you have found favor in My sight, and I know you by name.”

[18] Then Moses said, “Please, let me see Your glory.”

[19] He said, “I will cause all My goodness to pass in front of you, and I
will proclaim the name •Yahweh before you. I will be gracious to whom I
will be gracious, and I will have compassion on whom I will have
compassion.” [20] But He answered, “You cannot see My face, for no one
can see Me and live.” [21] The LORD said, “Here is a place near Me. You are
to stand on the rock, [22] and when My glory passes by, I will put you in the
crevice of the rock and cover you with My hand until I have passed by.
[23] Then I will take My hand away, and you will see My back, but My face
will not be seen.”

EXODUS

New Stone Tablets

34 The LORD said to Moses, "Cut two stone tablets like the first ones, and I will write on them the words that were on the first tablets, which you broke.
2 Be prepared by morning. Come up Mount Sinai in the morning
and stand before Me on the mountaintop.
3 No one may go up with you; in fact, no one must be seen anywhere on the mountain. Even the flocks and herds are not to graze in front of that mountain."

4 Moses cut two stone tablets like the first ones. He got up early in the morning, and taking the two stone tablets in his hand, he climbed Mount Sinai, just as the LORD had commanded him.

5 The LORD came down in a cloud, stood with him there, and proclaimed
His name •Yahweh.
6† Then the LORD passed in front of him and proclaimed:

> Yahweh — Yahweh is a compassionate and gracious God, slow to
> anger and rich in faithful love and truth,
> 7 maintaining faithful love to a thousand generations, forgiving wrongdoing, rebellion, and sin. But He will not leave the •guilty unpunished, bringing the consequences of the fathers' wrongdoing on the children and grandchildren to the third and fourth generation.

8 Moses immediately bowed down to the ground and worshiped.
9 Then he said, "My Lord, if I have indeed found favor in Your sight, my Lord, please go with us. Even though this is a stiff-necked people, forgive our wrongdoing and sin, and accept us as Your own possession."

Covenant Obligations

10 And the LORD responded: "Look, I am making a covenant. I will perform wonders in the presence of all your people [A] that have never been done [B] in all the earth or in any nation. All the people you live among will see the LORD's work, for what I am doing with you is awe-inspiring.
11 Observe what I command you today. I am going to drive out before you
the Amorites, Canaanites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites.
12 Be careful not to make a treaty with the inhabitants of the land that you are

going to enter; otherwise, they will become a snare among you. 13 Instead,
you must tear down their altars, smash their sacred pillars, and chop down
their •Asherah poles. 14† You are never to bow down to another god
because Yahweh, being jealous by nature, [C] is a jealous God.

15 “Do not make a treaty with the inhabitants of the land, or else when
they prostitute themselves with their gods and sacrifice to their gods, they
will invite you, and you will eat their sacrifices. 16 Then you will take some
of their daughters as brides for your sons. Their daughters will prostitute
themselves with their gods and cause your sons to prostitute themselves
with their gods.

17 “Do not make cast images of gods for yourselves.

18 “Observe the Festival of •Unleavened Bread. You are to eat
unleavened bread for seven days at the appointed time in the month of
Abib as I commanded you. For you came out of Egypt in the month of
Abib.

19 “The firstborn male from every womb belongs to Me, including all
your male livestock, the firstborn of cattle or sheep. 20 You must redeem
the firstborn of a donkey with a sheep, but if you do not redeem it, break its
neck. You must redeem all the firstborn of your sons. No one is to appear
before Me empty-handed.

21 “You are to labor six days but you must rest on the seventh day; you
must even rest during plowing and harvesting times.

22 “Observe the Festival of Weeks with the •firstfruits of the wheat
harvest, and the Festival of Ingathering at the turn of the agricultural year.
23 Three times a year all your males are to appear before the Lord GOD, the
God of Israel. 24 For I will drive out nations before you and enlarge your
territory. No one will covet your land when you go up three times a year to
appear before the LORD your God.

[25] "Do not present [E] the blood for My sacrifice with anything leavened. The sacrifice of the •Passover Festival must not remain until morning.

[26] "Bring the best firstfruits of your land to the house of the LORD your God.

"You must not boil a young goat in its mother's milk."

[27] The LORD also said to Moses, "Write down these words, for I have made a covenant with you and with Israel based on these words."

[28] Moses was there with the LORD 40 days and 40 nights; he did not eat bread or drink water. He wrote the Ten Commandments, the words of the covenant, on the tablets.

Moses' Radiant Face

[29†] As Moses descended from Mount Sinai — with the two tablets of the
•testimony in his hands as he descended the mountain — he did not realize
that the skin of his face shone as a result of his speaking with the LORD. [F],
[30] When Aaron and all the Israelites saw Moses, the skin of his face shone!
They were afraid to come near him. [31] But Moses called out to them, so
Aaron and all the leaders of the community returned to him, and Moses
spoke to them. [32] Afterward all the Israelites came near, and he commanded
them to do everything the LORD had told him on Mount Sinai. [33] When
Moses had finished speaking with them, he put a veil over his face. [34] But
whenever Moses went before the LORD to speak with Him, he would
remove the veil until he came out. After he came out, he would tell the
Israelites what he had been commanded, [35] and the Israelites would see that
Moses' face [G] was radiant. Then Moses would put the veil over his face
again until he went to speak with the LORD.

EXODUS

The Sabbath Command

35 Moses assembled the entire Israelite community and said to them,
“These are the things that the LORD has commanded you to do: 2[†] For
six days work is to be done, but on the seventh day you are to have a holy
day, a Sabbath of complete rest to the LORD. Anyone who does work on it
must be executed. 3 Do not light a fire in any of your homes on the Sabbath
day.”

Building the Tabernacle

4 Then Moses said to the entire Israelite community, “This is what the
LORD has commanded: 5 Take up an offering among you for the LORD. Let
everyone whose heart is willing bring this as the LORD’s offering: gold,
silver, and bronze; 6 blue, purple, and scarlet yarn; fine linen and goat hair;
7 ram skins dyed red and manatee skins; [A] acacia wood; 8 oil for the light;
spices for the anointing oil and for the fragrant incense; 9 and onyx with
gemstones to mount on the •ephod and breastpiece.

10 “Let all the skilled craftsmen [B] among you come and make everything
that the LORD has commanded: 11 the tabernacle — its tent and covering, its
clasps and planks, its crossbars, its posts and bases; 12 the ark with its poles,
the •mercy seat, and the veil for the screen; 13 the table with its poles, all its
utensils, and the •bread of the Presence 14 the lampstand for light with its
utensils and lamps as well as the oil for the light; 15 the altar of incense with
its poles; the anointing oil and the fragrant incense; the entryway screen for
the entrance to the tabernacle; 16 the altar of •burnt offering with its bronze
grate, its poles, and all its utensils; the basin with its stand; 17 the hangings
of the courtyard, its posts and bases, and the screen for the gate of the
courtyard; 18 the tent pegs for the tabernacle and the tent pegs for the
courtyard, along with their ropes; 19 and the specially woven [C] garments for
ministering in the sanctuary — the holy garments for Aaron the priest and
the garments for his sons to serve as priests.”

20 Then the entire Israelite community left Moses’ presence. 21 Everyone
whose heart was moved and whose spirit prompted him came and brought
an offering to the LORD for the work on the tent of meeting, for all its

services, and for the holy garments. 22 Both men and women came; all who
had willing hearts brought brooches, earrings, rings, necklaces, and all
kinds of gold jewelry — everyone who waved a presentation offering of
gold to the LORD. 23 Everyone who had in his possession blue, purple, or
scarlet yarn, fine linen or goat hair, ram skins dyed red or manatee skins, [D]
brought them. 24 Everyone making an offering of silver or bronze brought it
as a contribution to the LORD. Everyone who possessed acacia wood useful
for any task in the work brought it. 25 Every skilled [E] woman spun yarn
with her hands and brought it: blue, purple, and scarlet yarn, and fine linen.
26 And all the women whose hearts were moved spun the goat hair by virtue
of their skill. 27 The leaders brought onyx and gemstones to mount on the
ephod and breastpiece, 28 as well as the spice and oil for the light, for the
anointing oil, and for the fragrant incense. 29 So the Israelites brought a
freewill offering to the LORD, all the men and women whose hearts
prompted them to bring something for all the work that the LORD, through
Moses, had commanded to be done.

Bezalel and Oholiab

30 Moses then said to the Israelites: “Look, the LORD has appointed by
name Bezalel son of Uri, son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah. 31 He has filled
him with God’s Spirit, with wisdom, understanding, and ability in every
kind of craft 32 to design artistic works in gold, silver, and bronze, 33 to cut
gemstones for mounting, and to carve wood for work in every kind of
artistic craft. 34 He has also given both him and Oholiab son of Ahisamach,
of the tribe of Dan, the ability to teach others. 35 He has filled them with
skill[F] to do all the work of a gem cutter; a designer; an embroiderer in blue,
purple, and scarlet yarn and fine linen; and a weaver. They can do every
kind of craft and design artistic designs.

EXODUS

36 Bezalel, Oholiab, and all the skilled [A] people are to work based on
everything the LORD has commanded. The LORD has given them
wisdom and understanding to know how to do all the work of constructing
the sanctuary."

2 So Moses summoned Bezalel, Oholiab, and every skilled [B] person in
whose heart the LORD had placed wisdom, everyone whose heart moved
him, to come to the work and do it. 3 They took from Moses' presence all
the contributions that the Israelites had brought for the task of making the
sanctuary. Meanwhile, the people continued to bring freewill offerings
morning after morning.

4 Then all the craftsmen who were doing all the work for the sanctuary
came one by one from the work they were doing 5 and said to Moses, "The
people are bringing more than is needed for the construction of the work
the LORD commanded to be done."

6 After Moses gave an order, they sent a proclamation throughout the
camp: "Let no man or woman make anything else as an offering for the
sanctuary." So the people stopped. 7 The materials were sufficient for them
to do all the work. There was more than enough.

Building the Tabernacle

8 All the skilled craftsmen [C] among those doing the work made the
tabernacle with 10 curtains. Bezalel made them of finely spun linen, as well
as blue, purple, and scarlet yarn, with a design of •cherubim worked into
them. 9 The length of each curtain was 42 feet, [D] and the width of each
curtain six feet; [E] all the curtains had the same measurements. 10 He joined
five of the curtains to each other, and the other five curtains he joined to
each other. 11 He made loops of blue yarn on the edge of the last curtain in
the first set and did the same on the edge of the outermost curtain in the
second set. 12 He made 50 loops on the one curtain and 50 loops on the
edge of the curtain in the second set, so that the loops lined up with each
other. 13 He also made 50 gold clasps and joined the curtains to each other,
so that the tabernacle became a single unit.

14 He made curtains of goat hair for a tent over the tabernacle; he made
11 of them. 15 The length of each curtain was 45 feet, [F] and the width of
each curtain six feet. [G] All 11 curtains had the same measurements. 16 He
joined five of the curtains together, and the other six together. 17 He made
50 loops on the edge of the outermost curtain in the first set and 50 loops on
the edge of the corresponding curtain in the second set. 18 He made 50
bronze clasps to join the tent together as a single unit. 19 He also made a
covering for the tent from ram skins dyed red and a covering of manatee
skins [H] on top of it.

20 He made upright planks [I] of acacia wood for the tabernacle. 21 The
length of each plank was 15 feet, [J] and the width of each was 27 inches. [K]
22 There were two tenons connected to each other for each plank. He did the
same for all the planks of the tabernacle. 23 He made planks for the
tabernacle as follows: 20 for the south side, 24 and he made 40 silver bases
to put under the 20 planks, two bases under the first plank for its two
tenons, and two bases under each of the following planks for their two
tenons; 25 for the second side of the tabernacle, the north side, he made 20
planks, 26 with their 40 silver bases, two bases under the first plank and two
bases under each of the following ones; 27 and for the west side of the
tabernacle he made six planks. 28 He also made two additional planks for
the two back corners of the tabernacle. 29 They were paired at the bottom
and joined together [L] at the [M] top in a single ring. This is what he did with
both of them for the two corners. 30 So there were eight planks with their 16
silver bases, two bases under each one.

31 He made five crossbars of acacia wood for the planks on one side of
the tabernacle, 32 five crossbars for the planks on the other side of the
tabernacle, and five crossbars for those at the back of the tabernacle on the
west. 33 He made the central crossbar run through the middle of the planks
from one end to the other. 34 He overlaid them with gold and made their
rings out of gold as holders for the crossbars. He also overlaid the crossbars
with gold.

[35] Then he made the veil with blue, purple, and scarlet yarn, and finely
spun linen. He made it with a design of cherubim worked into it. [36] He
made four posts of acacia wood for it and overlaid them with gold; their
hooks were of gold. And he cast four silver bases for the posts.

[37] He made a screen embroidered with blue, purple, and scarlet yarn, and
finely spun linen for the entrance to the tent, [38] together with its five posts
and their hooks. He overlaid the tops of the posts and their bands with gold,
but their five bases were bronze.

EXODUS

Making the Ark

37 [†] Bezalel made the ark of acacia wood, 45 inches long, 27 inches
wide, and 27 inches high. [A] 2 He overlaid it with pure gold inside and
out and made a gold molding all around it. 3 He cast four gold rings for it,
for its four feet, two rings on one side and two rings on the other side. 4 He
made poles of acacia wood and overlaid them with gold. 5 He inserted the
poles into the rings on the sides of the ark for carrying the ark.

6 He made a •mercy seat of pure gold, 45 inches long and 27 inches
wide. [B] 7 He made two •cherubim of gold; he made them of hammered
work at the two ends of the mercy seat, 8 one cherub at one end and one
cherub at the other end. At each end, he made a cherub of one piece with
the mercy seat. 9 They had wings spread out. They faced each other and
covered the mercy seat with their wings. The faces of the cherubim were
looking toward the mercy seat.

Making the Table

10 He constructed the table of acacia wood, 36 inches long, 18 inches
wide, and 27 inches high. [C] 11 He overlaid it with pure gold and made a
gold molding all around it. 12 He made a three-inch [D] frame all around it
and made a gold molding all around its frame. 13 He cast four gold rings for
it and attached the rings to the four corners at its four legs. 14 The rings
were next to the frame as holders for the poles to carry the table. 15 He
made the poles for carrying the table from acacia wood and overlaid them
with gold. 16 He also made the utensils that would be on the table out of
pure gold: its plates and cups, as well as its bowls and pitchers for pouring
•drink offerings.

Making the Lampstand

17 Then he made the lampstand out of pure hammered gold. He made it
all of one piece: its base and shaft, its ornamental cups, and its calyxes and
petals. 18 Six branches extended from its sides, three branches of the
lampstand from one side and three branches of the lampstand from the other
side. 19 There were three cups shaped like almond blossoms, each with a

calyx and petals, on the first branch, and three cups shaped like almond
blossoms, each with a calyx and petals, on the next branch. It was this way
for the six branches that extended from the lampstand. [20] On the lampstand
shaft there were four cups shaped like almond blossoms with its calyxes
and petals. [21] For the six branches that extended from it, a calyx was under
the first pair of branches from it, a calyx under the second pair of branches
from it, and a calyx under the third pair of branches from it. [22] Their calyxes
and branches were of one piece. [E] All of it was a single hammered piece of
pure gold. [23] He also made its seven lamps, snuffers, and firepans of pure
gold. [24] He made it and all its utensils of 75 pounds [F] of pure gold.

Making the Altar of Incense

[25] He made the altar of incense out of acacia wood. It was square, 18
inches long and 18 inches wide; it was 36 inches high. [G] Its horns were of
one piece. [H] [26] He overlaid it, its top, all around its sides, and its horns with
pure gold. Then he made a gold molding all around it. [27] He made two gold
rings for it under the molding on two of its sides; he put these on opposite
sides of it to be holders for the poles to carry it with. [28] He made the poles
of acacia wood and overlaid them with gold.

[29] He also made the holy anointing oil and the pure, fragrant, and
expertly blended incense.

EXODUS

Making the Altar of Burnt Offering

38 Bezalel constructed the altar of •burnt offering from acacia wood. It
was square, 7 1/2 feet long and 7 1/2 feet wide, [A] and was 4 1/2 feet [B]
high. 2 He made horns for it on its four corners; the horns were of one
piece. [C] Then he overlaid it with bronze.

3 He made all the altar's utensils: the pots, shovels, basins, meat forks,
and firepans; he made all its utensils of bronze. 4 He constructed for the
altar a grate of bronze mesh under its ledge, [D] halfway up from the bottom.
5 At the four corners of the bronze grate he cast four rings as holders for the
poles. 6 Also, he made the poles of acacia wood and overlaid them with
bronze. 7 Then he inserted the poles into the rings on the sides of the altar in
order to carry it with them. He constructed the altar with boards so that it
was hollow.

Making the Bronze Basin

8 He made the bronze basin and its stand from the bronze mirrors of the
women who served at the entrance to the tent of meeting.

Making the Courtyard

9 Then he made the courtyard. The hangings on the south side of the
courtyard were of finely spun linen, 150 feet in length, [E] 10 including their
20 posts and 20 bronze bases. The hooks and bands [F] of the posts were
silver. 11 The hangings on the north side were also 150 feet in length, [G]
including their 20 posts and 20 bronze bases. The hooks and bands [H] of the
posts were silver. 12 The hangings on the west side were 75 feet in length, [I]
including their 10 posts and 10 bases. The hooks and bands of the posts
were silver. 13 The hangings on the east toward the sunrise were also 75 feet
in length. [J] 14 The hangings on one side of the gate were 22 1/2 feet, [K]
including their three posts and three bases. 15 It was the same for the other
side. The hangings were 22 1/2 feet, [L] including their three posts and three
bases on both sides of the courtyard gate. 16 All the hangings around the
courtyard were of finely spun linen. 17 The bases for the posts were bronze;

the hooks and bands [M] of the posts were silver; and the plating for the tops of the posts was silver. All the posts of the courtyard were banded with silver.

[18] The screen for the gate of the courtyard was embroidered with blue, purple, and scarlet yarn, and finely spun linen. It was 30 feet [N] long, and like the hangings of the courtyard, 7 1/2 feet [O] high. [P] [19] It had four posts, including their four bronze bases. Their hooks were silver, and the bands [Q] as well as the plating of their tops were silver. [20] All the tent pegs for the tabernacle and for the surrounding courtyard were bronze.

Inventory of Materials

[21] This is the inventory for the tabernacle, the tabernacle of the •testimony, that was recorded at Moses' command. It was the work of the Levites under the direction of [R] Ithamar son of Aaron the priest. [22] Bezalel son of Uri, son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, made everything that the LORD commanded Moses. [23] With him was Oholiab son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan, a gem cutter, a designer, and an embroiderer with blue, purple, and scarlet yarn, and fine linen.

[24†] All the gold of the presentation offering that was used for the project in all the work on the sanctuary, was 2,193 pounds, [S] according to the sanctuary •shekel. [25†] The silver from those of the community who were registered was 7,544 pounds, [T] according to the sanctuary shekel — [26] 2/5 of an ounce [U] per man, that is, half a shekel according to the sanctuary shekel, from everyone 20 years old or more who had crossed over to the registered group, 603,550 men. [27] There were 7,500 pounds [V] of silver used to cast the bases of the sanctuary and the bases of the veil — 100 bases from 7,500 pounds, [W] 75 pounds [X] for each base. [28] With the remaining 44 pounds [Y] he made the hooks for the posts, overlaid their tops, and supplied bands [Z] for them.

[29] The bronze of the presentation offering totaled 5,310 pounds. [A] [30] He made with it the bases for the entrance to the tent of meeting, the bronze

altar and its bronze grate, all the utensils for the altar, [31] the bases for the surrounding courtyard, the bases for the gate of the courtyard, all the tent pegs for the tabernacle, and all the tent pegs for the surrounding courtyard.

EXODUS

Making the Priestly Garments

39 They made specially woven [A] garments for ministry in the sanctuary,
and the holy garments for Aaron from the blue, purple, and scarlet
yarn, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

Making the Ephod

2 Bezalel made the •ephod of gold, of blue, purple, and scarlet yarn, and
of finely spun linen. 3 They hammered out thin sheets of gold, and he cut
threads from them to interweave with the blue, purple, and scarlet yarn, and
the fine linen in a skillful design. 4 They made shoulder pieces for attaching
it; it was joined together at its two edges. 5 The artistically woven waistband
that was on the ephod was of one piece with the ephod, according to the
same workmanship of gold, of blue, purple, and scarlet yarn, and of finely
spun linen, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

6 Then they mounted the onyx stones surrounded with gold filigree
settings, engraved with the names of Israel's sons as a gem cutter engraves
a seal. 7 He fastened them on the shoulder pieces of the ephod as memorial
stones for the Israelites, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

Making the Breastpiece

8 He also made the embroidered breastpiece with the same workmanship
as the ephod of gold, of blue, purple, and scarlet yarn, and of finely spun
linen. 9 They made the breastpiece square and folded double, nine inches
long and nine inches wide. [B] 10 They mounted four rows of gemstones on
it. The first row was a row of carnelian, topaz, and emerald; [C] 11 the second
row, a turquoise, [D] a sapphire, [E] and a diamond; [F] 12 the third row, a
jacinth, [G] an agate, and an amethyst; 13 and the fourth row, a beryl, an onyx,
and a jasper. They were surrounded with gold filigree in their settings.

14 The 12 stones corresponded to the names of Israel's sons. Each stone
was engraved like a seal with one of the names of the 12 tribes.

15 They made braided chains of pure gold cord for the breastpiece.
16 They also fashioned two gold filigree settings and two gold rings and

attached the two rings to its two corners. 17 Then they attached the two gold
cords to the two gold rings on the corners of the breastpiece. 18 They
attached the other ends of the two cords to the two filigree settings and, in
this way, attached them to the ephod’s shoulder pieces in front. 19 They
made two other gold rings and put them at the two other corners of the
breastpiece on the edge that is next to the inner border of the ephod. 20 They
made two more gold rings and attached them to the bottom of the ephod’s
two shoulder pieces on its front, close to its seam, above the ephod’s
woven waistband. 21 Then they tied the breastpiece from its rings to the
rings of the ephod with a cord of blue yarn, so that the breastpiece was
above the ephod’s waistband and did not come loose from the ephod. They
did just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

Making the Robe

22 They made the woven robe of the ephod entirely of blue yarn.
23 There was an opening in the center of the robe like that of body armor [H]
with a collar around the opening so that it would not tear. 24 They made
pomegranates of finely spun blue, purple, and scarlet yarn on the lower
hem of the robe. 25 They made bells of pure gold and attached the bells
between the pomegranates, all around the hem of the robe between the
pomegranates, 26 a bell and a pomegranate alternating all around the lower
hem of the robe [I] to be worn for ministry. They made it just as the LORD had
commanded Moses.

The Other Priestly Garments

27 They made the tunics of fine woven linen for Aaron and his sons.
28 They also made the turban and the ornate headbands [J] of fine linen, the
undergarments, 29 and the sash of finely spun linen of embroidered blue,
purple, and scarlet yarn. They did just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

Making the Holy Diadem

30 They also made a medallion, the holy diadem, out of pure gold and
wrote on it an inscription like the engraving on a seal:

HOLY TO THE LORD.

31 Then they attached a cord of blue yarn to it in order to mount it on the
turban, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

Moses' Inspection of the Tabernacle

32 So all the work for the tabernacle, the tent of meeting, was finished.
The Israelites did everything just as the LORD had commanded Moses.
33 Then they brought the tabernacle to Moses: the tent with all its
furnishings, its clasps, its planks, its crossbars, and its posts and bases;
34 the covering of ram skins dyed red and the covering of manatee skins; [K]
the veil for the screen; 35 the ark of the •testimony with its poles and the
•mercy seat; 36 the table, all its utensils, and the •bread of the Presence
37 the pure gold lampstand, with its lamps arranged and all its utensils, as
well as the oil for the light; 38 the gold altar; the anointing oil; the fragrant
incense; the screen for the entrance to the tent; 39 the bronze altar with its
bronze grate, its poles, and all its utensils; the basin with its stand; 40 the
hangings of the courtyard, its posts and bases, the screen for the gate of the
courtyard, its ropes and tent pegs, and all the equipment for the service of
the tabernacle, the tent of meeting; 41 and the specially woven [L] garments
for ministering in the sanctuary, the holy garments for Aaron the priest and
the garments for his sons to serve as priests. 42 The Israelites had done all
the work according to everything the LORD had commanded Moses.
43 Moses inspected all the work they had accomplished. They had done just
as the LORD commanded. Then Moses blessed them.

EXODUS

Setting up the Tabernacle

40 The LORD spoke to Moses: 2 “You are to set up the tabernacle, the tent
of meeting, on the first day of the first month. [A], 3 Put the ark of the
•testimony there and screen off the ark with the veil. 4 Then bring in the
table and lay out its arrangement; also bring in the lampstand and set up its
lamps. 5 Place the gold altar for incense in front of the ark of the testimony.
Put up the screen for the entrance to the tabernacle. 6 Position the altar of
burnt offering in front of the entrance to the tabernacle, the tent of meeting.
7 Place the basin between the tent of meeting and the altar, and put water in
it. 8 Assemble the surrounding courtyard and hang the screen for the gate of
the courtyard.

9 “Take the anointing oil and anoint the tabernacle and everything in it;
consecrate it along with all its furnishings so that it will be holy. 10 Anoint
the altar of burnt offering and all its utensils; consecrate the altar so that it
will be especially holy. 11 Anoint the basin and its stand and consecrate it.

12 “Then bring Aaron and his sons to the entrance to the tent of meeting
and wash them with water. 13 Clothe Aaron with the holy garments, anoint
him, and consecrate him, so that he can serve Me as a priest. 14 Have his
sons come forward and clothe them in tunics. 15 Anoint them just as you
anointed their father, so that they may also serve Me as priests. Their
anointing will serve to inaugurate a permanent priesthood for them
throughout their generations.”

16 Moses did everything just as the LORD had commanded him. 17 The
tabernacle was set up in the first month of the second year, on the first day
of the month. 18 Moses set up the tabernacle: he laid its bases, positioned
its planks, inserted its crossbars, and set up its posts. 19 Then he spread the
tent over the tabernacle and put the covering of the tent on top of it, just as
the LORD had commanded Moses.

20[†] Moses took the testimony and placed it in the ark, and attached the
poles to the ark. He set the •mercy seat on top of the ark. 21 He brought the
ark into the tabernacle, put up the veil for the screen, and screened off the
ark of the testimony, just as the LORD had commanded him.

22 Moses placed the table in the tent of meeting on the north side of the
tabernacle, outside the veil. 23 He arranged the bread on it before the LORD,
just as the LORD had commanded him. 24 He also put the lampstand in the
tent of meeting opposite the table on the south side of the tabernacle 25 and
set up the lamps before the LORD, just as the LORD had commanded him.

26 Moses also installed the gold altar in the tent of meeting, in front of the
veil, 27 and burned fragrant incense on it, just as the LORD had commanded
him. 28 He put up the screen at the entrance to the tabernacle. 29 Then he
placed the altar of burnt offering at the entrance to the tabernacle, the tent of
meeting, and offered the •burnt offering and the •grain offering on it, just as
the LORD had commanded him.

30 He set the basin between the tent of meeting and the altar and put
water in it for washing. 31 Moses, Aaron, and his sons washed their hands
and feet from it. 32 They washed whenever they came to the tent of meeting
and approached the altar, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

33 Next Moses set up the surrounding courtyard for the tabernacle and the
altar and hung a screen for the gate of the courtyard. So Moses finished the
work.

The LORD's Glory

34 The cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled
the tabernacle. 35 Moses was unable to enter the tent of meeting because
the cloud rested on it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.

36 The Israelites set out whenever the cloud was taken up from the
tabernacle throughout all the stages of their journey. 37 If the cloud was not
taken up, they did not set out until the day it was taken up. 38 For the cloud
of the LORD was over the tabernacle by day, and there was a fire inside the
cloud by night, visible to the entire house of Israel throughout all the stages
of their journey.

LEVITICUS

Introduction to Leviticus

LEVITICUS

The Burnt Offering

1 [†]Then the LORD summoned Moses and spoke to him from the tent of
meeting: [2†] “Speak to the Israelites and tell them: When any of you
brings an offering to the LORD from the livestock, you [A] may bring your
offering from the herd or the flock.

[3†] “If his gift is a •burnt offering from the herd, he is to bring an
unblemished male. He must bring it to the entrance to the tent of meeting
so that he [B] may be accepted by the LORD. [4†] He is to lay his hand on the
head of the burnt offering so it can be accepted on his behalf to make
•atonement for him. [5†] He is to slaughter the bull before the LORD; Aaron’s
sons the priests are to present the blood and sprinkle it on all sides of the
altar that is at the entrance to the tent of meeting. [6†] Then he must skin the
burnt offering and cut it into pieces. [C] [7] The sons of Aaron the priest will
prepare a fire on the altar and arrange wood on the fire. [8] Aaron’s sons the
priests are to arrange the pieces, the head, and the suet on top of the
burning wood on the altar. [9†] The offerer must wash its entrails and shanks
with water. Then the priest will burn all of it on the altar as a burnt offering,
a fire offering of a pleasing aroma to the LORD.

[10] “But if his gift for a burnt offering is from the flock, from sheep or
goats, he is to present an unblemished male. [11] He will slaughter it on the
north side of the altar before the LORD. Aaron’s sons the priests will sprinkle
its blood against the altar on all sides. [12] He will cut the animal into pieces [D]
with its head and its suet, and the priest will arrange them on top of the
burning wood on the altar. [13] But he is to wash the entrails and shanks with
water. The priest will then present all of it and burn it on the altar; it is a
burnt offering, a fire offering of a pleasing aroma to the LORD.

[14†] “If his gift to the LORD is a burnt offering of birds, he is to present his
offering from the turtledoves or young pigeons. [E], [15†] Then the priest must
bring it to the altar, and must twist off its head and burn it on the altar; its
blood should be drained at the side of the altar. [16] He will remove its
digestive tract, [F] cutting off the tail feathers, and throw it on the east side of
the altar at the place for ashes. [17†] He will tear it open by its wings without
dividing the bird. Then the priest is to burn it on the altar on top of the

burning wood. It is a burnt offering, a fire offering of a pleasing aroma to the LORD.

LEVITICUS

The Grain Offering

2 “When anyone presents a •grain offering as a gift to the LORD, his gift
must consist of fine flour. He is to pour olive oil on it, put frankincense
on it, 2 and bring it to Aaron’s sons the priests. The priest will take a
handful of fine flour and oil from it, along with all its frankincense, and will
burn this memorial portion of it on the altar, a fire offering of a pleasing
aroma to the LORD. 3 But the rest of the grain offering will belong to Aaron
and his sons; it is the holiest part of the fire offerings to the LORD.

4† “When you present a grain offering baked in an oven, it must be made
of fine flour, either unleavened cakes mixed with oil or unleavened wafers
coated with oil. 5 If your gift is a grain offering prepared on a griddle, it
must be unleavened bread made of fine flour mixed with oil. 6 Break it into
pieces and pour oil on it; it is a grain offering. 7 If your gift is a grain
offering prepared in a pan, it must be made of fine flour with oil. 8 When
you bring to the LORD the grain offering made in any of these ways, it is to
be presented to the priest, and he will take it to the altar. 9† The priest will
remove the memorial portion [A] from the grain offering and burn it on the
altar, a fire offering of a pleasing aroma to the LORD. 10 But the rest of the
grain offering will belong to Aaron and his sons; it is the holiest part of the
fire offerings to the LORD.

11† “No grain offering that you present to the LORD is to be made with
yeast, for you are not to burn any yeast or honey as a fire offering to the
LORD. 12 You may present them to the LORD as an offering of •firstfruits, but
they are not to be offered on the altar as a pleasing aroma. 13† You are to
season each of your grain offerings with salt; you must not omit from your
grain offering the salt of the covenant with your God. You are to present
salt with each of your offerings.

14 “If you present a grain offering of firstfruits to the LORD, you must
present fresh heads of grain, crushed kernels, roasted on the fire, for your
grain offering of firstfruits. 15 You are to put oil and frankincense on it; it is
a grain offering. 16 The priest will then burn some of its crushed kernels and
oil with all its frankincense as a fire offering to the LORD.

LEVITICUS

The Fellowship Offering

3 [†]“If his offering is a •fellowship sacrifice, and he is presenting an
animal from the herd, whether male or female, he must present one
without blemish before the LORD. 2 He is to lay his hand on the head of his
offering and slaughter it at the entrance to the tent of meeting. Then Aaron’s
sons the priests will sprinkle the blood on all sides of the altar. 3[†] He will
present part of the fellowship sacrifice as a fire offering to the LORD: the fat
surrounding the entrails, all the fat that is on the entrails, 4[†] and the two
kidneys with the fat on them at the loins; he will also remove the fatty lobe
of the liver with the kidneys. 5 Aaron’s sons will burn it on the altar along
with the •burnt offering that is on the burning wood, a fire offering of a
pleasing aroma to the LORD.

6 “If his offering as a fellowship sacrifice to the LORD is from the flock,
he must present a male or female without blemish. 7 If he is presenting a
lamb for his offering, he is to present it before the LORD. 8 He must lay his
hand on the head of his offering, then slaughter it before the tent of meeting.
Aaron’s sons will sprinkle its blood on all sides of the altar. 9 He will then
present part of the fellowship sacrifice as a fire offering to the LORD
consisting of its fat and the entire fat tail, which he is to remove close to
the backbone. He will also remove the fat surrounding the entrails, all the
fat on the entrails, 10 the two kidneys with the fat on them at the loins, and
the fatty lobe of the liver above the kidneys. 11 Then the priest will burn the
food on the altar, as a fire offering to the LORD.

12 “If his offering is a goat, he is to present it before the LORD. 13 He
must lay his hand on its head and slaughter it before the tent of meeting.
Aaron’s sons will sprinkle [A] its blood on all sides of the altar. 14 He will
present part of his offering as a fire offering to the LORD: the fat surrounding
the entrails, all the fat that is on the entrails, 15 and the two kidneys with the
fat on them at the loins; he will also remove the fatty lobe of the liver with
the kidneys. 16 Then the priest will burn the food on the altar, as a fire
offering for a pleasing aroma.

“All fat belongs to the LORD. 17 This is a permanent statute throughout
your generations, wherever you live: you must not eat any fat or any

blood.”

LEVITICUS

The Sin Offering

4 Then the LORD spoke to Moses: 2† “Tell the Israelites: When someone
sins unintentionally against any of the LORD’s commands and does
anything prohibited by them —

3 “If the anointed priest sins, bringing •guilt on the people, he is to
present to the LORD a young, unblemished bull as a •sin [A] offering for the
sin he has committed. 4 He must bring the bull to the entrance to the tent of
meeting before the LORD, lay his hand on the bull’s head, and slaughter it
before the LORD. 5 The anointed priest must then take some of the bull’s
blood and bring it into the tent of meeting. 6 The priest is to dip his finger in
the blood and sprinkle some of it seven times before the LORD in front of
the veil of the sanctuary. 7† The priest must apply some of the blood to the
horns of the altar of fragrant incense that is before the LORD in the tent of
meeting. He must pour out the rest of the bull’s blood at the base of the altar
of burnt offering that is at the entrance to the tent of meeting. 8 He is to
remove all the fat from the bull of the sin offering: the fat surrounding the
entrails, all the fat that is on the entrails, 9 and the two kidneys with the fat
on them at the loins. He will also remove the fatty lobe of the liver with the
kidneys, 10 just as the fat is removed from the ox of the •fellowship
sacrifice. The priest is to burn them on the altar of burnt offering. 11 But the
hide of the bull and all its flesh, with its head and shanks, and its entrails
and dung — 12† all the rest of the bull — he must bring to a ceremonially
•clean place outside the camp to the ash heap, and must burn it on a wood
fire. It is to be burned at the ash heap.

13† “Now if the whole community of Israel errs, and the matter escapes
the notice of the assembly, so that they violate any of the LORD’s
commands and incur guilt by doing what is prohibited, 14 then the
assembly must present a young bull as a sin offering. When the sin they
have committed in regard to the command becomes known, they are to
bring it before the tent of meeting. 15 The elders of the community are to
lay their hands on the bull’s head before the LORD and it is to be slaughtered
before the LORD. 16 The anointed priest will bring some of the bull’s blood
into the tent of meeting. 17 The priest is to dip his finger in the blood and
sprinkle it seven times before the LORD in front of the veil. 18 He is to apply

some of the blood to the horns of the altar that is before the LORD in the tent of meeting. He must pour out the rest of the blood at the base of the altar of burnt offering that is at the entrance to the tent of meeting.
19 He is to remove all the fat from it and burn it on the altar.
20 He is to offer this bull just as he did with the bull in the sin offering; he will offer it the same way. So the priest will make •atonement on their behalf, and they will be forgiven.
21 Then he will bring the bull outside the camp and burn it just as he burned the first bull. It is the sin offering for the assembly.

22 “When a leader [B], sins and unintentionally violates any of the commands of the LORD his God by doing what is prohibited, and incurs guilt,
23 or someone informs him about the sin he has committed, he is to bring an unblemished male goat as his offering.
24 He is to lay his hand on the head of the goat and slaughter it at the place where the •burnt offering is slaughtered before the LORD. It is a sin offering.
25 Then the priest must take some of the blood from the sin offering with his finger and apply it to the horns of the altar of burnt offering. The rest of its blood he must pour out at the base of the altar of burnt offering.
26 He must burn all its fat on the altar, like the fat of the fellowship sacrifice. In this way the priest will make atonement on his behalf for that person’s sin, and he will be forgiven.

27 “Now if any of the common people [C] sins unintentionally by violating one of the LORD’s commands, does what is prohibited, and incurs guilt,
28 or if someone informs him about the sin he has committed, then he is to bring an unblemished female goat as his offering for the sin that he has committed.
29 He is to lay his hand on the head of the sin offering and slaughter it at the place of the burnt offering.
30 Then the priest must take some of its blood with his finger and apply it to the horns of the altar of burnt offering. He must pour out the rest of its blood at the base of the altar.
31 He is to remove all its fat just as the fat is removed from the fellowship sacrifice. The priest is to burn it on the altar as a pleasing aroma to the LORD. In this way the priest will make atonement on his behalf, and he will be forgiven.

[32] "Or if the offering that he brings as a sin offering is a lamb, he is to
bring an unblemished female. [33] He is to lay his hand on the head of the sin
offering and slaughter it as a sin offering at the place where the burnt
offering is slaughtered. [34] Then the priest must take some of the blood of
the sin offering with his finger and apply it to the horns of the altar of burnt
offering. He must pour out the rest of its blood at the base of the altar. [35] He
is to remove all its fat just as the fat of the lamb is removed from the
fellowship sacrifice. The priest will burn it on the altar along with the fire
offerings to the LORD. In this way the priest will make atonement on his
behalf for the sin he has committed, and he will be forgiven.

LEVITICUS

Cases Requiring Sin Offerings

5 “When someone sins in any of these ways:

If he has seen, heard, or known about something he has witnessed,
and did not respond to a public call to testify, he is responsible for
his sin.
2 Or if someone touches anything •unclean — a carcass of an
unclean wild animal, or unclean livestock, or an unclean
swarming creature — without being aware of it, he is unclean and
•guilty.
3 Or if he touches human uncleanness — any uncleanness by
which one can become defiled — without being aware of it, but
later recognizes it, he is guilty.
4 Or if someone swears rashly to do what is good or
evil — concerning anything a person may speak rashly in an
oath — without being aware of it, but later recognizes it, he incurs
guilt in such an instance. [A]

5† If someone incurs guilt in one of these cases, he is to confess he has
committed that sin. 6 He must bring his restitution for the sin he has
committed to the LORD: a female lamb or goat from the flock as a •sin
offering. In this way the priest will make •atonement on his behalf for his
sin.

7 “But if he cannot afford an animal from the flock, then he may bring to
the LORD two turtledoves or two young pigeons as restitution for his
sin — one as a sin offering and the other as a •burnt offering. 8 He is to
bring them to the priest, who will first present the one for the sin offering.
He must twist its head at the back of the neck without severing it. 9 Then he
will sprinkle some of the blood of the sin offering on the side of the altar,
while the rest of the blood is to be drained out at the base of the altar; it is a
sin offering. 10† He must prepare the second bird as a burnt offering
according to the regulation. In this way the priest will make atonement on
his behalf for the sin he has committed, and he will be forgiven.

ARTICLE

Who Wrote the Pentateuch and When Was It Written? ⇒

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[11] "But if he cannot afford [B] two turtledoves or two young pigeons, he may bring two quarts [C] of fine [D] flour [E], as an offering for his sin. He must not put olive oil or frankincense on it, for it is a sin offering. [12] He is to bring it to the priest, who will take a handful from it as its memorial portion and burn it on the altar along with the fire offerings to the LORD; it is a sin offering. [13] In this way the priest will make atonement on his behalf concerning the sin he has committed in any of these cases, and he will be forgiven. The rest will belong to the priest, like the •grain offering."

The Restitution Offering

[14] Then the LORD spoke to Moses: [15†] "If someone offends by sinning unintentionally in regard to any of the LORD's holy things, he must bring his •restitution offering to the LORD: an unblemished ram from the flock (based on your assessment of its value in silver •shekels, according to the sanctuary shekel) as a restitution offering. [16] He must make restitution for his sin regarding any holy thing, adding a fifth of its value to it, and give it to the priest. Then the priest will make atonement on his behalf with the ram of the restitution offering, and he will be forgiven.

[17] "If someone sins and without knowing it violates any of the LORD's commands concerning anything prohibited, he bears the consequences of his guilt. [18] He must bring an unblemished ram from the flock according to your assessment of its value as a restitution offering to the priest. Then the priest will make atonement on his behalf for the error he has committed unintentionally, and he will be forgiven. [19] It is a restitution offering; he is indeed guilty before the LORD."

LEVITICUS

6

1 The LORD spoke to Moses: 2 “When someone sins and offends the LORD
by deceiving his neighbor in regard to a deposit, a security, [A] or a
robbery; or defrauds his neighbor; 3 or finds something lost and lies about
it; or swears falsely about any of the sinful things a person may do —
4† once he has sinned and acknowledged his •guilt — he must return what
he stole or defrauded, or the deposit entrusted to him, or the lost item he
found, 5 or anything else about which he swore falsely. He must make full
restitution for it and add a fifth of its value to it. He is to pay it to its owner
on the day he acknowledges his guilt. 6 Then he must bring his •restitution
offering to the LORD: an unblemished ram from the flock according to your
assessment of its value as a restitution offering to the priest. 7 In this way
the priest will make •atonement on his behalf before the LORD, and he will
be forgiven for anything he may have done to incur guilt.”

The Burnt Offering

8 The LORD spoke to Moses: 9 “Command Aaron and his sons: This is the
law of the •burnt offering; the burnt offering itself must remain on the
altar’s hearth all night until morning, while the fire of the altar is kept
burning on it. 10† The priest is to put on his linen robe and linen
undergarments. [B], He is to remove the ashes of the burnt offering the fire
has consumed on the altar, and place them beside the altar. 11 Then he must
take off his garments, put on other clothes, and bring the ashes outside the
camp to a ceremonially •clean place. 12† The fire on the altar is to be kept
burning; it must not go out. Every morning the priest will burn wood on the
fire. He is to arrange the burnt offering on the fire and burn the fat portions
from the •fellowship offerings on it. 13 Fire must be kept burning on the
altar continually; it must not go out.

The Grain Offering

14 “Now this is the law of the •grain offering: Aaron’s sons will present
it before the LORD in front of the altar. 15 The priest is to remove a handful
of fine flour and olive oil from the grain offering, with all the frankincense
that is on the offering, and burn its memorial portion on the altar as a

pleasing aroma to the LORD. 16 Aaron and his sons may eat the rest of it. It is to be eaten in the form of unleavened bread in a holy place; they are to eat it in the courtyard of the tent of meeting. 17 It must not be baked with yeast; I have assigned it as their portion from My fire offerings. It is especially holy, like the •sin offering and the restitution offering. 18 Any male among Aaron's descendants may eat it. It is a permanent portion [C] throughout your generations from the fire offerings to the LORD. Anything that touches the offerings will become holy."

19 The LORD spoke to Moses: 20 "This is the offering that Aaron and his sons must present to the LORD on the day that he is anointed: two quarts [D] of fine flour as a regular grain offering, half of it in the morning and half in the evening. 21 It is to be prepared with oil on a griddle; you are to bring it well-kneaded. You must present it as a grain offering of baked pieces, [E] a pleasing aroma to the LORD. 22[†] The priest, who is one of Aaron's sons and will be anointed to take his place, is to prepare it. It must be completely burned as a permanent portion for the LORD. 23 Every grain offering for a priest will be a whole burnt offering; it is not to be eaten."

The Sin Offering

24 The LORD spoke to Moses: 25 "Tell Aaron and his sons: This is the law of the sin offering. The sin offering is most holy and must be slaughtered before the LORD at the place where the burnt offering is slaughtered. 26 The priest who offers it as a sin offering is to eat it. It must be eaten in a holy place, in the courtyard of the tent of meeting. 27 Anything that touches its flesh will become holy, and if any of its blood spatters on a garment, then you must wash that garment [F] in a holy place. 28 A clay pot in which the sin offering is boiled must be broken; if it is boiled in a bronze vessel, it must be scoured and rinsed with water. 29 Any male among the priests may eat it; it is especially holy. 30 But no sin offering may be eaten if its blood has been brought into the tent of meeting to make atonement in the holy place; it must be burned up.

LEVITICUS

The Restitution Offering

7 “Now this is the law of the •restitution offering; it is especially holy.
2 The restitution offering must be slaughtered at the place where the
•burnt offering is slaughtered, and the priest is to sprinkle its blood on all
sides of the altar. 3 The offerer must present all the fat from it: the fat tail,
the fat surrounding the entrails, 4 and the two kidneys with the fat on them
at the loins; he will also remove the fatty lobe of the liver with the kidneys.
5 The priest will burn them on the altar as a fire offering to the Lord; it is a
restitution offering. 6 Any male among the priests may eat it. It is to be
eaten in a holy place; it is especially holy.

7 “The restitution offering is like the •sin offering; the law is the same
for both. It belongs to the priest who makes •atonement with it. 8 As for
the priest who presents someone’s burnt offering, the hide of the burnt
offering he has presented belongs to him; it is the priest’s. 9 Any •grain
offering that is baked in an oven or prepared in a pan or on a griddle
belongs to the priest who presents it; it is his. 10 But any grain offering,
whether dry or mixed with oil, belongs equally [A] to all of Aaron’s sons.

The Fellowship Sacrifice

11 “Now this is the law of the •fellowship sacrifice that someone may
present to the Lord: 12 If he presents it for thanksgiving, in addition to the
thanksgiving sacrifice, he is to present unleavened cakes mixed with olive
oil, unleavened wafers coated with oil, and well-kneaded cakes of fine
flour mixed with oil. 13 He is to present as his offering cakes of leavened
bread with his thanksgiving sacrifice of fellowship. 14 From the cakes he
must present one portion of each offering as a contribution to the Lord. It
will belong to the priest who sprinkles the blood of the fellowship offering;
it is his. 15 The meat of his thanksgiving sacrifice of fellowship must be
eaten on the day he offers it; he may not leave any of it until morning.

16 “If the sacrifice he offers is a vow or a freewill offering, it is to be
eaten on the day he presents his sacrifice, and what is left over may be eaten
on the next day. 17 But what remains of the sacrificial meat by the third day
must be burned up. 18 If any of the meat of his fellowship sacrifice is eaten

on the third day, it will not be accepted. It will not be credited to the one who presents it; it is repulsive. The person who eats any of it will be responsible for his sin. [B]

[19] “Meat that touches anything •unclean must not be eaten; it is to be burned up. Everyone who is •clean may eat any other meat. [20] But the one who eats meat from the LORD’s fellowship sacrifice while he is unclean, [C] that person must be cut off from his people. [21] If someone touches anything unclean, whether human uncleanness, an unclean animal, or any unclean, detestable creature, and eats meat from the LORD’s fellowship sacrifice, that person must be cut off from his people.”

Fat and Blood Prohibited

[22] The LORD spoke to Moses: [23] “Tell the Israelites: You are not to eat any fat of an ox, a sheep, or a goat. [24] The fat of an animal that dies naturally or is mauled by wild beasts [D] may be used for any purpose, but you must not eat it. [25] If anyone eats animal fat from a fire offering presented to the LORD, the person who eats it must be cut off from his people. [26] Wherever you live, you must not eat the blood of any bird or animal. [27] Whoever eats any blood, that person must be cut off from his people.”

The Portion for the Priests

[28] The LORD spoke to Moses: [29] “Tell the Israelites: The one who presents a fellowship sacrifice to the LORD must bring an offering to the LORD from his sacrifice. [30] His own hands will bring the fire offerings to the LORD. He will bring the fat together with the breast. The breast is to be waved as a presentation offering before the LORD. [31†] The priest is to burn the fat on the altar, but the breast belongs to Aaron and his sons. [32] You are to give the right thigh to the priest as a contribution from your fellowship sacrifices. [33] The son of Aaron who presents the blood of the fellowship offering and the fat will have the right thigh as a portion. [34†] I have taken from the Israelites the breast of the presentation offering and the thigh of the

contribution from their fellowship sacrifices, and have assigned them to
Aaron the priest and his sons as a permanent portion [E] from the Israelites."

35 This is the portion from the fire offerings to the LORD for Aaron and
his sons since the day they were presented to serve the LORD as priests.
36 The LORD commanded this to be given to them by the Israelites on the
day He anointed them. It is a permanent portion [F] throughout their
generations.

37 This is the law for the burnt offering, the grain offering, the sin
offering, the restitution offering, the ordination offering, and the fellowship
sacrifice, 38 which the LORD commanded Moses on Mount Sinai on the day
He [G] commanded the Israelites to present their offerings to the LORD in the
Wilderness of Sinai.

LEVITICUS

Ordination of Aaron and His Sons

8 [†]The LORD spoke to Moses: 2 “Take Aaron, his sons with him, the
garments, the anointing oil, the bull of the •sin [A] offering, the two rams,
and the basket of unleavened bread, 3 and assemble the whole community
at the entrance to the tent of meeting.” 4 So Moses did as the LORD
commanded him, and the community assembled at the entrance to the tent
of meeting. 5 Moses said to them, “This is what the LORD has commanded
to be done.”

6 Then Moses presented Aaron and his sons and washed them with water.
7[†] He put the tunic on Aaron, wrapped the sash around him, clothed him
with the robe, and put the •ephod on him. He put the woven band of the
ephod around him and fastened it to him. 8[†] Then he put the breastpiece on
him and placed the •Urim and Thummim into the breastpiece. 9 He also put
the turban on his head and placed the gold medallion, the holy diadem, on
the front of the turban, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

10[†] Then Moses took the anointing oil and anointed the tabernacle and
everything in it to consecrate them. 11 He sprinkled some of the oil on the
altar seven times, anointing the altar with all its utensils, and the basin with
its stand, to consecrate them. 12 He poured some of the anointing oil on
Aaron’s head and anointed and consecrated him. 13 Then Moses presented
Aaron’s sons, clothed them with tunics, wrapped sashes around them, and
fastened headbands on them, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

14 Then he brought the bull near for the sin offering, and Aaron and his
sons laid their hands on the head of the bull for the sin offering. 15 Then
Moses slaughtered it, [B] took the blood, and applied it with his finger to the
horns of the altar on all sides, purifying the altar. He poured out the blood
at the base of the altar and consecrated it so that •atonement can be made on
it. [C] 16 Moses took all the fat that was on the entrails, the fatty lobe of the
liver, and the two kidneys with their fat, and he burned them on the altar.
17 He burned up the bull with its hide, flesh, and dung outside the camp, as
the LORD had commanded Moses.

[18] Then he presented the ram for the •burnt offering, and Aaron and his
sons laid their hands on the head of the ram. [19] Moses slaughtered it and [D]
sprinkled the blood on all sides of the altar. [20] Moses cut the ram into pieces
and burned the head, the pieces, and the suet, [21] but he washed the entrails
and shanks with water. He then burned the entire ram on the altar. It was a
burnt offering for a pleasing aroma, a fire offering to the LORD as He had
commanded Moses.

[22] Next he presented the second ram, the ram of ordination, and Aaron
and his sons laid their hands on the head of the ram. [23] Moses slaughtered
it, [E] took some of its blood, and put it on Aaron's right earlobe, on the
thumb of his right hand, and on the big toe of his right foot. [24†] Moses also
presented Aaron's sons and put some of the blood on their right earlobes, on
the thumbs of their right hands, and on the big toes of their right feet. Then
Moses sprinkled the blood on all sides of the altar. [25] He took the fat — the
fat tail, all the fat that was on the entrails, the fatty lobe of the liver, and the
two kidneys with their fat — as well as the right thigh. [26] From the basket
of unleavened bread that was before the LORD he took one cake of
unleavened bread, one cake of bread made with oil, and one wafer, and
placed them on the fat portions and the right thigh. [27] He put all these in the
hands of Aaron and his sons and waved them before the LORD as a
presentation offering. [28] Then Moses took them from their hands and
burned them on the altar with the burnt offering. This was an ordination
offering for a pleasing aroma, a fire offering to the LORD. [29] He also took
the breast and waved it before the LORD as a presentation offering; it was
Moses' portion of the ordination ram as the LORD had commanded him.

[30] Then Moses took some of the anointing oil and some of the blood that
was on the altar and sprinkled them on Aaron and his garments, as well as
on his sons and their garments. In this way he consecrated Aaron and his
garments, as well as his sons and their garments.

[31] Moses said to Aaron and his sons, "Boil the meat at the entrance to the
tent of meeting and eat it there with the bread that is in the basket for the
ordination offering as I commanded: Aaron and his sons are to eat it.

[32] You must burn up what remains of the meat and bread. [33] You must not
go outside the entrance to the tent of meeting for seven days, until the time
your days of ordination are completed, because it will take seven days to
ordain you. [F] [34] The LORD commanded what has been done today in order to
make atonement for you. [35] You must remain at the entrance to the tent of
meeting day and night for seven days and keep the LORD's charge so that
you will not die, for this is what I was commanded." [36] So Aaron and his
sons did everything the LORD had commanded through Moses.

LEVITICUS

The Priestly Ministry Inaugurated

9 On the eighth day Moses summoned Aaron, his sons, and the elders of
Israel. [2†] He said to Aaron, "Take a young bull for a •sin [A] offering and
a ram for a •burnt offering, both without blemish, and present them before
the LORD. [3] And tell the Israelites: Take a male goat for a sin offering; a calf
and a lamb, male yearlings without blemish, for a burnt offering; [4] an ox
and a ram for a •fellowship offering to sacrifice before the LORD; and a
•grain offering mixed with oil. For today the LORD is going to appear to
you. "

[5] They brought what Moses had commanded to the front of the tent of
meeting, and the whole community came forward and stood before the
LORD. [6] Moses said, "This is what the LORD commanded you to do, that the
glory of the LORD may appear to you." [7] Then Moses said to Aaron,
"Approach the altar and sacrifice your sin offering and your burnt offering;
make •atonement for yourself and the people. Sacrifice the people's
offering and make atonement for them, as the LORD commanded."

[8] So Aaron approached the altar and slaughtered the calf as a sin offering
for himself. [9] Aaron's sons brought the blood to him, and he dipped his
finger in the blood and applied it to the horns of the altar. He poured out the
blood at the base of the altar. [10] He burned the fat, the kidneys, and the fatty
lobe of the liver from the sin offering on the altar, as the LORD had
commanded Moses. [11] He burned up the flesh and the hide outside the
camp.

[12] Then he slaughtered the burnt offering. Aaron's sons brought him the
blood, and he sprinkled it on all sides of the altar. [13] They brought him the
burnt offering piece by piece, along with the head, and he burned them on
the altar. [14] He washed the entrails and the shanks and burned them with the
burnt offering on the altar.

[15] Aaron presented the people's offering. He took the male goat for the
people's sin offering, slaughtered it, and made a sin offering with it as he
did before. [16] He presented the burnt offering and sacrificed it according to

the regulation. [17] Next he presented the grain offering, took a handful of it,
and burned it on the altar in addition to the morning burnt offering.

[18] Finally, he slaughtered the ox and the ram as the people's fellowship
sacrifice. Aaron's sons brought him the blood, and he sprinkled it on all
sides of the altar. [19] They also brought the fat portions from the ox and the
ram — the fat tail, the fat surrounding the entrails, the kidneys, and the fatty
lobe of the liver — [20] and placed these on the breasts. Aaron burned the fat
portions on the altar, [21] but he waved the breasts and the right thigh as a
presentation offering before the LORD, as Moses had commanded.

[22] Aaron lifted up his hands toward the people and blessed them. He
came down after sacrificing the sin offering, the burnt offering, and the
fellowship offering. [23] Moses and Aaron then entered the tent of meeting.
When they came out, they blessed the people, and the glory of the LORD
appeared to all the people. [24†] Fire came from the LORD and consumed the
burnt offering and the fat portions on the altar. And when all the people saw
it, they shouted and fell facedown on the ground.

LEVITICUS

Nadab and Abihu

10 [†]Aaron's sons Nadab and Abihu each took his own firepan, put fire
in it, placed incense on it, and presented unauthorized fire before the
LORD, which He had not commanded them to do. 2 Then fire came from the
LORD and burned them to death before the LORD. 3 So Moses said to
Aaron, "This is what the LORD meant when He said:

I will show My holiness [A]
to those who are near Me,
and I will reveal My glory [B]
before all the people."

But Aaron remained silent.

4 Moses summoned Mishael and Elzaphan, sons of Aaron's uncle
Uzziel, and said to them, "Come here and carry your relatives away from
the front of the sanctuary to a place outside the camp." 5 So they came
forward and carried them in their tunics outside the camp, as Moses had
said.

6 Then Moses said to Aaron and his sons Eleazar and Ithamar, "Do not
let your hair hang loose and do not tear your garments, or else you will
die, and the LORD will become angry with the whole community. However,
your brothers, the whole house of Israel, may mourn over that tragedy
when the LORD sent the fire. 7 You must not go outside the entrance to the
tent of meeting or you will die, for the LORD's anointing oil is on you." So
they did as Moses said.

Regulations for Priests

8 The LORD spoke to Aaron: 9 "You and your sons are not to drink wine
or beer when you enter the tent of meeting, or else you will die; this is a
permanent statute throughout your generations. 10 You must distinguish
between the holy and the common, and the •clean and the •unclean, 11 and
teach the Israelites all the statutes that the LORD has given to them through
Moses."

12 Moses spoke to Aaron and his remaining sons, Eleazar and Ithamar:
“Take the •grain offering that is left over from the fire offerings to the
LORD, and eat it prepared without yeast beside the altar, because it is
especially holy. 13 You must eat it in a holy place because it is your
portion [C] and your sons’ from the fire offerings to the LORD, for this is what
I was commanded. 14 But you and your sons and your daughters may eat
the breast of the presentation offering and the thigh of the contribution in
any ceremonially clean place, because these portions have been assigned to
you and your children from the Israelites’ •fellowship sacrifices. 15 They are
to bring the thigh of the contribution and the breast of the presentation
offering, together with the offerings of fat portions made by fire, to wave as
a presentation offering before the LORD. It will belong permanently to you
and your children, as the LORD commanded.”

16 Later, Moses inquired about the male goat of the •sin offering, but it
had already been burned up. He was angry with Eleazar and Ithamar,
Aaron’s surviving sons, and asked, 17 “Why didn’t you eat the sin offering
in the sanctuary area? For it is especially holy, and He has assigned it to
you to take away the •guilt of the community and make •atonement for
them before the LORD. 18 Since its blood was not brought inside the
sanctuary, you should have eaten it in the sanctuary area, as I commanded.”

19 But Aaron replied to Moses, “See, today they presented their sin
offering and their •burnt offering before the LORD. Since these things have
happened to me, if I had eaten the sin offering today, would it have been
acceptable in the LORD’s sight? ” 20 When Moses heard this, it was
acceptable to him. [D]

LEVITICUS

Clean and Unclean Land Animals

11 †The LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron: [2] “Tell the Israelites: You may
eat all these kinds of land animals. [3] You may eat any animal with
divided hooves and that chews the cud. [4] But among the ones that chew the
cud or have divided hooves you are not to eat these:

the camel, though it chews the cud,
does not have divided hooves — it is •unclean for you;
[5] the hyrax, though it chews the cud,
does not have hooves — it is unclean for you;
[6] the hare, though it chews the cud,
does not have hooves — it is unclean for you;
[7] the pig, though it has divided hooves,
does not chew the cud — it is unclean for you.

[8] Do not eat any of their meat or touch their carcasses — they are unclean
for you.

Clean and Unclean Aquatic Animals

[9] “This is what you may eat from all that is in the water: You may eat
everything in the water that has fins and scales, whether in the seas or
streams. [10] But these are to be detestable to you: everything in the seas or
streams that does not have fins and scales among all the swarming things
and other living creatures in the water. [11] They are to remain detestable to
you; you must not eat any of their meat, and you must detest their carcasses.
[12] Everything in the water that does not have fins and scales will be
detestable to you.

Unclean Birds

[13]† “You are to detest these birds. They must not be eaten because they
are detestable:

the eagle, [A], the bearded [B] vulture,

the black vulture, [C] 14 the kite, [D]
any kind of falcon, [E]
15 every kind of raven, 16 the ostrich, [F]
the short-eared owl, [G] the gull, [H]
any kind of hawk,
17 the little [I] owl, the cormorant, [J]
the long-eared owl, [K]
18 the white [L] owl, the desert owl, [M]
the osprey, [N] 19 the stork, [O]
any kind of heron, [P]
the hoopoe, and the bat.

Clean and Unclean Flying Insects

20 "All winged insects that walk on all fours are to be detestable to you.
21 But you may eat these kinds of all the winged insects that walk on all
fours: those that have jointed legs above their feet for hopping on the
ground. 22 You may eat these:

any kind of locust, katydid, cricket, and grasshopper.

23 All other winged insects that have four feet are to be detestable to you.

Purification after Touching Dead Animals

24 "These will make you unclean. Whoever touches their carcasses will
be unclean until evening, 25 and whoever carries any of their carcasses
must wash his clothes and will be unclean until evening. 26 All animals that
have hooves but do not have a divided hoof and do not chew the cud are
unclean for you. Whoever touches them becomes unclean. 27 All the four-
footed animals that walk on their paws are unclean for you. Whoever
touches their carcasses will be unclean until evening, 28 and anyone who
carries their carcasses must wash his clothes and will be unclean until
evening. They are unclean for you.

29 “These creatures that swarm on the ground are unclean for you:

the weasel, [Q] the mouse,
any kind of large lizard, [R]
30 the gecko, the monitor lizard, [S]
the common lizard, [T] the skink, [U]
and the chameleon. [V]

31 These are unclean for you among all the swarming creatures. Whoever
touches them when they are dead will be unclean until evening. 32 When
any one of them dies and falls on anything it becomes unclean — any item
of wood, clothing, leather, •sackcloth, or any implement used for work. It is
to be rinsed with water and will remain unclean until evening; then it will
be •clean. 33 If any of them falls into any clay pot, everything in it will
become unclean; you must break it. 34 Any edible food coming into contact
with that unclean water will become unclean, and any drinkable liquid in
any container will become unclean. 35 Anything one of their carcasses falls
on will become unclean. If it is an oven or stove, it must be smashed; it is
unclean and will remain unclean for you. 36 A spring or cistern containing
water will remain clean, but someone who touches a carcass in it will
become unclean. 37 If one of their carcasses falls on any seed that is to be
sown, it is clean; 38 but if water has been put on the seed and one of their
carcasses falls on it, it is unclean for you.

39 “If one of the animals that you use for food dies, anyone who touches
its carcass will be unclean until evening. 40 Anyone who eats some of its
carcass must wash his clothes and will be unclean until evening. Anyone
who carries its carcass must wash his clothes and will be unclean until
evening.

Unclean Swarming Creatures

41 “All the creatures that swarm on the earth are detestable; they must not
be eaten. 42 Do not eat any of the creatures that swarm on the earth,

anything that moves on its belly or walks on all fours or on many feet, [W] for
they are detestable. 43 Do not become contaminated by any creature that
swarms; do not become unclean or defiled by them. 44 For I am •Yahweh
your God, so you must consecrate yourselves and be holy because I am
holy. You must not defile yourselves by any swarming creature that crawls
on the ground. 45 For I am Yahweh, who brought you up from the land of
Egypt to be your God, so you must be holy because I am holy.

46 “This is the law concerning animals, birds, all living creatures that
move in the water, and all creatures that swarm on the ground, 47† in order
to distinguish between the unclean and the clean, between the animals that
may be eaten and those that may not be eaten.”

Purification after Childbirth

12 †The LORD spoke to Moses: 2 "Tell the Israelites: When a woman
becomes pregnant and gives birth to a male child, she will be
•unclean seven days, as she is during the days of her menstrual impurity.
3† The flesh of his foreskin must be circumcised on the eighth day. 4† She
will continue in purification from her bleeding for 33 days. She must not
touch any holy thing or go into the sanctuary until completing her days of
purification. 5 But if she gives birth to a female child, she will be unclean
for two weeks as she is during her menstrual impurity. She will continue in
purification from her bleeding for 66 days.

6 "When her days of purification are complete, whether for a son or
daughter, she is to bring to the priest at the entrance to the tent of meeting a
year-old male lamb for a •burnt offering, and a young pigeon or a turtledove
for a •sin [A] offering. 7 He will present them before the LORD and make
•atonement on her behalf; she will be •clean from her discharge of blood.
This is the law for a woman giving birth, whether to a male or female.
8† But if she doesn't have sufficient means [B], for a sheep, she may take two
turtledoves or two young pigeons, one for a burnt offering and the other for
a sin [C] offering. Then the priest will make atonement on her behalf, and she
will be clean."

LEVITICUS

Skin Diseases

13 [†]The LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron: 2 “When a person has a
swelling, [A] scab, [B] or spot on the skin of his body, and it becomes a
disease on the skin of his body, he is to be brought to Aaron the priest or to
one of his sons, the priests. 3 The priest will examine the infection on the
skin of his body. If the hair in the infection has turned white and the
infection appears to be deeper than the skin of his body, it is a skin disease.
After the priest examines him, he must pronounce him •unclean. 4 But if the
spot on the skin of his body is white and does not appear to be deeper than
the skin, and the hair in it has not turned white, the priest must quarantine
the infected person for seven days. 5 The priest will then reexamine him on
the seventh day. If he sees that the infection remains unchanged and has not
spread on the skin, the priest must quarantine him for another seven days.
6 The priest will examine him again on the seventh day. If the infection has
faded and has not spread on the skin, the priest is to pronounce him •clean;
it is a scab. The person is to wash his clothes and will become clean. 7 But
if the scab spreads further on his skin after he has presented himself to the
priest for his cleansing, he must present himself again to the priest. 8 The
priest will examine him, and if the scab has spread on the skin, then the
priest must pronounce him unclean; he has a skin disease.

9 “When a skin disease develops on a person, he is to be brought to the
priest. 10 The priest will examine him. If there is a white swelling on the
skin that has turned the hair white, and there is a patch of raw flesh in the
swelling, 11 it is a chronic disease on the skin of his body, and the priest
must pronounce him unclean. He need not quarantine him, for he is
unclean. 12 But if the skin disease breaks out all over the skin so that it
covers all the skin of the infected person from his head to his feet so far as
the priest can see, 13 the priest will look, and if the skin disease has covered
his entire body, he is to pronounce the infected person clean. Since he has
turned totally white, he is clean. 14 But whenever raw flesh appears on him,
he will be unclean. 15 When the priest examines the raw flesh, he must
pronounce him unclean. Raw flesh is unclean; it is a skin disease. 16 But if
the raw flesh changes [C] and [D] turns white, he must go to the priest. 17 The
priest will examine him, and if the infection has turned white, the priest
must pronounce the infected person clean; he is clean.

18 “When a boil appears on the skin of one’s body and it heals, 19 and a
white swelling or a reddish-white spot develops where the boil was, the
person must present himself to the priest. 20 The priest will make an
examination, and if the spot seems to be beneath the skin and the hair in it
has turned white, the priest must pronounce him unclean; it is a skin disease
that has broken out in the boil. 21 But when the priest examines it, if there is
no white hair in it, and it is not beneath the skin but is faded, the priest must
quarantine him seven days. 22 If it spreads further on the skin, the priest
must pronounce him unclean; it is an infection. 23 But if the spot remains
where it is and does not spread, it is only the scar from the boil. The priest
is to pronounce him clean.

24 “When there is a burn on the skin of one’s body produced by fire, and
the patch made raw by the burn becomes reddish-white or white, 25 the
priest is to examine it. If the hair in the spot has turned white and the spot
appears to be deeper than the skin, it is a skin disease that has broken out in
the burn. The priest must pronounce him unclean; it is a skin disease. 26 But
when the priest examines it, if there is no white hair in the spot and it is not
beneath the skin but is faded, the priest must quarantine him seven days.
27 The priest will reexamine him on the seventh day. If it has spread further
on the skin, the priest must pronounce him unclean; it is a skin disease.
28 But if the spot has remained where it was and has not spread on the skin
but is faded, it is the swelling from the burn. The priest is to pronounce him
clean, for it is only the scar from the burn.

29 “When a man or woman has an infection on the head or chin, 30 the
priest must examine the infection. If it appears to be deeper than the skin,
and the hair in it is yellow and sparse, the priest must pronounce the person
unclean. It is a scaly outbreak, [E] a skin disease of the head or chin. 31 When
the priest examines the scaly infection, if it does not appear to be deeper
than the skin, and there is no black hair in it, the priest must quarantine the
person with the scaly infection for seven days. 32 The priest will reexamine
the infection on the seventh day. If the scaly outbreak has not spread and
there is no yellow hair in it and it does not appear to be deeper than the
skin, 33 the person must shave himself but not shave the scaly area. Then

the priest must quarantine the person who has the scaly outbreak for another
seven days. 34 The priest will examine the scaly outbreak on the seventh
day, and if it has not spread on the skin and does not appear to be deeper
than the skin, the priest is to pronounce the person clean. He is to wash his
clothes, and he will be clean. 35 But if the scaly outbreak spreads further on
the skin after his cleansing, 36 the priest is to examine the person. If the
scaly outbreak has spread on the skin, the priest does not need to look for
yellow hair; the person is unclean. 37 But if as far as he can see, the scaly
outbreak remains unchanged and black hair has grown in it, then it has
healed; he is clean. The priest is to pronounce the person clean.

38 “When a man or a woman has white spots on the skin of the body,
39 the priest is to make an examination. If the spots on the skin of the body
are dull white, it is only a rash [F] that has broken out on the skin; the person
is clean.

40 “If a man loses the hair of his head, he is bald, but he is clean. 41 Or if
he loses the hair at his hairline, he is bald on his forehead, but he is clean.
42 But if there is a reddish-white infection on the bald head or forehead, it is
a skin disease breaking out on his head or forehead. 43 The priest is to
examine him, and if the swelling of the infection on his bald head or
forehead is reddish-white, like the appearance of a skin disease on his body,
44 the man is afflicted with a skin disease; he is unclean. The priest must
pronounce him unclean; the infection is on his head.

45† “The person afflicted with an infectious skin disease is to have his
clothes torn and his hair hanging loose, and he must cover his mouth and
cry out, ‘Unclean, unclean! ’ 46† He will remain unclean as long as he has
the infection; he is unclean. He must live alone in a place outside the camp.

Contaminated Fabrics

47 “If a fabric is contaminated with mildew — in wool or linen fabric,
48† in the warp or woof of linen or wool, or in leather or anything made of
leather — 49 and if the contamination is green or red in the fabric, the

leather, the warp, the woof, or any leather article, it is a mildew
contamination and is to be shown to the priest. [50] The priest is to examine
the contamination and quarantine the contaminated fabric for seven days.
[51] The priest is to reexamine the contamination on the seventh day. If it has
spread in the fabric, the warp, the woof, or the leather, regardless of how it
is used, the contamination is harmful mildew; it is unclean. [52] He is to burn
the fabric, the warp or woof in wool or linen, or any leather article, which is
contaminated. Since it is harmful mildew it must be burned up.

[53] “When the priest examines it, if the contamination has not spread in
the fabric, the warp or woof, or any leather article, [54] the priest is to order
whatever is contaminated to be washed and quarantined for another seven
days. [55] After it has been washed, the priest is to reexamine the
contamination. If the appearance of the contaminated article has not
changed, it is unclean. Even though the contamination has not spread, you
must burn up the fabric. It is a fungus [G] on the front or back of the fabric.

[56] “If the priest examines it, and the contamination has faded after it has
been washed, he must cut the contaminated section out of the fabric, the
leather, or the warp or woof. [57] But if it reappears in the fabric, the warp or
woof, or any leather article, it has broken out again. You must burn up
whatever is contaminated. [58] But if the contamination disappears from the
fabric, the warp or woof, or any leather article, which have been washed, it
is to be washed again, and it will be clean.

[59] “This is the law concerning a mildew contamination in wool or linen
fabric, warp or woof, or any leather article, in order to pronounce it clean or
unclean.”

LEVITICUS

Cleansing of Skin Diseases

14 The LORD spoke to Moses: 2 “This is the law concerning the person
afflicted with a skin disease on the day of his cleansing. He is to be
brought to the priest, 3 who will go outside the camp and examine him. If
the skin disease has disappeared from the afflicted person, [A] 4 the priest will
order that two live •clean birds, cedar wood, scarlet yarn, and hyssop be
brought for the one who is to be cleansed. 5 Then the priest will order that
one of the birds be slaughtered over fresh water in a clay pot. 6 He is to take
the live bird together with the cedar wood, scarlet yarn, and hyssop, and dip
them all into the blood of the bird that was slaughtered over the fresh water.
7 He will then sprinkle the blood seven times on the one who is to be
cleansed from the skin disease. He is to pronounce him clean and release
the live bird over the open countryside. 8 The one who is to be cleansed
must wash his clothes, shave off all his hair, and bathe with water; he is
clean. Afterward he may enter the camp, but he must remain outside his tent
for seven days. 9 He is to shave off all his hair again on the seventh day: his
head, his beard, his eyebrows, and the rest of his hair. He is to wash his
clothes and bathe himself with water; he is clean.

10 “On the eighth day he must take two unblemished male lambs, an
unblemished year-old ewe lamb, a •grain offering of three quarts [B] of fine
flour mixed with olive oil, and one-third of a quart [C] of olive oil. 11† The
priest who performs the cleansing will place the person who is to be
cleansed, together with these offerings, before the LORD at the entrance to
the tent of meeting. 12† The priest is to take one male lamb and present it as
a •restitution offering, along with the one-third quart [D] of olive oil, and he
must wave them as a presentation offering before the LORD. 13 He is to
slaughter the male lamb at the place in the sanctuary area where the •sin
offering and •burnt offering are slaughtered, for like the sin offering, the
restitution offering belongs to the priest; it is especially holy. 14 The priest
is to take some of the blood from the restitution offering and put it on the
lobe of the right ear of the one to be cleansed, on the thumb of his right
hand, and on the big toe of his right foot. 15 Then the priest will take some
of the one-third quart [E] of olive oil and pour it into his left palm. 16 The
priest will dip his right finger into the oil in his left palm and sprinkle some

of the oil with his finger seven times before the LORD. [17] From the oil
remaining in his palm the priest will put some on the lobe of the right ear of
the one to be cleansed, on the thumb of his right hand, and on the big toe of
his right foot, on top of the blood of the restitution offering. [18] What is left
of the oil in the priest's palm he is to put on the head of the one to be
cleansed. In this way the priest will make •atonement for him before the
LORD. [19] The priest must sacrifice the sin offering and make atonement for
the one to be cleansed from his uncleanness. Afterward he will slaughter
the burnt offering. [20] The priest is to offer the burnt offering and the grain
offering on the altar. The priest will make atonement for him, and he will be
clean.

[21] "But if he is poor and cannot afford these, [F], he is to take one male
lamb for a restitution offering to be waved in order to make atonement for
him, along with two quarts [G] of fine flour mixed with olive oil for a grain
offering, one-third of a quart [H] of olive oil, [22] and two turtledoves or two
young pigeons, whatever he can afford, [I] one to be a sin offering and the
other a burnt offering. [23] On the eighth day he is to bring these things for his
cleansing to the priest at the entrance to the tent of meeting before the LORD.
[24] The priest will take the male lamb for the restitution offering and the one-
third quart [J] of olive oil, and wave them as a presentation offering before
the LORD. [25] After he slaughters the male lamb for the restitution offering,
the priest is to take some of the blood of the restitution offering and put it
on the right earlobe of the one to be cleansed, on the thumb of his right
hand, and on the big toe of his right foot. [26] Then the priest will pour some
of the oil into his left palm. [27] With his right finger the priest will sprinkle
some of the oil in his left palm seven times before the LORD. [28] The priest
will also put some of the oil in his palm on the right earlobe of the one to be
cleansed, on the thumb of his right hand, and on the big toe of his right foot,
on the same place as the blood of the restitution offering. [29] What is left of
the oil in the priest's palm he is to put on the head of the one to be cleansed
to make atonement for him before the LORD. [30] He must then sacrifice one
type of what he can afford, [K] either the turtledoves or young pigeons, [31] one
as a sin offering and the other as a burnt offering, sacrificing what he can

afford together with the grain offering. In this way the priest will make atonement before the LORD for the one to be cleansed. 32 This is the law for someone who has [M] a skin disease and cannot afford [N] the cost of his cleansing."

Cleansing of Contaminated Objects

33[†] The LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron: 34 "When you enter the land of Canaan that I am giving you as a possession, and I place a mildew contamination in a house in the land you possess, [O] 35 the owner of the house is to come and tell the priest: Something like mildew contamination has appeared [P] in my house. 36 The priest must order them to clear the house before he enters to examine the contamination, so that nothing in the house becomes •unclean. Afterward the priest will come to examine the house. 37 He will examine it, and if the contamination in the walls of the house consists of green or red indentations [Q] that appear to be beneath the surface of the wall, 38 the priest is to go outside the house to its doorway and quarantine the house for seven days. 39 The priest is to return on the seventh day and examine it. If the contamination has spread on the walls of the house, 40 the priest must order that the stones with the contamination be pulled out and thrown into an unclean place outside the city. 41 He is to have the inside of the house completely scraped, and the plaster [R] that is scraped off must be dumped in an unclean place outside the city. 42 Then they must take different stones to replace the former ones and take additional plaster [S] to replaster the house.

43 "If the contamination reappears in the house after the stones have been pulled out, and after the house has been scraped and replastered, 44 the priest must come and examine it. If the contamination has spread in the house, it is harmful mildew; the house is unclean. 45 It must be torn down with its stones, its beams, and all its plaster, and taken outside the city to an unclean place. 46 Whoever enters the house during any of the days the priest quarantines it will be unclean until evening. 47 Whoever lies down in the house is to wash his clothes, and whoever eats in it is to wash his clothes.

48 “But when the priest comes and examines it, if the contamination has
not spread in the house after it was replastered, he is to pronounce the house
clean because the contamination has disappeared. [T] 49 He is to take two
birds, cedar wood, scarlet yarn, and hyssop to purify the house, 50 and he is
to slaughter one of the birds over a clay pot containing fresh water. 51 He
will take the cedar wood, the hyssop, the scarlet yarn, and the live bird, dip
them in the blood of the slaughtered bird and the fresh water, and sprinkle
the house seven times. 52 He will purify the house with the blood of the
bird, the fresh water, the live bird, the cedar wood, the hyssop, and the
scarlet yarn. 53 Then he is to release the live bird into the open countryside
outside the city. In this way he will make atonement for the house, and it
will be clean.

54 “This is the law for any skin disease or mildew, for a scaly outbreak, [U]
55 for mildew in clothing or on a house, 56 and for a swelling, scab, or spot,
57[†] to determine when something is unclean or clean. This is the law
regarding skin disease and mildew.”

LEVITICUS

Bodily Discharges

15 †The LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron: [2] “Speak to the Israelites and
tell them: When any man has a discharge from his body, he is
•unclean. [3] This is uncleanness of his discharge: Whether his body secretes
the discharge or retains it, he is unclean. All the days that his body secretes
or retains anything because of his discharge, he is unclean. [4] Any bed the
man with the discharge lies on will be unclean, and any furniture he sits on
will be unclean. [5] Anyone who touches his bed is to wash his clothes and
bathe with water, and he will remain unclean until evening. [6] Whoever sits
on furniture that the man with the discharge was sitting on is to wash his
clothes and bathe with water, and he will remain unclean until evening.
[7] Whoever touches the body of the man with a discharge is to wash his
clothes and bathe with water, and he will remain unclean until evening. [8] If
the man with the discharge spits on anyone who is •clean, he is to wash his
clothes and bathe with water, and he will remain unclean until evening.
[9] Any saddle the man with the discharge rides on will be unclean.
[10] Whoever touches anything that was under him will be unclean until
evening, and whoever carries such things is to wash his clothes and bathe
with water, and he will remain unclean until evening. [11] If the man with the
discharge touches anyone without first rinsing his hands in water, the
person who was touched is to wash his clothes and bathe with water, and he
will remain unclean until evening. [12] Any clay pot that the man with the
discharge touches must be broken, while any wooden utensil must be rinsed
with water.

[13] “When the man with the discharge has been cured of it, he is to count
seven days for his cleansing, wash his clothes, and bathe his body in fresh
water; he will be clean. [14] He must take two turtledoves or two young
pigeons on the eighth day, come before the LORD at the entrance to the tent
of meeting, and give them to the priest. [15] The priest is to sacrifice them,
one as a •sin offering and the other as a •burnt offering. In this way the
priest will make •atonement for him before the LORD because of his
discharge.

[16] “When a man has an emission of semen, he is to bathe himself
completely with water, and he will remain unclean until evening. [17] Any

clothing or leather on which there is an emission of semen must be washed
with water, and it will remain unclean until evening. 18† If a man sleeps
with a woman and has an emission of semen, both of them are to bathe with
water, and they will remain unclean until evening.

19† “When a woman has a discharge, and it consists of blood from her
body, she will be unclean because of her menstruation for seven days.
Everyone who touches her will be unclean until evening. 20 Anything she
lies on during her menstruation will become unclean, and anything she sits
on will become unclean. 21 Everyone who touches her bed is to wash his
clothes and bathe with water, and he will remain unclean until evening.
22 Everyone who touches any furniture she was sitting on is to wash his
clothes and bathe with water, and he will remain unclean until evening. 23 If
discharge is on the bed or the furniture she was sitting on, when he touches
it he will be unclean until evening. 24 If a man sleeps with her, and blood
from her menstruation gets on him, he will be unclean for seven days, and
every bed he lies on will become unclean.

25 “When a woman has a discharge of her blood for many days, though it
is not the time of her menstruation, or if she has a discharge beyond her
period, she will be unclean all the days of her unclean discharge, as she is
during the days of her menstruation. 26 Any bed she lies on during the days
of her discharge will be like her bed during menstrual impurity; any
furniture she sits on will be unclean as in her menstrual period. 27 Everyone
who touches them will be unclean; he must wash his clothes and bathe with
water, and he will remain unclean until evening. 28 When she is cured of her
discharge, she is to count seven days, and after that she will be clean. 29 On
the eighth day she must take two turtledoves or two young pigeons and
bring them to the priest at the entrance to the tent of meeting. 30 The priest
is to sacrifice one as a sin offering and the other as a burnt offering. In this
way the priest will make atonement for her before the LORD because of her
unclean discharge.

31 “You must keep the Israelites from their uncleanness, so that they do
not die by defiling My tabernacle that is among them. 32† This is the law

for someone with a discharge: a man who has an emission of semen, becoming unclean by it; [33] a woman who is in her menstrual period; anyone who has a discharge, whether male or female; and a man who sleeps with an unclean woman."

LEVITICUS

The Day of Atonement

16 The LORD spoke to Moses after the death of two of Aaron's sons when
they approached the presence of the LORD and died. 2† The LORD
said to Moses: "Tell your brother Aaron that he may not come whenever he
wants into the holy place behind the veil in front of the •mercy seat on the
ark or else he will die, because I appear in the cloud above the mercy seat.

3 "Aaron is to enter the most holy place in this way: with a young bull
for a •sin offering and a ram for a •burnt offering. 4 He is to wear a holy
linen tunic, and linen undergarments are to be on his body. He must tie a
linen sash around him and wrap his head with a linen turban. These are
holy garments; he must bathe his body with water before he wears them.
5 He is to take from the Israelite community two male goats for a sin
offering and one ram for a burnt offering.

TWISTED SCRIPTURE

Leviticus 16:4-10

The Seventh-Day Adventist Church views this passage as pointing to Satan as the end-time scapegoat who takes away the sins of God's people. This will occur during the millennium when Satan is sentenced to roam the desolate earth while the saints are in heaven. This doctrine makes Christ and Satan co-redeemers. While Christ pays for the believer's sins, Satan is the sin bearer who is punished for them. The Scriptures clearly teach that Jesus alone both makes atonement for sin and removes the sin as far as the east is from the west (Ps 103:12).

6 "Aaron will present the bull for his sin offering and make •atonement
for himself and his household. 7 Next he will take the two goats and place
them before the LORD at the entrance to the tent of meeting. 8† After Aaron
casts lots for the two goats, one lot for the LORD and the other for azazel,
9 he is to present the goat chosen by lot for the LORD and sacrifice it as a sin
offering. 10 But the goat chosen by lot for azazel is to be presented alive
before the LORD to make purification with it by sending it into the
wilderness for azazel.

11 “When Aaron presents the bull for his sin offering and makes
atonement for himself and his household, he will slaughter the bull for his
sin offering. 12 Then he must take a firepan full of fiery coals from the altar
before the LORD and two handfuls of finely ground fragrant incense, and
bring them inside the veil. 13 He is to put the incense on the fire before the
LORD, so that the cloud of incense covers the mercy seat that is over the
•testimony, or else he will die. 14 He is to take some of the bull’s blood
and sprinkle it with his finger against the east side of the mercy seat; then
he will sprinkle some of the blood with his finger before the mercy seat
seven times.

15 “When he slaughters the male goat for the people’s sin offering and
brings its blood inside the veil, he must do the same with its blood as he did
with the bull’s blood: he is to sprinkle it against the mercy seat and in front
of it. 16 He will purify the most holy place in this way for all their sins
because of the Israelites’ impurities and rebellious acts. He will do the
same for the tent of meeting that remains among them, because it is
surrounded by their impurities. 17 No one may be in the tent of meeting
from the time he enters to make atonement in the most holy place until he
leaves after he has made atonement for himself, his household, and the
whole assembly of Israel. 18 Then he will go out to the altar that is before
the LORD and make atonement for it. He is to take some of the bull’s blood
and some of the goat’s blood and put it on the horns on all sides of the altar.
19 He is to sprinkle some of the blood on it with his finger seven times to
cleanse and set it apart from the Israelites’ impurities.

20 “When he has finished purifying the most holy place, the tent of
meeting, and the altar, he is to present the live male goat. 21† Aaron will lay
both his hands on the head of the live goat and confess over it all the
Israelites’ wrongdoings and rebellious acts — all their sins. He is to put
them on the goat’s head and send it away into the wilderness by the man
appointed for the task. [A] 22† The goat will carry on it all their wrongdoings
into a desolate land, and he will release it there.

23 “Then Aaron is to enter the tent of meeting, take off the linen
garments he wore when he entered the most holy place, and leave them
there. 24 He will bathe his body with water in a holy place and put on his
clothes. Then he must go out and sacrifice his burnt offering and the
people’s burnt offering; he will make atonement for himself and for the
people. 25 He is to burn the fat of the sin offering on the altar. 26 The man
who released the goat for azazel is to wash his clothes and bathe his body
with water; afterward he may reenter the camp. 27 The bull for the sin
offering and the goat for the sin offering, whose blood was brought into the
most holy place to make atonement, must be brought outside the camp and
their hide, flesh, and dung burned up. 28 The one who burns them is to
wash his clothes and bathe himself with water; afterward he may reenter the
camp.

29† “This is to be a permanent statute for you: In the seventh month, on
the tenth day of the month you are to practice self-denial and do no work,
both the native and the foreigner who resides among you. 30 Atonement
will be made for you on this day to cleanse you, and you will be •clean
from all your sins before the LORD. 31 It is a Sabbath of complete rest for
you, and you must practice self-denial; it is a permanent statute. 32 The
priest who is anointed and ordained [B] to serve as high priest in place of his
father will make atonement. He will put on the linen garments, the holy
garments, 33 and purify the most holy place. He will purify the tent of
meeting and the altar and will make atonement for the priests and all the
people of the assembly. 34 This is to be a permanent statute for you, to make
atonement for the Israelites once a year because of all their sins.” And all
this was done as the LORD commanded Moses.

LEVITICUS

Forbidden Sacrifices

17 [†]The LORD spoke to Moses: [2] “Speak to Aaron, his sons, and all the
Israelites and tell them: This is what the LORD has commanded:
[3] Anyone from the house of Israel who slaughters an ox, sheep, or goat in
the camp, or slaughters it outside the camp, [4†] instead of bringing it to the
entrance to the tent of meeting to present it as an offering to the LORD before
His tabernacle — that person will be considered •guilty. [A], He has shed
blood and must be cut off from his people. [5] This is so the Israelites will
bring to the LORD the sacrifices they have been offering in the open
country. They are to bring them to the priest at the entrance to the tent of
meeting and offer them as •fellowship sacrifices to the LORD. [6] The priest
will then sprinkle the blood on the LORD’s altar at the entrance to the tent of
meeting and burn the fat as a pleasing aroma to the LORD. [7] They must no
longer offer their sacrifices to the goat-demons that they have prostituted
themselves with. This will be a permanent statute for them throughout their
generations.

[8] “Say to them: Anyone from the house of Israel or from the foreigners
who live among them who offers a •burnt offering or a sacrifice [9] but does
not bring it to the entrance to the tent of meeting to sacrifice it to the LORD,
that person must be cut off from his people.

Eating Blood and Carcasses Prohibited

[10] “Anyone from the house of Israel or from the foreigners who live
among them who eats any blood, I will turn [B] against that person who eats
blood and cut him off from his people. [11†] For the life of a creature is in the
blood, and I have appointed it to you to make •atonement on the altar for [C]
your lives, since it is the lifeblood that makes atonement. [12] Therefore I say
to the Israelites: None of you and no foreigner who lives among you may
eat blood.

TWISTED SCRIPTURE

Leviticus 17:10-14

Using this passage about eating blood, the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society (Jehovah's Witnesses) forbids members from receiving blood through the mouth or veins. Hence, they allow no blood transfusions, even in life-or-death situations.

13 "Any Israelite or foreigner living among them, who hunts down a wild
animal or bird that may be eaten must drain its blood and cover it with dirt.
14 Since the life of every creature is its blood, I have told the Israelites: You
must not eat the blood of any creature, because the life of every creature is
its blood; whoever eats it must be cut off.

15 "Every person, whether the native or the foreigner, who eats an animal
that died a natural death or was mauled by wild beasts is to wash his
clothes and bathe with water, and he will remain •unclean until evening;
then he will be •clean. 16 But if he does not wash his clothes and bathe
himself, he will bear his punishment."

LEVITICUS

Prohibited Pagan Practices

18 †•Yahweh spoke to Moses: 2 “Speak to the Israelites and tell them: I
am Yahweh your God. 3† Do not follow the practices of the land of
Egypt, where you used to live, or follow the practices of the land of
Canaan, where I am bringing you. You must not follow their customs.
4† You are to practice My ordinances and you are to keep My statutes by
following them; I am Yahweh your God. 5 Keep My statutes and
ordinances; a person will live if he does them. I am Yahweh.

6 “You are not to come near any close relative [A] for sexual intercourse; I
am Yahweh. 7 You are not to shame your father by having sex with your
mother. She is your mother; you must not have sexual intercourse with her.
8† You are not to have sex with your father’s wife; it will shame your
father. 9† You are not to have sexual intercourse with your sister, either
your father’s daughter or your mother’s, whether born at home or born
elsewhere. You are not to have sex with her. 10 You are not to have sexual
intercourse with your son’s daughter or your daughter’s daughter, because it
will shame your family. [B] 11 You are not to have sexual intercourse with
your father’s wife’s daughter, who is adopted by [C] your father; she is your
sister. 12 You are not to have sexual intercourse with your father’s sister;
she is your father’s close relative. 13 You are not to have sexual intercourse
with your mother’s sister, for she is your mother’s close relative. 14 You are
not to shame your father’s brother by coming near his wife to have sexual
intercourse; she is your aunt. 15 You are not to have sexual intercourse with
your daughter-in-law. She is your son’s wife; you are not to have sex with
her. 16 You are not to have sexual intercourse with your brother’s wife; it
will shame your brother. 17 You are not to have sexual intercourse with a
woman and her daughter. You are not to marry her son’s daughter or her
daughter’s daughter and have sex with her. They are close relatives; it is
depraved. 18 You are not to marry a woman as a rival to her sister and have
sexual intercourse with her during her sister’s lifetime.

19 “You are not to come near a woman during her menstrual impurity to
have sexual intercourse with her. 20 You are not to have sexual intercourse
with [D] your neighbor’s wife, defiling yourself with her.

21† “You are not to make any of your children pass through the fire to
•Molech. Do not profane the name of your God; I am Yahweh. 22† You are
not to sleep with a man as with a woman; it is detestable. 23† You are not
to have sexual intercourse with [E] any animal, defiling yourself with it; a
woman is not to present herself to an animal to mate with it; it is a
perversion.

24† “Do not defile yourselves by any of these practices, for the nations I
am driving out before you have defiled themselves by all these things.
25 The land has become defiled, so I am punishing it for its sin, and the land
will vomit out its inhabitants. 26 But you are to keep My statutes and
ordinances. You must not commit any of these detestable things — not the
native or the foreigner who lives among you. 27 For the men who were in
the land prior to you have committed all these detestable things, and the
land has become defiled. 28 If you defile the land, it will vomit you out as it
has vomited out the nations that were before you. 29 Any person who does
any of these detestable practices must be cut off from his people. 30 You
must keep My instruction to not do any of the detestable customs that were
practiced before you, so that you do not defile yourselves by them; I am
Yahweh your God.”

LEVITICUS

Laws of Holiness

19 †The LORD spoke to Moses: [2] "Speak to the entire Israelite community
and tell them: Be holy because I, •Yahweh your God, am holy.

[3] "Each of you is to respect his mother and father. You are to keep My
Sabbaths; I am Yahweh your God. [4] Do not turn to idols or make cast
images of gods for yourselves; I am Yahweh your God.

> ## TWISTED SCRIPTURE
> ### Leviticus 19:3
> **B***oth God and Jesus (Mt 12:8) are called the Lord of the Sabbath, showing their equality. This verse is troublesome for those rejecting the deity of Jesus.*

[5] "When you offer a •fellowship sacrifice to the LORD, sacrifice it so that
you may be accepted. [6] It is to be eaten on the day you sacrifice it or on the
next day, but what remains on the third day must be burned up. [7] If any is
eaten on the third day, it is a repulsive thing; it will not be accepted.
[8] Anyone who eats it will bear his punishment, for he has profaned what is
holy to the LORD. That person must be cut off from his people.

[9]† "When you reap the harvest of your land, you are not to reap to the
very edge of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. [10] You must
not strip your vineyard bare or gather its fallen grapes. Leave them for the
poor and the foreign resident; I am Yahweh your God.

[11]† "You must not steal. You must not act deceptively or lie to one
another. [12] You must not swear falsely by My name, profaning the name of
your God; I am Yahweh.

[13]† "You must not oppress your neighbor or rob him. The wages due a
hired hand must not remain with you until morning. [14] You must not curse

the deaf or put a stumbling block in front of the blind, but you are to •fear your God; I am Yahweh.

15 “You must not act unjustly when deciding a case. Do not be partial to
the poor or give preference to the rich; judge your neighbor fairly. 16 You
must not go about spreading slander among your people; you must not
jeopardize [A] your neighbor’s life; I am Yahweh.

17 “You must not harbor hatred against your brother. [B], Rebuke your
neighbor directly, and you will not incur •guilt because of him. 18† Do not
take revenge or bear a grudge against members of your community, but
love your neighbor as yourself; I am Yahweh.

19† “You are to keep My statutes. You must not crossbreed two different kinds of your livestock, sow your fields with two kinds of seed, or put on a garment made of two kinds of material.

ARTICLE

Does the Bible Provide Ethical Guidance for Business? ⇒

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20 “If a man has sexual intercourse with a woman who is a slave
designated for another man, but she has not been redeemed or given her
freedom, there must be punishment. [C] They are not to be put to death,
because she had not been freed. 21 However, he must bring a ram as his
•restitution offering to the LORD at the entrance to the tent of meeting.
22 The priest will make •atonement on his behalf before the LORD with the
ram of the restitution offering for the sin he has committed, and he will be
forgiven for the sin he committed.

23 “When you come into the land and plant any kind of tree for food, you
are to consider the fruit forbidden. [D] It will be forbidden to you for three
years; it is not to be eaten. 24† In the fourth year all its fruit must be

consecrated as a praise offering to the LORD. 25 But in the fifth year you may eat its fruit. In this way its yield will increase for you; I am Yahweh your God.

26† “You are not to eat anything with blood in it. [E], You are not to practice •divination or sorcery. 27† You are not to cut off the hair at the sides of your head or mar the edge of your beard. 28† You are not to make gashes on your bodies for the dead or put tattoo marks on yourselves; I am Yahweh.

29 “Do not debase [F] your daughter by making her a prostitute, or the land will be prostituted and filled with depravity. 30 You must keep My Sabbaths and revere My sanctuary; I am Yahweh.

31† “Do not turn to mediums [G] or consult spiritists, [H] or you will be defiled by them; I am Yahweh your God.

32 “You are to rise in the presence of the elderly and honor the old. Fear your God; I am Yahweh.

33† “When a foreigner lives with you in your land, you must not oppress him. 34 You must regard the foreigner who lives with you as the native-born among you. You are to love him as yourself, for you were foreigners in the land of Egypt; I am Yahweh your God.

35 “You must not be unfair in measurements of length, weight, or volume. 36 You are to have honest balances, honest weights, an honest dry measure, [I] and an honest liquid measure; [J] I am Yahweh your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt. 37 You must keep all My statutes and all My ordinances and do them; I am Yahweh.”

LEVITICUS

Molech Worship and Spiritism

20 The LORD spoke to Moses: 2[†] “Say to the Israelites: Any Israelite or
foreigner living in Israel who gives any of his children to •Molech
must be put to death; the people of the country are to stone him. 3 I will
turn [A] against that man and cut him off from his people, because he gave his
•offspring to Molech, defiling My sanctuary and profaning My holy name.
4 But if the people of the country look the other way when that man [B] gives
any of his children to Molech, and do not put him to death, 5 then I will
turn [C] against that man and his family, and cut off from their people both
him and all who follow [D] him in prostituting themselves with Molech.

6 “Whoever turns to mediums [E], or spiritists [F] and prostitutes himself
with them, I will turn [G] against that person and cut him off from his people.
7 Consecrate yourselves and be holy, for I am •Yahweh your God. 8 Keep
My statutes and do them; I am Yahweh who sets you apart.

Family and Sexual Offenses

9 “If anyone curses his father or mother, he must be put to death. He has
cursed his father or mother; his blood is on his own hands. [H]

10 If a man commits adultery with a married woman — if he commits
adultery with his neighbor’s wife — both the adulterer and the adulteress
must be put to death. 11 If a man sleeps with his father’s wife, he has
shamed his father. Both of them must be put to death; their blood is on their
own hands. [I] 12 If a man sleeps with his daughter-in-law, both of them must
be put to death. They have acted perversely; their blood is on their own
hands. [J] 13 If a man sleeps with a man as with a woman, they have both
committed a detestable thing. They must be put to death; their blood is on
their own hands. [K] 14 If a man marries a woman and her mother, it is
depraved. Both he and they must be burned with fire, so that there will be
no depravity among you. 15 If a man has sexual intercourse with [L] an
animal, he must be put to death; you are also to kill the animal. 16 If a
woman comes near any animal and mates with it, you are to kill the woman
and the animal. They must be put to death; their own blood is on them. 17 If
a man marries his sister, whether his father’s daughter or his mother’s

daughter, and they have sexual relations, [M], it is a disgrace. They must be cut off publicly from their people. He has had sexual intercourse with his sister; he will bear his punishment. 18 If a man sleeps with a menstruating woman and has sexual intercourse with her, he has exposed the source of her flow, and she has uncovered the source of her blood. Both of them must be cut off from their people. 19 You must not have sexual intercourse with your mother's sister or your father's sister, for it is exposing one's own blood relative; both people will bear their punishment. 20 If a man sleeps with his aunt, he has shamed his uncle; they will bear their •guilt and die childless. 21 If a man marries his brother's wife, it is impurity. He has shamed his brother; they will be childless.

Holiness in the Land

22 "You are to keep all My statutes and all My ordinances, and do them, so that the land where I am bringing you to live will not vomit you out. 23 You must not follow the statutes of the nations I am driving out before you, for they did all these things, and I abhorred them. 24 And I promised you: You will inherit their land, since I will give it to you to possess, a land flowing with milk and honey. I am Yahweh your God who set you apart from the peoples. 25 Therefore you must distinguish the •clean animal from the •unclean one, and the unclean bird from the clean one. Do not become contaminated by any land animal, bird, or whatever crawls on the ground; I have set these apart as unclean for you. 26† You are to be holy to Me because I, Yahweh, am holy, and I have set you apart from the nations to be Mine.

27 A man or a woman who is [N] a medium or a spiritist must be put to death. They are to be stoned; their blood is on their own hands." [O]

LEVITICUS

The Holiness of the Priests

21 The LORD said to Moses: “Speak to Aaron’s sons, the priests, and tell them: A priest is not to make himself ceremonially •unclean for a dead person among his relatives, [2] except for his immediate family: his mother, father, son, daughter, or brother. [3] He may make himself unclean for his young unmarried sister in his immediate family. [4] He is not to make himself unclean for those related to him by marriage [A] and so defile himself.

[5] “Priests may not make bald spots on their heads, shave the edge of their beards, or make gashes on their bodies. [6] They are to be holy to their God and not profane the name of their God. For they present the fire offerings to •Yahweh, the food of their God, and they must be holy. [7] They are not to marry a woman defiled by prostitution. [B] They are not to marry one divorced by her husband, for the priest is holy to his God. [8] You are to consider him holy since he presents the food of your God. He will be holy to you because I, Yahweh who sets you apart, am holy. [9] If a priest’s daughter defiles herself by promiscuity, [C] she defiles her father; she must be burned up.

[10] “The priest who is highest among his brothers, who has had the anointing oil poured on his head and has been ordained [D] to wear the garments, must not dishevel his hair [E] or tear his garments. [11] He must not go near any dead person or make himself unclean even for his father or mother. [12] He must not leave the sanctuary or he will desecrate the sanctuary of his God, for the consecration of the anointing oil of his God is on him; I am Yahweh.

[13] “He is to marry a woman who is a virgin. [14†] He is not to marry a widow, a divorced woman, or one defiled by prostitution. He is to marry a virgin from his own people, [15] so that he does not corrupt his bloodline [F] among his people, for I am Yahweh who sets him apart.”

Physical Defects and Priests

16 The LORD spoke to Moses: 17 “Tell Aaron: None of your descendants
throughout your generations who has a physical defect is to come near to
present the food of his God. 18 No man who has any defect is to come near:
no man who is blind, lame, facially disfigured, or deformed; 19 no man who
has a broken foot or hand, 20 or who is a hunchback or a dwarf, [G] or who
has an eye defect, a festering rash, scabs, or a crushed testicle. 21 No
descendant of Aaron the priest who has a defect is to come near to present
the fire offerings to the LORD. He has a defect and is not to come near to
present the food of his God. 22 He may eat the food of his God from what is
especially holy as well as from what is holy. 23 But because he has a defect,
he must not go near the curtain or approach the altar. He is not to desecrate
My sanctuaries, for I am Yahweh who sets them apart.” 24 Moses said this
to Aaron and his sons and to all the Israelites.

LEVITICUS

Priests and Their Food

22 The Lord spoke to Moses: 2 “Tell Aaron and his sons to deal
respectfully with the holy offerings of the Israelites that they have
consecrated to Me, so they do not profane My holy name; I am •Yahweh.
3 Say to them: If any man from any of your descendants throughout your
generations is in a state of uncleanness yet approaches the holy offerings
that the Israelites consecrate to the Lord, that person will be cut off from
My presence; I am Yahweh. 4 No man of Aaron’s descendants who has a
skin disease [A] or a discharge is to eat from the holy offerings until he is
•clean. Whoever touches anything made •unclean by a dead person or by a
man who has an emission of semen, 5 or whoever touches any swarming
creature that makes him unclean or any person who makes him
unclean — whatever his uncleanness — 6 the man who touches any of these
will remain unclean until evening and is not to eat from the holy offerings
unless he has bathed his body with water. 7 When the sun has set, he will
become clean, and then he may eat from the holy offerings, for that is his
food. 8 He must not eat an animal that died naturally or was mauled by
wild beasts, [B], making himself unclean by it; I am Yahweh. 9 They must
keep My instruction, or they will be •guilty and die because they profane it;
I am Yahweh who sets them apart.

10 “No one outside a priest’s family [C], is to eat the holy offering. A
foreigner staying with a priest or a hired hand is not to eat the holy offering.
11 But if a priest purchases someone with his money, that person may eat it,
and those born in his house may eat his food. 12 If the priest’s daughter is
married to a man outside a priest’s family, [D] she is not to eat from the holy
contributions. [E] 13 But if the priest’s daughter becomes widowed or
divorced, has no children, and returns to her father’s house as in her youth,
she may share her father’s food. But no outsider may share it. 14 If anyone
eats a holy offering in error, he must add a fifth to its value and give the
holy offering to the priest. 15 The priests must not profane the holy
offerings the Israelites give to the Lord 16 by letting the people eat their
holy offerings and having them bear the penalty of restitution. For I am
Yahweh who sets them apart.”

Acceptable Sacrifices

[17] The LORD spoke to Moses: [18] “Speak to Aaron, his sons, and all the
Israelites and tell them: Any man of the house of Israel or of the foreign
residents in Israel who presents his offering — whether they present
freewill gifts or payment of vows to the LORD as •burnt offerings — [19] must
offer an unblemished male from the cattle, sheep, or goats in order for you
to be accepted. [20] You are not to present anything that has a defect, because
it will not be accepted on your behalf.

[21] “When a man presents a •fellowship sacrifice to the LORD to fulfill a
vow or as a freewill offering from the herd or flock, it has to be
unblemished to be acceptable; there must be no defect in it. [22][†] You are not
to present any animal to the LORD that is blind, injured, maimed, or has a
running sore, festering rash, or scabs; you may not put any of them on the
altar as a fire offering to the LORD. [23] You may sacrifice as a freewill
offering any animal from the herd or flock that has an elongated or stunted
limb, but it is not acceptable as a vow offering. [24] You are not to present to
the LORD anything that has bruised, crushed, torn, or severed testicles; you
must not sacrifice them in your land. [25] Neither you nor [F] a foreigner are to
present food to your God from any of these animals. They will not be
accepted for you because they are deformed and have a defect.”

[26] The LORD spoke to Moses: [27] “When an ox, sheep, or goat is born, it
must remain with [G] its mother for seven days; from the eighth day on, it
will be acceptable as a gift, a fire offering to the LORD. [28] But you are not to
slaughter an animal from the herd or flock on the same day as its young.
[29] When you sacrifice a thank offering to the LORD, sacrifice it so that you
may be accepted. [30] It is to be eaten on the same day. Do not let any of it
remain until morning; I am Yahweh.

[31] “You are to keep My commands and do them; I am Yahweh. [32] You
must not profane My holy name; I must be treated as holy among the
Israelites. I am Yahweh who sets you apart, [33] the One who brought you out
of the land of Egypt to be your God; I am Yahweh.”

LEVITICUS

Holy Days

23 The LORD spoke to Moses: 2 “Speak to the Israelites and tell them:
These are My appointed times, the times of the LORD that you will
proclaim as sacred assemblies.

3[†] “Work may be done for six days, but on the seventh day there must be
a Sabbath of complete rest, a sacred assembly. You are not to do any work;
it is a Sabbath to the LORD wherever you live.

4 “These are the LORD’s appointed times, the sacred assemblies you are to
proclaim at their appointed times. 5[†] The •Passover to the LORD comes in
the first month, at twilight on the fourteenth day of the month. 6[†] The
Festival of •Unleavened Bread to the LORD is on the fifteenth day of the
same month. For seven days you must eat unleavened bread. 7 On the first
day you are to hold a sacred assembly; you are not to do any daily work.
8 You are to present a fire offering to the LORD for seven days. On the
seventh day there will be a sacred assembly; you must not do any daily
work.”

9 The LORD spoke to Moses: 10 “Speak to the Israelites and tell them:
When you enter the land I am giving you and reap its harvest, you are to
bring the first sheaf of your harvest to the priest. 11 He will wave the sheaf
before the LORD so that you may be accepted; the priest is to wave it on the
day after the Sabbath. 12 On the day you wave the sheaf, you are to offer a
year-old male lamb [A] without blemish as a •burnt offering to the LORD.
13 Its •grain offering is to be four quarts [B] of fine flour mixed with oil as a
fire offering to the LORD, a pleasing aroma, and its •drink offering will be
one quart [C] of wine. 14 You must not eat bread, roasted grain, or any new
grain until this very day, and until you have brought the offering to your
God. This is to be a permanent statute throughout your generations
wherever you live.

15 “You are to count seven [D] complete weeks [E], starting from the day
after the Sabbath, the day you brought the sheaf of the presentation
offering. 16 You are to count 50 days until the day after the seventh Sabbath
and then present an offering of new grain to the LORD. 17[†] Bring two loaves

of bread from your settlements as a presentation offering, each of them
made from four quarts [F] of fine flour, baked with yeast, as •firstfruits to the
LORD. 18 You are to present with the bread seven unblemished male lambs a
year old, one young bull, and two rams. They will be a burnt offering to the
LORD, with their grain offerings and drink offerings, a fire offering of a
pleasing aroma to the LORD. 19 You are also to prepare one male goat as a
•sin offering, and two male lambs a year old as a •fellowship sacrifice.
20 The priest will wave the lambs with the bread of firstfruits as a
presentation offering before the LORD; the bread and the two lambs will be
holy to the LORD for the priest. 21 On that same day you are to make a
proclamation and hold a sacred assembly. You are not to do any daily work.
This is to be a permanent statute wherever you live throughout your
generations. 22 When you reap the harvest of your land, you are not to reap
all the way to the edge of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest.
Leave them for the poor and the foreign resident; I am •Yahweh your
God."

23† The LORD spoke to Moses: 24 "Tell the Israelites: In the seventh
month, on the first day of the month, you are to have a day of complete rest,
commemoration, and joyful shouting [G] — a sacred assembly. 25 You must
not do any daily work, but you must present a fire offering to the LORD."

26 The LORD again spoke to Moses: 27 "The tenth day of this seventh
month is the Day of •Atonement. You are to hold a sacred assembly and
practice self-denial; you are to present a fire offering to the LORD. 28 On
this particular day you are not to do any work, for it is a Day of Atonement
to make atonement for yourselves before the LORD your God. 29 If any
person does not practice self-denial on this particular day, he must be cut off
from his people. 30 I will destroy among his people anyone who does any
work on this same day. 31 You are not to do any work. This is a permanent
statute throughout your generations wherever you live. 32 It will be a
Sabbath of complete rest for you, and you must practice self-denial. You are
to observe your Sabbath from the evening of the ninth day of the month
until the following evening."

33 The LORD spoke to Moses: 34 “Tell the Israelites: The Festival of
Booths [H] to the LORD begins on the fifteenth day of this seventh month and
continues for seven days. 35 There is to be a sacred assembly on the first
day; you are not to do any daily work. 36 You are to present a fire offering to
the LORD for seven days. On the eighth day you are to hold a sacred
assembly and present a fire offering to the LORD. It is a solemn gathering;
you are not to do any daily work.

37[†] “These are the LORD’s appointed times that you are to proclaim as
sacred assemblies for presenting fire offerings to the LORD, burnt offerings
and grain offerings, sacrifices and drink offerings, each on its designated
day. 38 These are in addition to the offerings for the LORD’s Sabbaths, your
gifts, all your vow offerings, and all your freewill offerings that you give to
the LORD.

39 “You are to celebrate the LORD’s festival on the fifteenth day of the
seventh month for seven days after you have gathered the produce of the
land. There will be complete rest on the first day and complete rest on the
eighth day. 40 On the first day you are to take the product of majestic
trees — palm fronds, boughs of leafy trees, and willows of the
brook — and rejoice before the LORD your God for seven days. 41 You are
to celebrate it as a festival to the LORD seven days each year. This is a
permanent statute for you throughout your generations; you must celebrate
it in the seventh month. 42 You are to live in booths for seven days. All the
native-born of Israel must live in booths, 43 so that your generations may
know that I made the Israelites live in booths when I brought them out of
the land of Egypt; I am Yahweh your God.” 44 So Moses declared the
LORD’s appointed times to the Israelites.

LEVITICUS

Tabernacle Oil and Bread

24 The LORD spoke to Moses: 2 “Command the Israelites to bring you
pure oil from crushed olives for the light, in order to keep the lamp
burning continually. 3 Aaron is to tend it continually from evening until
morning before the LORD outside the veil of the •testimony in the tent of
meeting. This is a permanent statute throughout your generations. 4 He must
continually tend the lamps on the pure gold lampstand in the LORD’s
presence.

5 “Take fine flour and bake it into 12 loaves; each loaf is to be made with
four quarts. [A] 6 Arrange them in two rows, six to a row, on the pure gold
table before the LORD. 7 Place pure frankincense near each row, so that it
may serve as a memorial portion for the bread and a fire offering to the
LORD. 8 The bread is to be set out before the LORD every Sabbath day as a
perpetual covenant obligation on the part of the Israelites. 9 It belongs to
Aaron and his sons, who are to eat it in a holy place, for it is the holiest
portion for him from the fire offerings to the LORD; this is a permanent
rule.”

A Case of Blasphemy

10† Now the son of an Israelite mother and an Egyptian father was [B]
among the Israelites. A fight broke out in the camp between the Israelite
woman’s son and an Israelite man. 11 Her son cursed and blasphemed the
Name, and they brought him to Moses. (His mother’s name was Shelomith,
a daughter of Dibri of the tribe of Dan.) 12 They put him in custody until
the LORD’s decision could be made clear to them.

13† Then the LORD spoke to Moses: 14 “Bring the one who has cursed to
the outside of the camp and have all who heard him lay their hands on his
head; then have the whole community stone him. 15 And tell the Israelites:
If anyone curses his God, he will bear the consequences of his sin.
16 Whoever blasphemes the name of •Yahweh is to be put to death; the
whole community must stone him. If he blasphemes the Name, he is to be
put to death, whether the foreign resident or the native.

[17] "If a man kills anyone, he must be put to death. [18] Whoever kills an
animal is to make restitution for it, life for life. [19]† If any man inflicts a
permanent injury on his neighbor, whatever he has done is to be done to
him: [20] fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth. Whatever injury he
inflicted on the person, the same is to be inflicted on him. [21] Whoever kills
an animal is to make restitution for it, but whoever kills a person is to be put
to death. [22] You are to have the same law for the foreign resident and the
native, because I am Yahweh your God."

[23] After Moses spoke to the Israelites, they brought the one who had
cursed to the outside of the camp and stoned him. So the Israelites did as
the LORD had commanded Moses.

LEVITICUS

Sabbath Years and Jubilee

25 The LORD spoke to Moses on Mount Sinai: 2 “Speak to the Israelites
and tell them: When you enter the land I am giving you, the land will
observe a Sabbath to the LORD. 3 You may sow your field for six years, and
you may prune your vineyard and gather its produce for six years. 4† But
there will be a Sabbath of complete rest for the land in the seventh year, a
Sabbath to the LORD: you are not to sow your field or prune your vineyard.
5 You are not to reap what grows by itself from your crop, or harvest the
grapes of your untended vines. It must be a year of complete rest for the
land. 6 Whatever the land produces during the Sabbath year can be food for
you — for yourself, your male or female slave, and the hired hand or
foreigner who stays with you. 7 All of its growth may serve as food for your
livestock and the wild animals in your land.

8 “You are to count seven sabbatical years, seven times seven years, so
that the time period of the seven sabbatical years amounts to 49. 9 Then you
are to sound a trumpet loudly in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the
month; you will sound it throughout your land on the Day of •Atonement.
10† You are to consecrate the fiftieth year and proclaim freedom in the land
for all its inhabitants. It will be your Jubilee, when each of you is to return
to his property and each of you to his clan. 11 The fiftieth year will be your
Jubilee; you are not to sow, reap what grows by itself, or harvest its
untended vines. 12 It is to be holy to you because it is the Jubilee; you may
only eat its produce directly from the field.

13 “In this Year of Jubilee, each of you will return to his property. 14 If
you make a sale to your neighbor or a purchase from him, do not cheat one
another. 15 You are to make the purchase from your neighbor based on the
number of years since the last Jubilee. He is to sell to you based on the
number of remaining harvest years. 16 You are to increase its price in
proportion to a greater amount of years, and decrease its price in proportion
to a lesser amount of years, because what he is selling to you is a number of
harvests. 17 You are not to cheat one another, but •fear your God, for I am
•Yahweh your God.

[18] “You are to keep My statutes and ordinances and carefully observe
them, so that you may live securely in the land. [19] Then the land will yield
its fruit, so that you can eat, be satisfied, and live securely in the land. [20] If
you wonder: ‘What will we eat in the seventh year if we don’t sow or gather
our produce? ’ [21] I will appoint My blessing for you in the sixth year, so
that it will produce a crop sufficient for three years. [22] When you sow in the
eighth year, you will be eating from the previous harvest. You will be eating
this until the ninth year when its harvest comes in.

[23] “The land is not to be permanently sold because it is Mine, and you are
only foreigners and temporary residents on My land. [A], [24] You are to allow
the redemption of any land you occupy. [25] If your brother becomes destitute
and sells part of his property, his nearest relative may come and redeem
what his brother has sold. [26][†] If a man has no •family redeemer, but he
prospers [B] and obtains enough to redeem his land, [27] he may calculate the
years since its sale, repay the balance to the man he sold it to, and return to
his property. [28] But if he cannot obtain enough to repay him, what he sold
will remain in the possession of its purchaser until the Year of Jubilee. It is
to be released at the Jubilee, so that he may return to his property.

[29] “If a man sells a residence in a walled city, his right of redemption will
last until a year has passed after its sale; his right of redemption will last a
year. [30] If it is not redeemed by the end of a full year, then the house in the
walled city is permanently transferred to its purchaser throughout his
generations. It is not to be released on the Jubilee. [31] But houses in villages
that have no walls around them are to be classified as open fields. The right
to redeem such houses stays in effect, and they are to be released at the
Jubilee.

[32] “Concerning the Levitical cities, the Levites always have the right to
redeem houses in the cities they possess. [33] Whatever property one of the
Levites can redeem [C] — a house sold in a city they possess — must be
released at the Jubilee, because the houses in the Levitical cities are their
possession among the Israelites. [34] The open pastureland around their cities
may not be sold, for it is their permanent possession.

35 "If your brother becomes destitute and cannot sustain himself among [D]
you, you are to support him as a foreigner or temporary resident, so that he
can continue to live among you. 36 Do not profit or take interest from him,
but fear your God and let your brother live among you. 37 You are not to
lend him your silver with interest or sell him your food for profit. 38 I am
Yahweh your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt to give you
the land of Canaan and to be your God.

39† "If your brother among you becomes destitute and sells himself to
you, you must not force him to do slave labor. 40 Let him stay with you as a
hired hand or temporary resident; he may work for you until the Year of
Jubilee. 41 Then he and his children are to be released from you, and he may
return to his clan and his ancestral property. 42 They are not to be sold as
slaves, [E] because they are My slaves that I brought out of the land of Egypt.
43 You are not to rule over them harshly but fear your God. 44 Your male
and female slaves are to be from the nations around you; you may purchase
male and female slaves. 45 You may also purchase them from the foreigners
staying with you, or from their families living among you — those born in
your land. These may become your property. 46 You may leave them to your
sons after you to inherit as property; you can make them slaves for life. But
concerning your brothers, the Israelites, you must not rule over one another
harshly.

47 "If a foreigner or temporary resident living among you prospers, but
your brother living near him becomes destitute and sells himself to the
foreigner living among you, or to a member of the foreigner's clan, 48 he
has the right of redemption after he has been sold. One of his brothers may
redeem him. 49 His uncle or cousin may redeem him, or any of his close
relatives from his clan may redeem him. If he prospers, he may redeem
himself. 50 The one who purchased him is to calculate the time from the
year he sold himself to him until the Year of Jubilee. The price of his sale
will be determined by the number of years. It will be set for him like the
daily wages of a hired hand. 51 If many years are still left, he must pay his
redemption price in proportion to them based on his purchase price. 52 If
only a few years remain until the Year of Jubilee, he will calculate and pay

the price of his redemption in proportion to his remaining years. 53 He will
stay with him like a man hired year by year. A foreign owner is not to rule
over him harshly in your sight. 54 If he is not redeemed in any of these
ways, he and his children are to be released at the Year of Jubilee. 55 For the
Israelites are My slaves. They are My slaves that I brought out of the land
of Egypt; I am Yahweh your God.

LEVITICUS

Covenant Blessings and Discipline

26 “Do not make idols for yourselves, set up a carved image or sacred
pillar for yourselves, or place a sculpted stone in your land to bow
down to it, for I am •Yahweh your God. 2 You must keep My Sabbaths and
revere My sanctuary; I am Yahweh.

3 “If you follow My statutes and faithfully observe My commands, 4 I
will give you rain at the right time, and the land will yield its produce, and
the trees of the field will bear their fruit. 5 Your threshing will continue until
grape harvest, and the grape harvest will continue until sowing time; you
will have plenty of food to eat and live securely in your land. 6 I will give
peace to the land, and you will lie down with nothing to frighten you. I will
remove dangerous animals from the land, and no sword will pass through
your land. 7 You will pursue your enemies, and they will fall before you by
the sword. 8 Five of you will pursue 100, and 100 of you will pursue
10,000; your enemies will fall before you by the sword.

9 “I will turn to you, make you fruitful and multiply you, and confirm My
covenant with you. 10 You will eat the old grain of the previous year and
will clear out the old to make room for the new. 11 I will place My
residence [A] among you, and I will not reject you. 12 I will walk among you
and be your God, and you will be My people. 13 I am Yahweh your God,
who brought you out of the land of Egypt, so that you would no longer be
their slaves. I broke the bars of your yoke and enabled you to live in
freedom. [B]

14† “But if you do not obey Me and observe all these commands — 15 if
you reject My statutes and despise My ordinances, and do not observe all
My commands — and break My covenant, 16 then I will do this to you: I
will bring terror on you — wasting disease and fever that will cause your
eyes to fail and your life to ebb away. You will sow your seed in vain
because your enemies will eat it. 17 I will turn [C] against you, so that you
will be defeated by your enemies. Those who hate you will rule over you,
and you will flee even though no one is pursuing you.

18 “But if after these things you will not obey Me, I will proceed to
discipline you seven times for your sins. 19 I will break down your strong
pride. I will make your sky like iron and your land like bronze, 20 and your
strength will be used up for nothing. Your land will not yield its produce,
and the trees of the land will not bear their fruit.

21† “If you act with hostility toward Me and are unwilling to obey Me, I
will multiply your plagues seven times for your sins. 22 I will send wild
animals against you that will deprive you of your children, ravage your
livestock, and reduce your numbers until your roads are deserted.

23 “If in spite of these things you do not accept My discipline, but act
with hostility toward Me, 24 then I will act with hostility toward you; I also
will strike you seven times for your sins. 25 I will bring a sword against you
to execute the vengeance of the covenant. Though you withdraw into your
cities, I will send a pestilence among you, and you will be delivered into
enemy hands. 26 When I cut off your supply of bread, 10 women will bake
your bread in a single oven and ration out your bread by weight, so that you
will eat but not be satisfied.

27 “And if in spite of this you do not obey Me but act with hostility
toward Me, 28 I will act with furious hostility toward you; I will also
discipline you seven times for your sins. 29 You will eat the flesh of your
sons; you will eat the flesh of your daughters. 30 I will destroy your •high
places, cut down your incense altars, and heap your dead bodies on the
lifeless bodies of your idols; I will reject you. 31 I will reduce your cities to
ruins and devastate your sanctuaries. I will not smell the pleasing aroma of
your sacrifices. 32 I also will devastate the land, so that your enemies who
come to live there will be appalled by it. 33 But I will scatter you among the
nations, and I will draw a sword to chase after you. So your land will
become desolate, and your cities will become ruins.

34 “Then the land will make up for its Sabbath years during the time it
lies desolate, while you are in the land of your enemies. At that time the
land will rest and make up for its Sabbaths. 35 As long as it lies desolate, it

will have the rest it did not have during your Sabbaths when you lived
there.

36 “I will put anxiety in the hearts of those of you who survive in the
lands of their enemies. The sound of a wind-driven leaf will put them to
flight, and they will flee as one flees from a sword, and fall though no one
is pursuing them. 37 They will stumble over one another as if fleeing from a
sword though no one is pursuing them. You will not be able to stand against
your enemies. 38 You will perish among the nations; the land of your
enemies will devour you. 39 Those [D] who survive in the lands of your
enemies will waste away because of their sin; they will also waste away
because of their fathers’ sins along with theirs.

40 “But if they will confess their sin and the sin of their fathers — their
unfaithfulness that they practiced against Me, and how they acted with
hostility toward Me, 41 and I acted with hostility toward them and brought
them into the land of their enemies — and if their uncircumcised hearts will
be humbled, and if they will pay the penalty for their sin, 42 then I will
remember My covenant with Jacob. I will also remember My covenant with
Isaac and My covenant with Abraham, and I will remember the land. 43 For
the land abandoned by them will make up for its Sabbaths by lying desolate
without the people, while they pay the penalty for their sin, because they
rejected My ordinances and abhorred My statutes. 44 Yet in spite of this,
while they are in the land of their enemies, I will not reject or abhor them so
as to destroy them and break My covenant with them, since I am Yahweh
their God. 45 For their sake I will remember the covenant with their fathers,
whom I brought out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the nations to be
their God; I am Yahweh.”

46[†] These are the statutes, ordinances, and laws the Lord established
between Himself and the Israelites through Moses on Mount Sinai.

LEVITICUS

Funding the Sanctuary

27 [†]The LORD spoke to Moses: 2 “Speak to the Israelites and tell them:
When someone makes a special vow to the LORD that involves the
assessment of people, 3 if the assessment concerns a male from 20 to 60
years old, your assessment is 50 silver •shekels measured by the standard
sanctuary shekel. 4 If the person is a female, your assessment is 30 shekels.
5 If the person is from five to 20 years old, your assessment for a male is 20
shekels and for a female 10 shekels. 6 If the person is from one month to
five years old, your assessment for a male is five silver shekels, and for a
female your assessment is three shekels of silver. 7 If the person is 60 years
or more, your assessment is 15 shekels for a male and 10 shekels for a
female. 8 But if one is too poor to pay the assessment, he must present the
person before the priest and the priest will set a value for him. The priest
will set a value for him according to what the one making the vow can
afford.

9 “If the vow involves one of the animals that may be brought as an
offering to the LORD, any of these he gives to the LORD will be holy. 10 He
may not replace it or make a substitution for it, either good for bad, or bad
for good. But if he does substitute one animal for another, both that animal
and its substitute will be holy.

11 “If the vow involves any of the •unclean animals that may not be
brought as an offering to the LORD, the animal must be presented before the
priest. 12 The priest will set its value, whether high or low; the price will be
set as the priest makes the assessment for you. 13 If the one who brought it
decides to redeem it, he must add a fifth to the [A] assessed value.

14 “When a man consecrates his house as holy to the LORD, the priest will
assess its value, whether high or low. The price will stand just as the priest
assesses it. 15 But if the one who consecrated his house redeems it, he must
add a fifth to the [B] assessed value, and it will be his.

16 “If a man consecrates to the LORD any part of a field that he possesses,
your assessment of value will be proportional to the seed needed to sow it,
at the rate of 50 silver shekels for every five bushels [C] of barley seed. [D] 17 If

he consecrates his field during the Year of Jubilee, the price will stand according to your assessment. [18] But if he consecrates his field after the Jubilee, the priest will calculate the price for him in proportion to the years left until the next Year of Jubilee, so that your assessment will be reduced. [19] If the one who consecrated the field decides to redeem it, he must add a fifth to the [E] assessed value, and the field will transfer back to him. [20] But if he does not redeem the field or if he has sold it to another man, it is no longer redeemable. [21] When the field is released in the Jubilee, it will be holy to the Lord like a field permanently set apart; it becomes the priest's property.

[22] "If a person consecrates to the Lord a field he has purchased that is not part of his inherited landholding, [23] then the priest will calculate for him the amount of the [F] assessment up to the Year of Jubilee, and the person will pay the assessed value on that day as a holy offering to the Lord. [24] In the Year of Jubilee the field will return to the one he bought it from, the original owner. [25] All your assessed values will be measured by the standard sanctuary shekel, 20 *gerahs* to the shekel.

[26] "But no one can consecrate a firstborn of the livestock, whether an animal from the herd or flock, to the Lord, because a firstborn already belongs to the Lord. [27] If it is one of the unclean livestock, it must be ransomed according to your assessment by adding a fifth of its value to it. If it is not redeemed, it can be sold according to your assessment.

[28] "Nothing that a man permanently sets apart to the Lord from all he owns, whether a person, an animal, or his inherited landholding, can be sold or redeemed; everything set apart is especially holy to the Lord. [29] No person who has been set apart for destruction is to be ransomed; he must be put to death.

[30] "Every tenth of the land's produce, grain from the soil or fruit from the trees, belongs to the Lord; it is holy to the Lord. [31] If a man decides to redeem any part of this tenth, he must add a fifth to its value. [32] Every tenth animal from the herd or flock, which passes under the shepherd's rod, will

be holy to the LORD. 33 He is not to inspect whether it is good or bad, and he
is not to make a substitution for it. But if he does make a substitution, both
the animal and its substitute will be holy; they cannot be redeemed."

34 These are the commands the LORD gave Moses for the Israelites on
Mount Sinai.

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The Census of Israel

1 [†]The LORD spoke to Moses in the tent of meeting in the Wilderness of
Sinai, on the first day of the second month of the second year after
Israel's departure from the land of Egypt: 2[†] "Take a census of the entire
Israelite community by their clans and their ancestral houses, counting the
names of every male one by one. 3 You and Aaron are to register those who
are 20 years old or more by their military divisions — everyone who can
serve in Israel's army. [A] 4 A man from each tribe is to be with you, each one
the head of his ancestral house. 5[†] These are the names of the men who are
to assist you:

Elizur son of Shedeur from Reuben;
6 Shelumiel son of Zurishaddai from Simeon;
7 Nahshon son of Amminadab from Judah;
8 Nethanel son of Zuar from Issachar;
9 Eliab son of Helon from Zebulun;
10 from the sons of Joseph:
Elishama son of Ammihud from Ephraim,
Gamaliel son of Pedahzur from Manasseh;
11 Abidan son of Gideoni from Benjamin;
12 Ahiezer son of Ammishaddai from Dan;
13 Pagiel son of Ochran from Asher;
14 Eliasaph son of Deuel from Gad;
15 Ahira son of Enan from Naphtali.

16 These are the men called from the community; they are leaders of their
ancestral tribes, the heads of Israel's clans."

17[†] So Moses and Aaron took these men who had been designated by
name, 18 and they assembled the whole community on the first day of the
second month. They recorded their ancestry by their clans and their
ancestral houses, counting one by one the names of those 20 years old or
more, 19[†] just as the LORD commanded Moses. He registered them in the
Wilderness of Sinai:

[20]† The descendants of Reuben, the firstborn of Israel: according
to their family records by their clans and their ancestral houses,
counting one by one the names of every male 20 years old or
more, everyone who could serve in the army, [21] those registered
for the tribe of Reuben numbered 46,500.

[22] The descendants of Simeon: according to their family records
by their clans and their ancestral houses, those registered counting
one by one the names of every male 20 years old or more,
everyone who could serve in the army, [23] those registered for the
tribe of Simeon numbered 59,300.

[24] The descendants of Gad: according to their family records by
their clans and their ancestral houses, counting the names of those
20 years old or more, everyone who could serve in the army,
[25] those registered for the tribe of Gad numbered 45,650.

[26] The descendants of Judah: according to their family records by
their clans and their ancestral houses, counting the names of those
20 years old or more, everyone who could serve in the army,
[27] those registered for the tribe of Judah numbered 74,600.

[28] The descendants of Issachar: according to their family records
by their clans and their ancestral houses, counting the names of
those 20 years old or more, everyone who could serve in the army,
[29] those registered for the tribe of Issachar numbered 54,400.

[30] The descendants of Zebulun: according to their family records
by their clans and their ancestral houses, counting the names of
those 20 years old or more, everyone who could serve in the army,
[31] those registered for the tribe of Zebulun numbered 57,400.

[32]† The descendants of Joseph:

The descendants of Ephraim: according to their family records by
their clans and their ancestral houses, counting the names of those
20 years old or more, everyone who could serve in the army,
[33] those registered for the tribe of Ephraim numbered 40,500.

34 The descendants of Manasseh: according to their family
records by their clans and their ancestral houses, counting the
names of those 20 years old or more, everyone who could serve in
the army, 35 those registered for the tribe of Manasseh numbered
32,200.

36 The descendants of Benjamin: according to their family
records by their clans and their ancestral houses, counting the
names of those 20 years old or more, everyone who could serve in
the army, 37 those registered for the tribe of Benjamin numbered
35,400.

38 The descendants of Dan: according to their family records by
their clans and their ancestral houses, counting the names of those
20 years old or more, everyone who could serve in the army,
39 those registered for the tribe of Dan numbered 62,700.

40 The descendants of Asher: according to their family records by
their clans and their ancestral houses, counting the names of those
20 years old or more, everyone who could serve in the army,
41 those registered for the tribe of Asher numbered 41,500.

42 The descendants of Naphtali: according to their family records
by their clans and their ancestral houses, counting the names of
those 20 years old or more, everyone who could serve in the army,
43 those registered for the tribe of Naphtali numbered 53,400.

44† These are the men Moses and Aaron registered, with the assistance of
the 12 leaders of Israel; each represented his ancestral house. 45 So all the
Israelites 20 years old or more, everyone who could serve in Israel's army,
were registered by their ancestral houses. 46 All those registered numbered
603,550.

Duties of the Levites

47† But the Levites were not registered with them by their ancestral tribe.
48 For the LORD had told Moses: 49 "Do not register or take a census of the

tribe of Levi with the other Israelites. 50 Appoint the Levites over the
tabernacle of the •testimony, all its furnishings, and everything in it. They
are to transport the tabernacle and all its articles, take care of it, and camp
around it. 51† Whenever the tabernacle is to move, the Levites are to take it
down, and whenever it is to stop at a campsite, the Levites are to set it up.
Any unauthorized person who comes near it must be put to death.

52 "The Israelites are to camp by their military divisions, each man with
his encampment and under his banner. 53† The Levites are to camp around
the tabernacle of the testimony and watch over it, so that no wrath will fall
on the Israelite community." 54† The Israelites did everything just as the
LORD had commanded Moses.

NUMBERS

Organization of the Camps

2 [†]The LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron: 2 “The Israelites are to camp
under their respective banners beside the flags of their ancestral houses.
They are to camp around the tent of meeting at a distance from it:

> 3 Judah’s military divisions will camp on the east side toward the
> sunrise under their banner. The leader of the descendants of Judah
> is Nahshon son of Amminadab. 4 His military division numbers
> 74,600. 5 The tribe of Issachar will camp next to it. The leader of
> the Issacharites is Nethanel son of Zuar. 6 His military division
> numbers 54,400. 7 The tribe of Zebulun will be next. The leader
> of the Zebulunites is Eliab son of Helon. 8 His military division
> numbers 57,400. 9[†] The total number in their military divisions
> who belong to Judah’s encampment is 186,400; they will move
> out first.
>
> 10 Reuben’s military divisions will camp on the south side under
> their banner. The leader of the Reubenites is Elizur son of
> Shedeur. 11 His military division numbers 46,500. 12 The tribe of
> Simeon will camp next to it. The leader of the Simeonites is
> Shelumiel son of Zurishaddai. 13 His military division numbers
> 59,300. 14 The tribe of Gad will be next. The leader of the Gadites
> is Eliasaph son of Deuel. 15 His military division numbers
> 45,650. 16 The total number in their military divisions who belong
> to Reuben’s encampment is 151,450; they will move out second.
>
> 17[†] The tent of meeting is to move out with the Levites’ camp,
> which is in the middle of the camps. They are to move out just as
> they camp, each in his place, [A] with their banners.
>
> 18 Ephraim’s military divisions will camp on the west side under
> their banner. The leader of the Ephraimites is Elishama son of
> Ammihud. 19 His military division numbers 40,500. 20 The tribe
> of Manasseh will be next to it. The leader of the Manassites is
> Gamaliel son of Pedahzur. 21 His military division numbers
> 32,200. 22 The tribe of Benjamin will be next. The leader of the
> Benjaminites is Abidan son of Gideoni. 23 His military division

numbers 35,400. [24] The total in their military divisions who
belong to Ephraim's encampment number 108,100; they will
move out third.

[25] Dan's military divisions will camp on the north side under their
banner. The leader of the Danites is Ahiezer son of Ammishaddai.
[26] His military division numbers 62,700. [27] The tribe of Asher will
camp next to it. The leader of the Asherites is Pagiel son of
Ochran. [28] His military division numbers 41,500. [29] The tribe of
Naphtali will be next. The leader of the Naphtalites is Ahira son
of Enan. [30] His military division numbers 53,400. [31] The total
number who belong to Dan's encampment is 157,600; they are to
move out last, with their banners."

[32] These are the Israelites registered by their ancestral houses. The
total number in the camps by their military divisions is 603,550.
[33] But the Levites were not registered among the Israelites, just as
the LORD had commanded Moses.

[34] The Israelites did everything the LORD commanded Moses; they camped
by their banners in this way and moved out the same way, each man by his
clan and by his ancestral house.

NUMBERS

Aaron's Sons and the Levites

3 †These are the family records of Aaron and Moses at the time the LORD
spoke with Moses on Mount Sinai. 2 These are the names of Aaron's
sons: Nadab, the firstborn, and Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar. 3 These are the
names of Aaron's sons, the anointed priests, who were ordained to serve as
priests. 4 But Nadab and Abihu died in the LORD's presence when they
presented unauthorized fire before the LORD in the Wilderness of Sinai, and
they had no sons. So Eleazar and Ithamar served as priests under the
direction of Aaron their father.

5† The LORD spoke to Moses: 6 "Bring the tribe of Levi near and present
them to Aaron the priest to assist him. 7 They are to perform duties for [A]
him and the entire community before the tent of meeting by attending to the
service of the tabernacle. 8 They are to take care of [B] all the furnishings of
the tent of meeting and perform duties for [C] the Israelites by attending to
the service of the tabernacle. 9 Assign the Levites to Aaron and his sons;
they have been assigned exclusively to him from the Israelites. 10† You are
to appoint Aaron and his sons to carry out their priestly responsibilities, but
any unauthorized person who comes near the sanctuary must be put to
death."

11† The LORD spoke to Moses: 12 "See, I have taken the Levites from the
Israelites in place of every firstborn Israelite from the womb. The Levites
belong to Me, 13 because every firstborn belongs to Me. At the time I struck
down every firstborn in the land of Egypt, I consecrated every firstborn in
Israel to Myself, both man and animal. They are Mine; I am •Yahweh."

The Levitical Census

14 The LORD spoke to Moses in the Wilderness of Sinai: 15 "Register the
Levites by their ancestral houses and their clans. You are to register every
male one month old or more." 16 So Moses registered them in obedience to
the LORD as he had been commanded:

17† These were Levi's sons by name: Gershon, Kohath, and
Merari. 18 These were the names of Gershon's sons by their clans:

Libni and Shimei. 19 Kohath's sons by their clans were Amram,
Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel. 20 Merari's sons by their clans were
Mahli and Mushi. These were the Levite clans by their ancestral
houses.

21[†] The Libnite clan and the Shimeite clan came from Gershon;
these were the Gershonite clans. 22 Those registered, counting
every male one month old or more, numbered 7,500. 23 The
Gershonite clans camped behind the tabernacle on the west side,
24 and the leader of the Gershonite family was Eliasaph son of
Lael. 25 The Gershonites' duties at the tent of meeting involved
the tabernacle, the tent, its covering, the screen for the entrance to
the tent of meeting, 26 the hangings of the courtyard, the screen
for the entrance to the courtyard that surrounds the tabernacle and
the altar, and the tent ropes — all the work relating to these.

27 The Amramite clan, the Izharite clan, the Hebronite clan, and
the Uzzielite clan came from Kohath; these were the Kohathites.
28 Counting every male one month old or more, there were 8,600
responsible for the duties of[D] the sanctuary. 29 The clans of the
Kohathites camped on the south side of the tabernacle, 30 and the
leader of the family of the Kohathite clans was Elizaphan son of
Uzziel. 31 Their duties involved the ark, the table, the lampstand,
the altars, the sanctuary utensils that were used with these, and the
screen — and all the work relating to them. 32 The chief of the
Levite leaders was Eleazar son of Aaron the priest; he had
oversight of those responsible for the duties of[E] the sanctuary.

33 The Mahlite clan and the Mushite clan came from Merari; these
were the Merarite clans. 34 Those registered, counting every male
one month old or more, numbered 6,200. 35 The leader of the
family of the Merarite clans was Zuriel son of Abihail; they
camped on the north side of the tabernacle. 36 The assigned duties
of Merari's descendants involved the tabernacle's supports,
crossbars, posts, bases, all its equipment, and all the work related

to these, 37 in addition to the posts of the surrounding courtyard
with their bases, tent pegs, and ropes.

38 Moses, Aaron, and his sons, who performed the duties of [F] the
sanctuary as a service on behalf of the Israelites, camped in front
of the tabernacle on the east, in front of the tent of meeting
toward the sunrise. Any unauthorized person who came near it
was to be put to death.

39 The total number of all the Levite males one month old or more that
Moses and Aaron registered by their clans at the LORD's command was
22,000.

Redemption of the Firstborn

40[†] The LORD told Moses: "Register every firstborn male of the Israelites
one month old or more, and list their names. 41 You are to take the Levites
for Me — I am Yahweh — in place of every firstborn among the Israelites,
and the Levites' cattle in place of every firstborn among the Israelites'
cattle." 42 So Moses registered every firstborn among the Israelites, as the
LORD commanded him. 43 The total number of the firstborn males one
month old or more listed by name was 22,273.

44 The LORD spoke to Moses again: 45 "Take the Levites in place of every
firstborn among the Israelites, and the Levites' cattle in place of their cattle.
The Levites belong to Me; I am Yahweh. 46 As the redemption price for the
273 firstborn Israelites who outnumber the Levites, 47 collect five •shekels
for each person, according to the standard sanctuary shekel — 20 *gerahs* to
the shekel. 48 Give the money to Aaron and his sons as the redemption
price for those who are in excess among the Israelites."

49 So Moses collected the redemption money from those in excess of the
ones redeemed by the Levites. 50 He collected the money from the firstborn
Israelites: 1,365 shekels measured by the standard sanctuary shekel. 51 He
gave the redemption money to Aaron and his sons in obedience to the LORD,
just as the LORD commanded Moses.

Duties of the Kohathites

4 [†]The LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron: 2 “Among the Levites, take a
census of the Kohathites by their clans and their ancestral houses, 3 men
from 30 years old to 50 years old — everyone who is qualified [A] to do work
at the tent of meeting.

4 “The service of the Kohathites at the tent of meeting concerns the most
holy objects. 5 Whenever the camp is about to move on, Aaron and his sons
are to go in, take down the screening veil, and cover the ark of the
•testimony with it. 6 They are to place over this a covering made of
manatee skin, [B] spread a solid blue cloth on top, and insert its poles.

7 “They are to spread a blue cloth over the table of the Presence and place
the plates and cups on it, as well as the bowls and pitchers for the •drink
offering. The regular bread offering is to be on it. 8 They are to spread a
scarlet cloth over them, cover them with a covering made of manatee
skin, [C] and insert the poles in the table.

9 “They are to take a blue cloth and cover the lampstand used for light,
with its lamps, snuffers, and firepans, as well as its jars of oil by which
they service it. 10 Then they must place it with all its utensils inside a
covering made of manatee skin [D] and put them on the carrying frame.

11 “They are to spread a blue cloth over the gold altar, cover it with a
covering made of manatee skin, [E] and insert its poles. 12 They are to take
all the serving utensils they use in the sanctuary, place them in a blue cloth,
cover them with a covering made of manatee skin, [F] and put them on a
carrying frame.

13 “They are to remove the ashes from the bronze altar, spread a purple
cloth over it, 14 and place all the equipment on it that they use in serving:
the firepans, meat forks, shovels, and basins — all the equipment of the
altar. They are to spread a covering made of manatee skin [G] over it and
insert its poles.

15 “Aaron and his sons are to finish covering the holy objects and all their
equipment whenever the camp is to move on. The Kohathites will come and
carry them, but they are not to touch the holy objects or they will die.
These are the transportation duties of the Kohathites regarding the tent of
meeting.

16 “Eleazar, son of Aaron the priest, has oversight of the lamp oil, the
fragrant incense, the daily •grain offering, and the anointing oil. He has
oversight of the entire tabernacle and everything in it, the holy objects and
their utensils.” [H]

17 Then the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron: 18 “Do not allow the
Kohathite tribal clans to be wiped out from the Levites. 19 Do this for them
so that they may live and not die when they come near the most holy
objects: Aaron and his sons are to go in and assign each man his task and
transportation duty. 20 The Kohathites are not to go in and look at the holy
objects, even for a moment, [I] or they will die.”

Duties of the Gershonites

21 The LORD spoke to Moses: 22 “Take a census of the Gershonites also,
by their ancestral houses and their clans. 23 Register men from 30 years old
to 50 years old, everyone who is qualified to perform service, to do work at
the tent of meeting. 24 This is the service of the Gershonite clans regarding
work and transportation duties: 25 They are to transport the tabernacle
curtains, the tent of meeting with its covering and the covering made of
manatee skin [J] on top of it, the screen for the entrance to the tent of
meeting, 26 the hangings of the courtyard, the screen for the entrance at the
gate of the courtyard that surrounds the tabernacle and the altar, along with
their ropes and all the equipment for their service. They will carry out
everything that needs to be done with these items.

27 “All the service of the Gershonites, all their transportation duties and
all their other work, is to be done at the command of Aaron and his sons;
you are to assign to them all that they are responsible to carry. 28 This is the

service of the Gershonite clans at the tent of meeting, and their duties will be under the direction of Ithamar son of Aaron the priest.

Duties of the Merarites

[29] "As for the Merarites, you are to register them by their clans and their ancestral houses. [30] Register men from 30 years old to 50 years old, everyone who is qualified to do the work of the tent of meeting. [31] This is what they are responsible to carry as the whole of their service at the tent of meeting: the supports of the tabernacle, with its crossbars, posts, and bases, [32] the posts of the surrounding courtyard with their bases, tent pegs, and ropes, including all their equipment and all the work related to them. You are to assign by name the items that they are responsible to carry. [33] This is the service of the Merarite clans regarding all their work at the tent of meeting, under the direction of Ithamar son of Aaron the priest."

Census of the Levites

[34] So Moses, Aaron, and the leaders of the community registered the Kohathites by their clans and their ancestral houses, [35] men from 30 years old to 50 years old, everyone who was qualified for work at the tent of meeting. [36] The men registered by their clans numbered 2,750. [37] These were the registered men of the Kohathite clans, everyone who could serve at the tent of meeting. Moses and Aaron registered them at the LORD's command through Moses.

[38] The Gershonites were registered by their clans and their ancestral houses, [39] men from 30 years old to 50 years old, everyone who was qualified for work at the tent of meeting. [40] The men registered by their clans and their ancestral houses numbered 2,630. [41] These were the registered men of the Gershonite clans. At the LORD's command Moses and Aaron registered everyone who could serve at the tent of meeting.

[42] The men of the Merarite clans were registered by their clans and their ancestral houses, [43] those from 30 years old to 50 years old, everyone who was qualified for work at the tent of meeting. [44] The men registered by their

clans numbered 3,200. [45] These were the registered men of the Merarite clans; Moses and Aaron registered them at the LORD's command through Moses.

[46] Moses, Aaron, and the leaders of Israel registered all the Levites by their clans and their ancestral houses, [47] from 30 years old to 50 years old, everyone who was qualified to do the work of serving at the tent of meeting and transporting it. [48] Their registered men numbered 8,580. [49] At the LORD's command they were registered under the direction of Moses, each one according to his work and transportation duty, and his assignment was as the LORD commanded Moses.

NUMBERS

Isolation of the Unclean

5 [†]The LORD instructed Moses: [2] “Command the Israelites to send away
anyone from the camp who is afflicted with a skin disease, anyone who
has a bodily discharge, or anyone who is defiled because of a corpse. [3] You
must send away both male or female; send them outside the camp, so that
they will not defile their camps where I dwell among them.” [4] The Israelites
did this, sending them outside the camp. The Israelites did as the LORD
instructed Moses.

Compensation for Wrongdoing

[5†] The LORD spoke to Moses: [6] “Tell the Israelites: When a man or
woman commits any sin against another, that person acts unfaithfully
toward the LORD and is •guilty. [7] The person is to confess the sin he has
committed. He is to pay full compensation, add a fifth of its value to it, and
give it to the individual he has wronged. [8] But if that individual has no
relative to receive compensation, the compensation goes to the LORD for
the priest, along with the •atonement ram by which the priest will make
atonement for the guilty person. [9] Every holy contribution the Israelites
present to the priest will be his. [10] Each one’s holy contribution is his to
give; what each one gives to the priest will be his.”

The Jealousy Ritual

[11†] The LORD spoke to Moses: [12] “Speak to the Israelites and tell them: If
any man’s wife goes astray, is unfaithful to him, [13] and sleeps with
another, [A] but it is concealed from her husband, and she is undetected, even
though she has defiled herself, since there is no witness against her, and she
wasn’t caught in the act; [14] and if a feeling of jealousy comes over the
husband and he becomes jealous because of his wife who has defiled
herself — or if a feeling of jealousy comes over him and he becomes
jealous of her though she has not defiled herself — [15] then the man is to
bring his wife to the priest. He is also to bring an offering for her of two
quarts [B] of barley flour. He is not to pour oil over it or put frankincense on
it because it is a •grain offering of jealousy, a grain offering for
remembrance that brings sin to mind.

16 “The priest is to bring her forward and have her stand before the LORD.
17 Then the priest is to take holy water in a clay bowl, and take some of the
dust from the tabernacle floor and put it in the water. 18 After the priest has
the woman stand before the LORD, he is to let down her hair [C] and place in
her hands the grain offering for remembrance, which is the grain offering of
jealousy. The priest is to hold the bitter water that brings a curse. 19[†] The
priest will require the woman to take an oath and will say to her, ‘If no man
has slept with you, if you have not gone astray and become defiled while
under your husband’s authority, be unaffected by this bitter water that
brings a curse. 20 But if you have gone astray while under your husband’s
authority, if you have defiled yourself and a man other than your husband
has slept with you’ — 21 at this point the priest must make the woman take
the oath with the sworn curse, and he is to say to her — ‘May the LORD
make you into an object of your people’s cursing and swearing when He
makes your thigh shrivel and your belly swell. [D] 22 May this water that
brings a curse enter your stomach, causing your belly to swell and your
thigh to shrivel.’

“And the woman must reply, ‘•Amen, Amen.’

23[†] “Then the priest is to write these curses on a scroll and wash them off
into the bitter water. 24 He will require the woman to drink the bitter water
that brings a curse, and it will enter her and cause bitter suffering. 25 The
priest is to take the grain offering of jealousy from the woman’s hand, wave
the offering before the LORD, and bring it to the altar. 26 The priest is to take
a handful of the grain offering as a memorial portion and burn it on the
altar. Then he will require the woman to drink the water.

27 “When he makes her drink the water, if she has defiled herself and
been unfaithful to her husband, the water that brings a curse will enter her
and cause bitter suffering; her belly will swell, and her thigh will shrivel.
She will become a curse among her people. 28 But if the woman has not
defiled herself and is pure, she will be unaffected and will be able to
conceive children.

[29]† “This is the law regarding jealousy when a wife goes astray and
defiles herself while under her husband’s authority, [30] or when a feeling of
jealousy comes over a husband and he becomes jealous of his wife. He is to
have the woman stand before the LORD, and the priest will apply this entire
ritual to her. [31] The husband will be free of guilt, but that woman will bear
the consequences of her guilt.”

NUMBERS

The Nazirite Vow

6 [†]The Lord instructed Moses: 2 “Speak to the Israelites and tell them:
When a man or woman makes a special vow, a Nazirite vow, to
consecrate himself to [A] the Lord, 3[†] he is to abstain from wine and beer.
He must not drink vinegar made from wine or from beer. He must not drink
any grape juice or eat fresh grapes or raisins. 4 He is not to eat anything
produced by the grapevine, from seeds to skin, [B] during his vow.

5[†] “You must not cut his hair [C] throughout the time of his vow of
consecration. He must be holy until the time is completed during which he
consecrates himself to the Lord; he is to let the hair of his head grow long.
6 He must not go near a dead body during the time he consecrates himself to
the Lord. 7 He is not to defile himself for his father or mother, or his
brother or sister, when they die, because the hair consecrated to his God is
on his head. 8 He is holy to the Lord during the time of consecration.

9[†] “If someone suddenly dies near him, defiling his consecrated head of
hair, he must shave his head on the day of his purification; he is to shave it
on the seventh day. 10 On the eighth day he is to bring two turtledoves or
two young pigeons to the priest at the entrance to the tent of meeting.
11 The priest is to offer one as a •sin offering and the other as a •burnt
offering to make •atonement on behalf of the Nazirite, since he sinned
because of the corpse. On that day he must consecrate [D] his head again.
12 He is to rededicate his time of consecration to the Lord and to bring a
year-old male lamb as a •restitution offering. But do not count the previous
period, because his consecrated hair became defiled.

13[†] “This is the law of the Nazirite: On the day his time of consecration is
completed, he must be brought to the entrance to the tent of meeting. 14 He
is to present an offering to the Lord of one unblemished year-old male
lamb as a burnt offering, one unblemished year-old female lamb as a sin
offering, one unblemished ram as a •fellowship offering, 15 along with their
•grain offerings and •drink offerings, and a basket of unleavened cakes
made from fine flour mixed with oil, and unleavened wafers coated with
oil.

16 “The priest is to present these before the LORD and sacrifice the
Nazirite’s sin offering and burnt offering. 17 He will also offer the ram as a
fellowship sacrifice to the LORD, together with the basket of unleavened bread. Then the priest will offer the accompanying grain offering and drink offering.

18 “The Nazirite is to shave his consecrated head at the entrance to the tent of meeting, take the hair from his head, and put it on the fire under the
fellowship sacrifice. 19 The priest is to take the boiled shoulder from the
ram, one unleavened cake from the basket, and one unleavened wafer, and put them into the hands of the Nazirite after he has shaved his consecrated
head. 20 The priest is to wave them as a presentation offering before the
LORD. It is a holy portion for the priest, in addition to the breast of the presentation offering and the thigh of the contribution. After that, the Nazirite may drink wine.

21† “This is the ritual of the Nazirite who vows his offering to the LORD for his consecration, in addition to whatever else he can afford; he must fulfill whatever vow he makes in keeping with the ritual for his consecration.”

The Priestly Blessing

22† The LORD spoke to Moses: 23 “Tell Aaron and his sons how you are to
bless the Israelites. Say to them:

24 May •Yahweh bless you and protect you;
25 may Yahweh make His face shine on you
and be gracious to you;
26 may Yahweh look with favor on you [E]
and give you peace. [F]

27 In this way they will pronounce My name over [G] the Israelites, and I will bless them.”

NUMBERS

Offerings from the Leaders

7 †On the day Moses finished setting up the tabernacle, he anointed and
consecrated it and all its furnishings, along with the altar and all its
utensils. After he anointed and consecrated these things, 2 the leaders of
Israel, the heads of their ancestral houses, presented an offering. They were
the tribal leaders who supervised the registration. 3 They brought as their
offering before the LORD six covered carts and 12 oxen, a cart from every
two leaders and an ox from each one, and presented them in front of the
tabernacle.

4 The LORD said to Moses, 5 “Accept these from them to be used in the
work of the tent of meeting, and give this offering to the Levites, to each
division according to their service.”

6 So Moses took the carts and oxen and gave them to the Levites. 7 He
gave the Gershonites two carts and four oxen corresponding to their
service, 8 and gave the Merarites four carts and eight oxen corresponding to
their service, under the direction of Ithamar son of Aaron the priest. 9 But
he did not give any to the Kohathites, since their responsibility was service
related to the holy objects carried on their shoulders.

10 The leaders also presented the dedication gift for the altar when it was
anointed. The leaders presented their offerings in front of the altar. 11 The
LORD told Moses, “Each day have one leader present his offering for the
dedication of the altar.”

> 12† The one who presented his offering on the first day was
> Nahshon son of Amminadab from the tribe of Judah. 13 His
> offering was one silver dish weighing 3 1/4 pounds [A] and one
> silver basin weighing 1 3/4 pounds, [B] measured by the standard
> sanctuary •shekel, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil
> for a •grain offering; 14 one gold bowl weighing four ounces, [C]
> full of incense; 15 one young bull, one ram, and one male lamb a
> year old, for a •burnt offering; 16 one male goat for a •sin
> offering; 17 and two bulls, five rams, five male breeding goats,

and five male lambs a year old, for the •fellowship sacrifice. This
was the offering of Nahshon son of Amminadab.

[18] On the second day Nethanel son of Zuar, leader of Issachar,
presented an offering. [19] As his offering, he presented one silver
dish weighing 3 1/4 pounds [D] and one silver basin weighing 1 3/4
pounds, [E] measured by the standard sanctuary shekel, both of
them full of fine flour mixed with oil for a grain offering; [20] one
gold bowl weighing four ounces, [F] full of incense; [21] one young
bull, one ram, and one male lamb a year old, for a burnt offering;
[22] one male goat for a sin offering; [23] and two bulls, five rams,
five male breeding goats, and five male lambs a year old, for the
fellowship sacrifice. This was the offering of Nethanel son of
Zuar.

[24] On the third day Eliab son of Helon, leader of the Zebulunites,
presented an offering. [25] His offering was one silver dish
weighing 3 1/4 pounds [G] and one silver basin weighing 1 3/4
pounds, [H] measured by the standard sanctuary shekel, both of
them full of fine flour mixed with oil for a grain offering; [26] one
gold bowl weighing four ounces, [I] full of incense; [27] one young
bull, one ram, and one male lamb a year old, for a burnt offering;
[28] one male goat for a sin offering; [29] and two bulls, five rams,
five male breeding goats, and five male lambs a year old, for the
fellowship sacrifice. This was the offering of Eliab son of Helon.

[30] On the fourth day Elizur son of Shedeur, leader of the
Reubenites, presented an offering. [31] His offering was one silver
dish weighing 3 1/4 pounds [J] and one silver basin weighing 1 3/4
pounds, [K] measured by the standard sanctuary shekel, both of
them full of fine flour mixed with oil for a grain offering; [32] one
gold bowl weighing four ounces, [L] full of incense; [33] one young
bull, one ram, and one male lamb a year old, for a burnt offering;
[34] one male goat for a sin offering; [35] and two bulls, five rams,
five male breeding goats, and five male lambs a year old, for the

fellowship sacrifice. This was the offering of Elizur son of
Shedeur.

36 On the fifth day Shelumiel son of Zurishaddai, leader of the
Simeonites, presented an offering. 37 His offering was one silver
dish weighing 3 1/4 pounds [M] and one silver basin weighing 1 3/4
pounds, [N] measured by the standard sanctuary shekel, both of
them full of fine flour mixed with oil for a grain offering; 38 one
gold bowl weighing four ounces, [O] full of incense; 39 one young
bull, one ram, and one male lamb a year old, for a burnt offering;
40 one male goat for a sin offering; 41 and two bulls, five rams,
five male breeding goats, and five male lambs a year old, for the
fellowship sacrifice. This was the offering of Shelumiel son of
Zurishaddai.

42 On the sixth day Eliasaph son of Deuel, leader of the Gadites,
presented an offering. 43 His offering was one silver dish
weighing 3 1/4 pounds [P] and one silver basin weighing 1 3/4
pounds, [Q] measured by the standard sanctuary shekel, both of
them full of fine flour mixed with oil for a grain offering; 44 one
gold bowl weighing four ounces, [R] full of incense; 45 one young
bull, one ram, and one male lamb a year old, for a burnt offering;
46 one male goat for a sin offering; 47 and two bulls, five rams,
five male breeding goats, and five male lambs a year old, for the
fellowship sacrifice. This was the offering of Eliasaph son of
Deuel.

48 On the seventh day Elishama son of Ammihud, leader of the
Ephraimites, presented an offering. 49 His offering was one silver
dish weighing 3 1/4 pounds [S] and one silver basin weighing 1 3/4
pounds, [T] measured by the standard sanctuary shekel, both of
them full of fine flour mixed with oil for a grain offering; 50 one
gold bowl weighing four ounces, [U] full of incense; 51 one young
bull, one ram, and one male lamb a year old, for a burnt offering;
52 one male goat for a sin offering; 53 and two bulls, five rams,
five male breeding goats, and five male lambs a year old, for the

fellowship sacrifice. This was the offering of Elishama son of
Ammihud.

[54] On the eighth day Gamaliel son of Pedahzur, leader of the
Manassites, presented an offering. [55] His offering was one silver
dish weighing 3 1/4 pounds [V] and one silver basin weighing 1 3/4
pounds, [W] measured by the standard sanctuary shekel, both of
them full of fine flour mixed with oil for a grain offering; [56] one
gold bowl weighing four ounces, [X] full of incense; [57] one young
bull, one ram, and one male lamb a year old, for a burnt offering;
[58] one male goat for a sin offering; [59] and two bulls, five rams,
five male breeding goats, and five male lambs a year old, for the
fellowship sacrifice. This was the offering of Gamaliel son of
Pedahzur.

[60] On the ninth day Abidan son of Gideoni, leader of the
Benjaminites, presented an offering. [61] His offering was one silver
dish weighing 3 1/4 pounds [Y] and one silver basin weighing 1 3/4
pounds, [Z] measured by the standard sanctuary shekel, both of
them full of fine flour mixed with oil for a grain offering; [62] one
gold bowl weighing four ounces, [A] full of incense; [63] one young
bull, one ram, and one male lamb a year old, for a burnt offering;
[64] one male goat for a sin offering; [65] and two bulls, five rams,
five male breeding goats, and five male lambs a year old, for the
fellowship sacrifice. This was the offering of Abidan son of
Gideoni.

[66] On the tenth day Ahiezer son of Ammishaddai, leader of the
Danites, presented an offering. [67] His offering was one silver dish
weighing 3 1/4 pounds [B] and one silver basin weighing 1 3/4
pounds, [C] measured by the standard sanctuary shekel, both of
them full of fine flour mixed with oil for a grain offering; [68] one
gold bowl weighing four ounces, [D] full of incense; [69] one young
bull, one ram, and one male lamb a year old, for a burnt offering;
[70] one male goat for a sin offering; [71] and two bulls, five rams,
five male breeding goats, and five male lambs a year old, for the

fellowship sacrifice. This was the offering of Ahiezer son of
Ammishaddai.

72 On the eleventh day Pagiel son of Ochran, leader of the
Asherites, presented an offering. 73 His offering was one silver
dish weighing 3 1/4 pounds [E] and one silver basin weighing 1 3/4
pounds, [F] measured by the standard sanctuary shekel, both of
them full of fine flour mixed with oil for a grain offering; 74 one
gold bowl weighing four ounces, [G] full of incense; 75 one young
bull, one ram, and one male lamb a year old, for a burnt offering;
76 one male goat for a sin offering; 77 and two bulls, five rams,
five male breeding goats, and five male lambs a year old, for the
fellowship sacrifice. This was the offering of Pagiel son of
Ochran.

78 On the twelfth day Ahira son of Enan, leader of the
Naphtalites, presented an offering. 79 His offering was one silver
dish weighing 3 1/4 pounds [H] and one silver basin weighing 1 3/4
pounds, [I] measured by the standard sanctuary shekel, both of them
full of fine flour mixed with oil for a grain offering; 80 one gold
bowl weighing four ounces, [J] full of incense; 81 one young bull,
one ram, and one male lamb a year old, for a burnt offering;
82 one male goat for a sin offering; 83 and two bulls, five rams,
five male breeding goats, and five male lambs a year old, for the
fellowship sacrifice. This was the offering of Ahira son of Enan.

84[†] This was the dedication gift from the leaders of Israel for the altar
when it was anointed: 12 silver dishes, 12 silver basins, and 12 gold bowls.
85 Each silver dish weighed 3 1/4 pounds, [K] and each basin 1 3/4 pounds. [L]
The total weight of the silver articles was 60 pounds [M] measured by the
standard sanctuary shekel. 86 The 12 gold bowls full of incense each
weighed four ounces [N] measured by the standard sanctuary shekel. The total
weight of the gold bowls was three pounds. [O] 87 All the livestock for the
burnt offering totaled 12 bulls, 12 rams, and 12 male lambs a year old, with
their grain offerings, and 12 male goats for the sin offering. 88 All the

livestock for the fellowship sacrifice totaled 24 bulls, 60 rams, 60 male
breeding goats, and 60 male lambs a year old. This was the dedication gift
for the altar after it was anointed.

89† When Moses entered the tent of meeting to speak with the LORD, he
heard the voice speaking to him from above the •mercy seat that was on the
ark of the •testimony, from between the two •cherubim. He spoke to him
that way.

NUMBERS

The Lighting in the Tabernacle

8 †The LORD spoke to Moses: 2 “Speak to Aaron and tell him: When you
set up the lamps, the seven lamps are to give light in front of the
lampstand.” 3 So Aaron did this; he set up its lamps to give light in front of
the lampstand just as the LORD had commanded Moses. 4 This is the way the
lampstand was made: it was a hammered work of gold, hammered from its
base to its flower petals. The lampstand was made according to the pattern
the LORD had shown Moses.

Consecration of the Levites

5† The LORD spoke to Moses: 6 “Take the Levites from among the
Israelites and ceremonially cleanse them. 7 This is what you must do to
them for their purification: Sprinkle them with the purification water. Have
them shave their entire bodies and wash their clothes, and so purify
themselves.

8† “They are to take a young bull and its •grain offering of fine flour
mixed with oil, and you are to take a second young bull for a •sin offering.
9 Bring the Levites before the tent of meeting and assemble the entire
Israelite community. 10 Then present the Levites before the LORD, and have
the Israelites lay their hands on them. 11 Aaron is to present the Levites
before the LORD as a presentation offering from the Israelites, so that they
may perform the LORD’s work. 12 Next the Levites are to lay their hands on
the heads of the bulls. Sacrifice one as a sin offering and the other as a
•burnt offering to the LORD, to make •atonement for the Levites.

13† “You are to have the Levites stand before Aaron and his sons, and you
are to present them before the LORD as a presentation offering. 14 In this
way you are to separate the Levites from the rest of the Israelites so that the
Levites will belong to Me. 15† After that the Levites may come to serve at
the tent of meeting, once you have ceremonially cleansed them and
presented them as a presentation offering. 16 For they have been
exclusively assigned to Me from the Israelites. I have taken them for
Myself in place of all who come first from the womb, every Israelite
firstborn. 17 For every firstborn among the Israelites is Mine, both man and

animal. I consecrated them to Myself on the day I struck down every
firstborn in the land of Egypt. [18] But I have taken the Levites in place of
every firstborn among the Israelites. [19] From the Israelites, I have given the
Levites exclusively to Aaron and his sons to perform the work for the
Israelites at the tent of meeting and to make atonement on their behalf, so
that no plague will come against the Israelites when they approach the
sanctuary."

[20†] Moses, Aaron, and the entire Israelite community did this to the
Levites. The Israelites did everything to them the LORD commanded Moses
regarding the Levites. [21] The Levites purified themselves and washed their
clothes; then Aaron presented [A] them before the LORD as a presentation
offering. Aaron also made atonement for them to ceremonially cleanse
them. [22] After that, the Levites came to do their work at the tent of meeting
in the presence of Aaron and his sons. So they did to them as the LORD had
commanded Moses concerning the Levites.

[23†] The LORD spoke to Moses: [24] "In regard to the Levites: From 25 years
old or more, a man enters the service in the work at the tent of meeting.
[25] But at 50 years old he is to retire from his service in the work and no
longer serve. [26] He may assist his brothers to fulfill responsibilities [B] at the
tent of meeting, but he must not do the work. This is how you are to deal
with the Levites regarding their duties."

NUMBERS

The Second Passover

9 †In the first month of the second year after their departure from the land
of Egypt, the LORD told Moses in the Wilderness of Sinai: 2 “The
Israelites are to observe the •Passover at its appointed time. 3 You must
observe it at its appointed time on the fourteenth day of this month at
twilight; you are to observe it according to all its statutes and ordinances.”
4 So Moses told the Israelites to observe the Passover, 5 and they observed it
in the first month on the fourteenth day at twilight in the Wilderness of
Sinai. The Israelites did everything as the LORD had commanded Moses.

6† But there were some men who were •unclean because of a human
corpse, so they could not observe the Passover on that day. These men
came before Moses and Aaron the same day 7 and said to him, “We are
unclean because of a human corpse. Why should we be excluded from
presenting the LORD’s offering at its appointed time with the other
Israelites? ”

8† Moses replied to them, “Wait here until I hear what the LORD
commands for you.”

9 Then the LORD spoke to Moses: 10 “Tell the Israelites: When any one of
you or your descendants is unclean because of a corpse or is on a distant
journey, he may still observe the Passover to the LORD. 11 Such people are to
observe it in the second month, on the fourteenth day at twilight. They are
to eat the animal with unleavened bread and bitter herbs; 12 they may not
leave any of it until morning or break any of its bones. They must observe
the Passover according to all its statutes.

13 “But the man who is ceremonially •clean, is not on a journey, and yet
fails to observe the Passover is to be cut off from his people, because he did
not present the LORD’s offering at its appointed time. That man will bear the
consequences of his sin.

14† “If a foreigner resides with you and wants to observe the Passover to
the LORD, he is to do so according to the Passover statute and its
ordinances. You are to apply the same statute to both the foreign resident
and the native of the land.”

Guidance by the Cloud

15† On the day the tabernacle was set up, the cloud covered the
tabernacle, the tent of the •testimony, and it appeared like fire above the
tabernacle from evening until morning. 16 It remained that way
continuously: the cloud would cover it, appearing like fire at night.
17† Whenever the cloud was lifted up above the tent, the Israelites would set
out; at the place where the cloud stopped, there the Israelites camped. 18 At
the LORD's command the Israelites set out, and at the LORD's command they
camped. As long as the cloud stayed over the tabernacle, they camped.

19 Even when the cloud stayed over the tabernacle many days, the
Israelites carried out the LORD's requirement and did not set out.
20 Sometimes the cloud remained over the tabernacle for only a few days.
They would camp at the LORD's command and set out at the LORD's
command. 21 Sometimes the cloud remained only from evening until
morning; when the cloud lifted in the morning, they set out. Or if it
remained a day and a night, they moved out when the cloud lifted.
22 Whether it was two days, a month, or longer, [A] the Israelites camped and
did not set out as long as the cloud stayed over the tabernacle. But when it
was lifted, they set out. 23 They camped at the LORD's command, and they
set out at the LORD's command. They carried out the LORD's requirement
according to His command through Moses.

NUMBERS

Two Silver Trumpets

10 †The LORD spoke to Moses: 2 “Make two trumpets of hammered silver
to summon the community and have the camps set out. 3 When both
are sounded in long blasts, the entire community is to gather before you at
the entrance to the tent of meeting. 4 However, if one is sounded, only the
leaders, the heads of Israel’s clans, are to gather before you.

5 “When you sound short blasts, the camps pitched on the east are to set
out. 6 When you sound short blasts a second time, the camps pitched on the
south are to set out. Short blasts are to be sounded for them to set out.
7 When calling the assembly together, you are to sound long blasts, not
short ones. 8 The sons of Aaron, the priests, are to sound the trumpets. Your
use of these is a permanent statute throughout your generations.

9 “When you enter into battle in your land against an adversary who is
attacking you, sound short blasts on the trumpets, and you will be
remembered before the LORD your God and be delivered from your
enemies. 10 You are to sound the trumpets over your •burnt offerings and
your •fellowship sacrifices and on your joyous occasions, your appointed
festivals, and the beginning of each of your months. They will serve as a
reminder for you before your God: I am •Yahweh your God.”

From Sinai to Paran

11† During the second year, in the second month on the twentieth day of
the month, the cloud was lifted up above the tabernacle of the •testimony.
12 The Israelites traveled on from the Wilderness of Sinai, moving from one
place to the next until the cloud stopped in the Wilderness of Paran.
13 They set out for the first time according to the LORD’s command through
Moses.

14† The military divisions of the camp of Judah with their banner set out
first, and Nahshon son of Amminadab was over Judah’s divisions.
15 Nethanel son of Zuar was over the division of the Issachar tribe, 16 and
Eliab son of Helon was over the division of the Zebulun tribe. 17 The

tabernacle was then taken down, and the Gershonites and the Merarites set
out, transporting the tabernacle.

18 The military divisions of the camp of Reuben with their banner set out,
and Elizur son of Shedeur was over Reuben’s division. 19 Shelumiel son of
Zurishaddai was over the division of Simeon’s tribe, 20 and Eliasaph son of
Deuel was over the division of the tribe of Gad. 21 The Kohathites then set
out, transporting the holy objects; the tabernacle was to be set up before
their arrival.

22 Next the military divisions of the camp of Ephraim with their banner
set out, and Elishama son of Ammihud was over Ephraim’s division.
23 Gamaliel son of Pedahzur was over the division of the tribe of Manasseh,
24 and Abidan son of Gideoni was over the division of the tribe of
Benjamin.

25 The military divisions of the camp of Dan with their banner set out,
serving as rear guard for all the camps, and Ahiezer son of Ammishaddai
was over Dan’s division. 26 Pagiel son of Ochran was over the division of
the tribe of Asher, 27 and Ahira son of Enan was over the division of the
tribe of Naphtali. 28 This was the order of march for the Israelites by their
military divisions as they set out.

29[†] Moses said to Hobab, son of Moses’ father-in-law [A] Reuel the
Midianite: “We’re setting out for the place the LORD promised: ‘I will give it
to you.’ Come with us, and we will treat you well, for the LORD has
promised good things to Israel.”

30 But he replied to him, “I don’t want to go. Instead, I will go to my own
land and my relatives.”

31 “Please don’t leave us,” Moses said, “since you know where we should
camp in the wilderness, and you can serve as our eyes. 32 If you come with
us, whatever good the LORD does for us we will do for you.”

33† They set out from the mountain of the LORD on a three-day journey
with the ark of the LORD's covenant traveling ahead of them for those three
days to seek a resting place for them. 34 Meanwhile, the cloud of the LORD
was over them by day when they set out from the camp.

35† Whenever the ark set out, Moses would say:

Arise, LORD!
Let Your enemies be scattered,
and those who hate You flee from Your presence.

36 When it came to rest, he would say:

Return, LORD,
to the countless thousands of Israel.

NUMBERS

Complaints about Hardship

11 [†] Now the people began complaining openly before [A] the LORD about
hardship. When the LORD heard, His anger burned, and fire from the
LORD blazed among them and consumed the outskirts of the camp. 2 Then
the people cried out to Moses, and he prayed to the LORD, and the fire died
down. 3 So that place was named Taberah, because the LORD's fire had
blazed among them.

Complaints about Food

4[†] Contemptible people [B] among them had a strong craving for other
food. The Israelites cried again and said, "Who will feed us meat? 5 We
remember the free fish we ate in Egypt, along with the cucumbers, melons,
leeks, onions, and garlic. 6 But now our appetite is gone; [C] there's nothing
to look at but this manna! "

7 The manna resembled coriander seed, and its appearance was like that
of bdellium. 8 The people walked around and gathered it. They ground it on
a pair of grinding stones or crushed it in a mortar, then boiled it in a
cooking pot and shaped it into cakes. It tasted like a pastry cooked with the
finest oil. 9 When the dew fell on the camp at night, the manna would fall
with it.

10[†] Moses heard the people, family after family, crying at the entrance of
their tents. The LORD was very angry; Moses was also provoked. [D] 11 So
Moses asked the LORD, "Why have You brought such trouble on Your
servant? Why are You angry with me, and why do You burden me with all
these people? 12 Did I conceive all these people? Did I give them birth so
You should tell me, 'Carry them at your breast, as a nursing woman carries
a baby,' to the land that You swore to give their fathers? 13 Where can I
get meat to give all these people? For they are crying to me: 'Give us meat
to eat! ' 14 I can't carry all these people by myself. They are too much for
me. 15 If You are going to treat me like this, please kill me right now. If
You are pleased with me, don't let me see my misery anymore."

Seventy Elders Anointed

16[†] The LORD answered Moses, “Bring Me 70 men from Israel known to
you as elders and officers of the people. Take them to the tent of meeting
and have them stand there with you. 17 Then I will come down and speak
with you there. I will take some of the Spirit who is on you and put the
Spirit on them. They will help you bear the burden of the people, so that
you do not have to bear it by yourself.

18 “Tell the people: Purify yourselves in readiness for tomorrow, and you
will eat meat because you cried before the LORD: ‘Who will feed us meat?
We really had it good in Egypt.’ The LORD will give you meat and you will
eat. 19 You will eat, not for one day, or two days, or five days, or 10 days, or
20 days, 20 but for a whole month — until it comes out of your nostrils and
becomes nauseating to you — because you have rejected the LORD who is
among you, and cried to Him: ‘Why did we ever leave Egypt? ’ ”

21 But Moses replied, “I’m in the middle of a people with 600,000 foot
soldiers, yet You say, ‘I will give them meat, and they will eat for a month.’
22 If flocks and herds were slaughtered for them, would they have enough?
Or if all the fish in the sea were caught for them, would they have
enough? ”

23 The LORD answered Moses, “Is the LORD’s power limited? [E] You will
see whether or not what I have promised will happen to you.”

24 Moses went out and told the people the words of the LORD. He brought
70 men from the elders of the people and had them stand around the tent.
25 Then the LORD descended in the cloud and spoke to him. He took some
of the Spirit that was on Moses and placed the Spirit on the 70 elders. As
the Spirit rested on them, they prophesied, but they never did it again.
26 Two men had remained in the camp, one named Eldad and the other
Medad; the Spirit rested on them — they were among those listed, but had
not gone out to the tent — and they prophesied in the camp. 27 A young
man ran and reported to Moses, “Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the
camp.”

[28] Joshua son of Nun, assistant to Moses since his youth, responded,
“Moses, my lord, stop them! ”

[29†] But Moses asked him, “Are you jealous on my account? If only all
the LORD’s people were prophets and the LORD would place His Spirit on
them!” [30] Then Moses returned to the camp along with the elders of Israel.

Quail in the Camp

[31†] A wind sent by the LORD came up and blew quail in from the sea; it
dropped them at the camp all around, three feet [F] off [G] the ground, about a
day’s journey in every direction. [32] The people were up all that day and
night and all the next day gathering the quail — the one who took the least
gathered 50 bushels [H] — and they spread them out all around the camp.

[33] While the meat was still between their teeth, before it was chewed, the
LORD’s anger burned against the people, and the LORD struck them with a
very severe plague. [34] So they named that place Kibroth-hattaavah,
because there they buried the people who had craved the meat.

[35] From Kibroth-hattaavah the people moved on to Hazeroth and
remained there.

NUMBERS

Miriam and Aaron Rebel

12 † Miriam and Aaron criticized Moses because of the •Cushite woman
he married (for he had married a Cushite woman). 2† They said,
“Does the LORD speak only through Moses? Does He not also speak through
us? ” And the LORD heard it. 3 Moses was a very humble man, more so than
any man on the face of the earth.

4 Suddenly the LORD said to Moses, Aaron, and Miriam, “You three come
out to the tent of meeting.” So the three of them went out. 5 Then the LORD
descended in a pillar of cloud, stood at the entrance to the tent, and
summoned Aaron and Miriam. When the two of them came forward, 6 He
said:

“Listen to what I say:
If there is a prophet among you from the LORD,
I make Myself known to him in a vision;
I speak with him in a dream.
7† Not so with My servant Moses;
he is faithful in [A] all My household.
8† I speak with him directly, [B]
openly, and not in riddles;
he sees the form of the LORD.

So why were you not afraid to speak against My servant Moses? ” 9† The
LORD’s anger burned against them, and He left.

10 As the cloud moved away from the tent, Miriam’s skin suddenly
became diseased, as white as snow. When Aaron turned toward her, he saw
that she was diseased 11 and said to Moses, “My lord, please don’t hold
against us this sin we have so foolishly committed. 12 Please don’t let her be
like a dead baby whose flesh is half eaten away when he comes out of his
mother’s womb.”

13 Then Moses cried out to the LORD, “God, please heal her! ”

14† The LORD answered Moses, “If her father had merely spit in her face,
wouldn’t she remain in disgrace for seven days? Let her be confined outside

the camp for seven days; after that she may be brought back in." 15 So
Miriam was confined outside the camp for seven days, and the people did
not move on until Miriam was brought back in. 16† After that, the people
set out from Hazeroth and camped in the Wilderness of Paran.

NUMBERS

Scouting Out Canaan

13 † The LORD spoke to Moses: 2 “Send men to scout out the land of
Canaan I am giving to the Israelites. Send one man who is a leader
among them from each of their ancestral tribes.” 3† Moses sent them from
the Wilderness of Paran at the LORD’s command. All the men were leaders
in Israel. 4† These were their names:

Shammua son of Zaccur from the tribe of Reuben;
5 Shaphat son of Hori from the tribe of Simeon;
6 Caleb son of Jephunneh from the tribe of Judah;
7 Igal son of Joseph from the tribe of Issachar;
8 Hoshea son of Nun from the tribe of Ephraim;
9 Palti son of Raphu from the tribe of Benjamin;
10 Gaddiel son of Sodi from the tribe of Zebulun;
11 Gaddi son of Susi from the tribe of Manasseh (from the tribe
of Joseph);
12 Ammiel son of Gemalli from the tribe of Dan;
13 Sethur son of Michael from the tribe of Asher;
14 Nahbi son of Vophsi from the tribe of Naphtali;
15 Geuel son of Machi from the tribe of Gad.

16 These were the names of the men Moses sent to scout out the land, and
Moses renamed Hoshea son of Nun, Joshua.

17† When Moses sent them to scout out the land of Canaan, he told them,
“Go up this way to the •Negev, then go up into the hill country. 18 See what
the land is like, and whether the people who live there are strong or weak,
few or many. 19 Is the land they live in good or bad? Are the cities they live
in encampments or fortifications? 20 Is the land fertile or unproductive?
Are there trees in it or not? Be courageous. Bring back some fruit from the
land.” It was the season for the first ripe grapes.

21† So they went up and scouted out the land from the Wilderness of Zin
as far as Rehob near the entrance to Hamath. A 22† They went up through

the Negev and came to Hebron, where Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmai, the
descendants of Anak, were living. Hebron was built seven years before
Zoan in Egypt. [23] When they came to the Valley of Eshcol, they cut down
a branch with a single cluster of grapes, which was carried on a pole by two
men. They also took some pomegranates and figs. [24] That place was called
the Valley of Eshcol because of the cluster of grapes the Israelites cut there.
[25†] At the end of 40 days they returned from scouting out the land.

Report about Canaan

[26†] The men went back to Moses, Aaron, and the entire Israelite
community in the Wilderness of Paran at Kadesh. They brought back a
report for them and the whole community, and they showed them the fruit
of the land. [27] They reported to Moses: “We went into the land where you
sent us. Indeed it is flowing with milk and honey, and here is some of its
fruit. [28†] However, the people living in the land are strong, and the cities are
large and fortified. We also saw the descendants of Anak there. [29] The
Amalekites are living in the land of the Negev; the Hittites, Jebusites, and
Amorites live in the hill country; and the Canaanites live by the sea and
along the Jordan.”

[30†] Then Caleb quieted the people in the presence of Moses and said,
“We must go up and take possession of the land because we can certainly
conquer it! ”

[31] But the men who had gone up with him responded, “We can’t go up
against the people because they are stronger than we are! ” [32] So they gave
a negative report to the Israelites about the land they had scouted: “The land
we passed through to explore is one that devours its inhabitants, and all the
people we saw in it are men of great size. [33] We even saw the Nephilim
there — the descendants of Anak come from the Nephilim! To ourselves
we seemed like grasshoppers, and we must have seemed the same to them.”

NUMBERS

Israel's Refusal to Enter Canaan

14 [†]Then the whole community broke into loud cries, and the people
wept that night. 2 All the Israelites complained about Moses and
Aaron, and the whole community told them, “If only we had died in the
land of Egypt, or if only we had died in this wilderness! 3 Why is the LORD
bringing us into this land to die by the sword? Our wives and little children
will become plunder. Wouldn’t it be better for us to go back to Egypt? ”
4 So they said to one another, “Let’s appoint a leader and go back to Egypt.”

5[†] Then Moses and Aaron fell down with their faces to the ground in
front of the whole assembly of the Israelite community. 6 Joshua son of Nun
and Caleb son of Jephunneh, who were among those who scouted out the
land, tore their clothes 7 and said to the entire Israelite community: “The
land we passed through and explored is an extremely good land. 8 If the
LORD is pleased with us, He will bring us into this land, a land flowing with
milk and honey, and give it to us. 9 Only don’t rebel against the LORD, and
don’t be afraid of the people of the land, for we will devour them. Their
protection has been removed from them, and the LORD is with us. Don’t be
afraid of them! ”

10[†] While the whole community threatened to stone them, the glory of
the LORD appeared to all the Israelites at the tent of meeting.

God’s Judgment of Israel’s Rebellion

11 The LORD said to Moses, “How long will these people despise Me?
How long will they not trust in Me despite all the signs I have performed
among them? 12 I will strike them with a plague and destroy them. Then I
will make you into a greater and mightier nation than they are.”

13 But Moses replied to the LORD, “The Egyptians will hear about it, for
by Your strength You brought up this people from them. 14[†] They will tell it
to the inhabitants of this land. They have heard that You, LORD, are among
these people, how You, LORD, are seen face to face, how Your cloud stands
over them, and how You go before them in a pillar of cloud by day and in a
pillar of fire by night. 15 If You kill this people with a single blow, [A] the

nations that have heard of Your fame will declare, 16 'Since the LORD
wasn't able to bring this people into the land He swore to give them, He
has slaughtered them in the wilderness.'

17 "So now, may my Lord's power be magnified just as You have spoken:
18† The LORD is slow to anger and rich in faithful love, forgiving
wrongdoing and rebellion. But He will not leave the •guilty unpunished,
bringing the consequences of the fathers' wrongdoing on the children to the
third and fourth generation. 19 Please pardon the wrongdoing of this
people, in keeping with the greatness of Your faithful love, just as You
have forgiven them from Egypt until now."

20† The LORD responded, "I have pardoned them as you requested. 21 Yet
as surely as I live and as the whole earth is filled with the LORD's glory,
22 none of the men who have seen My glory and the signs I performed in
Egypt and in the wilderness, and have tested Me these 10 times and did not
obey Me, 23 will ever see the land I swore to give their fathers. None of
those who have despised Me will see it. 24 But since My servant Caleb has
a different spirit and has followed Me completely, I will bring him into the
land where he has gone, and his descendants will inherit it. 25 Since the
Amalekites and Canaanites are living in the lowlands, [B] turn back tomorrow
and head for the wilderness in the direction of the •Red Sea."

26 Then the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron: 27 "How long must I endure
this evil community that keeps complaining about Me? I have heard the
Israelites' complaints that they make against Me. 28 Tell them: As surely as
I live," this is the LORD's declaration, "I will do to you exactly as I heard
you say. 29 Your corpses will fall in this wilderness — all of you who were
registered in the census, the entire number of you 20 years old or
more — because you have complained about Me. 30 I swear that none of
you will enter the land I promised [C] to settle you in, except Caleb son of
Jephunneh and Joshua son of Nun. 31 I will bring your children whom you
said would become plunder into the land you rejected, and they will enjoy
it. 32 But as for you, your corpses will fall in this wilderness. 33 Your
children will be shepherds in the wilderness for 40 years and bear the

penalty for your acts of unfaithfulness until all your corpses lie scattered in
the wilderness. 34 You will bear the consequences of your sins 40 years
based on the number of the 40 days that you scouted the land, a year for
each day. [D], You will know My displeasure. [E] 35 I, •Yahweh, have spoken. I
swear that I will do this to the entire evil community that has conspired
against Me. They will come to an end in the wilderness, and there they will
die."

36 So the men Moses sent to scout out the land, and who returned and
incited the entire community to complain about him by spreading a negative
report about the land — 37 those men who spread the negative report about
the land were struck down by the LORD. 38 Only Joshua son of Nun and
Caleb son of Jephunneh remained alive of those men who went to scout out
the land.

Israel Routed

39[†] When Moses reported these words to all the Israelites, the people
were overcome with grief. 40 They got up early the next morning and went
up the ridge of the hill country, saying, "Let's go to the place the LORD
promised, for we were wrong."

41 But Moses responded, "Why are you going against the LORD's
command? It won't succeed. 42 Don't go, because the LORD is not among
you and you will be defeated by your enemies. 43 The Amalekites and
Canaanites are right in front of you, and you will fall by the sword. The
LORD won't be with you, since you have turned from following Him."

44 But they dared to go up the ridge of the hill country, even though the
ark of the LORD's covenant and Moses did not leave the camp. 45 Then the
Amalekites and Canaanites who lived in that part of the hill country came
down, attacked them, and routed them as far as Hormah.

NUMBERS

Laws About Offerings

15 [†]The LORD instructed Moses: [2] “Speak to the Israelites and tell them: When you enter the land I am giving you to settle in, [3] and you make a fire offering to the LORD from the herd or flock — either a •burnt offering or a sacrifice, to fulfill a vow, or as a freewill offering, or at your appointed festivals — to produce a pleasing aroma for the LORD, [4] the one presenting his offering to the LORD must also present a •grain offering of two quarts [A] of fine flour mixed with a quart [B] of oil. [5] Prepare a quart [C] of wine as a •drink offering with the burnt offering or sacrifice of each lamb.

[6] “If you prepare a grain offering with a ram, it must be four quarts [D] of fine flour mixed with a third of a gallon [E] of oil. [7] Also present a third of a gallon [F] of wine for a drink offering as a pleasing aroma to the LORD.

[8] “If you prepare a young bull as a burnt offering or as a sacrifice, to fulfill a vow, or as a •fellowship offering to the LORD, [9] a grain offering of six quarts [G] of fine flour mixed with two quarts [H] of oil must be presented with the bull. [10] Also present two quarts [I] of wine as a drink offering. It is a fire offering of pleasing aroma to the LORD. [11] This is to be done for each ox, ram, lamb, or goat. [12] This is how you must prepare each of them, no matter how many.

[13] “Every Israelite is to prepare these things in this way when he presents a fire offering as a pleasing aroma to the LORD. [14] When a foreigner resides with you or someone else is among you and wants to prepare a fire offering as a pleasing aroma to the LORD, he is to do exactly as you do throughout your generations. [15] The assembly is to have the same statute for both you and the foreign resident as a permanent statute throughout your generations. You and the foreigner will be alike before the LORD. [16] The same law and the same ordinance will apply to both you and the foreigner who resides with you.”

[17] The LORD instructed Moses: [18] “Speak to the Israelites and tell them: After you enter the land where I am bringing you, [19] you are to offer a contribution to the LORD when you eat from the food of the land. [20] You are

to offer a loaf from your first batch of dough as a contribution; offer it just
like a contribution from the threshing floor. 21 Throughout your
generations, you are to give the LORD a contribution from the first batch of
your dough.

22† “When you sin unintentionally and do not obey all these commands
that the LORD spoke to Moses — 23 all that the LORD has commanded you
through Moses, from the day the LORD issued the commands and onward
throughout your generations — 24 and if it was done unintentionally
without the community’s awareness, the entire community is to prepare one
young bull for a burnt offering as a pleasing aroma to the LORD, with its
grain offering and drink offering according to the regulation, and one male
goat as a •sin offering. 25 The priest must then make •atonement for the
entire Israelite community so that they may be forgiven, for the sin was
unintentional. They are to bring their offering, one made by fire to the
LORD, and their sin offering before the LORD for their unintentional sin.
26 The entire Israelite community and the foreigner who resides among
them will be forgiven, since it happened to all the people unintentionally.

27 “If one person sins unintentionally, he is to present a year-old female
goat as a sin offering. 28 The priest must then make atonement before the
LORD on behalf of the person who acts in error sinning unintentionally, and
when he makes atonement for him, he will be forgiven. 29 You are to have
the same law for the person who acts in error, whether he is an Israelite or a
foreigner who lives among you.

30 “But the person who acts defiantly, [J] whether native or foreign
resident, blasphemes the LORD. That person is to be cut off from his people.
31 He will certainly be cut off, because he has despised the LORD’s word and
broken His command; his •guilt remains on him.”

Sabbath Violation

32† While the Israelites were in the wilderness, they found a man
gathering wood on the Sabbath day. 33 Those who found him gathering
wood brought him to Moses, Aaron, and the entire community. 34 They

placed him in custody because it had not been decided what should be done
to him. [35] Then the LORD told Moses, “The man is to be put to death. The
entire community is to stone him outside the camp.” [36] So the entire
community brought him outside the camp and stoned him to death, as the
LORD had commanded Moses.

Tassels for Remembrance

[37†] The LORD said to Moses, [38] “Speak to the Israelites and tell them that
throughout their generations they are to make tassels for the corners of
their garments, and put a blue cord on the tassel at each corner. [39] These
will serve as tassels for you to look at, so that you may remember all the
LORD’s commands and obey them and not become unfaithful by following
your own heart and your own eyes. [40] This way you will remember and
obey all My commands and be holy to your God. [41] I am •Yahweh your
God who brought you out of the land of Egypt to be your God; I am
Yahweh your God.”

NUMBERS

Korah Incites Rebellion

16 [†] Now Korah son of Izhar, son of Kohath, son of Levi, with Dathan
and Abiram, sons of Eliab, and On son of Peleth, sons of Reuben,
took [2] 250 prominent Israelite men who were leaders of the community and
representatives in the assembly, and they rebelled against Moses. [3] They
came together against Moses and Aaron and told them, “You have gone too
far! [A] Everyone in the entire community is holy, and the LORD is among
them. Why then do you exalt yourselves above the LORD’s assembly? ”

[4] When Moses heard this, he fell facedown. [5] Then he said to Korah and
all his followers, “Tomorrow morning the LORD will reveal who belongs to
Him, who is set apart, and the one He will let come near Him. He will let
the one He chooses come near Him. [6] Korah, you and all your followers are
to do this: take firepans, and tomorrow [7] place fire in them and put incense
on them before the LORD. Then the man the LORD chooses will be the one
who is set apart. It is you Levites who have gone too far! ” [B]

[8] Moses also told Korah, “Now listen, Levites! [9] Isn’t it enough for you
that the God of Israel has separated you from the Israelite community to
bring you near to Himself, to perform the work at the LORD’s tabernacle,
and to stand before the community to minister to them? [10] He has brought
you near, and all your fellow Levites who are with you, but you are seeking
the priesthood as well. [11] Therefore, it is you and all your followers who
have conspired against the LORD! As for Aaron, who is he [C] that you should
complain about him? ”

[12†] Moses sent for Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, but they said,
“We will not come! [13] Is it not enough that you brought us up from a land
flowing with milk and honey to kill us in the wilderness? Do you also have
to appoint yourself as ruler over us? [14] Furthermore, you didn’t bring us to a
land flowing with milk and honey or give us an inheritance of fields and
vineyards. Will you gouge out the eyes of these men? We will not come! ”

[15] Then Moses became angry and said to the LORD, “Don’t respect their
offering. I have not taken one donkey from them or mistreated a single one
of them.” [16] So Moses told Korah, “You and all your followers are to appear

before the LORD tomorrow — you, they, and Aaron. 17 Each of you is to
take his firepan, place incense on it, and present his firepan before the
LORD — 250 firepans. You and Aaron are each to present your firepan
also.”

18 Each man took his firepan, placed fire in it, put incense on it, and stood
at the entrance to the tent of meeting along with Moses and Aaron. 19 After
Korah assembled the whole community against them at the entrance to the
tent of meeting, the glory of the LORD appeared to the whole community.
20[†] The LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, 21 “Separate yourselves from this
community so I may consume them instantly.”

22 But Moses and Aaron fell facedown and said, “God, God of the
spirits [D] of all flesh, when one man sins, will You vent Your wrath on the
whole community? ”

23 The LORD replied to Moses, 24 “Tell the community: Get away from
the dwellings of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram.”

25 Moses got up and went to Dathan and Abiram, and the elders of Israel
followed him. 26 He warned the community, “Get away now from the tents
of these wicked men. Don’t touch anything that belongs to them, or you
will be swept away because of all their sins.” 27 So they got away from the
dwellings of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. Meanwhile, Dathan and Abiram
came out and stood at the entrance of their tents with their wives, children,
and infants.

28 Then Moses said, “This is how you will know that the LORD sent me
to do all these things and that it was not of my own will: 29 If these men die
naturally as all people would, and suffer the fate of all, then the LORD has
not sent me. 30 But if the LORD brings about something unprecedented, and
the ground opens its mouth and swallows them along with all that belongs
to them so that they go down alive into •Sheol, then you will know that
these men have despised the LORD.”

31 Just as he finished speaking all these words, the ground beneath them
split open. 32 The earth opened its mouth and swallowed them and their
households, all Korah’s people, and all their possessions. 33 They went
down alive into Sheol with all that belonged to them. The earth closed over
them, and they vanished from the assembly. 34 At their cries, all the people
of Israel who were around them fled because they thought, “The earth may
swallow us too! ” 35 Fire also came out from the LORD and consumed the
250 men who were presenting the incense.

36† Then the LORD spoke to Moses: 37 “Tell Eleazar son of Aaron the
priest to remove the firepans from the burning debris, because they are holy,
and scatter the fire far away. 38 As for the firepans of those who sinned at
the cost of their own lives, make them into hammered sheets as plating for
the altar, for they presented them before the LORD, and the firepans are holy.
They will be a sign to the Israelites.”

39 So Eleazar the priest took the bronze firepans that those who were
burned had presented, and they were hammered into plating for the altar,
40 just as the LORD commanded him through Moses. It was to be a reminder
for the Israelites that no unauthorized person outside the lineage of Aaron
should approach to offer incense before the LORD and become like Korah
and his followers.

41† The next day the entire Israelite community complained about Moses
and Aaron, saying, “You have killed the LORD’s people! ” 42 When the
community assembled against them, Moses and Aaron turned toward the
tent of meeting, and suddenly the cloud covered it, and the LORD’s glory
appeared.

43 Moses and Aaron went to the front of the tent of meeting, 44 and the
LORD said to Moses, 45 “Get away from this community so that I may
consume them instantly.” But they fell facedown.

46 Then Moses told Aaron, “Take your firepan, place fire from the altar in
it, and add incense. Go quickly to the community and make •atonement for

them, because wrath has come from the LORD; the plague has begun.” [47] So
Aaron took his firepan as Moses had ordered, ran into the middle of the
assembly, and saw that the plague had begun among the people. After he
added incense, he made atonement for the people. [48] He stood between the
dead and the living, and the plague was halted. [49] But those who died from
the plague numbered 14,700, in addition to those who died because of the
Korah incident. [50] Aaron then returned to Moses at the entrance to the tent
of meeting, since the plague had been halted.

NUMBERS

Chapter 17 *Aaron's Staff Chosen*

1 The LORD instructed Moses: 2 "Speak to the Israelites and take one staff
from them for each ancestral house, 12 staffs from all the leaders of their
ancestral houses. Write each man's name on his staff. 3 Write Aaron's name
on Levi's staff, because there must be one staff for the head of each
ancestral house. 4 Then place them in the tent of meeting in front of the
•testimony where I meet with you. 5 The staff of the man I choose will
sprout, and I will rid Myself of the Israelites' complaints that they have
been making about you."

6 So Moses spoke to the Israelites, and each of their leaders gave him a
staff, one for each of the leaders of their ancestral houses, 12 staffs in all.
Aaron's staff was among them. 7 Moses placed the staffs before the LORD in
the tent of the testimony.

8 The next day Moses entered the tent of the testimony and saw that
Aaron's staff, representing the house of Levi, had sprouted, formed buds,
blossomed, and produced almonds! 9 Moses then brought out all the staffs
from the LORD's presence to all the Israelites. They saw them, and each man
took his own staff. 10 The LORD told Moses, "Put Aaron's staff back in front
of the testimony to be kept as a sign for the rebels, so that you may put an
end to their complaints before Me, or else they will die." 11 So Moses did as
the LORD commanded him.

12 Then the Israelites declared to Moses, "Look, we're perishing! We're
lost; we're all lost! 13 Anyone who comes near the LORD's tabernacle will
die. Will we all perish? "

NUMBERS

Provision for the Priesthood

18 [†]The LORD said to Aaron, “You, your sons, and your ancestral house
will be responsible for sin against the sanctuary. You and your sons
will be responsible for sin involving your priesthood. 2 But also bring your
relatives with you from the tribe of Levi, your ancestral tribe, so they may
join you and assist you and your sons in front of the tent of the •testimony.
3 They are to perform duties for you and for the whole tent. They must not
come near the sanctuary equipment or the altar; otherwise, both they and
you will die. 4 They are to join you and guard the tent of meeting, doing all
the work at the tent, but no unauthorized person may come near you.

5 “You are to guard the sanctuary and the altar so that wrath may not fall
on the Israelites again. 6 Look, I have selected your fellow Levites from the
Israelites as a gift for you, assigned by the LORD to work at the tent of
meeting. 7 But you and your sons will carry out your priestly
responsibilities for everything concerning the altar and for what is inside the
veil, and you will do that work. I am giving you the work of the priesthood
as a gift, [A] but an unauthorized person who comes near the sanctuary will
be put to death.”

Support for the Priests and Levites

8[†] Then the LORD spoke to Aaron, “Look, I have put you in charge of the
contributions brought to Me. As for all the holy offerings of the Israelites, I
have given them to you and your sons as a portion and a permanent statute.
9 A portion of the holiest offerings kept from the fire will be yours; every
one of their offerings that they give Me, whether the •grain offering, •sin
offering, or •restitution offering will be most holy for you and your sons.
10 You are to eat it as a most holy offering. [B] Every male may eat it; it is to
be holy to you.

11 “The contribution of their gifts also belongs to you. I have given all the
Israelites’ presentation offerings to you and to your sons and daughters as a
permanent statute. Every ceremonially •clean person in your house may eat
it. 12 I am giving you all the best of the fresh olive oil, new wine, and grain,
which the Israelites give to the LORD as their •firstfruits. 13 The firstfruits of

all that is in their land, which they bring to the LORD, belong to you. Every
clean person in your house may eat them.

[14] “Everything in Israel that is permanently dedicated to the LORD
belongs to you. [15] The firstborn of every living thing, man or animal,
presented to the LORD belongs to you. But you must certainly redeem the
firstborn of man, and redeem the firstborn of an •unclean animal. [16] You
will pay the redemption price for a month-old male according to your
assessment: five •shekels of silver by the standard sanctuary shekel, which
is 20 *gerahs*.

[17] “However, you must not redeem the firstborn of an ox, a sheep, or a
goat; they are holy. You are to sprinkle their blood on the altar and burn
their fat as a fire offering for a pleasing aroma to the LORD. [18] But their meat
belongs to you. It belongs to you like the breast of the presentation offering
and the right thigh.

[19] “I give to you and to your sons and daughters all the holy contributions
that the Israelites present to the LORD as a permanent statute. It is a
permanent covenant of salt before the LORD for you as well as your
•offspring.”

[20] The LORD told Aaron, “You will not have an inheritance in their land;
there will be no portion among them for you. I am your portion and your
inheritance among the Israelites.

[21] “Look, I have given the Levites every tenth in Israel as an inheritance
in return for the work they do, the work of the tent of meeting. [22] The
Israelites must never again come near the tent of meeting, or they will incur
•guilt and die. [23] The Levites will do the work of the tent of meeting, and
they will bear the consequences of their sin. The Levites will not receive an
inheritance among the Israelites; this is a permanent statute throughout
your generations. [24] For I have given them the tenth that the Israelites
present to the LORD as a contribution for their inheritance. That is why I told
them that they would not receive an inheritance among the Israelites.”

25 The LORD instructed Moses, 26 “Speak to the Levites and tell them:
When you receive from the Israelites the tenth that I have given you as your
inheritance, you must present part of it as an offering to the LORD — a tenth
of the tenth. 27 Your offering will be credited to you as if it were your grain
from the threshing floor or the full harvest from the winepress. 28 You are to
present an offering to the LORD from every tenth you receive from the
Israelites. Give some of it to Aaron the priest as an offering to the LORD.
29 You must present the entire offering due the LORD from all your gifts. The
best part of the tenth is to be consecrated.

30 “Tell them further: Once you have presented the best part of the tenth,
and it is credited to you Levites as the produce of the threshing floor or the
winepress, 31 then you and your household may eat it anywhere. It is your
wage in return for your work at the tent of meeting. 32 You will not incur
guilt because of it once you have presented the best part of it, but you must
not defile the Israelites’ holy offerings, so that you will not die.”

NUMBERS

Purification Ritual

19 † The LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, [2] “This is the legal statute that
the LORD has commanded: Instruct the Israelites to bring you an
unblemished red cow that has no defect and has never been yoked. [3] Give it
to Eleazar the priest, and he will have it brought outside the camp and
slaughtered in his presence. [4] Eleazar the priest is to take some of its blood
with his finger and sprinkle it seven times toward the front of the tent of
meeting. [5] The cow must be burned in his sight. Its hide, flesh, and blood,
are to be burned along with its dung. [6]† The priest is to take cedar wood,
hyssop, and crimson yarn, and throw them onto the fire where the cow is
burning. [7]† Then the priest must wash his clothes and bathe his body in
water; after that he may enter the camp, but he will remain ceremonially
•unclean until evening. [8] The one who burned the cow must also wash his
clothes and bathe his body in water, and he will remain unclean until
evening.

[9] “A man who is •clean is to gather up the cow’s ashes and deposit them
outside the camp in a ceremonially clean place. The ashes must be kept by
the Israelite community for preparing the water to remove impurity; it is a
•sin offering. [10] Then the one who gathers up the cow’s ashes must wash
his clothes, and he will remain unclean until evening. This is a permanent
statute for the Israelites and for the foreigner who resides among them.

[11]† “The person who touches any human corpse will be unclean for seven
days. [12] He is to purify himself with the water [A] on the third day and the
seventh day; then he will be clean. But if he does not purify himself on the
third and seventh days, he will not be clean. [13] Anyone who touches a body
of a person who has died, and does not purify himself, defiles the tabernacle
of the LORD. That person will be cut off from Israel. He remains unclean
because the water for impurity has not been sprinkled on him, and his
uncleanness is still on him.

ARTICLE

How Can Modern Medicine Relate to the Old Testament? ⇒

14† “This is the law when a person dies in a tent: everyone who enters the
tent and everyone who is already in the tent will be unclean for seven days,
15 and any open container without a lid tied on it is unclean. 16 Anyone in
the open field who touches a person who has been killed by the sword or
has died, or who even touches a human bone, or a grave, will be unclean for
seven days. 17 For the purification of the unclean person, they are to take
some of the ashes of the burnt sin offering, put them in a jar, and add fresh
water to them. 18 A person who is clean is to take hyssop, dip it in the water,
and sprinkle the tent, all the furnishings, and the people who were there. He
is also to sprinkle the one who touched a bone, a grave, a corpse, or a
person who had been killed.

19 “The one who is clean is to sprinkle the unclean person on the third
day and the seventh day. After he purifies the unclean person on the seventh
day, the one being purified must wash his clothes and bathe in water, and he
will be clean by evening. 20 But a person who is unclean and does not
purify himself, that person will be cut off from the assembly because he has
defiled the sanctuary of the Lord. The water for impurity has not been
sprinkled on him; he is unclean. 21 This is a permanent statute for them. The
person who sprinkles the water for impurity is to wash his clothes, and
whoever touches the water for impurity will be unclean until evening.
22 Anything the unclean person touches will become unclean, and anyone
who touches it will be unclean until evening.”

NUMBERS

Water from the Rock

20 [†] The entire Israelite community entered the Wilderness of Zin in the
first month, and they [A] settled in Kadesh. Miriam died and was
buried there.

2[†] There was no water for the community, so they assembled against
Moses and Aaron. 3 The people quarreled with Moses and said, “If only we
had perished when our brothers perished before the LORD. 4 Why have you
brought the LORD’s assembly into this wilderness for us and our livestock to
die here? 5 Why have you led us up from Egypt to bring us to this evil
place? It’s not a place of grain, figs, vines, and pomegranates, and there is
no water to drink! ”

6 Then Moses and Aaron went from the presence of the assembly to the
doorway of the tent of meeting. They fell down with their faces to the
ground, and the glory of the LORD appeared to them. 7 The LORD spoke to
Moses, 8 “Take the staff and assemble the community. You and your
brother Aaron are to speak to the rock while they watch, and it will yield its
water. You will bring out water for them from the rock and provide drink
for the community and their livestock.”

9 So Moses took the staff from the LORD’s presence just as He had
commanded him. 10 Moses and Aaron summoned the assembly in front of
the rock, and Moses said to them, “Listen, you rebels! Must we bring water
out of this rock for you? ” 11 Then Moses raised his hand and struck the
rock twice with his staff, so that a great amount of water gushed out, and
the community and their livestock drank.

12 But the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, “Because you did not trust Me
to show My holiness in the sight of the Israelites, you will not bring this
assembly into the land I have given them.” 13 These are the waters of
Meribah, where the Israelites quarreled with the LORD, and He showed His
holiness to them.

Edom Denies Passage

14† Moses sent messengers from Kadesh to the king of Edom, “This is
what your brother Israel says, ‘You know all the hardships that have
overtaken us. 15 Our fathers went down to Egypt, and we lived in Egypt
many years, but the Egyptians treated us and our fathers badly. 16 When we
cried out to the LORD, He heard our voice, sent an angel, [B] and brought us
out of Egypt. Now look, we are in Kadesh, a city on the border of your
territory. 17 Please let us travel through your land. We won’t travel through
any field or vineyard, or drink any well water. We will travel the King’s
Highway; we won’t turn to the right or the left until we have traveled
through your territory.’ ”

18 But Edom answered him, “You must not travel through our land, or we
will come out and confront you with the sword.”

19 “We will go on the main road,” the Israelites replied to them, “and if
we or our herds drink your water, we will pay its price. There will be no
problem; only let us travel through on foot.”

20 Yet Edom insisted, “You must not travel through.” And they came out
to confront them with a large force of heavily-armed people. [C] 21 Edom
refused to allow Israel to travel through their territory, and Israel turned
away from them.

Aaron’s Death

22† After they set out from Kadesh, the entire Israelite community came
to Mount Hor. 23 The LORD said to Moses and Aaron at Mount Hor on the
border of the land of Edom, 24 “Aaron will be gathered to his people; he
will not enter the land I have given the Israelites, because you both rebelled
against My command at the waters of Meribah. 25 Take Aaron and his son
Eleazar and bring them up Mount Hor. 26 Remove Aaron’s garments and
put them on his son Eleazar. Aaron will be gathered to his people and die
there.”

27 So Moses did as the LORD commanded, and they climbed Mount Hor
in the sight of the whole community. 28 After Moses removed Aaron’s
garments and put them on his son Eleazar, Aaron died there on top of the
mountain. Then Moses and Eleazar came down from the mountain. 29 When
the whole community saw that Aaron had passed away, the entire house of
Israel mourned for him 30 days.

NUMBERS

Canaanite King Defeated

21 [†]When the Canaanite king of Arad, who lived in the •Negev, heard
that Israel was coming on the Atharim road, he fought against Israel
and captured some prisoners. 2 Then Israel made a vow to the LORD, "If You
will deliver this people into our hands, we will •completely destroy their
cities." 3 The LORD listened to Israel's request, the Canaanites were
defeated, and Israel completely destroyed them and their cities. So they
named the place Hormah.

The Bronze Snake

4[†] Then they set out from Mount Hor by way of the •Red Sea to bypass
the land of Edom, but the people [A] became impatient because of the
journey. 5 The people spoke against God and Moses: "Why have you led us
up from Egypt to die in the wilderness? There is no bread or water, and we
detest this wretched food! " 6 Then the LORD sent poisonous snakes among
the people, and they bit them so that many Israelites died.

7 The people then came to Moses and said, "We have sinned by speaking
against the LORD and against you. Intercede with the LORD so that He will
take the snakes away from us." And Moses interceded for the people.

8 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Make a snake image and mount it on a
pole. When anyone who is bitten looks at it, he will recover." 9 So Moses
made a bronze snake and mounted it on a pole. Whenever someone was
bitten, and he looked at the bronze snake, he recovered.

Journey around Moab

10[†] The Israelites set out and camped at Oboth. 11 They set out from
Oboth and camped at Iye-abarim in the wilderness that borders Moab on the
east. 12 From there they went and camped at Zered Valley. 13 They set out
from there and camped on the other side of the Arnon River, in the
wilderness that extends from the Amorite border, because the Arnon was
the Moabite border between Moab and the Amorites. 14 Therefore it is
stated in the Book of the LORD's Wars:

Waheb in Suphah
and the ravines of the Arnon,
15 even the slopes of the ravines
that extend to the site of Ar
and lie along the border of Moab.

16 From there they went to Beer, the well the LORD told Moses about,
“Gather the people so I may give them water.” 17 Then Israel sang this song:

Spring up, well — sing to it!
18 The princes dug the well;
the nobles of the people hollowed it out
with a scepter and with their staffs.

They went from the wilderness to Mattanah, 19 from Mattanah to
Nahaliel, from Nahaliel to Bamoth, 20 from Bamoth to the valley in the
territory of Moab near the Pisgah highlands that overlook the wasteland. [C]

Amorite Kings Defeated

21[†] Israel sent messengers to say to Sihon king of the Amorites: 22 “Let
us travel through your land. We won’t go into the fields or vineyards. We
won’t drink any well water. We will travel the King’s Highway until we
have traveled through your territory.” 23 But Sihon would not let Israel
travel through his territory. Instead, he gathered his whole army and went
out to confront Israel in the wilderness. When he came to Jahaz, he fought
against Israel. 24 Israel struck him with the sword and took possession of his
land from the Arnon to the Jabbok, but only up to the Ammonite border,
because it was fortified.

25 Israel took all the cities and lived in all these Amorite cities, including
Heshbon and all its villages. 26 Heshbon was the city of Sihon king of the
Amorites, who had fought against the former king of Moab and had taken
control of all his land as far as the Arnon. 27[†] Therefore the poets [E] say:

Come to Heshbon, let it be rebuilt;

let the city of Sihon be restored. [F]
28 For fire came out of Heshbon,
a flame from the city of Sihon.
It consumed Ar of Moab,
the lords of Arnon's heights.
29 Woe to you, Moab!
You have been destroyed, people of Chemosh!
He gave up his sons as refugees,
and his daughters into captivity
to Sihon the Amorite king.
30 We threw them down;
Heshbon has been destroyed as far as Dibon.
We caused desolation as far as Nophah,
which reaches as far as Medeba.

31 So Israel lived in the Amorites' land. 32[†] After Moses sent spies to Jazer,
Israel captured its villages and drove out the Amorites who were there.

33 Then they turned and went up the road to Bashan, and Og king of
Bashan came out against them with his whole army to do battle at Edrei.
34 But the LORD said to Moses, "Do not fear him, for I have handed him
over to you along with his whole army and his land. Do to him as you did to
Sihon king of the Amorites, who lived in Heshbon." 35 So they struck him,
his sons, and his whole army until no one was left, [G] and they took
possession of his land.

NUMBERS

Balak Hires Balaam

22 † The Israelites traveled on and camped in the plains of Moab near the Jordan across from Jericho. 2† Now Balak son of Zippor saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites. 3 Moab was terrified of the people because they were numerous, and Moab dreaded the Israelites. 4 So the Moabites said to the elders of Midian, "This horde will devour everything around us like an ox eats up the green plants in the field."

Since Balak son of Zippor was Moab's king at that time, 5 he sent messengers to Balaam son of Beor at Pethor, which is by the Euphrates in the land of his people. Balak said to him: "Look, a people has come out of Egypt; they cover the surface of the land and are living right across from me. 6 Please come and put a curse on these people for me because they are more powerful than I am. I may be able to defeat them and drive them out of the land, for I know that those you bless are blessed and those you curse are cursed."

7 The elders of Moab and Midian departed with fees for •divination in hand. They came to Balaam and reported Balak's words to him. 8 He said to them, "Spend the night here, and I will give you the answer the LORD tells me." So the officials of Moab stayed with Balaam.

9 Then God came to Balaam and asked, "Who are these men with you? "

10 Balaam replied to God, "Balak son of Zippor, king of Moab, sent this message to me: 11 'Look, a people has come out of Egypt, and they cover the surface of the land. Now come and put a curse on them for me. I may be able to fight against them and drive them away.' "

12 Then God said to Balaam, "You are not to go with them. You are not to curse this people, for they are blessed."

13 So Balaam got up the next morning and said to Balak's officials, "Go back to your land, because the LORD has refused to let me go with you."

14 The officials of Moab arose, returned to Balak, and reported, "Balaam refused to come with us."

15† Balak sent officials again who were more numerous and higher in
rank than the others. 16 They came to Balaam and said to him, “This is what
Balak son of Zippor says: ‘Let nothing keep you from coming to me, 17 for
I will greatly honor you and do whatever you ask me. So please come and
put a curse on these people for me! ’ ”

18 But Balaam responded to the servants of Balak, “If Balak were to give
me his house full of silver and gold, I could not go against the command of
the LORD my God to do anything small or great. 19 Please stay here
overnight as the others did, so that I may find out what else the LORD has to
tell me.”

20 God came to Balaam at night and said to him, “Since these men have
come to summon you, get up and go with them, but you must only do what
I tell you.” 21 When he got up in the morning, Balaam saddled his donkey
and went with the officials of Moab.

Balaam’s Donkey and the Angel

22† But God was incensed that Balaam was going, and the Angel of the
LORD took His stand on the path to oppose him. Balaam was riding his
donkey, and his two servants were with him. 23 When the donkey saw the
Angel of the LORD standing on the path with a drawn sword in His hand, she
turned off the path and went into the field. So Balaam hit her to return her
to the path. 24 Then the Angel of the LORD stood in a narrow passage
between the vineyards, with a stone wall on either side. 25 The donkey saw
the Angel of the LORD and pressed herself against the wall, squeezing
Balaam’s foot against it. So he hit her once again. 26 The Angel of the LORD
went ahead and stood in a narrow place where there was no room to turn to
the right or the left. 27 When the donkey saw the Angel of the LORD, she
crouched down under Balaam. So he became furious and beat the donkey
with his stick.

28 Then the LORD opened the donkey’s mouth, and she asked Balaam,
“What have I done to you that you have beaten me these three times? ”

[29] Balaam answered the donkey, “You made me look like a fool. If I had
a sword in my hand, I’d kill you now! ”

[30] But the donkey said, “Am I not the donkey you’ve ridden all your life
until today? Have I ever treated you this way before? ”

“No,” he replied.

[31] Then the LORD opened Balaam’s eyes, and he saw the Angel of the
LORD standing in the path with a drawn sword in His hand. Balaam knelt
and bowed with his face to the ground. [32] The Angel of the LORD asked him,
“Why have you beaten your donkey these three times? Look, I came out to
oppose you, because what you are doing is evil in My sight. [33] The donkey
saw Me and turned away from Me these three times. If she had not turned
away from Me, I would have killed you by now and let her live.”

[34] Balaam said to the Angel of the LORD, “I have sinned, for I did not
know that You were standing in the path to confront me. And now, if it is
evil in Your sight, I will go back.”

[35] Then the Angel of the LORD said to Balaam, “Go with the men, but you
are to say only what I tell you.” So Balaam went with Balak’s officials.

[36] When Balak heard that Balaam was coming, he went out to meet him
at the Moabite city [B] on the Arnon border at the edge of his territory.
[37] Balak asked Balaam, “Did I not send you an urgent summons? Why
didn’t you come to me? Am I really not able to reward you? ”

[38] Balaam said to him, “Look, I have come to you, but can I say anything
I want? I must speak only the message God puts in my mouth.” [39] So
Balaam went with Balak, and they came to Kiriath-huzoth. [40] Balak
sacrificed cattle and sheep, and sent for Balaam and the officials who were
with him.

[41][†] In the morning, Balak took Balaam and brought him to Bamoth-baal.
From there he saw the outskirts of the people’s camp.

NUMBERS

Balaam's Oracles

23 Then Balaam said to Balak, "Build me seven altars here and prepare seven bulls and seven rams for me." 2 So Balak did as Balaam directed, and they offered a bull and a ram on each altar. 3 Balaam said to Balak, "Stay here by your •burnt offering while I am gone. Maybe the LORD will meet with me. I will tell you whatever He reveals to me." So he went to a barren hill.

4 God met with him and Balaam said to Him, "I have arranged seven altars and offered a bull and a ram on each altar." 5 Then the LORD put a message in Balaam's mouth and said, "Return to Balak and say what I tell you."

6 So he returned to Balak, who was standing there by his burnt offering with all the officials of Moab.

Balaam's First Oracle

7 Balaam proclaimed his poem:

Balak brought me from Aram;
the king of Moab, from the eastern mountains:
"Come, put a curse on Jacob for me;
come, denounce Israel! "
8 How can I curse someone God has not cursed?
How can I denounce someone the LORD has not denounced?
9 I see them from the top of rocky cliffs,
and I watch them from the hills.
There is a people living alone;
it does not consider itself among the nations.
10 Who has counted the dust of Jacob
or numbered the dust clouds [A] of Israel?
Let me die the death of the upright;
let the end of my life be like theirs.

11† "What have you done to me? " Balak asked Balaam. "I brought you to curse my enemies, but look, you have only blessed them! "

12 He answered, “Shouldn’t I say exactly what the LORD puts in my mouth? ”

Balaam’s Second Oracle

13 Then Balak said to him, “Please come with me to another place where you can see them. You will only see the outskirts of their camp; you won’t see all of them. From there, put a curse on them for me.”
14† So Balak took him to Lookout Field [B] on top of Pisgah, built seven altars, and offered a bull and a ram on each altar.

15 Balaam said to Balak, “Stay here by your burnt offering while I seek the LORD over there.”

16 The LORD met with Balaam and put a message in his mouth. Then He said, “Return to Balak and say what I tell you.”

17 So he returned to Balak, who was standing there by his burnt offering with the officials of Moab. Balak asked him, “What did the LORD say? ”

18 Balaam proclaimed his poem:

Balak, get up and listen;
son of Zippor, pay attention to what I say!
19 God is not a man who lies,
or a son of man who changes His mind.
Does He speak and not act,
or promise and not fulfill?
20 I have indeed received a command to bless;
since He has blessed, I cannot change it.
21 He considers no disaster for Jacob;
He sees no trouble for Israel. [C]
The LORD their God is with them,
and there is rejoicing over the King among them.
22 God brought them out of Egypt;
He is like the horns of a wild ox for them. [D],

[23] There is no magic curse against Jacob
and no •divination against Israel.
It will now be said about Jacob and Israel,
“What great things God has done! ”
[24] A people rise up like a lioness;
They rouse themselves like a lion.
They will not lie down until they devour the prey
and drink the blood of the slain.

[25] Then Balak told Balaam, “Don’t curse them and don’t bless them! ”

[26] But Balaam answered him, “Didn’t I tell you: Whatever the LORD says, I must do? ”

Balaam’s Third Oracle

[27†] Again Balak said to Balaam, “Please come. I will take you to another place. Maybe it will be agreeable to God that you can put a curse on them for me there.” [28] So Balak took Balaam to the top of Peor, which overlooks the wasteland. [E]

[29] Balaam told Balak, “Build me seven altars here and prepare seven bulls and seven rams for me.” [30] So Balak did as Balaam said and offered a bull and a ram on each altar.

NUMBERS

24 Since Balaam saw that it pleased the LORD to bless Israel, he did not
go to seek omens as on previous occasions, but turned [A] toward the
wilderness. 2 When Balaam looked up and saw Israel encamped tribe by
tribe, the Spirit of God came on him, 3 and he proclaimed his poem:

The •oracle of Balaam son of Beor,
the oracle of the man whose eyes are opened,
4 the oracle of one who hears the sayings of God,
who sees a vision from the •Almighty,
who falls into a trance with his eyes uncovered:
5 How beautiful are your tents, Jacob,
your dwellings, Israel.
6 They stretch out like river valleys, [B]
like gardens beside a stream,
like aloes the LORD has planted,
like cedars beside the water.
7 Water will flow from his buckets,
and his seed will be by abundant water.
His king will be greater than Agag,
and his kingdom will be exalted.
8 God brought him out of Egypt;
He is like [C] the horns of a wild ox for them.
He will feed on enemy nations
and gnaw their bones;
he will strike them with his arrows.
9 He crouches, he lies down like a lion
or a lioness — who dares to rouse him?
Those who bless you will be blessed,
and those who curse you will be cursed.

10† Then Balak became furious with Balaam, struck his hands together,
and said to him, “I summoned you to put a curse on my enemies, but
instead, you have blessed them these three times. 11 Now go to your home!
I said I would reward you richly, but look, the LORD has denied you a
reward.”

[12] Balaam answered Balak, "Didn't I previously tell the messengers you
sent me: [13] If Balak were to give me his house full of silver and gold, I
could not go against the LORD's command, to do anything good or bad of
my own will? I will say whatever the LORD says. [14] Now I am going back
to my people, but first, let me warn you what these people will do to your
people in the future."

Balaam's Fourth Oracle

[15]† Then he proclaimed his poem:

The oracle of Balaam son of Beor,
the oracle of the man whose eyes are opened;
[16] the oracle of one who hears the sayings of God
and has knowledge from the •Most High,
who sees a vision from the Almighty,
who falls into a trance with his eyes uncovered:
[17] I see him, [D] but not now;
I perceive him, [E] but not near.
A star will come from Jacob,
and a scepter will arise from Israel.
He will smash the forehead [F] of Moab
and strike down all the Shethites. [G]
[18] Edom will become a possession;
Seir will become a possession of its enemies,
but Israel will be triumphant.
[19] One who comes from Jacob will rule;
he will destroy the city's survivors.

[20]† Then Balaam saw Amalek and proclaimed his poem:

Amalek was first among the nations,
but his future is destruction.

[21] Next he saw the Kenites and proclaimed his poem:

Your dwelling place is enduring;
your nest is set in the cliffs.
22 Kain will be destroyed
when Asshur takes you captive.

23 Once more he proclaimed his poem:

Ah, who can live when God does this?
24 Ships will come from the coast of Kittim;
they will afflict Asshur and Eber,
but they too will come to destruction.

25† Balaam then arose and went back to his homeland, and Balak also went his way.

NUMBERS

Israel Worships Baal

25 [†]While Israel was staying in the Acacia Grove, [A], the people began to
have sexual relations with the women of Moab. 2 The women invited
them to the sacrifices for their gods, and the people ate and bowed in
worship to their gods. 3 So Israel aligned itself with •Baal of Peor, and the
LORD's anger burned against Israel. 4 The LORD said to Moses, "Take all the
leaders of the people and execute [B] them in broad daylight before the LORD
so that His burning anger may turn away from Israel."

5 So Moses told Israel's judges, "Kill each of the men who aligned
themselves with Baal of Peor."

Phinehas Intervenes

6 An Israelite man came bringing a Midianite woman to his relatives in
the sight of Moses and the whole Israelite community while they were
weeping at the entrance to the tent of meeting. 7 When Phinehas son of
Eleazar, son of Aaron the priest, saw this, he got up from the assembly, took
a spear in his hand, 8 followed the Israelite man into the tent, and drove it
through both the Israelite man and the woman — through her belly. Then
the plague on the Israelites was stopped, 9 but those who died in the plague
numbered 24,000.

10 The LORD spoke to Moses, 11 "Phinehas son of Eleazar, son of Aaron
the priest, has turned back My wrath from the Israelites because he was
zealous among them with My zeal, [C], so that I did not destroy the Israelites
in My zeal. 12 Therefore declare: I grant him My covenant of peace. 13 It
will be a covenant of perpetual priesthood for him and his future
descendants, because he was zealous for his God and made •atonement for
the Israelites."

14 The name of the slain Israelite man, who was struck dead with the
Midianite woman, was Zimri son of Salu, the leader of a Simeonite
ancestral house. 15 The name of the slain Midianite woman was Cozbi, the
daughter of Zur, a tribal head of an ancestral house in Midian.

Vengeance against the Midianites

[16] The LORD told Moses: [17] “Attack the Midianites and strike them dead.
[18] For they attacked you with the treachery that they used against you in the
Peor incident. They did the same in the case involving their sister Cozbi,
daughter of the Midianite leader who was killed the day the plague came at
Peor.”

NUMBERS

The Second Census

26 †After the plague, the LORD said to Moses and Eleazar son of Aaron
the priest, 2 “Take a census of the entire Israelite community by their
ancestral houses of those 20 years old or more who can serve in Israel’s
army.”

3 So Moses and Eleazar the priest said to them in the plains of Moab by
the Jordan across from Jericho, 4† “Take a census of those 20 years old or
more, as the LORD had commanded Moses and the Israelites who came out
of the land of Egypt.”

5† Reuben was the firstborn of Israel.
Reuben’s descendants:
the Hanochite clan from Hanoch;
the Palluite clan from Pallu;
6 the Hezronite clan from Hezron;
the Carmite clan from Carmi.
7 These were the Reubenite clans,
and their registered men numbered 43,730.
8 The son of Pallu was Eliab.
9 The sons of Eliab were Nemuel, Dathan, and Abiram.
(It was Dathan and Abiram, chosen by the community, who fought
against Moses and Aaron; they and Korah’s followers fought against the
LORD. 10 The earth opened its mouth and swallowed them with Korah,
when his followers died and the fire consumed 250 men. They serve as a
warning sign. 11 The sons of Korah, however, did not die.)

12† Simeon’s descendants by their clans:
the Nemuelite clan from Nemuel;
the Jaminite clan from Jamin;
the Jachinite clan from Jachin;
13 the Zerahite clan from Zerah;
the Shaulite clan from Shaul.
14 These were the Simeonite clans, numbering 22,200 men.

15† Gad’s descendants by their clans:
the Zephonite clan from Zephon;
the Haggite clan from Haggi;
the Shunite clan from Shuni;
16† the Oznite clan from Ozni;
the Erite clan from Eri;
17 the Arodite clan from Arod;
the Arelite clan from Areli.
18 These were the Gadite clans numbered by their registered men: 40,500.

19† Judah’s sons included Er and Onan, but they died in the land of
Canaan. 20 Judah’s descendants by their clans:
the Shelanite clan from Shelah;
the Perezite clan from Perez;
the Zerahite clan from Zerah.
21 The descendants of Perez:
the Hezronite clan from Hezron;
the Hamulite clan from Hamul.
22 These were Judah’s clans numbered by their registered men: 76,500.

23† Issachar’s descendants by their clans:
the Tolaite clan from Tola;
the Punite clan from Puvah;
24 the Jashubite clan from Jashub;
the Shimronite clan from Shimron.
25 These were Issachar’s clans numbered by their registered men: 64,300.

26† Zebulun’s descendants by their clans:
the Seredite clan from Sered;
the Elonite clan from Elon;
the Jahleelite clan from Jahleel.
27 These were the Zebulunite clans numbered by their registered
men: 60,500.

28† Joseph's descendants by their clans from Manasseh and Ephraim:
29 Manasseh's descendants:
the Machirite clan from Machir.
Machir fathered Gilead;
the Gileadite clan from Gilead.
30 These were Gilead's descendants:
the Iezerite clan from Iezer;
the Helekite clan from Helek;
31 the Asrielite clan from Asriel;
the Shechemite clan from Shechem;
32 the Shemidaite clan from Shemida;
the Hepherite clan from Hepher;
33 Zelophehad son of Hepher had no sons — only daughters. The names of Zelophehad's daughters were Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah.
34 These were Manasseh's clans, numbered by their registered men: 52,700.
35† These were Ephraim's descendants by their clans:
the Shuthelahite clan from Shuthelah;
the Becherite clan from Becher;
the Tahanite clan from Tahan.
36 These were Shuthelah's descendants:
the Eranite clan from Eran.
37 These were the Ephraimite clans numbered by their registered men: 32,500.
These were Joseph's descendants by their clans.

38† Benjamin's descendants by their clans:
the Belaite clan from Bela;
the Ashbelite clan from Ashbel;
the Ahiramite clan from Ahiram;
39 the Shuphamite clan from Shupham;
the Huphamite clan from Hupham.
40 Bela's descendants from Ard and Naaman:

the Ardite clan from Ard;
the Naamite clan from Naaman.
41 These were the Benjaminite clans numbered by their registered men: 45,600.

42† These were Dan's descendants by their clans:
the Shuhamite clan from Shuham.
These were the clans of Dan by their clans.
43 All the Shuhamite clans numbered by their registered men: 64,400.

44† Asher's descendants by their clans:
the Imnite clan from Imnah;
the Ishvite clan from Ishvi;
the Beriite clan from Beriah.
45 From Beriah's descendants:
the Heberite clan from Heber;
the Malchielite clan from Malchiel.
46 And the name of Asher's daughter was Serah.
47 These were the Asherite clans numbered by their registered men: 53,400.

48† Naphtali's descendants by their clans:
the Jahzeelite clan from Jahzeel;
the Gunite clan from Guni;
49 the Jezerite clan from Jezer;
the Shillemite clan from Shillem.
50 These were the Naphtali clans numbered by their registered men: 45,400.

51† These registered Israelite men numbered 601,730.

52† The LORD spoke to Moses, 53 "The land is to be divided among them
as an inheritance based on the number of names. 54 Increase the inheritance
for a large tribe and decrease it for a small one. Each is to be given its
inheritance according to those who were registered in it. 55 The land must

be divided by lot; they will receive an inheritance according to the names of
their ancestral tribes. 56 Each inheritance will be divided by lot among the
larger and smaller tribes.”

57† These were the Levites registered by their clans:
the Gershonite clan from Gershon;
the Kohathite clan from Kohath;
the Merarite clan from Merari.
58 These were the Levite family groups:
the Libnite clan,
the Hebronite clan,
the Mahlite clan,
the Mushite clan,
and the Korahite clan.

Kohath was the ancestor of Amram. 59 The name of Amram’s wife was
Jochebed, a descendant of Levi, born to Levi in Egypt. She bore to Amram:
Aaron, Moses, and their sister Miriam. 60 Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and
Ithamar were born to Aaron, 61 but Nadab and Abihu died when they
presented unauthorized fire before the Lord. 62 Those registered were
23,000, every male one month old or more; they were not registered among
the other Israelites, because no inheritance was given to them among the
Israelites.

63† These were the ones registered by Moses and Eleazar the priest when
they registered the Israelites on the plains of Moab by the Jordan across
from Jericho. 64 But among them there was not one of those who had been
registered by Moses and Aaron the priest when they registered the Israelites
in the Wilderness of Sinai. 65 For the Lord had said to them that they
would all die in the wilderness. None of them was left except Caleb son of
Jephunneh and Joshua son of Nun.

NUMBERS

A Case of Daughters' Inheritance

27 †The daughters of Zelophehad approached; Zelophehad was the son
of Hepher, son of Gilead, son of Machir, son of Manasseh from the
clans of Manasseh, the son of Joseph. These were the names of his
daughters: Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah. 2 They stood before
Moses, Eleazar the priest, the leaders, and the entire community at the
entrance to the tent of meeting and said, 3 “Our father died in the
wilderness, but he was not among Korah’s followers, who gathered together
against the LORD. Instead, he died because of his own sin, and he had no
sons. 4 Why should the name of our father be taken away from his clan?
Since he had no son, give us property among our father’s brothers.”

5 Moses brought their case before the LORD, 6 and the LORD answered
him, 7 “What Zelophehad’s daughters say is correct. You are to give them
hereditary property among their father’s brothers and transfer their father’s
inheritance to them. 8 Tell the Israelites: When a man dies without having a
son, transfer his inheritance to his daughter. 9 If he has no daughter, give his
inheritance to his brothers. 10 If he has no brothers, give his inheritance to
his father’s brothers. 11 If his father has no brothers, give his inheritance to
the nearest relative of his clan, and he will take possession of it. This is to
be a statutory ordinance for the Israelites as the LORD commanded Moses.”

Joshua Commissioned to Succeed Moses

12† Then the LORD said to Moses, “Go up this mountain of the Abarim
range and see the land that I have given the Israelites. 13 After you have
seen it, you will also be gathered to your people, as Aaron your brother
was. 14 When the community quarreled in the Wilderness of Zin, both of
you rebelled against My command to show My holiness in their sight at the
waters.” Those were the waters of Meribah of Kadesh in the Wilderness of
Zin.

15 So Moses appealed to the LORD, 16 “May the LORD, the God of the
spirits of all flesh, appoint a man over the community 17 who will go out
before them and come back in before them, and who will bring them out

and bring them in, so that the LORD's community won't be like sheep without a shepherd."

18 The LORD replied to Moses, "Take Joshua son of Nun, a man who has the Spirit in him, and lay your hands on him. 19 Have him stand before Eleazar the priest and the whole community, and commission him in their sight. 20 Confer some of your authority on him so that the entire Israelite community will obey him. 21 He will stand before Eleazar who will consult the LORD for him with the decision of the •Urim. He and all the Israelites with him, even the entire community, will go out and come back in at his command."

22 Moses did as the LORD commanded him. He took Joshua, had him stand before Eleazar the priest and the entire community, 23 laid his hands on him, and commissioned him, as the LORD had spoken through Moses.

NUMBERS

Prescribed Offerings

28 † The LORD spoke to Moses, [2] “Command the Israelites and say to them: Be sure to present to Me at its appointed time My offering and My food as My fire offering, a pleasing aroma to Me. [3] And say to them: This is the fire offering you are to present to the LORD:

Daily Offerings

“Each day present two unblemished year-old male lambs as a regular •burnt offering. [4] Offer one lamb in the morning and the other lamb at twilight, [5] along with two quarts [A] of fine flour for a •grain offering mixed with a quart [B] of olive oil from crushed olives. [6] It is a regular burnt offering established at Mount Sinai for a pleasing aroma, a fire offering to the LORD. [7] The •drink offering is to be a quart [C] with each lamb. Pour out the offering of beer to the LORD in the sanctuary area. [8] Offer the second lamb at twilight, along with the same kind of grain offering and drink offering as in the morning. It is a fire offering, a pleasing aroma to the LORD.

Sabbath Offerings

9† “On the Sabbath day present two unblemished year-old male lambs, four quarts [D] of fine flour mixed with oil as a grain offering, and its drink offering. [10] It is the burnt offering for every Sabbath, in addition to the regular burnt offering and its drink offering.

Monthly Offerings

11† “At the beginning of each of your months present a burnt offering to the LORD: two young bulls, one ram, seven male lambs a year old — all unblemished — [12] with six quarts [E] of fine flour mixed with oil as a grain offering for each bull, four quarts [F] of fine flour mixed with oil as a grain offering for the ram, [13] and two quarts [G] of fine flour mixed with oil as a grain offering for each lamb. It is a burnt offering, a pleasing aroma, a fire offering to the LORD. [14] Their drink offerings are to be two quarts [H] of wine with each bull, one and a third quarts [I] with the ram, and one quart [J] with

each male lamb. This is the monthly burnt offering for all the months of the
year. 15 And one male goat is to be offered as a •sin offering to the LORD, in
addition to the regular burnt offering with its drink offering.

Offerings for Passover

16† “The •Passover to the LORD comes in the first month, on the
fourteenth day of the month. 17 On the fifteenth day of this month there will
be a festival; unleavened bread is to be eaten for seven days. 18 On the first
day there is to be a sacred assembly; you are not to do any daily work.
19 Present a fire offering, a burnt offering to the LORD: two young bulls, one
ram, and seven male lambs a year old. Your animals are to be unblemished.
20 The grain offering with them is to be of fine flour mixed with oil; offer
six quarts [K] with each bull and four quarts [L] with the ram. 21 Offer two
quarts [M] with each of the seven lambs 22 and one male goat for a sin
offering to make •atonement for yourselves. 23 Offer these with the morning
burnt offering that is part of the regular burnt offering. 24 You are to offer
the same food each day for seven days as a fire offering, a pleasing aroma
to the LORD. It is to be offered with its drink offering and the regular burnt
offering. 25 On the seventh day you are to hold a sacred assembly; you are
not to do any daily work.

Offerings for the Festival of Weeks

26† “On the day of •firstfruits, you are to hold a sacred assembly when
you present an offering of new grain to the LORD at your Festival of Weeks;
you are not to do any daily work. 27 Present a burnt offering for a pleasing
aroma to the LORD: two young bulls, one ram, and seven male lambs a year
old, 28 with their grain offering of fine flour mixed with oil, six quarts [N]
with each bull, four quarts [O] with the ram, 29 and two quarts [P] with each of
the seven lambs, 30 and one male goat to make atonement for yourselves.
31 Offer them with their drink offerings in addition to the regular burnt
offering and its grain offering. Your animals are to be unblemished.

NUMBERS

Festival of Trumpets Offerings

29 †“You are to hold a sacred assembly in the seventh month, on the first
day of the month, and you are not to do any daily work. This will be
a day of joyful shouting [A] for you. 2 Offer a •burnt offering as a pleasing
aroma to the LORD: one young bull, one ram, seven male lambs a year
old — all unblemished — 3 with their •grain offering of fine flour mixed
with oil, six quarts [B] with the bull, four quarts [C] with the ram, 4 and two
quarts [D] with each of the seven male lambs. 5 Also offer one male goat as a
•sin offering to make •atonement for yourselves. 6 These are in addition to
the monthly and regular burnt offerings with their prescribed grain offerings
and •drink offerings. They are a pleasing aroma, a fire offering to the LORD.

Offerings for the Day of Atonement

7† “You are to hold a sacred assembly on the tenth day of this seventh
month and practice self-denial; you must not do any work. 8 Present a burnt
offering to the LORD, a pleasing aroma: one young bull, one ram, and seven
male lambs a year old. All your animals are to be unblemished. 9 Their
grain offering is to be of fine flour mixed with oil, six quarts [E] with the bull,
four quarts [F] with the ram, 10 and two quarts [G] with each of the seven
lambs. 11 Offer one male goat for a sin offering. The regular burnt offering
with its grain offering and drink offerings are in addition to the sin offering
of atonement.

Offerings for the Festival of Booths

12† “You are to hold a sacred assembly on the fifteenth day of the seventh
month; you must not do any daily work. You are to celebrate a seven-day
festival for the LORD. 13 Present a burnt offering, a fire offering as a pleasing
aroma to the LORD: 13 young bulls, two rams, and 14 male lambs a year old.
They are to be unblemished. 14 Their grain offering is to be of fine flour
mixed with oil, six quarts [H] with each of the 13 bulls, four quarts [I] with
each of the two rams, 15 and two quarts [J] with each of the 14 lambs. 16 Also
offer one male goat as a sin offering. These are in addition to the regular
burnt offering with its grain and drink offerings.

[17] “On the second day present 12 young bulls, two rams, and 14 male
lambs a year old — all unblemished — [18] with their grain and drink
offerings for the bulls, rams, and lambs, in proportion to their number.
[19] Also offer one male goat as a sin offering. These are in addition to the
regular burnt offering with its grain and drink offerings.

[20] “On the third day present 11 bulls, two rams, 14 male lambs a year
old — all unblemished — [21] with their grain and drink offerings for the
bulls, rams, and lambs, in proportion to their number. [22] Also offer one male
goat as a sin offering. These are in addition to the regular burnt offering
with its grain and drink offerings.

[23] “On the fourth day present 10 bulls, two rams, 14 male lambs a year
old — all unblemished — [24] with their grain and drink offerings for the
bulls, rams, and lambs, in proportion to their number. [25] Also offer one male
goat as a sin offering. These are in addition to the regular burnt offering
with its grain and drink offerings.

[26] “On the fifth day present nine bulls, two rams, 14 male lambs a year
old — all unblemished — [27] with their grain and drink offerings for the
bulls, rams, and lambs, in proportion to their number. [28] Also offer one male
goat as a sin offering. These are in addition to the regular burnt offering
with its grain and drink offerings.

[29] “On the sixth day present eight bulls, two rams, 14 male lambs a year
old — all unblemished — [30] with their grain and drink offerings for the
bulls, rams, and lambs, in proportion to their number. [31] Also offer one male
goat as a sin offering. These are in addition to the regular burnt offering
with its grain and drink offerings.

[32] “On the seventh day present seven bulls, two rams, and 14 male lambs
a year old — all unblemished — [33] with their grain and drink offerings for
the bulls, rams, and lambs, in proportion to their number. [34] Also offer one
male goat as a sin offering. These are in addition to the regular burnt
offering with its grain and drink offerings.

35 “On the eighth day you are to hold a solemn assembly; you are not to
do any daily work. 36 Present a burnt offering, a fire offering as a pleasing
aroma to the LORD: one bull, one ram, seven male lambs a year old — all
unblemished — 37 with their grain and drink offerings for the bulls, rams,
and lambs, in proportion to their number. 38 Also offer one male goat as a
sin offering. These are in addition to the regular burnt offering with its grain
and drink offerings.

39† “You must offer these to the LORD at your appointed times in addition
to your vow and freewill offerings, whether burnt, grain, drink, or
•fellowship offerings.” 40† So Moses told the Israelites everything the LORD
had commanded him.

NUMBERS

Regulations about Vows

30 [†]Moses told the leaders of the Israelite tribes, “This is what the LORD
has commanded: [2] When a man makes a vow to the LORD or swears
an oath to put himself under an obligation, he must not break his word; he
must do whatever he has promised.

[3] “When a woman in her father’s house during her youth makes a vow to
the LORD or puts herself under an obligation, [4] and her father hears about
her vow or the obligation she put herself under, and he says nothing to her,
all her vows and every obligation she put herself under are binding. [5] But if
her father prohibits her on the day he hears about it, none of her vows and
none of the obligations she put herself under are binding. The LORD will
absolve her because her father has prohibited her.

[6] “If a woman marries while her vows or the rash commitment she
herself made are binding, [7] and her husband hears about it and says nothing
to her when he finds out, her vows are binding, and the obligations she put
herself under are binding. [8] But if her husband prohibits her when he hears
about it, he will cancel her vow that is binding or the rash commitment she
herself made, and the LORD will forgive her.

[9] “Every vow a widow or divorced woman puts herself under is binding
on her.

[10] “If a woman in her husband’s house has made a vow or put herself
under an obligation with an oath, [11] and her husband hears about it, says
nothing to her, and does not prohibit her, all her vows are binding, and
every obligation she put herself under is binding. [12] But if her husband
cancels them on the day he hears about it, nothing that came from her lips,
whether her vows or her obligation, is binding. Her husband has canceled
them, and the LORD will absolve her. [13] Her husband may confirm or cancel
any vow or any sworn obligation to deny herself. [14] If her husband says
nothing at all to her from day to day, he confirms all her vows and
obligations, which are binding. He has confirmed them because he said
nothing to her when he heard about them. [15] But if he cancels them after he
hears about them, he will be responsible for her commitment.” [A]

16 These are the statutes that the LORD commanded Moses concerning the
relationship between a man and his wife, or between a father and his
daughter in his house during her youth.

NUMBERS

War with Midian

31 † The LORD spoke to Moses, 2 “Execute vengeance for the Israelites
against the Midianites. After that, you will be gathered to your
people.”

3† So Moses spoke to the people, “Equip some of your men for war. They
will go against Midian to inflict the LORD’s vengeance on them. 4 Send
1,000 men to war from each Israelite tribe.” 5 So 1,000 were recruited from
each Israelite tribe out of the thousands [A] in Israel — 12,000 equipped for
war. 6† Moses sent 1,000 from each tribe to war. They went with Phinehas
son of Eleazar the priest, in whose care were the holy objects and signal
trumpets.

7 They waged war against Midian, as the LORD had commanded Moses,
and killed every male. 8† Along with the others slain by them, they killed
the Midianite kings — Evi, Rekem, Zur, Hur, and Reba, the five kings of
Midian. They also killed Balaam son of Beor with the sword. 9 The
Israelites took the Midianite women and their children captive, and they
plundered all their cattle, flocks, and property. 10 Then they burned all the
cities where the Midianites lived, as well as all their encampments, 11 and
took away all the spoils of war and the captives, both man and beast.
12 They brought the prisoners, animals, and spoils of war to Moses, Eleazar
the priest, and the Israelite community at the camp on the plains of Moab by
the Jordan across from Jericho.

13† Moses, Eleazar the priest, and all the leaders of the community went
to meet them outside the camp. 14 But Moses became furious with the
officers, the commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds, who
were returning from the military campaign. 15 “Have you let every female
live? ” he asked them. 16 “Yet they are the ones who, at Balaam’s advice,
incited the Israelites to unfaithfulness against the LORD in the Peor incident,
so that the plague came against the LORD’s community. 17 So now, kill all
the male children and kill every woman who has had sexual relations with a
man, 18 but keep alive for yourselves all the young females who have not
had sexual relations.

19 “You are to remain outside the camp for seven days. All of you and
your prisoners who have killed a person or touched the dead are to purify
yourselves on the third day and the seventh day. 20 Also purify everything:
garments, leather goods, things made of goat hair, and every article of
wood.”

21 Then Eleazar the priest said to the soldiers who had gone to battle,
“This is the legal statute the LORD commanded Moses: 22 Only the gold,
silver, bronze, iron, tin, and lead — 23 everything that can withstand
fire — you are to pass through fire, and it will be •clean. It must still be
purified with the purification water. Anything that cannot withstand fire,
pass through the water. 24 On the seventh day wash your clothes, and you
will be clean. After that you may enter the camp.”

25 The LORD told Moses, 26 “You, Eleazar the priest, and the family
leaders of the community are to take a count of what was captured, man and
beast. 27 Then divide the captives between the troops who went out to war
and the entire community. 28 Set aside a tribute for the LORD from what
belongs to the fighting men who went out to war: one out of every 500
humans, cattle, donkeys, sheep, and goats. 29 Take the tribute from their half
and give it to Eleazar the priest as a contribution to the LORD. 30 From the
Israelites’ half, take one out of every 50 from the people, cattle, donkeys,
sheep, and goats, all the livestock, and give them to the Levites who
perform the duties of [B] the LORD’s tabernacle.”

31 So Moses and Eleazar the priest did as the LORD commanded Moses.
32 The captives remaining from the plunder the army had taken totaled:

675,000 sheep and goats,
33 72,000 cattle,
34 61,000 donkeys,
35 and 32,000 people, all the females who had not had sexual relations
with a man.

[36] The half portion for those who went out to war numbered:

337,500 sheep and goats,
[37] and the tribute to the LORD was 675
from the sheep and goats;
[38] from the 36,000 cattle,
the tribute to the LORD was 72;
[39] from the 30,500 donkeys,
the tribute to the LORD was 61;
[40] and from the 16,000 people,
the tribute to the LORD was 32 people.

[41] Moses gave the tribute to Eleazar the priest as a contribution for the LORD, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

[42] From the Israelites' half, which Moses separated from the men who fought, [43] the community's half was:

337,500 sheep and goats,
[44] 36,000 cattle,
[45] 30,500 donkeys,
[46] and 16,000 people.

[47] Moses took one out of every 50, selected from the people and the livestock of the Israelites' half. He gave them to the Levites who perform the duties of the LORD's tabernacle, as the LORD had commanded him.

[48]† The officers who were over the thousands of the army, the commanders of thousands and of hundreds, approached Moses [49] and told him, "Your servants have taken a census of the fighting men under our command, and not one of us is missing. [50] So we have presented to the LORD an offering of the gold articles each man found — armlets, bracelets, rings, earrings, and necklaces — to make •atonement for ourselves before the LORD."

[51] Moses and Eleazar the priest received from them all the articles made
out of gold. [52] All the gold of the contribution they offered to the LORD,
from the commanders of thousands and of hundreds, was 420 pounds. [C]
[53] Each of the soldiers had taken plunder for himself. [54] Moses and Eleazar
the priest received the gold from the commanders of thousands and of
hundreds and brought it into the tent of meeting as a memorial for the
Israelites before the LORD.

NUMBERS

Transjordan Settlements

32 [†] The Reubenites and Gadites had a very large number of livestock.
When they surveyed the lands of Jazer and Gilead, they saw that the
region was a good one for livestock. 2 So the Gadites and Reubenites came
to Moses, Eleazar the priest, and the leaders of the community and said:
3 “The territory of Ataroth, Dibon, Jazer, Nimrah, Heshbon, Elealeh,
Sebam, Nebo, and Beon, 4 which the LORD struck down before the
community of Israel, is good land for livestock, and your servants own
livestock.” 5 They said, “If we have found favor in your sight, let this land
be given to your servants as a possession. Don’t make us cross the Jordan.”

6[†] But Moses asked the Gadites and Reubenites, “Should your brothers
go to war while you stay here? 7 Why are you discouraging [A] the Israelites
from crossing into the land the LORD has given them? 8 That’s what your
fathers did when I sent them from Kadesh-barnea to see the land. 9 After
they went up as far as Eshcol Valley and saw the land, they discouraged the
Israelites from entering the land the LORD had given them. 10 So the LORD’s
anger burned that day, and He swore an oath: 11 ‘Because they did not
follow Me completely, none of the men 20 years old or more who came up
from Egypt will see the land I swore to give Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob —
12 none except Caleb son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite and Joshua son of
Nun, because they did follow the LORD completely.’ 13 The LORD’s anger
burned against Israel, and He made them wander in the wilderness 40 years
until the whole generation that had done what was evil in the LORD’s sight
was gone. 14 And here you, a brood of sinners, stand in your fathers’ place
adding even more to the LORD’s burning anger against Israel. 15 If you turn
back from following Him, He will once again leave this people in the
wilderness, and you will destroy all of them.”

16[†] Then they approached him and said, “We want to build sheepfolds
here for our livestock and cities for our dependents. 17 But we will arm
ourselves and be ready to go ahead of the Israelites until we have brought
them into their place. Meanwhile, our dependents will remain in the
fortified cities because of the inhabitants of the land. 18 We will not return
to our homes until each of the Israelites has taken possession of his

inheritance. 19 Yet we will not have an inheritance with them across the
Jordan and beyond, because our inheritance will be across the Jordan to the
east.”

20† Moses replied to them, “If you do this — if you arm yourselves for
battle before the LORD, 21 and every one of your armed men crosses the
Jordan before the LORD until He has driven His enemies from His presence,
22 and the land is subdued before the LORD — afterward you may return and
be free from obligation to the LORD and to Israel. And this land will belong
to you as a possession before the LORD. 23 But if you don’t do this, you will
certainly sin against the LORD; be sure your sin will catch up with you.
24 Build cities for your dependents and folds for your flocks, but do what
you have promised.”

25† The Gadites and Reubenites answered Moses, “Your servants will do
just as my lord commands. 26 Our little children, wives, livestock, and all
our animals will remain here in the cities of Gilead, 27 but your servants are
equipped for war before the LORD and will go across to the battle as my lord
orders.”

28† So Moses gave orders about them to Eleazar the priest, Joshua son of
Nun, and the family leaders of the Israelite tribes. 29 Moses told them, “If
the Gadites and Reubenites cross the Jordan with you, every man in battle
formation before the LORD, and the land is subdued before you, you are to
give them the land of Gilead as a possession. 30 But if they don’t go across
with you in battle formation, they must accept land in Canaan with you.”

31 The Gadites and Reubenites replied, “What the LORD has spoken to
your servants is what we will do. 32 We will cross over in battle formation
before the LORD into the land of Canaan, but we will keep our hereditary
possession across the Jordan.”

33† So Moses gave them — the Gadites, Reubenites, and half the tribe of
Manasseh son of Joseph — the kingdom of Sihon king of the Amorites and
the kingdom of Og king of Bashan, the land including its cities with the

territories surrounding them. 34 The Gadites rebuilt Dibon, Ataroth, Aroer,
35 Atroth-shophan, Jazer, Jogbehah, 36 Beth-nimrah, and Beth-haran as
fortified cities, and built sheepfolds. 37 The Reubenites rebuilt Heshbon,
Elealeh, Kiriathaim, 38 as well as Nebo and Baal-meon (whose names were
changed), and Sibmah. They gave names to the cities they rebuilt.

39[†] The descendants of Machir son of Manasseh went to Gilead, captured
it, and drove out the Amorites who were there. 40 So Moses gave Gilead to
the clan of Machir son of Manasseh, and they settled in it. 41 Jair, a
descendant of Manasseh, went and captured their villages, which he
renamed Jair’s Villages.[B] 42 Nobah went and captured Kenath with its
villages and called it Nobah after his own name.

NUMBERS

Wilderness Travels Reviewed

33 †These were the stages of the Israelites' journey when they went out
of the land of Egypt by their military divisions under the leadership of
Moses and Aaron. 2 At the LORD's command, Moses wrote down the
starting points for the stages of their journey; these are the stages listed by
their starting points:

3† They departed from Rameses in the first month, on the fifteenth day of
the month. On the day after the •Passover the Israelites went out
triumphantly [A], in the sight of all the Egyptians. 4 Meanwhile, the
Egyptians were burying every firstborn male the LORD had struck down
among them, for the LORD had executed judgment against their gods.
5 The Israelites departed from Rameses and camped at Succoth.
6 They departed from Succoth and camped at Etham, which is on the
edge of the wilderness.
7 They departed from Etham and turned back to Pi-hahiroth, which faces
Baal-zephon, and they camped before Migdol.
8 They departed from Pi-hahiroth and crossed through the middle of the
sea into the wilderness. They took a three-day journey into the
Wilderness of Etham and camped at Marah.
9 They departed from Marah and came to Elim. There were 12 springs of
water and 70 date palms at Elim, so they camped there.
10 They departed from Elim and camped by the •Red Sea.
11 They departed from the Red Sea and camped in the Wilderness of Sin.
12 They departed from the Wilderness of Sin and camped in Dophkah.
13 They departed from Dophkah and camped at Alush.
14 They departed from Alush and camped at Rephidim, where there was
no water for the people to drink.
15 They departed from Rephidim and camped in the Wilderness of Sinai.
16 They departed from the Wilderness of Sinai and camped at Kibroth-
hattaavah.
17 They departed from Kibroth-hattaavah and camped at Hazeroth.
18 They departed from Hazeroth and camped at Rithmah.
19 They departed from Rithmah and camped at Rimmon-perez.

[20] They departed from Rimmon-perez and camped at Libnah.
[21] They departed from Libnah and camped at Rissah.
[22] They departed from Rissah and camped at Kehelathah.
[23] They departed from Kehelathah and camped at Mount Shepher.
[24] They departed from Mount Shepher and camped at Haradah.
[25] They departed from Haradah and camped at Makheloth.
[26] They departed from Makheloth and camped at Tahath.
[27] They departed from Tahath and camped at Terah.
[28] They departed from Terah and camped at Mithkah.
[29] They departed from Mithkah and camped at Hashmonah.
[30] They departed from Hashmonah and camped at Moseroth.
[31] They departed from Moseroth and camped at Bene-jaakan.
[32] They departed from Bene-jaakan and camped at Hor-haggidgad.
[33] They departed from Hor-haggidgad and camped at Jotbathah.
[34] They departed from Jotbathah and camped at Abronah.
[35] They departed from Abronah and camped at Ezion-geber.
[36] They departed from Ezion-geber and camped in the Wilderness of Zin (that is, Kadesh).
[37] They departed from Kadesh and camped at Mount Hor on the edge of
the land of Edom. [38] At the LORD's command, Aaron the priest climbed
Mount Hor and died there on the first day of the fifth month in the
fortieth year after the Israelites went out of the land of Egypt. [39] Aaron
was 123 years old when he died on Mount Hor. [40] At that time the
Canaanite king of Arad, who lived in the •Negev in the land of Canaan,
heard the Israelites were coming.
[41] They departed from Mount Hor and camped at Zalmonah.
[42] They departed from Zalmonah and camped at Punon.
[43] They departed from Punon and camped at Oboth.
[44] They departed from Oboth and camped at Iye-abarim on the border of Moab.
[45] They departed from Iyim and camped at Dibon-gad.
[46] They departed from Dibon-gad and camped at Almon-diblathaim.
[47] They departed from Almon-diblathaim and camped in the Abarim

range facing Nebo.
[48] They departed from the Abarim range and camped on the plains of
Moab by the Jordan across from Jericho. [49] They camped by the Jordan
from Beth-jeshimoth to the Acacia Meadow [B] on the plains of Moab.

Instructions for Occupying Canaan

[50†] The LORD spoke to Moses in the plains of Moab by the Jordan across
from Jericho, [51] "Tell the Israelites: When you cross the Jordan into the land
of Canaan, [52] you must drive out all the inhabitants of the land before you,
destroy all their stone images and cast images, and demolish all their •high
places. [53] You are to take possession of the land and settle in it because I
have given you the land to possess. [54] You are to receive the land as an
inheritance by lot according to your clans. Increase the inheritance for a
large clan and decrease it for a small one. Whatever place the lot indicates
for someone will be his. You will receive an inheritance according to your
ancestral tribes. [55†] But if you don't drive out the inhabitants of the land
before you, those you allow to remain will become thorns in your eyes and
in your sides; they will harass you in the land where you will live. [56] And
what I had planned to do to them, I will do to you."

NUMBERS

Boundaries of the Promised Land

34 [†]The Lord spoke to Moses, 2 “Command the Israelites and say to them: When you enter the land of Canaan, it will be allotted to you as an inheritance [A] with these borders:

> 3[†] Your southern side will be from the Wilderness of Zin along the boundary of Edom. Your southern border on the east will begin at the east end of the Dead Sea. 4 Your border will turn south of the Ascent of Akrabbim, [B] proceed to Zin, and end south of Kadesh-barnea. It will go to Hazar-addar and proceed to Azmon. 5 The border will turn from Azmon to the Brook of Egypt, where it will end at the Mediterranean Sea.
>
> 6 Your western border will be the coastline of the Mediterranean Sea; this will be your western border.
>
> 7 This will be your northern border: From the Mediterranean Sea draw a line to Mount Hor; 8 from Mount Hor draw a line to the entrance of Hamath, [C] and the border will reach Zedad. 9 Then the border will go to Ziphron and end at Hazar-enan. This will be your northern border.
>
> 10 For your eastern border, draw a line from Hazar-enan to Shepham. 11 The border will go down from Shepham to Riblah east of Ain. It will continue down and reach the eastern slope of the Sea of Chinnereth. 12 Then the border will go down to the Jordan and end at the Dead Sea. This will be your land defined by its borders on all sides.”

13 So Moses commanded the Israelites, “This is the land you are to receive by lot as an inheritance, which the Lord commanded to be given to the nine and a half tribes. 14 For the tribe of the Reubenites and the tribe of the Gadites have received their inheritance according to their ancestral houses, and half the tribe of Manasseh has received its inheritance. 15 The two and a half tribes have received their inheritance across the Jordan from Jericho, eastward toward the sunrise.”

Leaders for Distributing the Land

[16]† The LORD spoke to Moses, [17] "These are the names of the men who
are to distribute the land as an inheritance for you: Eleazar the priest and
Joshua son of Nun. [18] Take one leader from each tribe to distribute the land.
[19] These are the names of the men:

Caleb son of Jephunneh from the tribe of Judah;
[20] Shemuel son of Ammihud from the tribe of Simeon;
[21] Elidad son of Chislon from the tribe of Benjamin;
[22] Bukki son of Jogli, a leader from the tribe of Dan;
[23] from the sons of Joseph:
Hanniel son of Ephod, a leader from the tribe of Manasseh,
[24] Kemuel son of Shiphtan, a leader from the tribe of Ephraim;
[25] Eli-zaphan son of Parnach, a leader from the tribe of Zebulun;
[26] Paltiel son of Azzan, a leader from the tribe of Issachar;
[27] Ahihud son of Shelomi, a leader from the tribe of Asher;
[28] Pedahel son of Ammihud, a leader from the tribe of Naphtali."

[29] These are the ones the LORD commanded to distribute the inheritance to
the Israelites in the land of Canaan.

Cities for the Levites

35 †The LORD again spoke to Moses in the plains of Moab by the Jordan
across from Jericho: 2 “Command the Israelites to give cities out of
their hereditary property for the Levites to live in and pastureland around
the cities. 3 The cities will be for them to live in, and their pasturelands will
be for their herds, flocks, and all their other animals. 4† The pasturelands of
the cities you are to give the Levites will extend from the city wall 500
yards [A] on every side. 5 Measure 1,000 yards [B] outside the city for the east
side, 1,000 yards [C] for the south side, 1,000 yards [D] for the west side, and
1,000 yards [E] for the north side, with the city in the center. This will belong
to them as pasturelands for the cities.

6 “The cities you give the Levites will include six cities of refuge, which
you must provide so that the one who kills someone may flee there; in
addition to these, give 42 other cities. 7 The total number of cities you give
the Levites will be 48, along with their pasturelands. 8 Of the cities that you
give from the Israelites’ territory, you should take more from a larger tribe
and less from a smaller one. Each tribe is to give some of its cities to the
Levites in proportion to the inheritance it receives.”

Cities of Refuge

9† The LORD said to Moses, 10 “Speak to the Israelites and tell them:
When you cross the Jordan into the land of Canaan, 11 designate cities to
serve as cities of refuge for you, so that a person who kills someone
unintentionally may flee there. 12 You will have the cities as a refuge from
the avenger, so that the one who kills someone will not die until he stands
trial before the assembly. 13 The cities you select will be your six cities of
refuge. 14 Select three cities across the Jordan and three cities in the land of
Canaan to be cities of refuge. 15† These six cities will serve as a refuge for
the Israelites and for the foreigner or temporary resident among them, so
that anyone who kills a person unintentionally may flee there.

16 “If anyone strikes a person with an iron object and death results, he is a
murderer; the murderer must be put to death. 17 If a man has in his hand a
stone capable of causing death and strikes another person and he dies, the

murderer must be put to death. 18 If a man has in his hand a wooden object
capable of causing death and strikes another person and he dies, the
murderer must be put to death. 19 The avenger of blood himself is to kill the
murderer; when he finds him, he is to kill him. 20 Likewise, if anyone in
hatred pushes a person or throws an object at him with malicious intent and
he dies, 21 or if in hostility he strikes him with his hand and he dies, the one
who struck him must be put to death; he is a murderer. The avenger of
blood is to kill the murderer when he finds him.

22 “But if anyone suddenly pushes a person without hostility or throws
any object at him without malicious intent 23 or without looking drops a
stone that could kill a person and he dies, but he was not his enemy and
wasn’t trying to harm him, 24 the assembly is to judge between the slayer
and the avenger of blood according to these ordinances. 25 The assembly is
to protect the one who kills someone from the hand of the avenger of blood.
Then the assembly will return him to the city of refuge he fled to, and he
must live there until the death of the high priest who was anointed with the
holy oil.

26 “If the one who kills someone ever goes outside the border of the city
of refuge he fled to, 27 and the avenger of blood finds him outside the
border of his city of refuge and kills him, the avenger will not be •guilty of
bloodshed, 28 for the one who killed a person was supposed to live in his
city of refuge until the death of the high priest. Only after the death of the
high priest may the one who has killed a person return to the land he
possesses. 29 These instructions will be a statutory ordinance for you
throughout your generations wherever you live.

30† “If anyone kills a person, the murderer is to be put to death based on
the word of witnesses. But no one is to be put to death based on the
testimony of one witness. 31 You are not to accept a ransom for the life of a
murderer who is guilty of killing someone; he must be put to death.
32† Neither should you accept a ransom for the person who flees to his city
of refuge, allowing him to return and live in the land before the death of the
high priest.

33 “Do not defile the land where you are, for bloodshed defiles the land,
and there can be no •atonement for the land because of the blood that is
shed on it, except by the blood of the person who shed it. 34 Do not make
the land •unclean where you live and where I reside; for I, •Yahweh, reside
among the Israelites.”

NUMBERS

The Inheritance of Zelophehad’s Daughters

36 †The family leaders from the clan of the descendants of Gilead — the
son of Machir, son of Manasseh — who were from the clans of the
sons of Joseph, approached and addressed Moses and the leaders who were
over the Israelite families. 2 They said, "•Yahweh commanded my lord to
give the land as an inheritance by lot to the Israelites. My lord was further
commanded by Yahweh to give our brother Zelophehad's inheritance to his
daughters. 3† If they marry any of the men from the other Israelite tribes,
their inheritance will be taken away from our fathers' inheritance and added
to that of the tribe into which they marry. Therefore, part of our allotted
inheritance would be taken away. 4 When the Jubilee comes for the
Israelites, their inheritance will be added to that of the tribe into which they
marry, and their inheritance will be taken away from the inheritance of our
ancestral tribe."

5† So Moses commanded the Israelites at the word of the LORD, "What
the tribe of Joseph's descendants says is right. 6 This is what the LORD has
commanded concerning Zelophehad's daughters: They may marry anyone
they like provided they marry within a clan of their ancestral tribe. 7 An
inheritance belonging to the Israelites must not transfer from tribe to tribe,
because each of the Israelites is to retain the inheritance of his ancestral
tribe. 8 Any daughter who possesses an inheritance from an Israelite tribe
must marry someone from the clan of her ancestral tribe, so that each of the
Israelites will possess the inheritance of his fathers. 9 No inheritance is to
transfer from one tribe to another, because each of the Israelite tribes is to
retain its inheritance."

10 The daughters of Zelophehad did as the LORD commanded Moses.
11 Mahlah, Tirzah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Noah, the daughters of Zelophehad,
married cousins on their father's side. 12 They married men from the clans
of the descendants of Manasseh son of Joseph, and their inheritance
remained within the tribe of their father's clan.

13† These are the commands and ordinances the LORD commanded the
Israelites through Moses in the plains of Moab by the Jordan across from
Jericho.

DEUTERONOMY

Introduction to Deuteronomy

DEUTERONOMY

Introduction

1 [†]These are the words Moses spoke to all Israel across the Jordan in the
wilderness, in the •Arabah opposite Suph, between Paran and Tophel,
Laban, Hazeroth, and Di-zahab. 2 It is an eleven-day journey from Horeb to
Kadesh-barnea by way of Mount Seir. 3 In the fortieth year, in the eleventh
month, on the first of the month, Moses told the Israelites everything the
LORD had commanded him to say to them. 4 This was after he had defeated
Sihon king of the Amorites, who lived in Heshbon, and Og king of Bashan,
who lived in Ashtaroth, at Edrei. 5[†] Across the Jordan in the land of Moab,
Moses began to explain this law, saying:

Departure from Horeb

6[†] "The LORD our God spoke to us at Horeb: 'You have stayed at this
mountain long enough. 7 Resume your journey and go to the hill country of
the Amorites and their neighbors in the Arabah, the hill country, the Judean
foothills, [A] the •Negev and the sea coast — to the land of the Canaanites
and to Lebanon as far as the Euphrates River. [B] 8 See, I have set the land
before you. Enter and take possession of the land the LORD swore to give to
your fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and their future descendants.'

Leaders for the Tribes

9 "I said to you at that time: I can't bear the responsibility for you on my
own. 10[†] The LORD your God has so multiplied you that today you are as
numerous as the stars of the sky. 11 May •Yahweh, the God of your fathers,
increase you a thousand times more, and bless you as He promised you.
12 But how can I bear your troubles, burdens, and disputes by myself?
13 Appoint for yourselves wise, understanding, and respected men from
each of your tribes, and I will make them your leaders.

14 "You replied to me, 'What you propose to do is good.'

15 "So I took the leaders of your tribes, wise and respected men, and set
them over you as leaders: officials for thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens,
and officers for your tribes. 16 I commanded your judges at that time: Hear

the cases between your brothers, and judge rightly between a man and his brother or a foreign resident. [17] Do not show partiality when deciding a case; listen to small and great alike. Do not be intimidated by anyone, for judgment belongs to God. Bring me any case too difficult for you, and I will hear it. [18] At that time I commanded you about all the things you were to do.

Israel's Disobedience at Kadesh-barnea

[19] "We then set out from Horeb and went across all the great and terrible wilderness you saw on the way to the hill country of the Amorites, just as the LORD our God had commanded us. When we reached Kadesh-barnea, [20] I said to you: You have reached the hill country of the Amorites, which the LORD our God is giving us. [21] See, the LORD your God has set the land before you. Go up and take possession of it as Yahweh, the God of your fathers, has told you. Do not be afraid or discouraged.

[22] "Then all of you approached me and said, 'Let's send men ahead of us, so that they may explore the land for us and bring us back a report about the route we should go up and the cities we will come to.' [23] The plan seemed good to me, so I selected 12 men from among you, one man for each tribe. [24] They left and went up into the hill country and came to the Valley of Eshcol, scouting the land. [25] They took some of the fruit from the land in their hands, carried it down to us, and brought us back a report: 'The land the LORD our God is giving us is good.'

[26] "But you were not willing to go up, rebelling against the command of the LORD your God. [27] You grumbled in your tents and said, 'The LORD brought us out of the land of Egypt to deliver us into the hands of the Amorites so they would destroy us, because He hated us. [28†] Where can we go? Our brothers have discouraged us, saying: The people are larger and taller than we are; the cities are large, fortified to the heavens. We also saw the descendants of the Anakim there.'

[29] "So I said to you: Don't be terrified or afraid of them! [30†] The LORD your God who goes before you will fight for you, just as you saw Him do

for you in Egypt. 31 And you saw in the wilderness how the Lord your God
carried you as a man carries his son all along the way you traveled until you
reached this place. 32 But in spite of this you did not trust the Lord your
God, 33 who went before you on the journey to seek out a place for you to
camp. He went in the fire by night and in the cloud by day to guide you on
the road you were to travel.

34 “When the Lord heard your [C] words, He grew angry and swore an
oath: 35 ‘None of these men in this evil generation will see the good land I
swore to give your fathers, 36 except Caleb the son of Jephunneh. He will
see it, and I will give him and his descendants the land on which he has set
foot, because he followed the Lord completely.’

37[†] “The Lord was angry with me also because of you and said: ‘You will
not enter there either. 38 Joshua son of Nun, who attends you, will enter it.
Encourage him, for he will enable Israel to inherit it. 39 Your little children,
whom you said would be plunder, your sons who [D] don’t know good from
evil, will enter there. I will give them the land, and they will take possession
of it. 40 But you are to turn back and head for the wilderness by way of the
•Red Sea.’

41 “You answered me, ‘We have sinned against the Lord. We will go up
and fight just as the Lord our God commanded us.’ Then each of you put
on his weapons of war and thought it would be easy to go up into the hill
country.

42 “But the Lord said to me, ‘Tell them: Don’t go up and fight, for I am
not with you to keep you from being defeated by your enemies.’ 43 So I
spoke to you, but you didn’t listen. You rebelled against the Lord’s
command and defiantly went up into the hill country. 44 Then the Amorites
who lived there came out against you and chased you like a swarm of bees.
They routed you from Seir as far as Hormah. 45 When you returned, you
wept before the Lord, but He didn’t listen to your requests or pay attention
to you. 46 For this reason you stayed in Kadesh as long as you did. [E]

DEUTERONOMY

Journey past Seir

2 “Then we turned back and headed for the wilderness by way of the •Red
Sea, as the LORD had told me, and we traveled around the hill country of
Seir for many days. [2] The LORD then said to me, [3] ‘You’ve been traveling
around this hill country long enough; turn north. [4] Command the people:
You are about to travel through the territory of your brothers, the
descendants of Esau, who live in Seir. They will be afraid of you, so you
must be very careful. [5] Don’t fight with them, for I will not give you any of
their land, not even an inch of it, [A] because I have given Esau the hill
country of Seir as his possession. [6] You may purchase food from them with
silver, so that you may eat, and buy water from them to drink. [7] For the
LORD your God has blessed you in all the work of your hands. He has
watched over your journey through this immense wilderness. The LORD
your God has been with you this past 40 years, and you have lacked
nothing.’

Journey past Moab

[8] “So we bypassed our brothers, the descendants of Esau, who live in
Seir. We turned away from the •Arabah road and from Elath and Ezion-
geber. We traveled along the road to the Wilderness of Moab. [9] The LORD
said to me, ‘Show no hostility toward Moab, and do not provoke them to
battle, for I will not give you any of their land as a possession, since I have
given Ar as a possession to the descendants of Lot.’ ”

[10] The Emim, a great and numerous people as tall as the Anakim, had
previously lived there. [11] They were also regarded as Rephaim, like the
Anakim, though the Moabites called them Emim. [12†] The Horites had
previously lived in Seir, but the descendants of Esau drove them out,
destroying them completely [B] and settling in their place, just as Israel did in
the land of its possession the LORD gave them.

[13] “The LORD said, ‘Now get up and cross the Zered Valley.’ So we
crossed the Zered Valley. [14] The time we spent traveling from Kadesh-
barnea until we crossed the Zered Valley was 38 years until the entire
generation of fighting men had perished from the camp, as the LORD had

sworn to them. [15] Indeed, the LORD's hand was against them, to eliminate
them from the camp until they had all perished.

Journey past Ammon

[16] "When all the fighting men had died among the people, [17] the LORD
spoke to me, [18] 'Today you are going to cross the border of Moab at Ar.
[19] When you get close to the Ammonites, don't show any hostility to them
or fight with them, for I will not give you any of the Ammonites' land as a
possession; I have given it as a possession to the descendants of Lot.' "

[20] This too used to be regarded as the land of the Rephaim. The Rephaim
lived there previously, though the Ammonites called them Zamzummim,
[21†] a great and numerous people, tall as the Anakim. The LORD destroyed
the Rephaim at the advance of the Ammonites, so that they drove them out
and settled in their place. [22] This was just as He had done for the
descendants of Esau who lived in Seir, when He destroyed the Horites
before them; they drove them out and have lived in their place until now.
[23] The Caphtorim, who came from Caphtor, destroyed the Avvim, who
lived in villages as far as Gaza, and settled in their place.

Defeat of Sihon the Amorite

[24] "The LORD also said, 'Get up, move out, and cross the Arnon Valley.
See, I have handed Sihon the Amorite, king of Heshbon, and his land over
to you. Begin to take possession of it; engage him in battle. [25] Today I will
begin to put the fear and dread of you on the peoples everywhere under
heaven. They will hear the report about you, tremble, and be in anguish
because of you.'

[26] "So I sent messengers with an offer of peace to Sihon king of Heshbon
from the Wilderness of Kedemoth, saying, [27] 'Let us travel through your
land; we will keep strictly to the highway. We will not turn to the right or
the left. [28] You can sell us food in exchange for silver so we may eat, and
give us water for silver so we may drink. Only let us travel through on foot,
[29] just as the descendants of Esau who live in Seir did for us, and the

Moabites who live in Ar, until we cross the Jordan into the land the LORD
our God is giving us.’ 30† But Sihon king of Heshbon would not let us travel
through his land, for the LORD your God had made his spirit stubborn and
his heart obstinate in order to hand him over to you, as has now taken place.

31 “Then the LORD said to me, ‘See, I have begun to give Sihon and his
land to you. Begin to take possession of it.’ 32 So Sihon and his whole army
came out against us for battle at Jahaz. 33 The LORD our God handed him
over to us, and we defeated him, his sons, and his whole army. 34† At that
time we captured all his cities and •completely destroyed the people of
every city, including the women and children. We left no survivors. 35 We
took only the livestock and the spoil from the cities we captured as plunder
for ourselves. 36 There was no city that was inaccessible to C us, from Aroer
on the rim of the Arnon Valley, along with the city in the valley, even as far
as Gilead. The LORD our God gave everything to us. 37 But you did not go
near the Ammonites’ land, all along the bank of the Jabbok River, the cities
of the hill country, or any place that the LORD our God had forbidden.

DEUTERONOMY

Defeat of Og of Bashan

3 “Then we turned and went up the road to Bashan, and Og king of
Bashan came out against us with his whole army to do battle at Edrei.
2 But the LORD said to me, ‘Do not fear him, for I have handed him over to
you along with his whole army and his land. Do to him as you did to Sihon
king of the Amorites, who lived in Heshbon.’ 3 So the LORD our God also
handed over Og king of Bashan and his whole army to us. We struck him
until there was no survivor left. 4 We captured all his cities at that time.
There wasn’t a city that we didn’t take from them: 60 cities, the entire
region of Argob, the kingdom of Og in Bashan. 5 All these were fortified
with high walls, gates, and bars, besides a large number of rural villages.
6 We •completely destroyed them, as we had done to Sihon king of
Heshbon, destroying the men, women, and children of every city. 7 But we
took all the livestock and the spoil from the cities as plunder for ourselves.

The Land of the Transjordan Tribes

8 “At that time we took the land from the two Amorite kings across the
Jordan, from the Arnon Valley as far as Mount Hermon, 9 which the
Sidonians call Sirion, but the Amorites call Senir, 10 all the cities of the
plateau, Gilead, and Bashan as far as Salecah and Edrei, cities of Og’s
kingdom in Bashan. 11[†] (Only Og king of Bashan was left of the remnant
of the Rephaim. His bed was made of iron. [A] Isn’t it in Rabbah of the
Ammonites? It is 13 feet six inches long and six feet wide by a standard
measure. [B])

12 “At that time we took possession of this land. I gave to the Reubenites
and Gadites the area extending from Aroer by the Arnon Valley, and half
the hill country of Gilead along with its cities. 13 I gave to half the tribe of
Manasseh the rest of Gilead and all Bashan, the kingdom of Og. The entire
region of Argob, the whole territory of Bashan, used to be called the land of
the Rephaim. 14[†] Jair, a descendant of Manasseh, took over the entire region
of Argob as far as the border of the Geshurites and Maacathites. He called
Bashan by his own name, Jair’s Villages, [C] as it is today. 15 I gave Gilead to
Machir, 16 and I gave to the Reubenites and Gadites the area extending from
Gilead to the Arnon Valley (the middle of the valley was the border) and up

to the Jabbok River, the border of the Ammonites. 17 The •Arabah and
Jordan are also borders from Chinnereth as far as the Sea of the Arabah,
the Dead Sea, under the slopes of Pisgah on the east.

18 "I commanded you at that time: The LORD your God has given you this
land to possess. All your fighting men will cross over in battle formation
ahead of your brothers the Israelites. 19 But your wives, young children, and
livestock — I know that you have a lot of livestock — will remain in the
cities I have given you 20 until the LORD gives rest to your brothers as He
has to you, and they also take possession of the land the LORD your God is
giving them across the Jordan. Then each of you may return to his
possession that I have given you.

The Transfer of Israel's Leadership

21 "I commanded Joshua at that time: Your own eyes have seen
everything the LORD your God has done to these two kings. The LORD will
do the same to all the kingdoms you are about to enter. 22 Don't be afraid of
them, for the LORD your God fights for you.

23 "At that time I begged the LORD: 24 Lord GOD, You have begun to
show Your greatness and power to Your servant, for what god is there in
heaven or on earth who can perform deeds and mighty acts like Yours?
25 Please let me cross over and see the beautiful land on the other side of
the Jordan, that good hill country and Lebanon.

26† "But the LORD was angry with me on account of you and would not
listen to me. The LORD said to me, 'That's enough! Do not speak to Me
again about this matter. 27 Go to the top of Pisgah and look to the west,
north, south, and east, and see it with your own eyes, for you will not cross
this Jordan. 28 But commission Joshua and encourage and strengthen him,
for he will cross over ahead of the people and enable them to inherit this
land that you will see.' 29 So we stayed in the valley facing Beth-peor.

DEUTERONOMY

Call to Obedience

4 “Now, Israel, listen to the statutes and ordinances I am teaching you to
follow, so that you may live, enter, and take possession of the land
•Yahweh, the God of your fathers, is giving you. 2† You must not add
anything to what I command you or take anything away from it, so that you
may keep the commands of the LORD your God I am giving you. 3 Your
eyes have seen what the LORD did at Baal-peor, for the LORD your God
destroyed every one of you who followed •Baal of Peor. 4 But you who
have remained faithful [A] to the LORD your God are all alive today. 5 Look, I
have taught you statutes and ordinances as the LORD my God has
commanded me, so that you may follow them in the land you are entering
to possess. 6 Carefully follow them, for this will show your wisdom and
understanding in the eyes of the peoples. When they hear about all these
statutes, they will say, ‘This great nation is indeed a wise and understanding
people.’ 7 For what great nation is there that has a god near to it as the LORD
our God is to us whenever we call to Him? 8 And what great nation has
righteous statutes and ordinances like this entire law I set before you today?

9 “Only be on your guard and diligently watch yourselves, so that you
don’t forget the things your eyes have seen and so that they don’t slip from
your mind as long as you live. Teach them to your children and your
grandchildren. 10 The day you stood before the LORD your God at Horeb,
the LORD said to me, ‘Assemble the people before Me, and I will let them
hear My words, so that they may learn to •fear Me all the days they live on
the earth and may instruct their children.’ 11† You came near and stood at
the base of the mountain, a mountain blazing with fire into the heavens and
enveloped in a dense, black cloud. 12 Then the LORD spoke to you from the
fire. You kept hearing the sound of the words, but didn’t see a form; there
was only a voice. 13 He declared His covenant to you. He commanded you
to follow the Ten Commandments, which He wrote on two stone tablets.
14 At that time the LORD commanded me to teach you statutes and
ordinances for you to follow in the land you are about to cross into and
possess.

Worshiping the True God

[15] “For your own good, be extremely careful — because you did not see
any form on the day the LORD spoke to you out of the fire at Horeb — [16] not
to act corruptly and make an idol for yourselves in the shape of any figure:
a male or female form, [17] or the form of any beast on the earth, any winged
creature that flies in the sky, [18] any creature that crawls on the ground, or
any fish in the waters under the earth. [19†] When you look to the heavens and
see the sun, moon, and stars — all the array of heaven — do not be led
astray to bow down and worship them. The LORD your God has provided
them for all people everywhere under heaven. [20†] But the LORD selected you
and brought you out of Egypt’s iron furnace to be a people for His
inheritance, as you are today.

[21] “The LORD was angry with me on your account. He swore that I would
not cross the Jordan and enter the good land the LORD your God is giving
you as an inheritance. [22] I won’t be crossing the Jordan because I am going
to die in this land. But you are about to cross over and take possession of
this good land. [23] Be careful not to forget the covenant of the LORD your
God that He made with you, and make an idol for yourselves in the shape of
anything He has forbidden you. [24†] For the LORD your God is a consuming
fire, a jealous God.

[25] “When you have children and grandchildren and have been in the land
a long time, and if you act corruptly, make an idol in the form of anything,
and do what is evil in the sight of the LORD your God, provoking Him to
anger, [26†] I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you today that you
will quickly perish from the land you are about to cross the Jordan to
possess. You will not live long there, but you will certainly be destroyed.
[27] The LORD will scatter you among the peoples, and you will be reduced to
a few survivors [B] among the nations where the LORD your God will drive
you. [28†] There you will worship man-made gods of wood and stone, which
cannot see, hear, eat, or smell. [29] But from there, you will search for the
LORD your God, and you will find Him when you seek Him with all your
heart and all your soul. [30] When you are in distress and all these things
have happened to you, you will return to the LORD your God in later days
and obey Him. [31] He will not leave you, destroy you, or forget the covenant

with your fathers that He swore to them by oath, because the LORD your
God is a compassionate God.

ARTICLE
Has Christianity Had a Bad Influence on History? ⇒

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[32] "Indeed, ask about the earlier days that preceded you, from the day
God created man on the earth and from one end of the heavens to the other:
Has anything like this great event ever happened, or has anything like it
been heard of? [33] Has a people heard God's voice speaking from the fire as
you have, and lived? [34†] Or has a god attempted to go and take a nation as
his own out of another nation, by trials, signs, wonders, and war, by a
strong hand and an outstretched arm, by great terrors, as the LORD your God
did for you in Egypt before your eyes? [35] You were shown these things so
that you would know that the LORD is God; there is no other besides Him.
[36] He let you hear His voice from heaven to instruct you. He showed you
His great fire on earth, and you heard His words from the fire. [37] Because
He loved your fathers, He chose their descendants after them and brought
you out of Egypt by His presence and great power, [38] to drive out before
you nations greater and stronger than you and to bring you in and give you
their land as an inheritance, as is now taking place. [39] Today, recognize and
keep in mind that the LORD is God in heaven above and on earth below;
there is no other. [40] Keep His statutes and commands, which I am giving
you today, so that you and your children after you may prosper and so that
you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you for all time."

Cities of Refuge

[41†] Then Moses set apart three cities across the Jordan to the east.
[42] Someone could flee there who committed manslaughter, killing his
neighbor accidentally without previously hating him. He could flee to one
of these cities and stay alive: [43] Bezer in the wilderness on the plateau land,

belonging to the Reubenites; Ramoth in Gilead, belonging to the Gadites; or
Golan in Bashan, belonging to the Manassites.

Introduction to the Law

44 This is the law Moses gave the Israelites. 45 These are the decrees,
statutes, and ordinances Moses proclaimed to them after they came out of
Egypt, 46 across the Jordan in the valley facing Beth-peor in the land of
Sihon king of the Amorites. He lived in Heshbon, and Moses and the
Israelites defeated him after they came out of Egypt. 47 They took
possession of his land and the land of Og king of Bashan, the two Amorite
kings who were across the Jordan to the east, 48 from Aroer on the rim of
the Arnon Valley as far as Mount Sion (that is, Hermon) 49 and all the
•Arabah on the east side of the Jordan as far as the Dead Sea below the
slopes of Pisgah.

DEUTERONOMY

The Ten Commandments

5 Moses summoned all Israel and said to them, “Israel, listen to the
statutes and ordinances I am proclaiming as you hear them today. Learn
and follow them carefully. 2† The LORD our God made a covenant with us
at Horeb. 3 He did not make this covenant with our fathers, but with all of
us who are alive here today. 4 The LORD spoke to you face to face from the
fire on the mountain. 5 At that time I was standing between the LORD and
you to report the word of the LORD to you, because you were afraid of the
fire and did not go up the mountain. And He said:

6 I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out
of the place of slavery.
7 Do not have other gods besides Me.
8 Do not make an idol for yourself in the shape of anything in the heavens
above or on the earth below or in the waters under the earth. 9† You must
not bow down to them or worship them, because I, the LORD your God,
am a jealous God, punishing the children for the fathers’ sin to the third
and fourth generations of those who hate Me, 10 but showing faithful
love to a thousand generations of those who love Me and keep My
commands.
11 Do not misuse the name of the LORD your God, because the LORD will
not leave anyone unpunished who misuses His name.
12 Be careful to remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy as the LORD
your God has commanded you. 13 You are to labor six days and do all
your work, 14† but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God.
You must not do any work — you, your son or daughter, your male or
female slave, your ox or donkey, any of your livestock, or the foreigner
who lives within your gates, so that your male and female slaves may rest
as you do. 15 Remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and
the LORD your God brought you out of there with a strong hand and an
outstretched arm. That is why the LORD your God has commanded you to
keep the Sabbath day.
16 Honor your father and your mother, as the LORD your God has
commanded you, so that you may live long and so that you may prosper
in the land the LORD your God is giving you.

[17] Do not murder.
[18] Do not commit adultery.
[19] Do not steal.
[20] Do not give dishonest testimony against your neighbor.
[21] Do not covet your neighbor's wife or desire your neighbor's house, his field, his male or female slave, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.

The People's Response

22† "The LORD spoke these commands in a loud voice to your entire
assembly from the fire, cloud, and thick darkness on the mountain; He
added nothing more. He wrote them on two stone tablets and gave them to
me. 23 All of you approached me with your tribal leaders and elders when
you heard the voice from the darkness and while the mountain was blazing
with fire. 24 You said, 'Look, the LORD our God has shown us His glory and
greatness, and we have heard His voice from the fire. Today we have seen
that God speaks with a person, yet he still lives. 25 But now, why should we
die? This great fire will consume us and we will die if we hear the voice of
the LORD our God any longer. 26 For who out of all mankind has heard the
voice of the living God speaking from the fire, as we have, and lived? 27 Go
near and listen to everything the LORD our God says. Then you can tell us
everything the LORD our God tells you; we will listen and obey.'

28 "The LORD heard your [A] words when you spoke to me. He said to me,
'I have heard the words that these people have spoken to you. Everything
they have said is right. 29 If only they had such a heart to •fear Me and keep
all My commands always, so that they and their children will prosper
forever. 30 Go and tell them: Return to your tents. 31 But you stand here
with Me, and I will tell you every command — the statutes and
ordinances — you are to teach them, so that they may follow them in the
land I am giving them to possess.'

32 "Be careful to do as the LORD your God has commanded you; you are
not to turn aside to the right or the left. 33 Follow the whole instruction the

LORD your God has commanded you, so that you may live, prosper, and have a long life in the land you will possess.

DEUTERONOMY

The Greatest Commandment

6 “This is the command — the statutes and ordinances — the LORD your
God has instructed me to teach you, so that you may follow them in the
land you are about to enter and possess. 2 Do this so that you may •fear the
LORD your God all the days of your life by keeping all His statutes and
commands I am giving you, your son, and your grandson, and so that you
may have a long life. 3 Listen, Israel, and be careful to follow them, so that
you may prosper and multiply greatly, because •Yahweh, the God of your
fathers, has promised you a land flowing with milk and honey.

4† “Listen, Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is One.[A], 5 Love the
LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your
strength. 6 These words that I am giving you today are to be in your heart.
7† Repeat them to your children. Talk about them when you sit in your
house and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you
get up. 8 Bind them as a sign on your hand and let them be a symbol[B] on
your forehead.[C] 9 Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your
gates.

Remembering God through Obedience

10† “When the LORD your God brings you into the land He swore to your
fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob that He would give you — a land with
large and beautiful cities that you did not build, 11 houses full of every good
thing that you did not fill them with, wells dug that you did not dig, and
vineyards and olive groves that you did not plant — and when you eat and
are satisfied, 12 be careful not to forget the LORD who brought you out of
the land of Egypt, out of the place of slavery. 13 Fear Yahweh your God,
worship Him, and take your oaths in His name. 14 Do not follow other
gods, the gods of the peoples around you, 15† for the LORD your God, who is
among you, is a jealous God. Otherwise, the LORD your God will become
angry with you and wipe you off the face of the earth. 16† Do not test the
LORD your God as you tested Him at Massah. 17 Carefully observe the
commands of the LORD your God, the decrees and statutes He has
commanded you. 18 Do what is right and good in the LORD’s sight, so that
you may prosper and so that you may enter and possess the good land the

LORD your God swore to give your fathers, [19] by driving out all your
enemies before you, as the LORD has said.

[20] “When your son asks you in the future, ‘What is the meaning of the
decrees, statutes, and ordinances, which the LORD our God has commanded
you? ’ [21] tell him, ‘We were slaves of Pharaoh in Egypt, but the LORD
brought us out of Egypt with a strong hand. [22] Before our eyes the LORD
inflicted great and devastating signs and wonders on Egypt, on Pharaoh,
and on all his household, [23] but He brought us from there in order to lead us
in and give us the land that He swore to our fathers. [24] The LORD
commanded us to follow all these statutes and to fear the LORD our God for
our prosperity always and for our preservation, as it is today.
[25] Righteousness will be ours if we are careful to follow every one of these
commands before the LORD our God, as He has commanded us.’

DEUTERONOMY

Israel to Destroy Idolatrous Nations

7 “When the LORD your God brings you into the land you are entering to
possess, and He drives out many nations before you — the Hittites,
Girgashites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites, seven
nations more numerous and powerful than you — 2† and when the LORD
your God delivers them over to you and you defeat them, you must
•completely destroy them. Make no treaty with them and show them no
mercy. 3 Do not intermarry with them. Do not give your daughters to their
sons or take their daughters for your sons, 4 because they will turn your
sons away from Me to worship other gods. Then the LORD’s anger will burn
against you, and He will swiftly destroy you. 5 Instead, this is what you are
to do to them: tear down their altars, smash their sacred pillars, cut down
their •Asherah poles, and burn up their carved images. 6† For you are a
holy people belonging to the LORD your God. The LORD your God has
chosen you to be His own possession out of all the peoples on the face of
the earth.

7† “The LORD was devoted to you and chose you, not because you were
more numerous than all peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples.
8 But because the LORD loved you and kept the oath He swore to your
fathers, He brought you out with a strong hand and redeemed you from the
place of slavery, from the power of Pharaoh king of Egypt. 9 Know that
•Yahweh your God is God, the faithful God who keeps His gracious
covenant loyalty for a thousand generations with those who love Him and
keep His commands. 10 But He directly pays back [A] and destroys those
who hate Him. He will not hesitate to directly pay back [B] the one who
hates Him. 11 So keep the command — the statutes and ordinances — that I
am giving you to follow today.

12 “If you listen to and are careful to keep these ordinances, the LORD
your God will keep His covenant loyalty with you, as He swore to your
fathers. 13 He will love you, bless you, and multiply you. He will bless
your descendants, [C], and the produce of your land — your grain, new wine,
and oil — the young of your herds, and the newborn of your flocks, in the
land He swore to your fathers that He would give you. 14 You will be
blessed above all peoples; there will be no infertile male or female among

you or your livestock. 15 The LORD will remove all sickness from you; He
will not put on you all the terrible diseases of Egypt that you know about,
but He will inflict them on all who hate you. 16† You must destroy all the
peoples the LORD your God is delivering over to you and not look on them
with pity. Do not worship their gods, for that will be a snare to you.

17 “If you say to yourself, ‘These nations are greater than I; how can I
drive them out? ’ 18 do not be afraid of them. Be sure to remember what the
LORD your God did to Pharaoh and all Egypt: 19 the great trials that you
saw, the signs and wonders, the strong hand and outstretched arm, by which
the LORD your God brought you out. The LORD your God will do the same
to all the peoples you fear. 20† The LORD your God will also send the hornet
against them until all the survivors and those hiding from you perish.
21 Don’t be terrified of them, for the LORD your God, a great and awesome
God, is among you. 22 The LORD your God will drive out these nations
before you little by little. You will not be able to destroy them all at once;
otherwise, the wild animals will become too numerous for you. 23 The
LORD your God will give them over to you and throw them into great
confusion until they are destroyed. 24 He will hand their kings over to you,
and you will wipe out their names under heaven. No one will be able to
stand against you; you will annihilate them. 25 You must burn up the carved
images of their gods. Don’t covet the silver and gold on the images and take
it for yourself, or else you will be ensnared by it, for it is abhorrent to the
LORD your God. 26 You must not bring any abhorrent thing into your house,
or you will be •set apart for destruction like it. You are to utterly detest and
abhor it, because it is set apart for destruction.

DEUTERONOMY

Remember the LORD

8 "You must carefully follow every command I am giving you today, so
that you may live and increase, and may enter and take possession of the
land the LORD swore to your fathers. 2 Remember that the LORD your God
led you on the entire journey these 40 years in the wilderness, so that He
might humble you and test you to know what was in your heart, whether or
not you would keep His commands. 3† He humbled you by letting you go
hungry; then He gave you manna to eat, which you and your fathers had not
known, so that you might learn that man does not live on bread alone but on
every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD. 4 Your clothing did not
wear out, and your feet did not swell these 40 years. 5 Keep in mind that
the LORD your God has been disciplining you just as a man disciplines his
son. 6 So keep the commands of the LORD your God by walking in His ways
and •fearing Him. 7 For the LORD your God is bringing you into a good
land, a land with streams of water, springs, and deep water sources, flowing
in both valleys and hills; 8 a land of wheat, barley, vines, figs, and
pomegranates; a land of olive oil and honey; 9 a land where you will eat
food without shortage, where you will lack nothing; a land whose rocks are
iron and from whose hills you will mine copper. 10 When you eat and are
full, you will praise the LORD your God for the good land He has given
you.

11 "Be careful that you don't forget the LORD your God by failing to keep
His command — the ordinances and statutes — I am giving you today.
12 When you eat and are full, and build beautiful houses to live in, 13 and
your herds and flocks grow large, and your silver and gold multiply, and
everything else you have increases, 14 be careful that your heart doesn't
become proud and you forget the LORD your God who brought you out of
the land of Egypt, out of the place of slavery. 15† He led you through the
great and terrible wilderness with its poisonous [A] snakes and scorpions, a
thirsty land where there was no water. He brought water out of the flint-like
rock for you. 16 He fed you in the wilderness with manna that your fathers
had not known, in order to humble and test you, so that in the end He might
cause you to prosper. 17 You may say to yourself, 'My power and my own
ability have gained this wealth for me,' 18 but remember that the LORD your
God gives you the power to gain wealth, in order to confirm His covenant

He swore to your fathers, as it is today. 19† If you ever forget the LORD your
God and go after other gods to worship and bow down to them, I testify
against you today that you will perish. 20 Like the nations the LORD is about
to destroy before you, you will perish if you do not obey the LORD your
God.

DEUTERONOMY

Warning against Self-Righteousness

9 †“Listen, Israel: Today you are about to cross the Jordan to go and drive
out nations greater and stronger than you, with large cities fortified to
the heavens. 2 The people are strong and tall, the descendants of the
Anakim. You know about them and you have heard it said about them,
‘Who can stand up to the sons of Anak? ’ 3 But understand that today the
LORD your God will cross over ahead of you as a consuming fire; He will
devastate and subdue them before you. You will drive them out and destroy
them swiftly, as the LORD has told you. 4 When the LORD your God drives
them out before you, do not say to yourself, ‘The LORD brought me in to
take possession of this land because of my righteousness.’ Instead, the LORD
will drive out these nations before you because of their wickedness. 5 You
are not going to take possession of their land because of your righteousness
or your integrity. Instead, the LORD your God will drive out these nations
before you because of their wickedness, in order to keep the promise He
swore to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. 6 Understand that the
LORD your God is not giving you this good land to possess because of your
righteousness, for you are a stiff-necked people.

Israel’s Rebellion and Moses’ Intercession

7 “Remember and do not forget how you provoked the LORD your God in
the wilderness. You have been rebelling against the LORD from the day you
left the land of Egypt until you reached this place. 8† You provoked the
LORD at Horeb, and He was angry enough with you to destroy you. 9 When I
went up the mountain to receive the stone tablets, the tablets of the
covenant the LORD made with you, I stayed on the mountain 40 days and 40
nights. I did not eat bread or drink water. 10† On the day of the assembly the
LORD gave me the two stone tablets, inscribed by God’s finger. The exact
words were on them, which the LORD spoke to you from the fire on the
mountain. 11 The LORD gave me the two stone tablets, the tablets of the
covenant, at the end of the 40 days and 40 nights.

12 “The LORD said to me, ‘Get up and go down immediately from here.
For your people whom you brought out of Egypt have acted corruptly. They
have quickly turned from the way that I commanded them; they have made

a cast image for themselves.' 13 The LORD also said to me, 'I have seen this
people, and indeed, they are a stiff-necked people. 14† Leave Me alone, and
I will destroy them and blot out their name under heaven. Then I will make
you into a nation stronger and more numerous than they.'

15 "So I went back down the mountain, while it was blazing with fire, and
the two tablets of the covenant were in my hands. 16 I saw how you had
sinned against the LORD your God; you had made a calf image for
yourselves. You had quickly turned from the way the LORD had commanded
for you. 17 So I took hold of the two tablets and threw them from my hands,
shattering them before your eyes. 18† Then I fell down like the first time in
the presence of the LORD for 40 days and 40 nights; I did not eat bread or
drink water because of all the sin you committed, doing what was evil in the
LORD's sight and provoking Him to anger. 19 I was afraid of the fierce anger
the LORD had directed against you, because He was about to destroy you.
But again the LORD listened to me on that occasion. 20 The LORD was angry
enough with Aaron to destroy him. But I prayed for Aaron at that time also.
21 I took the sinful calf you had made, burned it up, and crushed it,
thoroughly grinding it to powder as fine as dust. Then I threw it into the
stream that came down from the mountain.

22 "You continued to provoke the LORD at Taberah, Massah, and Kibroth-
hattaavah. 23 When the LORD sent you from Kadesh-barnea, He said, 'Go
up and possess the land I have given you'; you rebelled against the
command of the LORD your God. You did not believe or obey Him. 24 You
have been rebelling against the LORD ever since I have known you.

25 "I fell down in the presence of the LORD 40 days and 40 nights because
the LORD had threatened to destroy you. 26 I prayed to the LORD:

> Lord GOD, do not annihilate Your people, Your inheritance, whom
> You redeemed through Your greatness and brought out of Egypt
> with a strong hand. 27 Remember Your servants Abraham, Isaac,
> and Jacob. Disregard this people's stubbornness, and their
> wickedness and sin. 28 Otherwise, those in the land you brought

us from will say, ‘Because the LORD wasn’t able to bring them
into the land He had promised them, and because He hated them,
He brought them out to kill them in the wilderness.’ 29 But they
are Your people, Your inheritance, whom You brought out by
Your great power and outstretched arm.

DEUTERONOMY

The Covenant Renewed

10 “The LORD said to me at that time, ‘Cut two stone tablets like the first
ones and come to Me on the mountain and make a wooden ark. 2 I
will write on the tablets the words that were on the first tablets you broke,
and you are to place them in the ark.’ 3 So I made an ark of acacia wood,
cut two stone tablets like the first ones, and climbed the mountain with the
two tablets in my hand. 4† Then on the day of the assembly, the LORD wrote
on the tablets what had been written previously, the Ten Commandments
that He had spoken to you on the mountain from the fire. The LORD gave
them to me, 5 and I went back down the mountain and placed the tablets in
the ark I had made. And they have remained there, as the LORD commanded
me.”

6† The Israelites traveled from Beeroth Bene-jaakan [A] to Moserah. Aaron
died and was buried there, and Eleazar his son became priest in his place.
7 They traveled from there to Gudgodah, and from Gudgodah to Jotbathah,
a land with streams of water.

8 “At that time the LORD set apart the tribe of Levi to carry the ark of the
LORD’s covenant, to stand before •Yahweh to serve Him, and to pronounce
blessings in His name, as it is today. 9 For this reason, Levi does not have a
portion or inheritance like his brothers; the LORD is his inheritance, as the
LORD your God told him.

10 “I stayed on the mountain 40 days and 40 nights like the first time. The
LORD also listened to me on this occasion; He agreed not to annihilate you.
11 Then the LORD said to me, ‘Get up. Continue your journey ahead of the
people, so that they may enter and possess the land I swore to give their
fathers.’

What God Requires

12 “And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God ask of you except to
•fear the LORD your God by walking in all His ways, to love Him, and to
worship the LORD your God with all your heart and all your soul? 13 Keep
the LORD’s commands and statutes I am giving you today, for your own
good. 14 The heavens, indeed the highest heavens, belong to the LORD your

God, as does the earth and everything in it. [15]† Yet the LORD was devoted to
your fathers and loved them. He chose their descendants after them — He
chose you out of all the peoples, as it is today. [16] Therefore, circumcise your
hearts and don't be stiff-necked any longer. [17] For the LORD your God is the
God of gods and Lord of lords, the great, mighty, and awesome God,
showing no partiality and taking no bribe. [18] He executes justice for the
fatherless and the widow, and loves the foreigner, giving him food and
clothing. [19] You also must love the foreigner, since you were foreigners in
the land of Egypt. [20] You are to fear Yahweh your God and worship Him.
Remain faithful [B] to Him and take oaths in His name. [21] He is your praise
and He is your God, who has done for you these great and awesome works
your eyes have seen. [22]† Your fathers went down to Egypt, 70 people in all,
and now the LORD your God has made you as numerous as the stars of the
sky.

DEUTERONOMY

Remember and Obey

11 “Therefore, love the LORD your God and always keep His mandate
and His statutes, ordinances, and commands. [2] You must understand
today that it is not your children who experienced or saw the discipline of
the LORD your God:

His greatness, strong hand, and outstretched arm; [3] His signs and
the works He did in Egypt to Pharaoh king of Egypt and all his
land; [4] what He did to Egypt’s army, its horses and chariots, when
He made the waters of the •Red Sea flow over them as they
pursued you, and He destroyed them completely; [A] [5] what He did
to you in the wilderness until you reached this place; [6†] and what
He did to Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab the Reubenite,
when in the middle of the whole Israelite camp the earth opened
its mouth and swallowed them, their households, their tents, and
every living thing with them.

[7] Your own eyes have seen every great work the LORD has done.

[8] “Keep every command I am giving you today, so that you may have the
strength to cross into and possess the land you are to inherit, [9†] and so that
you may live long in the land the LORD swore to your fathers to give them
and their descendants, a land flowing with milk and honey. [10] For the land
you are entering to possess is not like the land of Egypt, from which you
have come, where you sowed your seed and irrigated by hand [B] as in a
vegetable garden. [11] But the land you are entering to possess is a land of
mountains and valleys, watered by rain from the sky. [12] It is a land the LORD
your God cares for. He is always watching over it from the beginning to the
end of the year.

[13] “If you carefully obey my commands I am giving you today, to love
the LORD your God and worship Him with all your heart and all your soul,
[14] I will provide rain for your land in the proper time, the autumn and
spring rains, and you will harvest your grain, new wine, and oil. [15] I will
provide grass in your fields for your livestock. You will eat and be
satisfied. [16] Be careful that you are not enticed to turn aside, worship, and

bow down to other gods. 17 Then the LORD's anger will burn against you.
He will close the sky, and there will be no rain; the land will not yield its
produce, and you will perish quickly from the good land the LORD is giving
you.

18 "Imprint these words of mine on your hearts and minds, bind them as a
sign on your hands, and let them be a symbol [C] on your foreheads. [D]
19† Teach them to your children, talking about them when you sit in your
house and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you
get up. 20 Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates,
21 so that as long as the heavens are above the earth, your days and those of
your children may be many in the land the LORD swore to give your fathers.
22 For if you carefully observe every one of these commands I am giving
you to follow — to love the LORD your God, walk in all His ways, and
remain faithful [E] to Him — 23 the LORD will drive out all these nations
before you, and you will drive out nations greater and stronger than you are.
24† Every place the sole of your foot treads will be yours. Your territory
will extend from the wilderness to Lebanon and from the Euphrates River
to the Mediterranean Sea. 25 No one will be able to stand against you; the
LORD your God will put fear and dread of you in all the land where you set
foot, as He has promised you.

A Blessing and a Curse

26† "Look, today I set before you a blessing and a curse: 27 there will be
a blessing, if you obey the commands of the LORD your God I am giving
you today, 28 and a curse, if you do not obey the commands of the LORD
your God and you turn aside from the path I command you today by
following other gods you have not known. 29 When the LORD your God
brings you into the land you are entering to possess, you are to proclaim the
blessing at Mount Gerizim and the curse at Mount Ebal. 30† Aren't these
mountains across the Jordan, beyond the western road in the land of the
Canaanites, who live in the •Arabah, opposite Gilgal, near the oaks of
Moreh? 31 For you are about to cross the Jordan to enter and take
possession of the land the LORD your God is giving you. When you possess

it and settle in it, [32] be careful to follow all the statutes and ordinances I set before you today.

DEUTERONOMY

The Chosen Place of Worship

12 “Be careful to follow these statutes and ordinances in the land that
•Yahweh, the God of your fathers, has given you to possess all the
days you live on the earth. 2† Destroy completely all the places where the
nations that you are driving out worship their gods — on the high
mountains, on the hills, and under every green tree. 3 Tear down their altars,
smash their sacred pillars, burn up their •Asherah poles, cut down the
carved images of their gods, and wipe out their names from every [A] place.
4 Don’t worship the LORD your God this way. 5† Instead, you must turn to
the place Yahweh your God chooses from all your tribes to put His name
for His dwelling and go there. 6 You are to bring there your •burnt offerings
and sacrifices, your tenths and personal contributions, [B] your vow offerings
and freewill offerings, and the firstborn of your herds and flocks. 7 You will
eat there in the presence of the LORD your God and rejoice with your
household in everything you do, [C] because the LORD your God has blessed
you.

8 “You are not to do as we are doing here today; everyone is doing
whatever seems right in his own eyes. 9 Indeed, you have not yet come into
the resting place and the inheritance the LORD your God is giving you.
10† When you cross the Jordan and live in the land the LORD your God is
giving you to inherit, and He gives you rest from all the enemies around
you and you live in security, 11 then Yahweh your God will choose the place
to have His name dwell. Bring there everything I command you: your burnt
offerings, sacrifices, offerings of the tenth, personal contributions, [D] and all
your choice offerings you vow to the LORD. 12 You will rejoice before the
LORD your God — you, your sons and daughters, your male and female
slaves, and the Levite who is within your gates, since he has no portion or
inheritance among you. 13 Be careful not to offer your burnt offerings in all
the sacred places you see. 14 You must offer your burnt offerings only in the
place the LORD chooses in one of your tribes, and there you must do
everything I command you.

Slaughtering Animals to Eat

15 “But whenever you want, you may slaughter and eat meat within any
of your gates, according to the blessing the LORD your God has given you.
Those who are •clean or •unclean may eat it, as they would a gazelle or
deer, 16[†] but you must not eat the blood; pour it on the ground like water.
17 Within your gates you may not eat: the tenth of your grain, new wine, or
oil; the firstborn of your herd or flock; any of your vow offerings that you
pledge; your freewill offerings; or your personal contributions. [E] 18 You
must eat them in the presence of the LORD your God at the place the LORD
your God chooses — you, your son and daughter, your male and female
slave, and the Levite who is within your gates. Rejoice before the LORD
your God in everything you do, [F] 19 and be careful not to neglect the Levite,
as long as you live in your land.

20 “When the LORD your God enlarges your territory as He has promised
you, and you say, ‘I want to eat meat’ because you have a strong desire to
eat meat, you may eat it whenever you want. 21 If the place where Yahweh
your God chooses to put His name is too far from you, you may slaughter
any of your herd or flock He has given you, as I have commanded you, and
you may eat it within your gates whenever you want. 22 Indeed, you may
eat it as the gazelle and deer are eaten; both the clean and the unclean may
eat it. 23 But don’t eat the blood, since the blood is the life, and you must
not eat the life with the meat. 24 Do not eat blood; pour it on the ground like
water. 25 Do not eat it, so that you and your children after you will prosper,
because you will be doing what is right in the LORD’s sight.

26 “But you are to take the holy offerings you have and your vow
offerings and go to the place the LORD chooses. 27 Present the meat and
blood of your burnt offerings on the altar of the LORD your God. The blood
of your other sacrifices is to be poured out beside the altar of the LORD your
God, but you may eat the meat. 28 Be careful to obey all these things I
command you, so that you and your children after you may prosper forever,
because you will be doing what is good and right in the sight of the LORD
your God.

29† "When the LORD your God annihilates the nations before you, which
you are entering to take possession of, and you drive them out and live in
their land, 30 be careful not to be ensnared by their ways after they have
been destroyed before you. Do not inquire about their gods, asking, 'How
did these nations worship their gods? I'll also do the same.' 31 You must not
do the same to the LORD your God, because they practice every detestable
thing, which the LORD hates, for their gods. They even burn their sons and
daughters in the fire to their gods. 32 You must be careful to do everything I
command you; do not add anything to it or take anything away from it.

DEUTERONOMY

The False Prophet

13 “If a prophet or someone who has dreams arises among you and
proclaims a sign or wonder to you, [2†] and that sign or wonder he has
promised you comes about, but he says, ‘Let us follow other gods,’ which
you have not known, ‘and let us worship them,’ [3] do not listen to that
prophet’s words or to that dreamer. For the LORD your God is testing you to
know whether you love the LORD your God with all your heart and all your
soul. [4] You must follow the LORD your God and •fear Him. You must keep
His commands and listen to His voice; you must worship Him and remain
faithful [A] to Him. [5†] That prophet or dreamer must be put to death, because
he has urged rebellion against the LORD your God who brought you out of
the land of Egypt and redeemed you from the place of slavery, to turn you
from the way the LORD your God has commanded you to walk. You must
purge the evil from you.

Don’t Tolerate Idolatry

[6] “If your brother, the son of your mother, or your son or daughter, or the
wife you embrace, or your closest friend secretly entices you, saying, ‘Let
us go and worship other gods’ — which neither you nor your fathers have
known, [7] any of the gods of the peoples around you, near you or far from
you, from one end of the earth to the other — [8] you must not yield to him or
listen to him. Show him no pity, [B] and do not spare him or shield him.
[9] Instead, you must kill him. Your hand is to be the first against him to put
him to death, and then the hands of all the people. [10] Stone him to death for
trying to turn you away from the LORD your God who brought you out of
the land of Egypt, out of the place of slavery. [11] All Israel will hear and be
afraid, and they will no longer do anything evil like this among you.

[12] “If you hear it said about one of your cities the LORD your God is
giving you to live in, [13] that •wicked men have sprung up among you, led
the inhabitants of their city astray, and said, ‘Let us go and worship other
gods,’ which you have not known, [14] you are to inquire, investigate, and
interrogate thoroughly. If the report turns out to be true that this detestable
thing has happened among you, [15†] you must strike down the inhabitants of
that city with the sword. •Completely destroy everyone in it as well as its

livestock with the sword. [16] You are to gather all its spoil in the middle of
the city square and completely burn up the city and all its spoil for the LORD
your God. The city must remain a mound of ruins forever; it is not to be
rebuilt. [17] Nothing •set apart for destruction is to remain in your hand, so
that the LORD will turn from His burning anger and grant you mercy, show
you compassion, and multiply you as He swore to your fathers. [18] This will
occur if you obey the LORD your God, keeping all His commands I am
giving you today, doing what is right in the sight of the LORD your God.

DEUTERONOMY

Forbidden Practices

14 “You are sons of the LORD your God; do not cut yourselves or make a bald spot on your head [A] on behalf of the dead,
2 for you are a holy people belonging to the LORD your God. The LORD has chosen you to be His own possession out of all the peoples on the face of the earth.

Clean and Unclean Foods

3 “You must not eat any detestable thing.
4 These are the animals you may eat:

the ox, the sheep, the goat,
5 the deer, the gazelle, the roe deer,
the wild goat, the ibex, the antelope,
and the mountain sheep.

6 You may eat any animal that has hooves divided in two and chews the cud.
7 But among the ones that chew the cud or have divided hooves, you are not to eat these:

the camel, the hare, and the hyrax,
though they chew the cud, they do not have hooves —
they are •unclean for you;
8 and the pig, though it has hooves, it does not chew the cud —
it is unclean for you.

You must not eat their meat or touch their carcasses.

9 “You may eat everything from the water that has fins and scales,
10 but you may not eat anything that does not have fins and scales — it is unclean for you.

11 “You may eat every •clean bird,
12 but these are the ones you may not eat:

the eagle, the bearded vulture,
the black vulture, [13] the kite,
any kind of falcon,
[14] every kind of raven, [15] the ostrich,
the short-eared owl, the gull,
any kind of hawk,
[16] the little owl, the long-eared owl,
the white owl, [17] the desert owl,
the osprey, the cormorant, [18†] the stork,
any kind of heron,
the hoopoe, and the bat.

[19] All winged insects are unclean for you; they may not be eaten. [20] But you
may eat every clean flying creature.

[21†] "You are not to eat any carcass; you may give it to a temporary resident living within your gates, and he may eat it, or you may sell it to a foreigner. For you are a holy people belonging to the LORD your God. You must not boil a young goat in its mother's milk.

A Tenth for the LORD

[22] "Each year you are to set aside a tenth of all the produce grown in your
fields. [23] You are to eat a tenth of your grain, new wine, and oil, and the firstborn of your herd and flock, in the presence of •Yahweh your God at the place where He chooses to have His name dwell, so that you will always learn to •fear the LORD your God. [24] But if the distance is too great
for you to carry it, since the place where Yahweh your God chooses to put His name is too far away from you and since the LORD your God has blessed you, [25] then exchange it for money, take the money in your hand,
and go to the place the LORD your God chooses. [26] You may spend the
money on anything you want: cattle, sheep, wine, beer, or anything you desire. You are to feast there in the presence of the LORD your God and rejoice with your family. [27] Do not neglect the Levite within your gates,
since he has no portion or inheritance among you.

28 “At the end of every three years, bring a tenth of all your produce for
that year and store it within your gates. 29 Then the Levite, who has no
portion or inheritance among you, the foreigner, the fatherless, and the
widow within your gates may come, eat, and be satisfied. And the LORD
your God will bless you in all the work of your hands that you do.

DEUTERONOMY

Debts Canceled

15 “At the end of every seven years you must cancel debts. 2 This is how
to cancel debt: Every creditor [A] is to cancel what he has lent his
neighbor. He is not to collect anything from his neighbor or brother,
because the LORD’s release of debts has been proclaimed. 3† You may
collect something from a foreigner, but you must forgive whatever your
brother owes you.

4† “There will be no poor among you, however, because the LORD is
certain to bless you in the land the LORD your God is giving you to possess
as an inheritance — 5 if only you obey the LORD your God and are careful
to follow every one of these commands I am giving you today. 6 When the
LORD your God blesses you as He has promised you, you will lend to many
nations but not borrow; you will rule over many nations, but they will not
rule over you.

Lending to the Poor

7 “If there is a poor person among you, one of your brothers within any of
your gates in the land the LORD your God is giving you, you must not be
hardhearted or tightfisted toward your poor brother. 8 Instead, you are to
open your hand to him and freely loan him enough for whatever need he
has. 9 Be careful that there isn’t this wicked thought in your heart, ‘The
seventh year, the year of canceling debts, is near,’ and you are stingy toward
your poor brother and give him nothing. He will cry out to the LORD against
you, and you will be •guilty. 10 Give to him, and don’t have a stingy heart [B]
when you give, and because of this the LORD your God will bless you in all
your work and in everything you do. [C] 11 For there will never cease to be
poor people in the land; that is why I am commanding you, ‘You must
willingly open your hand to your afflicted and poor brother in your land.’

Release of Slaves

12† “If your fellow Hebrew, a man or woman, is sold to you and serves
you six years, you must set him free in the seventh year. 13 When you set
him free, do not send him away empty-handed. 14 Give generously to him
from your flock, your threshing floor, and your winepress. You are to give

him whatever the LORD your God has blessed you with. [15] Remember that
you were a slave in the land of Egypt and the LORD your God redeemed
you; that is why I am giving you this command today. [16] But if your slave
says to you, 'I don't want to leave you,' because he loves you and your
family, and is well off with you, [17†] take an awl and pierce through his ear
into the door, and he will become your slave for life. Also treat your female
slave the same way. [18] Do not regard it as a hardship [D] when you set him
free, because he worked for you six years — worth twice the wages of a
hired hand. Then the LORD your God will bless you in everything you do.

Consecration of Firstborn Animals

[19] "You must consecrate to the LORD your God every firstborn male
produced by your herd and flock. You are not to put the firstborn of your
oxen to work or shear the firstborn of your flock. [20] Each year you and your
family are to eat it before the LORD your God in the place the LORD chooses.
[21] But if there is a defect in the animal, if it is lame or blind or has any
serious defect, you must not sacrifice it to the LORD your God. [22] Eat it
within your gates; both the •unclean person and the •clean may eat it, as
though it were a gazelle or deer. [23] But you must not eat its blood; pour it on
the ground like water.

DEUTERONOMY

The Festival of Passover

16 “Observe the month of Abib and celebrate the •Passover to the LORD
your God, because the LORD your God brought you out of Egypt by
night in the month of Abib. 2 Sacrifice to •Yahweh your God a Passover
animal from the herd or flock in the place where the LORD chooses to have
His name dwell. 3† You must not eat leavened bread with it. For seven days
you are to eat unleavened bread with it, the bread of hardship — because
you left the land of Egypt in a hurry — so that you may remember for the
rest of your life the day you left the land of Egypt. 4 No yeast is to be found
anywhere in your territory for seven days, and none of the meat you
sacrifice in the evening of the first day is to remain until morning. 5 You are
not to sacrifice the Passover animal in any of the towns the LORD your God
is giving you. 6 You must only sacrifice the Passover animal at the place
where Yahweh your God chooses to have His name dwell. Do this in the
evening as the sun sets at the same time of day you departed from Egypt.
7 You are to cook and eat it in the place the LORD your God chooses, and
you are to return to your tents in the morning. 8 You must eat unleavened
bread for six days. On the seventh day there is to be a solemn assembly to
the LORD your God, and you must not do any work.

The Festival of Weeks

9 “You are to count seven weeks, counting the weeks from the time the
sickle is first put to the standing grain. 10 You are to celebrate the Festival
of Weeks to the LORD your God with a freewill offering that you give in
proportion to how the LORD your God has blessed you. 11 Rejoice before
Yahweh your God in the place where He chooses to have His name
dwell — you, your son and daughter, your male and female slave, the
Levite within your gates, as well as the foreigner, the fatherless, and the
widow among you. 12 Remember that you were slaves in Egypt; carefully
follow these statutes.

The Festival of Booths

13 “You are to celebrate the Festival of Booths for seven days when you
have gathered in everything from your threshing floor and winepress.
14 Rejoice during your festival — you, your son and daughter, your male

and female slave, as well as the Levite, the foreigner, the fatherless, and the widow within your gates. 15 You are to hold a seven-day festival for the LORD your God in the place He chooses, because the LORD your God will bless you in all your produce and in all the work of your hands, and you will have abundant joy.

16† "All your males are to appear three times a year before the LORD your God in the place He chooses: at the Festival of •Unleavened Bread, the Festival of Weeks, and the Festival of Booths. No one is to appear before the LORD empty-handed. 17 Everyone must appear with a gift suited to his means, according to the blessing the LORD your God has given you.

Appointing Judges and Officials

18 "Appoint judges and officials for your tribes in all your towns the LORD your God is giving you. They are to judge the people with righteous judgment. 19 Do not deny justice or show partiality to anyone. Do not accept a bribe, for it blinds the eyes of the wise and twists the words of the righteous. 20 Pursue justice and justice alone, so that you will live and possess the land the LORD your God is giving you.

Forbidden Worship

21 "Do not set up an •Asherah of any kind of wood next to the altar you will build for the LORD your God, 22† and do not set up a sacred pillar; the LORD your God hates them.

DEUTERONOMY

17 "You must not sacrifice to the LORD your God an ox or sheep with a
defect or any serious flaw, for that is detestable to the LORD your
God.

The Judicial Procedure for Idolatry

2 "If a man or woman among you in one of your towns that the LORD
your God will give you is discovered doing evil in the sight of the LORD
your God and violating His covenant 3 and has gone to worship other gods
by bowing down to the sun, moon, or all the stars in the sky — which I
have forbidden — 4 and if you are told or hear about it, you must
investigate it thoroughly. If the report turns out to be true that this detestable
thing has happened in Israel, 5† you must bring out to your •gates that man
or woman who has done this evil thing and stone them to death. 6 The one
condemned to die is to be executed on the testimony of two or three
witnesses. No one is to be executed on the testimony of a single witness.
7 The witnesses' hands are to be the first in putting him to death, and after
that, the hands of all the people. You must purge the evil from you.

Difficult Cases

8 "If a case is too difficult for you — concerning bloodshed, lawsuits, or
assaults — cases disputed at your gates, you must go up to the place the
LORD your God chooses. 9 You are to go to the Levitical priests and to the
judge who presides at that time. Ask, and they will give you a verdict in the
case. 10 You must abide by the verdict they give you at the place the LORD
chooses. Be careful to do exactly as they instruct you. 11 You must abide by
the instruction they give you and the verdict they announce to you. Do not
turn to the right or the left from the decision they declare to you. 12 The
person who acts arrogantly, refusing to listen either to the priest who stands
there serving the LORD your God or to the judge, must die. You must purge
the evil from Israel. 13 Then all the people will hear about it, be afraid, and
no longer behave arrogantly.

Appointing a King

[14] “When you enter the land the LORD your God is giving you, take
possession of it, live in it, and say, ‘I will set a king over me like all the
nations around me,’ [15†] you are to appoint over you the king the LORD your
God chooses. Appoint a king from your brothers. You are not to set a
foreigner over you, or one who is not of your people. [16†] However, he must
not acquire many horses for himself or send the people back to Egypt to
acquire many horses, for the LORD has told you, ‘You are never to go back
that way again.’ [17] He must not acquire many wives for himself so that his
heart won’t go astray. He must not acquire very large amounts of silver and
gold for himself. [18] When he is seated on his royal throne, he is to write a
copy of this instruction for himself on a scroll in the presence of the
Levitical priests. [19] It is to remain with him, and he is to read from it all the
days of his life, so that he may learn to •fear the LORD his God, to observe
all the words of this instruction, and to do these statutes. [20] Then his heart
will not be exalted above his countrymen, he will not turn from this
command to the right or the left, and he and his sons will continue ruling
many years [A] over Israel.

DEUTERONOMY

Provisions for the Levites

18 “The Levitical priests, the whole tribe of Levi, will have no portion or
inheritance with Israel. They will eat the LORD’s fire offerings; that is
their inheritance. 2† Although Levi has no inheritance among his brothers,
the LORD is his inheritance, as He promised him. 3 This is the priests’ share
from the people who offer a sacrifice, whether it is an ox, a sheep, or a goat;
the priests are to be given the shoulder, jaws, and stomach. 4 You are to give
him the •firstfruits of your grain, new wine, and oil, and the first sheared
wool of your flock. 5 For •Yahweh your God has chosen him and his sons
from all your tribes to stand and minister in His name from now on. [B]
6 When a Levite leaves one of your towns where he lives in Israel and
wants to go to the place the LORD chooses, 7 he may serve in the name of
Yahweh his God like all his fellow Levites who minister there in the
presence of the LORD. 8 They will eat equal portions besides what he has
received from the sale of the family estate. [C]

Occult Practices versus Prophetic Revelation

9† “When you enter the land the LORD your God is giving you, do not
imitate the detestable customs of those nations. 10 No one among you is to
make his son or daughter pass through the fire, practice •divination, tell
fortunes, interpret omens, practice sorcery, 11 cast spells, consult a medium
or a familiar spirit, or inquire of the dead. 12 Everyone who does these
things is detestable to the LORD, and the LORD your God is driving out the
nations before you because of these detestable things. 13 You must be
blameless before the LORD your God. 14 Though these nations you are about
to drive out listen to fortune-tellers and diviners, the LORD your God has not
permitted you to do this.

TWISTED SCRIPTURE

Deuteronomy 18:10-12

One of the earliest exhortations to the people of God about the dangers of occult involvement, this passage lists nine kinds of religious practices to avoid: (1) making a child sacrifice to false gods; (2)

predicting the future or seeking hidden treasures through the aid of divining rods, pendulums, and other occult means; (3) guiding one's affairs by the stars; (4) using Ouija boards, crystals, etc.; (5) practicing sorcery; (6) placing oneself into a trance or attempting to alter one's state of consciousness; (7) attending séances; (8) mixing potions; and (9) becoming a spiritualist medium, or one who attempts to communicate with the dead. Persons involved in occultism do not entrust their lives, present or future, to God but rather seek to rule their affairs through forbidden means.

Deuteronomy 18:18

Some Muslims believe this verse refers to the coming of Muhammad. But in Ac 7:37 Stephen unequivocally identifies Jesus as the fulfillment of this prophecy.

15 “The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from
among your own brothers. You must listen to him. 16 This is what you
requested from the LORD your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly
when you said, ‘Let us not continue to hear the voice of the LORD our God
or see this great fire any longer, so that we will not die! ’ 17 Then the LORD
said to me, ‘They have spoken well. 18 I will raise up for them a prophet
like you from among their brothers. I will put My words in his mouth, and
he will tell them everything I command him. 19 I will hold accountable
whoever does not listen to My words that he speaks in My name. 20† But
the prophet who dares to speak a message in My name that I have not
commanded him to speak, or who speaks in the name of other gods — that
prophet must die.’ 21 You may say to yourself, ‘How can we recognize a
message the LORD has not spoken? ’ 22† When a prophet speaks in the
LORD’s name, and the message does not come true or is not fulfilled, that is
a message the LORD has not spoken. The prophet has spoken it
presumptuously. Do not be afraid of him.

DEUTERONOMY

Cities of Refuge

19 [†]“When the Lord your God annihilates the nations whose land He is
giving you, so that you drive them out and live in their cities and
houses, 2 you are to set apart three cities for yourselves within the land the
Lord your God is giving you to possess. 3 You are to determine the
distances [A] and divide the land the Lord your God is granting you as an
inheritance into three regions, so that anyone who commits manslaughter
can flee to these cities. [B]

4 “Here is the law concerning a case of someone who kills a person and
flees there to save his life, having killed his neighbor accidentally without
previously hating him: 5 If he goes into the forest with his neighbor to cut
timber, and his hand swings the ax to chop down a tree, but the blade flies
off the handle and strikes his neighbor so that he dies, that person may flee
to one of these cities and live. 6[†] Otherwise, the avenger of blood in the heat
of his anger [C] might pursue the one who committed manslaughter, overtake
him because the distance is great, and strike him dead. Yet he did not
deserve to die, [D] since he did not previously hate his neighbor. 7 This is why
I am commanding you to set apart three cities for yourselves. 8 If the Lord
your God enlarges your territory as He swore to your fathers, and gives you
all the land He promised to give them — 9[†] provided you keep every one of
these commands I am giving you today and follow them, loving the Lord
your God and walking in His ways at all times — you are to add three more
cities to these three. 10 In this way, innocent blood will not be shed, and you
will not become •guilty of bloodshed in the land the Lord your God is
giving you as an inheritance. 11 But if someone hates his neighbor, lies in
ambush for him, attacks him, and strikes him fatally, and flees to one of
these cities, 12 the elders of his city must send for him, take him from there,
and hand him over to the avenger of blood and he will die. 13[†] You must not
look on him with pity but purge from Israel the guilt of shedding innocent
blood, and you will prosper.

Boundary Markers

14 “You must not move your neighbor’s boundary marker, established at
the start in the inheritance you will receive in the land the Lord your God is

giving you to possess.

Witnesses in Court

15 “One witness cannot establish any wrongdoing or sin against a person,
whatever that person has done. A fact must be established by the testimony
of two or three witnesses.

16 “If a malicious witness testifies against someone accusing him of a
crime, 17 the two people in the dispute must stand in the presence of the
LORD before the priests and judges in authority at that time. 18 The judges
are to make a careful investigation, and if the witness turns out to be a liar
who has falsely accused his brother, 19 you must do to him as he intended to
do to his brother. You must purge the evil from you. 20 Then everyone else
will hear and be afraid, and they will never again do anything evil like this
among you. 21† You must not show pity: life for life, eye for eye, tooth for
tooth, hand for hand, and foot for foot.

DEUTERONOMY

Rules for War

20 [†]“When you go out to war against your enemies and see horses,
chariots, and an army larger than yours, do not be afraid of them, for
the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, is with you.
2 When you are about to engage in battle, the priest is to come forward and
address the army. 3 He is to say to them: ‘Listen, Israel: Today you are
about to engage in battle with your enemies. Do not be cowardly. Do not be
afraid, alarmed, or terrified because of them. 4 For the LORD your God is the
One who goes with you to fight for you against your enemies to give you
victory.’

5[†] “The officers are to address the army, ‘Has any man built a new house
and not dedicated it? Let him leave and return home. Otherwise, he may die
in battle and another man dedicate it. 6 Has any man planted a vineyard and
not begun to enjoy its fruit? [A] Let him leave and return home. Otherwise he
may die in battle and another man enjoy its fruit. [B] 7 Has any man become
•engaged to a woman and not married her? Let him leave and return home.
Otherwise he may die in battle and another man marry her.’ 8 The officers
will continue to address the army and say, ‘Is there any man who is afraid
or cowardly? Let him leave and return home, so that his brothers’ hearts
won’t melt like his own.’ 9 When the officers have finished addressing the
army, they will appoint military commanders to lead it.

10 “When you approach a city to fight against it, you must make an offer
of peace. 11[†] If it accepts your offer of peace and opens its gates to you, all
the people found in it will become forced laborers for you and serve you.
12 However, if it does not make peace with you but wages war against you,
lay siege to it. 13 When the LORD your God hands it over to you, you must
strike down all its males with the sword. 14 But you may take the women,
children, animals, and whatever else is in the city — all its spoil — as
plunder. You may enjoy the spoil of your enemies that the LORD your God
has given you. 15 This is how you are to treat all the cities that are far away
from you and are not among the cities of these nations. 16[†] However, you
must not let any living thing survive among the cities of these people the
LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance. 17 You must •completely
destroy them — the Hittite, Amorite, Canaanite, Perizzite, Hivite, and

Jebusite — as the LORD your God has commanded you, [18] so that they won't teach you to do all the detestable things they do for their gods, and you sin against the LORD your God.

[19]† "When you lay siege to a city for a long time, fighting against it in order to capture it, you must not destroy its trees by putting an ax to them, because you can get food from them. You must not cut them down. Are trees of the field human, to come under siege by you? [20] But you may destroy the trees that you know do not produce food. You may cut them down to build siege works against the city that is waging war against you, until it falls.

DEUTERONOMY

Unsolved Murders

21 “If a murder victim is found lying in a field in the land the LORD your
God is giving you to possess, and it is not known who killed him,
2 your elders and judges must come out and measure the distance from the
victim to the nearby cities. 3† The elders of the city nearest to the victim are
to get a young cow that has not been yoked or used for work. 4 The elders
of that city will bring the cow down to a continually flowing stream, to a
place not tilled or sown, and they will break its neck there by the stream.
5 Then the priests, the sons of Levi, will come forward, for •Yahweh your
God has chosen them to serve Him and pronounce blessings in His name,
and they are to give a ruling in [A] every dispute and case of assault. 6 All the
elders of the city nearest to the victim will wash their hands by the stream
over the young cow whose neck has been broken. 7 They will declare, ‘Our
hands did not shed this blood; our eyes did not see it. 8 LORD, forgive Your
people Israel You redeemed, and do not hold the shedding of innocent blood
against them.’ Then they will be absolved of responsibility for bloodshed.
9 You must purge from yourselves the •guilt of shedding innocent blood, for
you will be doing what is right in the LORD’s sight.

Fair Treatment of Captured Women

10 “When you go to war against your enemies and the LORD your God
hands them over to you and you take some of them prisoner, and 11† if you
see a beautiful woman among the captives, desire her, and want to take her
as your wife, 12 you are to bring her into your house. She must shave her
head, trim her nails, 13 remove the clothes she was wearing when she was
taken prisoner, live in your house, and mourn for her father and mother a
full month. After that, you may have sexual relations with her and be her
husband, and she will be your wife. 14 Then if you are not satisfied with her,
you are to let her go where she wants, but you must not sell her for money
or treat her as merchandise, [B] because you have humiliated her.

The Right of the Firstborn

15† “If a man has two wives, one loved and the other unloved, and both
the loved and the unloved bear him sons, and if the unloved wife has the

firstborn son, 16† when that man gives what he has to his sons as an inheritance, he is not to show favoritism to the son of the loved wife as his firstborn over the firstborn of the unloved wife. 17† He must acknowledge the firstborn, the son of the unloved wife, by giving him two shares [C] of his estate, for he is the firstfruits of his virility; he has the rights of the firstborn.

A Rebellious Son

18 “If a man has a stubborn and rebellious son who does not obey his father or mother and doesn’t listen to them even after they discipline him,
19 his father and mother must take hold of him and bring him to the elders of his city, to the •gate of his hometown. 20 They will say to the elders of his city, ‘This son of ours is stubborn and rebellious; he doesn’t obey us. He’s a glutton and a drunkard.’ 21† Then all the men of his city will stone him to death. You must purge the evil from you, and all Israel will hear and be afraid.

Display of Executed People

22 “If anyone is found guilty of an offense deserving the death penalty and is executed, and you hang his body on a tree, 23† you are not to leave his corpse on the tree overnight but are to bury him that day, for anyone hung on a tree is under God’s curse. You must not defile the land the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance.

DEUTERONOMY

Caring for Your Brother's Property

22 †“If you see your brother’s ox or sheep straying, you must not ignore
it; make sure you return it to your brother. 2 If your brother does not
live near you or you don’t know him, you are to bring the animal to your
home to remain with you until your brother comes looking for it; then you
can return it to him. 3 Do the same for his donkey, his garment, or anything
your brother has lost and you have found. You must not ignore it. 4 If you
see your brother’s donkey or ox fallen down on the road, you must not
ignore it; you must help him lift it up.

Preserving Natural Distinctions

5† “A woman is not to wear male clothing, and a man is not to put on a
woman’s garment, for everyone who does these things is detestable to the
LORD your God.

6 “If you come across a bird’s nest with chicks or eggs, either in a tree or
on the ground along the road, and the mother is sitting on the chicks or
eggs, you must not take the mother along with the young. 7 You may take
the young for yourself, but be sure to let the mother go free, so that you
may prosper and live long. 8 If you build a new house, make a railing
around your roof, so that you don’t bring bloodguilt on your house if
someone falls from it. 9† Do not plant your vineyard with two types of seed;
otherwise, the entire harvest, both the crop you plant and the produce of the
vineyard, will be defiled. 10 Do not plow with an ox and a donkey together.
11 Do not wear clothes made of both wool and linen. 12 Make tassels on the
four corners of the outer garment you wear.

ARTICLE
Does the Bible Affirm That Animals Have Rights? ⇒

Violations of Proper Sexual Conduct

13 “If a man marries a woman, has sexual relations with her, and comes to
hate her, 14 and accuses her of shameful conduct, and gives her a bad name,
saying, ‘I married this woman and was intimate with her, but I didn’t find
any evidence of her virginity,’ 15 the young woman’s father and mother will
take the evidence of her virginity and bring it to the city elders at the •gate.
16 The young woman’s father will say to the elders, ‘I gave my daughter to
this man as a wife, but he hates her. 17 He has accused her of shameful
conduct, saying: “I didn’t find any evidence of your daughter’s virginity,”
but here is the evidence of my daughter’s virginity.’ They will spread out
the cloth before the city elders. 18 Then the elders of that city will take the
man and punish him. 19 They will also fine him 100 silver shekels and give
them to the young woman’s father, because that man gave an Israelite virgin
a bad name. She will remain his wife; he cannot divorce her as long as he
lives. 20 But if this accusation is true and no evidence of the young woman’s
virginity is found, 21† they will bring the woman to the door of her father’s
house, and the men of her city will stone her to death. For she has
committed an outrage in Israel by being promiscuous in her father’s house.
You must purge the evil from you.

22 “If a man is discovered having sexual relations with another man’s
wife, both the man who had sex with the woman and the woman must die.
You must purge the evil from Israel. 23 If there is a young woman who is a
virgin •engaged to a man, and another man encounters her in the city and
has sex with her, 24 you must take the two of them out to the gate of that
city and stone them to death — the young woman because she did not cry
out in the city and the man because he has violated his neighbor’s fiancée.
You must purge the evil from you. 25† But if the man encounters an engaged
woman in the open country, and he seizes and rapes her, only the man who
raped her must die. 26 Do nothing to the young woman, because she is not
•guilty of an offense deserving death. This case is just like one in which a
man attacks his neighbor and murders him. 27 When he found her in the
field, the engaged woman cried out, but there was no one to rescue her. 28 If
a man encounters a young woman, a virgin who is not engaged, takes hold
of her and rapes her, and they are discovered, 29 the man who raped her
must give the young woman’s father 50 silver shekels, and she must

become his wife because he violated her. He cannot divorce her as long as he lives.

30† “A man is not to marry his father’s wife; he must not violate his father’s marriage bed. ,

DEUTERONOMY

Exclusion and Inclusion

23 †“No man whose testicles have been crushed [A] or whose penis has
been cut off may enter the LORD’s assembly. 2† No one of illegitimate
birth may enter the LORD’s assembly; none of his descendants, even to the
tenth generation, may enter the LORD’s assembly. 3† No Ammonite or
Moabite may enter the LORD’s assembly; none of their descendants, even to
the tenth generation, may ever enter the LORD’s assembly. 4 This is because
they did not meet you with food and water on the journey after you came
out of Egypt, and because Balaam son of Beor from Pethor in Aram-
naharaim was hired to curse you. 5 Yet the LORD your God would not listen
to Balaam, but He turned the curse into a blessing for you because the LORD
your God loves you. 6 Never seek their peace or prosperity as long as you
live. 7† Do not despise an Edomite, because he is your brother. Do not
despise an Egyptian, because you were a foreign resident in his land. 8 The
children born to them in the third generation may enter the LORD’s
assembly.

Cleanliness of the Camp

9 “When you are encamped against your enemies, be careful to avoid
anything offensive. 10 If there is a man among you who is •unclean because
of a bodily emission during the night, he must go outside the camp; he may
not come anywhere inside the camp. 11 When evening approaches, he must
wash with water, and when the sun sets he may come inside the camp.
12 You must have a place outside the camp and go there to relieve yourself.
13† You must have a digging tool in your equipment; when you relieve
yourself, dig a hole with it and cover up your excrement. 14 For the LORD
your God walks throughout your camp to protect you and deliver your
enemies to you; so your encampments must be holy. He must not see
anything improper among you or He will turn away from you.

Fugitive Slaves

15† “Do not return a slave to his master when he has escaped from his
master to you. 16 Let him live among you wherever he wants within your
gates. Do not mistreat him.

Cult Prostitution Forbidden

17[†] “No Israelite woman is to be a cult prostitute, and no Israelite man is
to be a cult prostitute. 18 Do not bring a female prostitute’s wages or a male
prostitute’s [B] earnings into the house of the LORD your God to fulfill any
vow, because both are detestable to the LORD your God.

Interest on Loans

19 “Do not charge your brother interest on money, food, or anything that
can earn interest. 20[†] You may charge a foreigner interest, but you must not
charge your brother interest, so that the LORD your God may bless you in
everything you do [C] in the land you are entering to possess.

Keeping Vows

21 “If you make a vow to the LORD your God, do not be slow to keep it,
because He will require it of you, and it will be counted against you as sin.
22 But if you refrain from making a vow, it will not be counted against you
as sin. 23 Be careful to do whatever comes from your lips, because you have
freely vowed what you promised [D] to the LORD your God.

Neighbor’s Crops

24[†] “When you enter your neighbor’s vineyard, you may eat as many
grapes as you want until you are full, but you must not put any in your
container. 25 When you enter your neighbor’s standing grain, you may pluck
heads of grain with your hand, but you must not put a sickle to your
neighbor’s grain.

DEUTERONOMY

Marriage and Divorce Laws

24 [†]“If a man marries a woman, but she becomes displeasing to him
because he finds something improper about her, he may write her a
divorce certificate, hand it to her, and send her away from his house. 2 If
after leaving his house she goes and becomes another man’s wife, 3 and the
second man hates her, writes her a divorce certificate, hands it to her, and
sends her away from his house or if he [A] dies, 4 the first husband who sent
her away may not marry her again after she has been defiled, because that
would be detestable to the LORD. You must not bring •guilt on the land the
LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance.

5 “When a man takes a bride, he must not go out with the army or be
liable for any duty. He is free to stay at home for one year, so that he can
bring joy to the wife he has married.

Safeguarding Life

6[†] “Do not take a pair of millstones or an upper millstone as security for a
debt, because that is like taking a life as security.

7 “If a man is discovered kidnapping one of his Israelite brothers,
whether he treats him as a slave or sells him, the kidnapper must die. You
must purge the evil from you.

8 “Be careful in a case of infectious skin disease, following carefully
everything the Levitical priests instruct you to do. Be careful to do as I have
commanded them. 9[†] Remember what the LORD your God did to Miriam on
the journey after you left Egypt.

Consideration for People in Need

10 “When you make a loan of any kind to your neighbor, do not enter his
house to collect what he offers as security. 11 You must stand outside while
the man you are making the loan to brings the security out to you. 12 If he is
a poor man, you must not sleep in the garment he has given as security.
13 Be sure to return it [B] to him at sunset. Then he will sleep in it and bless

you, and this will be counted as righteousness to you before the LORD your
God.

[14] "Do not oppress a hired hand who is poor and needy, whether one of
your brothers or one of the foreigners residing within a town [C] in your land.
[15] You are to pay him his wages each day before the sun sets, because he is
poor and depends on them. Otherwise he will cry out to the LORD against
you, and you will be held guilty.

[16†] "Fathers are not to be put to death for their children or children for
their fathers; each person will be put to death for his own sin. [17] Do not
deny justice to a foreigner or fatherless child, and do not take a widow's
garment as security. [18] Remember that you were a slave in Egypt, and the
LORD your God redeemed you from there. Therefore I am commanding you
to do this.

[19†] "When you reap the harvest in your field, and you forget a sheaf in
the field, do not go back to get it. It is to be left for the foreigner, the
fatherless, and the widow, so that the LORD your God may bless you in all
the work of your hands. [20] When you knock down the fruit from your olive
tree, you must not go over the branches again. What remains will be for the
foreigner, the fatherless, and the widow. [21] When you gather the grapes of
your vineyard, you must not glean what is left. What remains will be for the
foreigner, the fatherless, and the widow. [22] Remember that you were a slave
in the land of Egypt. Therefore I am commanding you to do this.

DEUTERONOMY

Fairness and Mercy

25 “If there is a dispute between men, they are to go to court, and the judges will hear their case. They will clear the innocent and condemn the •guilty. [2†] If the guilty party deserves to be flogged, the judge will make him lie down and be flogged in his presence with the number of lashes appropriate for his crime. [3†] He may be flogged with 40 lashes, but no more. Otherwise, if he is flogged with more lashes than these, your brother will be degraded in your sight.

[4†] “Do not muzzle an ox while it treads out grain.

Preserving the Family Line

[5†] “When brothers live on the same property [A] and one of them dies without a son, the wife of the dead man may not marry a stranger outside the family. Her brother-in-law is to take her as his wife, have sexual relations with her, and perform the duty of a brother-in-law for her. [6] The first son she bears will carry on the name of the dead brother, so his name will not be blotted out from Israel. [7] But if the man doesn’t want to marry his sister-in-law, she must go to the elders at the city •gate and say, ‘My brother-in-law refuses to preserve his brother’s name in Israel. He isn’t willing to perform the duty of a brother-in-law for me.’ [8] The elders of his city will summon him and speak with him. If he persists and says, ‘I don’t want to marry her,’ [9†] then his sister-in-law will go up to him in the sight of the elders, remove his sandal from his foot, and spit in his face. Then she will declare, ‘This is what is done to a man who will not build up his brother’s house.’ [10] And his family name in Israel will be called ‘The house of the man whose sandal was removed.’

[11] “If two men are fighting with each other, and the wife of one steps in to rescue her husband from the one striking him, and she puts out her hand and grabs his genitals, [12†] you are to cut off her hand. You must not show pity.

Honest Weights and Measures

[13] “You must not have two different weights [B] in your bag, one heavy
and one light. [14] You must not have two differing dry measures in your
house, a larger and a smaller. [15] You must have a full and honest weight, a
full and honest dry measure, so that you may live long in the land the LORD
your God is giving you. [16†] For everyone who does such things and acts
unfairly is detestable to the LORD your God.

Revenge on the Amalekites

[17†] “Remember what the Amalekites did to you on the journey after you
left Egypt. [18] They met you along the way and attacked all your stragglers
from behind when you were tired and weary. They did not •fear God.
[19] When the LORD your God gives you rest from all the enemies around you
in the land the LORD your God is giving you to possess as an inheritance,
blot out the memory of Amalek under heaven. Do not forget.

DEUTERONOMY

Giving the Firstfruits

26 †“When you enter the land the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance, and you take possession of it and live in it, 2 you must take some of the first of all the land’s produce that you harvest from the land •Yahweh your God is giving you and put it in a container. Then go to the place where the LORD your God chooses to have His name dwell. 3 When you come before the priest who is serving at that time, you must say to him, ‘Today I acknowledge to the LORD your God that I have entered the land the LORD swore to our fathers to give us.’

4 “Then the priest will take the container from your hand and place it before the altar of the LORD your God. 5† You are to respond by saying in the presence of the LORD your God:

> My father was a wandering Aramean. He went down to Egypt with a few people and lived there. There he became a great, powerful, and populous nation. 6 But the Egyptians mistreated and afflicted us, and forced us to do hard labor. 7 So we called out to Yahweh, the God of our fathers, and the LORD heard our cry and saw our misery, hardship, and oppression. 8 Then the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a strong hand and an outstretched arm, with terrifying power, and with signs and wonders. 9 He led us to this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey. 10 I have now brought the first of the land’s produce that You, LORD, have given me.

You will then place the container before the LORD your God and bow down to Him. 11 You, the Levite, and the foreign resident among you will rejoice in all the good things the LORD your God has given you and your household.

The Tenth in the Third Year

12† “When you have finished paying all the tenth of your produce in the third year, the year of the tenth, you are to give it to the Levite, the foreigner, the fatherless, and the widow, so that they may eat in your towns and be satisfied. 13 Then you will say in the presence of the LORD your God:

I have taken the consecrated portion out of my house; I have also
given it to the Levite, the foreigner, the fatherless, and the widow,
according to all the commands You gave me. I have not violated
or forgotten Your commands. [14] I have not eaten any of it while in
mourning, or removed any of it while •unclean, or offered any of
it for the dead. I have obeyed the LORD my God; I have done all
You commanded me. [15] Look down from Your holy dwelling,
from heaven, and bless Your people Israel and the land You have
given us as You swore to our fathers, a land flowing with milk and
honey.

Covenant Summary

[16] "The LORD your God is commanding you this day to follow these
statutes and ordinances. You must be careful to follow them with all your
heart and all your soul. [17] Today you have affirmed that the LORD is your
God and that you will walk in His ways, keep His statutes, commands, and
ordinances, and obey Him. [18] And today the LORD has affirmed that you are
His special people as He promised you, that you are to keep all His
commands, [19†] that He will elevate you to praise, fame, and glory above all
the nations He has made, and that you will be a holy people to the LORD
your God as He promised."

DEUTERONOMY

The Law Written on Stones

27 Moses and the elders of Israel commanded the people, “Keep every
command I am giving you today. 2† At the time you cross the Jordan
into the land the LORD your God is giving you, you must set up large stones
and cover them with plaster. 3† Write all the words of this law on the stones
after you cross to enter the land the LORD your God is giving you, a land
flowing with milk and honey, as •Yahweh, the God of your fathers, has
promised you. 4† When you have crossed the Jordan, you are to set up these
stones on Mount Ebal, as I am commanding you today, and you are to cover
them with plaster. 5† Build an altar of stones there to the LORD your
God — you must not use any iron tool on them. 6 Use uncut stones to build
the altar of the LORD your God and offer •burnt offerings to the LORD your
God on it. 7 There you are to sacrifice •fellowship offerings, eat, and rejoice
in the presence of the LORD your God. 8 Write clearly all the words of this
law on the plastered stones.”

The Covenant Curses

9† Moses and the Levitical priests spoke to all Israel, “Be silent, Israel,
and listen! This day you have become the people of the LORD your God.
10 Obey the LORD your God and follow His commands and statutes I am
giving you today.”

11 On that day Moses commanded the people, 12† “When you have
crossed the Jordan, these tribes will stand on Mount Gerizim to bless the
people: Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Joseph, and Benjamin. 13 And these
tribes will stand on Mount Ebal to deliver the curse: Reuben, Gad, Asher,
Zebulun, Dan, and Naphtali. 14 The Levites will proclaim in a loud voice to
every Israelite:

15† ‘The person who makes a carved idol or cast image, which is
detestable to the LORD, the work of a craftsman, and sets it up in secret is
cursed.’
And all the people will reply, ‘•Amen! ’
16† ‘The one who dishonors his father or mother is cursed.’

And all the people will say, ‘Amen! ’
17† ‘The one who moves his neighbor’s boundary marker is cursed.’
And all the people will say, ‘Amen! ’
18 ‘The one who leads a blind person astray on the road is cursed.’
And all the people will say, ‘Amen! ’
19 ‘The one who denies justice to a foreigner, a fatherless child, or a widow is cursed.’
And all the people will say, ‘Amen! ’
20† ‘The one who sleeps with his father’s wife is cursed, for he has violated his father’s marriage bed.’ [A]
And all the people will say, ‘Amen! ’
21† ‘The one who has sexual intercourse with any animal is cursed.’
And all the people will say, ‘Amen! ’
22 ‘The one who sleeps with his sister, whether his father’s daughter or his mother’s daughter is cursed.’
And all the people will say, ‘Amen! ’
23 ‘The one who sleeps with his mother-in-law is cursed.’
And all the people will say, ‘Amen! ’
24 ‘The one who secretly kills his neighbor is cursed.’
And all the people will say, ‘Amen! ’
25 ‘The one who accepts a bribe to kill an innocent person is cursed.’
And all the people will say, ‘Amen! ’
26 ‘Anyone who does not put the words of this law into practice is cursed.’
And all the people will say, ‘Amen! ’

DEUTERONOMY

Blessings for Obedience

28 [†]“Now if you faithfully obey the LORD your God and are careful to
follow all His commands I am giving you today, the LORD your God
will put you far above all the nations of the earth. [2] All these blessings will
come and overtake you, because you obey the LORD your God:

[3] You will be blessed in the city
and blessed in the country.
[4] Your descendants [A] will be blessed,
and your land’s produce,
and the offspring of your livestock,
including the young of your herds
and the newborn of your flocks.
[5] Your basket and kneading bowl will be blessed.
[6] You will be blessed when you come in
and blessed when you go out.

[7] “The LORD will cause the enemies who rise up against you to be
defeated before you. They will march out against you from one direction
but flee from you in seven directions. [8] The LORD will grant you a blessing
on your storehouses and on everything you do; [B] He will bless you in the
land the LORD your God is giving you. [9] The LORD will establish you as His
holy people, as He swore to you, if you obey the commands of the LORD
your God and walk in His ways. [10] Then all the peoples of the earth will see
that you are called by •Yahweh’s name, and they will stand in awe of you.
[11] The LORD will make you prosper abundantly with children, [C] the
offspring of your livestock, and your land’s produce in the land the LORD
swore to your fathers to give you. [12†] The LORD will open for you His
abundant storehouse, the sky, to give your land rain in its season and to
bless all the work of your hands. You will lend to many nations, but you
will not borrow. [13] The LORD will make you the head and not the tail; you
will only move upward and never downward if you listen to the LORD your
God’s commands I am giving you today and are careful to follow them.
[14] Do not turn aside to the right or the left from all the things I am
commanding you today, and do not go after other gods to worship them.

Curses for Disobedience

15† “But if you do not obey the LORD your God by carefully following all His commands and statutes I am giving you today, all these curses will come and overtake you:

16 You will be cursed in the city
and cursed in the country.
17 Your basket and kneading bowl will be cursed.
18 Your descendants [D] will be cursed,
and your land’s produce,
the young of your herds,
and the newborn of your flocks.
19† You will be cursed when you come in
and cursed when you go out.

20† The LORD will send against you curses, confusion, and rebuke in everything you do [E] until you are destroyed and quickly perish, because of the wickedness of your actions in abandoning Me. 21 The LORD will make pestilence cling to you until He has exterminated you from the land you are entering to possess. 22 The LORD will afflict you with wasting disease, fever, inflammation, burning heat, drought, [F] blight, and mildew; these will pursue you until you perish. 23† The sky above you will be bronze, and the earth beneath you iron. 24 The LORD will turn the rain of your land into falling [G] dust; it will descend on you from the sky until you are destroyed. 25 The LORD will cause you to be defeated before your enemies. You will march out against them from one direction but flee from them in seven directions. You will be an object of horror to all the kingdoms of the earth. 26† Your corpses will be food for all the birds of the sky and the wild animals of the land, with no one to scare them away.

27 “The LORD will afflict you with the boils of Egypt, tumors, a festering rash, and scabies, from which you cannot be cured. 28 The LORD will afflict you with madness, blindness, and mental confusion, 29 so that at noon you will grope as a blind man gropes in the dark. You will not be successful in

anything you do. You will only be oppressed and robbed continually, and no
one will help you. 30† You will become •engaged to a woman, but another
man will rape her. You will build a house but not live in it. You will plant a
vineyard but not enjoy its fruit. 31 Your ox will be slaughtered before your
eyes, but you will not eat any of it. Your donkey will be taken away from
you and not returned to you. Your flock will be given to your enemies, and
no one will help you. 32 Your sons and daughters will be given to another
people, while your eyes grow weary looking for them every day. But you
will be powerless to do anything. [H] 33 A people you don't know will eat
your land's produce and everything you have labored for. You will only be
oppressed and crushed continually. 34 You will be driven mad by what you
see. 35 The LORD will afflict you with painful and incurable boils on your
knees and thighs — from the sole of your foot to the top of your head.

36† "The LORD will bring you and your king that you have appointed to a
nation neither you nor your fathers have known, and there you will worship
other gods, of wood and stone. 37 You will become an object of horror,
scorn, and ridicule among all the peoples where the LORD will drive you.

38 "You will sow much seed in the field but harvest little, because locusts
will devour it. 39 You will plant and cultivate vineyards but not drink the
wine or gather the grapes, because worms will eat them. 40 You will have
olive trees throughout your territory but not anoint yourself with oil,
because your olives will drop off. 41 You will father sons and daughters, but
they will not remain yours, because they will be taken prisoner. 42 Whirring
insects will take possession of all your trees and your land's produce. 43 The
foreign resident among you will rise higher and higher above you, while
you sink lower and lower. 44 He will lend to you, but you won't lend to him.
He will be the head, and you will be the tail.

45 "All these curses will come, pursue, and overtake you until you are
destroyed, since you did not obey the LORD your God and keep the
commands and statutes He gave you. 46† These curses will be a sign and a
wonder against you and your descendants forever. 47 Because you didn't
serve the LORD your God with joy and a cheerful heart, even though you

had an abundance of everything, [48] you will serve your enemies the LORD
will send against you, in famine, thirst, nakedness, and a lack of everything.
He will place an iron yoke on your neck until He has destroyed you. [49] The
LORD will bring a nation from far away, from the ends of the earth, to swoop
down on you like an eagle, a nation whose language you don't understand,
[50] a ruthless nation, [I] showing no respect for the old and not sparing the
young. [51] They will eat the offspring of your livestock and your land's
produce until you are destroyed. They will leave you no grain, new wine,
oil, young of your herds, or newborn of your flocks until they cause you to
perish. [52] They will besiege you within all your gates until your high and
fortified walls, that you trust in, come down throughout your land. They
will besiege you within all your gates throughout the land the LORD your
God has given you.

[53†] "You will eat your children, [J] the flesh of your sons and daughters the
LORD your God has given you during the siege and hardship your enemy
imposes on you. [54] The most sensitive and refined man among you will
look grudgingly [K] at his brother, the wife he embraces, [L] and the rest of his
children, [55] refusing to share with any of them his children's flesh that he
will eat because he has nothing left during the siege and hardship your
enemy imposes on you in all your towns. [56†] The most sensitive and refined
woman among you, who would not venture to set the sole of her foot on the
ground because of her refinement and sensitivity, will begrudge the husband
she embraces, her son, and her daughter, [57] the afterbirth that comes out
from between her legs and the children she bears, because she will secretly
eat them for lack of anything else during the siege and hardship your enemy
imposes on you within your gates.

[58] "If you are not careful to obey all the words of this law, which are
written in this scroll, by •fearing this glorious and awesome
name — Yahweh, your God — [59] He will bring extraordinary plagues on
you and your descendants, severe and lasting plagues, and terrible and
chronic sicknesses. [60] He will afflict you again with all the diseases of
Egypt, which you dreaded, and they will cling to you. [61] The LORD will also
afflict you with every sickness and plague not recorded in the book of this

law, until you are destroyed. 62† Though you were as numerous as the stars
of the sky, you will be left with only a few people, because you did not
obey the LORD your God. 63 Just as the LORD was glad to cause you to
prosper and to multiply you, so He will also be glad to cause you to perish
and to destroy you. You will be deported from the land you are entering to
possess. 64† Then the LORD will scatter you among all peoples from one end
of the earth to the other, and there you will worship other gods, of wood and
stone, which neither you nor your fathers have known. 65 You will find no
peace among those nations, and there will be no resting place for the sole
of your foot. There the LORD will give you a trembling heart, failing eyes,
and a despondent spirit. 66 Your life will hang in doubt before you. You will
be in dread night and day, never certain of survival. 67 In the morning you
will say, 'If only it were evening! ' and in the evening you will say, 'If only
it were morning! ' — because of the dread you will have in your heart and
because of what you will see. 68† The LORD will take you back in ships to
Egypt by a route that I said you would never see again. There you will sell
yourselves to your enemies as male and female slaves, but no one will buy
you."

DEUTERONOMY

Chapter 29 *Renewing the Covenant*

1These are the words of the covenant the LORD commanded Moses to make
with the Israelites in the land of Moab, in addition to the covenant He had
made with them at Horeb. 2 Moses summoned all Israel and said to them,
“You have seen with your own eyes everything the LORD did in Egypt to
Pharaoh, to all his officials, and to his entire land. 3 You saw with your own
eyes the great trials and those great signs and wonders. 4† Yet to this day
the LORD has not given you a mind to understand, eyes to see, or ears to
hear. 5 I led you 40 years in the wilderness; your clothes and the sandals on
your feet did not wear out; 6 you did not eat bread or drink wine or
beer — so that you might know that I am •Yahweh your God. 7† When you
reached this place, Sihon king of Heshbon and Og king of Bashan came out
against us in battle, but we defeated them. 8 We took their land and gave it
as an inheritance to the Reubenites, the Gadites, and half the tribe of
Manasseh. 9 Therefore, observe the words of this covenant and follow
them, so that you will succeed in everything you do.

10 “All of you are standing today before the LORD your God — your
leaders, tribes, elders, officials, all the men of Israel, 11 your children, your
wives, and the foreigners in your camps who cut your wood and draw your
water — 12 so that you may enter into the covenant of the LORD your God,
which He is making with you today, so that you may enter into His oath
13† and so that He may establish you today as His people and He may be
your God as He promised you and as He swore to your fathers Abraham,
Isaac, and Jacob. 14 I am making this covenant and this oath not only with
you, 15† but also with those who are standing here with us today in the
presence of the LORD our God and with those who are not here today.

Abandoning the Covenant

16 “Indeed, you know how we lived in the land of Egypt and passed
through the nations where you traveled. 17 You saw their detestable images
and idols made of wood, stone, silver, and gold, which were among them.

[18] Be sure there is no man, woman, clan, or tribe among you today whose
heart turns away from the LORD our God to go and worship the gods of
those nations. Be sure there is no root among you bearing poisonous and
bitter fruit. [19] When someone hears the words of this oath, he may consider
himself exempt, [A] thinking, 'I will have peace even though I follow my
own stubborn heart.' This will lead to the destruction of the well-watered
land as well as the dry land. [20†] The LORD will not be willing to forgive him.
Instead, His anger and jealousy will burn against that person, and every
curse written in this scroll will descend on him. The LORD will blot out his
name under heaven, [21] and single him out for harm from all the tribes of
Israel, according to all the curses of the covenant written in this book of the
law.

[22] "Future generations of your children who follow you and the foreigner
who comes from a distant country will see the plagues of the land and the
sicknesses the LORD has inflicted on it. [23] All its soil will be a burning waste
of sulfur and salt, unsown, producing nothing, with no plant growing on it,
just like the fall of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboiim, which the
LORD demolished in His fierce anger. [24] All the nations will ask, 'Why has
the LORD done this to this land? Why this great outburst of anger? ' [25] Then
people will answer, 'It is because they abandoned the covenant of Yahweh,
the God of their fathers, which He had made with them when He brought
them out of the land of Egypt. [26] They began to worship other gods, bowing
down to gods they had not known — gods that the LORD had not permitted
them to worship. [27] Therefore the LORD's anger burned against this land,
and He brought every curse written in this book on it. [28†] The LORD
uprooted them from their land in His anger, rage, and great wrath, and
threw them into another land where they are today.' [29] The hidden things
belong to the LORD our God, but the revealed things belong to us and our
children forever, so that we may follow all the words of this law.

DEUTERONOMY

Returning to the Lord

30 “When all these things happen to you — the blessings and curses I
have set before you — and you come to your senses while you are in
all the nations where the LORD your God has driven you, [2] and you and your
children return to the LORD your God and obey Him with all your heart and
all your soul by doing [A] everything I am giving you today, [3] then He will
restore your fortunes, [B] have compassion on you, and gather you again from
all the peoples where the LORD your God has scattered you. [4] Even if your
exiles are at the ends of the earth, [C] He will gather you and bring you back
from there. [5] The LORD your God will bring you into the land your fathers
possessed, and you will take possession of it. He will cause you to prosper
and multiply you more than He did your fathers. [6†] The LORD your God will
circumcise your heart and the hearts of your descendants, and you will love
Him with all your heart and all your soul so that you will live. [7] The LORD
your God will put all these curses on your enemies who hate and persecute
you. [8] Then you will again obey Him and follow all His commands I am
giving you today. [9] The LORD your God will make you prosper abundantly
in all the work of your hands with children, [D] the offspring of your
livestock, and your land’s produce. Indeed, the LORD will again delight in
your prosperity, as He delighted in that of your fathers, [10] when you obey
the LORD your God by keeping His commands and statutes that are written
in this book of the law and return to Him with all your heart and all your
soul.

Choose Life

[11] “This command that I give you today is certainly not too difficult or
beyond your reach. [12] It is not in heaven so that you have to ask, ‘Who will
go up to heaven, get it for us, and proclaim it to us so that we may follow
it? ’ [13] And it is not across the sea so that you have to ask, ‘Who will cross
the sea, get it for us, and proclaim it to us so that we may follow it? ’ [14] But
the message is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, so that you
may follow it. [15] See, today I have set before you life and prosperity, death
and adversity. [16] For I am commanding you today to love the LORD your
God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commands, statutes, and
ordinances, so that you may live and multiply, and the LORD your God may

bless you in the land you are entering to possess. [17] But if your heart turns
away and you do not listen and you are led astray to bow down to other
gods and worship them, [18] I tell you today that you will certainly perish and
will not live long in the land you are entering to possess across the Jordan.
[19][†] I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you today that I have set
before you life and death, blessing and curse. Choose life so that you and
your descendants may live, [20] love the LORD your God, obey Him, and
remain faithful [E] to Him. For He is your life, and He will prolong your life
in the land the LORD swore to give to your fathers Abraham, Isaac, and
Jacob.”

DEUTERONOMY

Joshua Takes Moses' Place

31 Then Moses continued to speak these words to all Israel, 2† saying, “I
am now 120 years old; I can no longer act as your leader. [A] The Lord
has told me, ‘You will not cross this Jordan.’ 3 The Lord your God is the
One who will cross ahead of you. He will destroy these nations before you,
and you will drive them out. Joshua is the one who will cross ahead of you,
as the Lord has said. 4 The Lord will deal with them as He did Sihon and
Og, the kings of the Amorites, and their land when He destroyed them.
5 The Lord will deliver them over to you, and you must do to them exactly
as I have commanded you. 6 Be strong and courageous; don’t be terrified
or afraid of them. For it is the Lord your God who goes with you; He will
not leave you or forsake you.”

7 Moses then summoned Joshua and said to him in the sight of all Israel,
“Be strong and courageous, for you will go with this people into the land
the Lord swore to give to their fathers. You will enable them to take
possession of it. 8 The Lord is the One who will go before you. He will be
with you; He will not leave you or forsake you. Do not be afraid or
discouraged.”

9† Moses wrote down this law and gave it to the priests, the sons of Levi,
who carried the ark of the Lord’s covenant, and to all the elders of Israel.
10 Moses commanded them, “At the end of every seven years, at the
appointed time in the year of debt cancellation, during the Festival of
Booths, 11† when all Israel assembles [B] in the presence of the Lord your
God at the place He chooses, you are to read this law aloud before all
Israel. 12 Gather the people — men, women, children, and foreigners living
within your gates — so that they may listen and learn to •fear the Lord
your God and be careful to follow all the words of this law. 13 Then their
children who do not know the law will listen and learn to fear the Lord
your God as long as you live in the land you are crossing the Jordan to
possess.”

14 The Lord said to Moses, “The time of your death is now approaching.
Call Joshua and present yourselves at the tent of meeting so that I may
commission him.” When Moses and Joshua went and presented themselves

at the tent of meeting, 15† the LORD appeared at the tent in a pillar of cloud,
and the cloud stood at the entrance to the tent.

16 The LORD said to Moses, "You are about to rest with your fathers, and
these people will soon commit adultery with the foreign gods of the land
they are entering. They will abandon Me and break the covenant I have
made with them. 17 My anger will burn against them on that day; I will
abandon them and hide My face from them so that they will become easy
prey. [C] Many troubles and afflictions will come to them. On that day they
will say, 'Haven't these troubles come to us because our God is no longer
with us? ' 18 I will certainly hide My face on that day because of all the evil
they have done by turning to other gods. 19 Therefore write down this song
for yourselves and teach it to the Israelites; have them recite it, [D] so that this
song may be a witness for Me against the Israelites. 20 When I bring them
into the land I swore to give their fathers, a land flowing with milk and
honey, they will eat their fill and prosper. [E] They will turn to other gods
and worship them, despising Me and breaking My covenant. 21 And when
many troubles and afflictions come to them, this song will testify against
them, because [F] their descendants will not have forgotten it. For I know
what they are prone to do, [G] even before I bring them into the land I swore
to give them." 22 So Moses wrote down this song on that day and taught it
to the Israelites.

23 The LORD commissioned Joshua son of Nun, "Be strong and
courageous, for you will bring the Israelites into the land I swore to them,
and I will be with you."

Moses Warns the People

24† When Moses had finished writing down on a scroll every single
word [H] of this law, 25 he commanded the Levites who carried the ark of the
LORD's covenant, 26 "Take this book of the law and place it beside the ark of
the covenant of the LORD your God so that it may remain there as a witness
against you. 27 For I know how rebellious and stiff-necked you are. If you
are rebelling against the LORD now, while I am still alive, how much more

will you rebel after I am dead! [28†] Assemble all your tribal elders and officers before me so that I may speak these words directly to them and call heaven and earth as witnesses against them. [29] For I know that after my death you will become completely corrupt and turn from the path I have commanded you. Disaster will come to you in the future, because you will do what is evil in the LORD's sight, infuriating Him with what your hands have made." [30] Then Moses recited aloud every single word [I] of this song to the entire assembly of Israel:

DEUTERONOMY

Song of Moses

32 †Pay attention, heavens, and I will speak;
listen, earth, to the words of my mouth.
2 Let my teaching fall like rain
and my word settle like dew,
like gentle rain on new grass
and showers on tender plants.
3 For I will proclaim •Yahweh's name.
Declare the greatness of our God!
4 The Rock — His work is perfect;
all His ways are entirely just.
A faithful God, without prejudice,
He is righteous and true.

5 His people have acted corruptly toward Him;
this is their defect [A] — they are not His children
but a devious and crooked generation.
6 Is this how you repay the LORD,
you foolish and senseless people?
Isn't He your Father and Creator?
Didn't He make you and sustain you?
7 Remember the days of old;
consider the years long past.
Ask your father, and he will tell you,
your elders, and they will teach you.
8† When the •Most High gave the nations their inheritance [B]
and divided the •human race,
He set the boundaries of the peoples
according to the number of the people of Israel.
9 But the LORD's portion is His people,
Jacob, His own inheritance.

10† He found him in a desolate land,
in a barren, howling wilderness;
He surrounded him, cared for him,
and protected him as the pupil of His eye.
11 He watches over [C] His nest like an eagle

and hovers over His young;
He spreads His wings, catches him,
and lifts him up on His pinions.
12† The LORD alone led him,
with no help from a foreign god. [D]
13† He made him ride on the heights of the land
and eat the produce of the field.
He nourished him with honey from the rock
and oil from flint-like rock,
14 cream from the herd and milk from the flock,
with the fat of lambs,
rams from Bashan, and goats,
with the choicest grains of wheat;
you drank wine from the finest grapes. [E]

15 Then Jeshurun became fat and rebelled —
you became fat, bloated, and gorged.
He abandoned the God who made him
and scorned the Rock of his salvation.
16† They provoked His jealousy with foreign gods;
they enraged Him with detestable practices.
17 They sacrificed to demons, not God,
to gods they had not known,
new gods that had just arrived,
which your fathers did not fear.
18 You ignored the Rock who gave you birth;
you forgot the God who gave birth to you.

19 When the LORD saw this, He despised them,
provoked to anger by His sons and daughters.
20 He said: “I will hide My face from them;
I will see what will become of them,
for they are a perverse generation —
unfaithful children.
21 They have provoked My jealousy
with their so-called gods; [F]

they have enraged Me with their worthless idols.
So I will provoke their jealousy
with an inferior people; [G]
I will enrage them with a foolish nation.
22† For fire has been kindled because of My anger
and burns to the depths of •Sheol;
it devours the land and its produce,
and scorches the foundations of the mountains.

23 "I will pile disasters on them;
I will use up My arrows against them.
24 They will be weak from hunger,
ravaged by pestilence and bitter plague;
I will unleash on them wild beasts with fangs,
as well as venomous snakes that slither in the dust.
25 Outside, the sword will take their children,
and inside, there will be terror;
the young man and the young woman will be killed,
the infant and the gray-haired man.

26† "I would have said: I will cut them to pieces
and blot out the memory of them from mankind,
27 if I had not feared insult from the enemy,
or feared that these foes might misunderstand
and say: 'Our own hand has prevailed;
it wasn't the LORD who did all this.' "

28 Israel is a nation lacking sense
with no understanding at all. [H]
29 If only they were wise, they would figure it out;
they would understand their fate.
30† How could one man pursue a thousand,
or two put ten thousand to flight,
unless their Rock had sold them,
unless the LORD had given them up?
31 But their "rock" is not like our Rock;
even our enemies concede.

32 For their vine is from the vine of Sodom
and from the fields of Gomorrah.
Their grapes are poisonous;
their clusters are bitter.
33 Their wine is serpents' venom,
the deadly poison of cobras.

34 "Is it not stored up with Me,
sealed up in My vaults?
35 Vengeance belongs to Me; I will repay.
In time their foot will slip,
for their day of disaster is near,
and their doom is coming quickly."
36 The LORD will indeed vindicate His people
and have compassion on His servants
when He sees that their strength is gone
and no one is left — slave or free.
37† He will say: "Where are their gods,
the 'rock' they found refuge in?
38 Who ate the fat of their sacrifices
and drank the wine of their •drink offerings?
Let them rise up and help you;
let it be a shelter for you.
39 See now that I alone am He;
there is no God but Me.
I bring death and I give life;
I wound and I heal.
No one can rescue anyone from My hand.
40† I raise My hand to heaven and declare:
As surely as I live forever,
41 when I sharpen My flashing sword,
and My hand takes hold of judgment,
I will take vengeance on My adversaries
and repay those who hate Me.
42 I will make My arrows drunk with blood
while My sword devours flesh —

the blood of the slain and the captives,
the heads of the enemy leaders.” [I]

43 Rejoice, you nations, concerning His people,
for He will avenge the blood of His servants.
He will take vengeance on His adversaries;
He will purify His land and His people.

44[†] Moses came with Joshua son of Nun and recited all the words of this
song in the presence of the people. 45 After Moses finished reciting all these
words to all Israel, 46 he said to them, “Take to heart all these words I am
giving as a warning to you today, so that you may command your children
to carefully follow all the words of this law. 47 For they are not meaningless
words to you but they are your life, and by them you will live long in the
land you are crossing the Jordan to possess.”

Moses’ Impending Death

48 On that same day the Lord spoke to Moses, 49 “Go up Mount Nebo in
the Abarim range in the land of Moab, across from Jericho, and view the
land of Canaan I am giving the Israelites as a possession. 50 Then you will
die on the mountain that you go up, and you will be gathered to your
people, just as your brother Aaron died on Mount Hor and was gathered to
his people. 51[†] For both of you broke faith with Me among the Israelites at
the waters of Meribath-kadesh in the Wilderness of Zin by failing to treat
Me as holy in their presence. 52 Although from a distance you will view the
land that I am giving the Israelites, you will not go there.”

DEUTERONOMY

Moses’ Blessings

33 [†]This is the blessing that Moses, the man of God, gave the Israelites
before his death. 2[†] He said:

The LORD came from Sinai
and appeared to them from Seir;
He shone on them from Mount Paran
and came with ten thousand holy ones,
with lightning [A] from His right hand [B] for them.
3 Indeed He loves the people. [C],
All Your [D] holy ones are in Your hand,
and they assemble [E] at Your feet.
Each receives Your words.
4 Moses gave us instruction,
a possession for the assembly of Jacob.
5 So He became King in Jeshurun
when the leaders of the people gathered
with the tribes of Israel.

6[†] Let Reuben live and not die
though his people become few.

7 He said this about Judah:

LORD, hear Judah's cry and bring him to his people.
He fights for his cause [F] with his own hands,
but may You be a help against his foes.

8 He said about Levi:

Your •Thummim and Urim belong to Your faithful one;
You tested him at Massah
and contended with him at the waters of Meribah.
9[†] He said about his father and mother,
"I do not regard them."
He disregarded his brothers
and didn't acknowledge his sons,

for they kept Your word
and maintained Your covenant.
10 They will teach Your ordinances to Jacob
and Your instruction to Israel;
they will set incense before You
and whole •burnt offerings on Your altar.
11 LORD, bless his possessions, [G]
and accept the work of his hands.
Smash the loins of his adversaries and enemies,
so that they cannot rise again.

12 He said about Benjamin:

The LORD's beloved rests [H] securely on Him.
He shields him all day long,
and he rests on His shoulders. [I]

13 He said about Joseph:

May his land be blessed by the LORD
with the dew of heaven's bounty
and the watery depths that lie beneath;
14 with the bountiful harvest from the sun
and the abundant yield of the seasons;
15 with the best products of the ancient mountains
and the bounty of the eternal hills;
16† with the choice gifts of the land
and everything in it;
and with the favor of Him
who appeared [J] in the burning bush.
May these rest on the head of Joseph,
on the crown of the prince of his brothers.
17† His firstborn bull has splendor,
and horns like [K] those of a wild ox;
he gores all the peoples with them
to the ends of the earth.

Such are the ten thousands of Ephraim,
and such are the thousands of Manasseh.

18 He said about Zebulun:

Rejoice, Zebulun, in your journeys,
and Issachar, in your tents.
19† They summon the peoples to a mountain;
there they offer acceptable sacrifices.
For they draw from the wealth of the seas
and the hidden treasures of the sand.

20 He said about Gad:

The one who enlarges Gad's territory
will be blessed.
He lies down like a lion
and tears off an arm or even a head.
21† He chose the best part for himself,
because a ruler's portion was assigned there for him.
He came with the leaders of the people;
he carried out the LORD's justice
and His ordinances for Israel.

22 He said about Dan:

Dan is a young lion,
leaping out of Bashan.

23 He said about Naphtali:

Naphtali, enjoying approval,
full of the LORD's blessing,
take possession to the west and the south.

24 He said about Asher:

May Asher be the most blessed of the sons;
may he be the most favored among his brothers
and dip his foot in olive oil.
25 May the bolts of your gate be iron and bronze,
and your strength last as long as you live.

26† There is none like the God of Jeshurun,
who rides the heavens to your aid,
the clouds in His majesty.
27 The God of old is your dwelling place,
and underneath are the everlasting arms.
He drives out the enemy before you
and commands, “Destroy! ”
28 So Israel dwells securely;
Jacob lives untroubled
in a land of grain and new wine;
even his skies drip with dew.
29† How happy you are, Israel!
Who is like you,
a people saved by the LORD?
He is the shield that protects you,
the sword you boast in.
Your enemies will cringe before you,
and you will tread on their backs. [L]

DEUTERONOMY

Moses' Death

34

[†]Then Moses went up from the plains of Moab to Mount Nebo, to the
top of Pisgah, which faces Jericho, and the LORD showed him all the
land: Gilead as far as Dan, 2 all of Naphtali, the land of Ephraim and
Manasseh, all the land of Judah as far as the Mediterranean [A] Sea, 3 the
•Negev, and the region from the Valley of Jericho, the City of Palms, as far
as Zoar. 4 The LORD then said to him, “This is the land I promised Abraham,
Isaac, and Jacob, ‘I will give it to your descendants.’ I have let you see it
with your own eyes, but you will not cross into it.”

5[†] So Moses the servant of the LORD died there in the land of Moab, as
the LORD had said. 6[†] He buried him [B] in the valley in the land of Moab
facing Beth-peor, and no one to this day knows where his grave is.
7[†] Moses was 120 years old when he died; his eyes were not weak, and his
vitality had not left him. 8 The Israelites wept for Moses in the plains of
Moab 30 days. Then the days of weeping and mourning for Moses came to
an end.

9 Joshua son of Nun was filled with the spirit of wisdom because Moses
had laid his hands on him. So the Israelites obeyed him and did as the LORD
had commanded Moses. 10[†] No prophet has arisen again in Israel like
Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face. 11 He was unparalleled for all
the signs and wonders the LORD sent him to do against the land of
Egypt — to Pharaoh, to all his officials, and to all his land, 12 and for all the
mighty acts of power and terrifying deeds that Moses performed in the sight
of all Israel.

JOSHUA

Introduction to Joshua

JOSHUA

Encouragement of Joshua

1 [†]After the death of Moses the LORD’s servant, the LORD spoke to Joshua
son of Nun, who had served Moses: 2[†] “Moses My servant is dead.
Now you and all the people prepare to cross over the Jordan to the land I
am giving the Israelites. 3[†] I have given you every place where the sole of
your foot treads, just as I promised Moses. 4 Your territory will be from the
wilderness and Lebanon to the great Euphrates River — all the land of the
Hittites — and west to the Mediterranean Sea. [A] 5 No one will be able to
stand against you as long as you live. I will be with you, just as I was with
Moses. I will not leave you or forsake you.

6[†] “Be strong and courageous, for you will distribute the land I swore to
their fathers to give them as an inheritance. 7 Above all, be strong and very
courageous to carefully observe the whole instruction My servant Moses
commanded you. Do not turn from it to the right or the left, so that you will
have success wherever you go. 8 This book of instruction must not depart
from your mouth; you are to recite [B] it day and night so that you may
carefully observe everything written in it. For then you will prosper and
succeed in whatever you do. 9 Haven’t I commanded you: be strong and
courageous? Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the LORD your God is
with you wherever you go.”

Joshua Prepares the People

10[†] Then Joshua commanded the officers of the people: 11 “Go through
the camp and tell the people, ‘Get provisions ready for yourselves, for
within three days you will be crossing the Jordan to go in and take
possession of the land the LORD your God is giving you to inherit.’ ”

12[†] Joshua said to the Reubenites, the Gadites, and half the tribe of
Manasseh: 13 “Remember what Moses the LORD’s servant commanded you
when he said, ‘The LORD your God will give you rest, and He will give you
this land.’ 14 Your wives, young children, and livestock may remain in the
land Moses gave you on this side of the Jordan. But your fighting men
must cross over in battle formation [C] ahead of your brothers and help them
15 until the LORD gives your brothers rest, as He has given you, and they too

possess the land the LORD your God is giving them. You may then return to the land of your inheritance and take possession of what Moses the LORD's servant gave you on the east side of the Jordan."

[16] They answered Joshua, "Everything you have commanded us we will
do, and everywhere you send us we will go. [17] We will obey you, just as we
obeyed Moses in everything. And may the LORD your God be with you, as
He was with Moses. [18] Anyone who rebels against your order and does not
obey your words in all that you command him, will be put to death. Above
all, be strong and courageous! "

JOSHUA

Spies Sent to Jericho

2 †Joshua son of Nun secretly sent two men as spies from the Acacia
Grove, [A] saying, "Go and scout the land, especially Jericho." So they
left, and they came to the house of a woman, a prostitute named Rahab,
and stayed there.

2† The king of Jericho was told, "Look, some of the Israelite men have
come here tonight to investigate the land." 3 Then the king of Jericho sent
word to Rahab and said, "Bring out the men who came to you and entered
your house, for they came to investigate the entire land."

4 But the woman had taken the two men and hidden them. So she said,
"Yes, the men did come to me, but I didn't know where they were from.
5 At nightfall, when the gate was about to close, the men went out, and I
don't know where they were going. Chase after them quickly, and you can
catch up with them! " 6 But she had taken them up to the roof and hidden
them among the stalks of flax that she had arranged on the roof. 7 The men
pursued them along the road to the fords of the Jordan, and as soon as they
left to pursue them, the gate was shut.

The Promise to Rahab

8† Before the men fell asleep, she went up on the roof 9 and said to them,
"I know that the LORD has given you this land and that the terror of you has
fallen on us, and everyone who lives in the land is panicking because of
you. [B] 10 For we have heard how the LORD dried up the waters of the •Red
Sea before you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to Sihon
and Og, the two Amorite kings you •completely destroyed across the
Jordan. 11 When we heard this, we lost heart, and everyone's courage
failed [C] because of you, for the LORD your God is God in heaven above and
on earth below. 12 Now please swear to me by the LORD that you will also
show kindness to my family, because I showed kindness to you. [D] Give me
a sure sign [E] 13 that you will spare the lives of my father, mother, brothers,
sisters, and all who belong to them, and save us from death."

14 The men answered her, “We will give our lives for yours. If you don’t
report our mission, we will show kindness and faithfulness to you when the
LORD gives us the land.”

15[†] Then she let them down by a rope through the window, since she
lived in a house that was built into the wall of the city. 16 “Go to the hill
country so that the men pursuing you won’t find you,” she said to them.
“Hide yourselves there for three days until they return; afterward, go on
your way.”

17 The men said to her, “We will be free from this oath you made us
swear, 18 unless, when we enter the land, you tie this scarlet cord to the
window through which you let us down. Bring your father, mother,
brothers, and all your father’s family into your house. 19 If anyone goes out
the doors of your house, his blood will be on his own head, and we will be
innocent. But if anyone with you in the house should be harmed, [F] his blood
will be on our heads. 20 And if you report our mission, we are free from the
oath you made us swear.”

21 “Let it be as you say,” she replied, and she sent them away. After they
had gone, she tied the scarlet cord to the window.

22 So the two men went into the hill country and stayed there three days
until the pursuers had returned. They searched all along the way, but did not
find them. 23 Then the men returned, came down from the hill country, and
crossed the Jordan. They went to Joshua son of Nun and reported
everything that had happened to them. 24 They told Joshua, “The LORD has
handed over the entire land to us. Everyone who lives in the land is also
panicking because of us.” [G]

JOSHUA

Crossing the Jordan

3 [†]Joshua started early the next morning and left the Acacia Grove [A] with
all the Israelites. They went as far as the Jordan and stayed there before
crossing. 2 After three days the officers went through the camp 3 and
commanded the people: “When you see the ark of the covenant of the LORD
your God carried by the Levitical priests, you must break camp and follow
it. 4 But keep a distance of about 1,000 yards [B] between yourselves and the
ark. Don’t go near it, so that you can see the way to go, for you haven’t
traveled this way before.” [C]

5 Joshua told the people, “Consecrate yourselves, because the LORD will
do wonders among you tomorrow.” 6 Then he said to the priests, “Take the
ark of the covenant and go on ahead of the people.” So they carried the ark
of the covenant and went ahead of them.

7[†] The LORD spoke to Joshua: “Today I will begin to exalt you in the sight
of all Israel, so they will know that I will be with you just as I was with
Moses. 8 Command the priests carrying the ark of the covenant: When you
reach the edge of the waters, [D] stand in the Jordan.”

9[†] Then Joshua told the Israelites, “Come closer and listen to the words of
the LORD your God.” 10[†] He said: “You will know that the living God is
among you and that He will certainly dispossess before you the Canaanites,
Hittites, Hivites, Perizzites, Girgashites, Amorites, and Jebusites 11 when
the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth goes ahead of you into
the Jordan. 12 Now choose 12 men from the tribes of Israel, one man for
each tribe. 13 When the feet [E] of the priests who carry the ark of the LORD,
the Lord of all the earth, come to rest in the Jordan’s waters, its waters will
be cut off. The water flowing downstream will stand up in a mass.”

14[†] When the people broke camp to cross the Jordan, the priests carried
the ark of the covenant ahead of the people. 15 Now the Jordan overflows
its banks throughout the harvest season. But as soon as the priests carrying
the ark reached the Jordan, their feet touched the water at its edge 16 and the
water flowing downstream stood still, rising up in a mass that extended as
far as Adam, a city next to Zarethan. The water flowing downstream into

the Sea of the •Arabah (the Dead Sea) was completely cut off, and the
people crossed opposite Jericho. 17 The priests carrying the ark of the
LORD's covenant stood firmly on dry ground in the middle of the Jordan,
while all Israel crossed on dry ground until the entire nation had finished
crossing the Jordan.

JOSHUA

The Memorial Stones

4 After the entire nation had finished crossing the Jordan, the LORD spoke
to Joshua: [2] “Choose 12 men from the people, one man for each tribe,
[3] and command them: Take 12 stones from this place in the middle of the
Jordan where the priests [A] are standing, carry them with you, and set them
down at the place where you spend the night.”

[4†] So Joshua summoned the 12 men he had selected from the Israelites,
one man for each tribe, [5] and said to them, “Go across to the ark of the
LORD your God in the middle of the Jordan. Each of you lift a stone onto his
shoulder, one for each [B] of the Israelite tribes, [6] so that this will be a sign
among you. In the future, when your children ask you, ‘What do these
stones mean to you? ’ [7] you should tell them, ‘The waters of the Jordan
were cut off in front of the ark of the LORD’s covenant. When it crossed the
Jordan, the Jordan’s waters were cut off.’ Therefore these stones will
always be a memorial for the Israelites.”

[8] The Israelites did just as Joshua had commanded them. The 12 men
took stones from the middle of the Jordan, one for each [C] of the Israelite
tribes, just as the LORD had told Joshua. They carried them to the camp and
set them down there. [9†] Joshua also set up 12 stones in the middle [D] of the
Jordan where the priests [E] who carried the ark of the covenant were
standing. The stones are there to this day.

[10] The priests carrying the ark continued standing in the middle of the
Jordan until everything was completed that the LORD had commanded
Joshua to tell the people, in keeping with all that Moses had commanded
Joshua. The people hurried across, [11] and after everyone had finished
crossing, the priests with the ark of the LORD crossed in the sight of the
people. [12] The Reubenites, Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh went in
battle formation in front of the Israelites, as Moses had instructed them.
[13] About 40,000 equipped for war crossed to the plains of Jericho in the
LORD’s presence.

[14] On that day the LORD exalted Joshua in the sight of all Israel, and they
revered him throughout his life, as they had revered Moses. [15] The LORD

told Joshua, [16] "Command the priests who carry the ark of the •testimony to come up from the Jordan."

[17] So Joshua commanded the priests, "Come up from the Jordan."
[18]† When the priests carrying the ark of the LORD's covenant came up from the middle of the Jordan, and their feet [F] stepped out on solid ground, the waters of the Jordan resumed their course, flowing over all the banks as before.

[19] The people came up from the Jordan on the tenth day of the first month, and camped at Gilgal on the eastern limits of Jericho. [20] Then
Joshua set up in Gilgal the 12 stones they had taken from the Jordan, [21] and
he said to the Israelites, "In the future, when your children ask their fathers, 'What is the meaning of these stones? ' [22] you should tell your children,
'Israel crossed the Jordan on dry ground.' [23] For the LORD your God dried up the waters of the Jordan before you until you had crossed over, just as the LORD your God did to the •Red Sea, which He dried up before us until
we had crossed over. [24] This is so that all the people of the earth may know that the LORD's hand is mighty, and so that you may always •fear the LORD your God."

JOSHUA

Circumcision of the Israelites

5 †When all the Amorite kings across the Jordan to the west and all the
Canaanite kings near the sea heard how the LORD had dried up the
waters of the Jordan before the Israelites until they had crossed over, they
lost heart and their courage failed [A] because of the Israelites.

2† At that time the LORD said to Joshua, “Make flint knives and
circumcise the Israelite men again.” 3 So Joshua made flint knives and
circumcised the Israelite men at Gibeath-haaraloth. [B] 4 This is the reason
Joshua circumcised them: All the people who came out of Egypt who were
males — all the men of war — had died in the wilderness along the way
after they had come out of Egypt. 5 Though all the people who came out
were circumcised, none of the people born in the wilderness along the way
were circumcised after they had come out of Egypt. 6 For the Israelites
wandered in the wilderness 40 years until all the nation’s men of war who
came out of Egypt had died off because they did not obey the LORD. So the
LORD vowed never to let them see the land He had sworn to their fathers to
give us, a land flowing with milk and honey. 7 Joshua raised up their sons
in their place; it was these he circumcised. They were still uncircumcised,
since they had not been circumcised along the way. 8 After the entire nation
had been circumcised, they stayed where they were in the camp until they
recovered. 9 The LORD then said to Joshua, “Today I have rolled away the
disgrace of Egypt from you.” Therefore, that place is called Gilgal to this
day.

Food from the Land

10 While the Israelites camped at Gilgal on the plains of Jericho, they
kept the •Passover on the evening of the fourteenth day of the month.
11 The day after Passover they ate unleavened bread and roasted grain from
the produce of the land. 12 And the day after they ate from the produce of
the land, the manna ceased. Since there was no more manna for the
Israelites, they ate from the crops of the land of Canaan that year.

Commander of the LORD’s Army

13† When Joshua was near Jericho, he looked up and saw a man standing in front of him with a drawn sword in His hand. Joshua approached Him and asked, “Are You for us or for our enemies? ”

14 “Neither,” He replied. “I have now come as commander of the LORD’s army.”

Then Joshua bowed with his face to the ground in worship and asked Him, “What does my Lord want to say to His servant? ”

15 The commander of the LORD’s army said to Joshua, “Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy.” And Joshua did so.

JOSHUA

The Conquest of Jericho

6 †Now Jericho was strongly fortified because of the Israelites — no one
leaving or entering. 2† The LORD said to Joshua, “Look, I have handed
Jericho, its king, and its fighting men over to you. 3 March around the city
with all the men of war, circling the city one time. Do this for six days.
4 Have seven priests carry seven ram’s-horn trumpets in front of the ark.
But on the seventh day, march around the city seven times, while the priests
blow the trumpets. 5 When there is a prolonged blast of the horn and you
hear its sound, have all the people give a mighty shout. Then the city wall
will collapse, and the people will advance, each man straight ahead.”

6 So Joshua son of Nun summoned the priests and said to them, “Take up
the ark of the covenant and have seven priests carry seven trumpets in front
of the ark of the LORD.” 7 He said to the people, “Move forward, march
around the city, and have the armed troops go ahead of the ark of the LORD.”

8 After Joshua had spoken to the people, seven priests carrying seven
trumpets before the LORD moved forward and blew the trumpets; the ark of
the LORD’s covenant followed them. 9 While the trumpets were blowing, the
armed troops went in front of the priests who blew the trumpets, and the
rear guard went behind the ark. 10 But Joshua had commanded the people:
“Do not shout or let your voice be heard. Don’t let one word come out of
your mouth until the time I say, ‘Shout! ’ Then you are to shout.” 11 So the
ark of the LORD was carried around the city, circling it once. They returned
to the camp and spent the night there. [A]

12 Joshua got up early the next morning. The priests took the ark of the
LORD, 13 and the seven priests carrying seven trumpets marched in front of
the ark of the LORD. While the trumpets were blowing, the armed troops
went in front of them, and the rear guard went behind the ark of the LORD.
14 On the second day they marched around the city once and returned to the
camp. They did this for six days.

15 Early on the seventh day, they started at dawn and marched around the
city seven times in the same way. That was the only day they marched
around the city seven times. 16† After the seventh time, the priests blew the

trumpets, and Joshua said to the people, “Shout! For the LORD has given
you the city. [17†] But the city and everything in it are •set apart to the LORD
for destruction. Only Rahab the prostitute and everyone with her in the
house will live, because she hid the men [B] we sent. [18] But keep yourselves
from the things set apart, or you will be set apart for destruction. If you
take any of those things, you will set apart the camp of Israel for destruction
and bring disaster on it. [19] For all the silver and gold, and the articles of
bronze and iron, are dedicated to the LORD and must go into the LORD’s
treasury.”

[20†] So the people shouted, and the trumpets sounded. When they heard
the blast of the trumpet, the people gave a great shout, and the wall
collapsed. The people advanced into the city, each man straight ahead, and
they captured the city. [21] They •completely destroyed everything in the city
with the sword — every man and woman, both young and old, and every
ox, sheep, and donkey.

ARTICLE

What Did Jesus Have to Do with Violence? ⇒

Rahab and Her Family Spared

[22†] Joshua said to the two men who had scouted the land, “Go to the
prostitute’s house and bring the woman out of there, and all who are with
her, just as you promised her.” [23] So the young men who had scouted went
in and brought out Rahab and her father, mother, brothers, and all who
belonged to her. They brought out her whole family and settled them
outside the camp of Israel.

[24] They burned up the city and everything in it, but they put the silver and
gold and the articles of bronze and iron into the treasury of the LORD’s
house. [25] However, Joshua spared Rahab the prostitute, her father’s

household, and all who belonged to her, because she hid the men Joshua had sent to spy on Jericho, and she lives in Israel to this day.

26† At that time Joshua imposed this curse:

The man who undertakes
the rebuilding of this city, Jericho,
is cursed before the LORD.
He will lay its foundation
at the cost of his firstborn;
he will set up its gates
at the cost of his youngest.

27 And the LORD was with Joshua, and his fame spread throughout the land.

JOSHUA

Defeat at Ai

7 †The Israelites, however, were unfaithful regarding the things •set apart
for destruction. Achan son of Carmi, son of Zabdi, son of Zerah, of the
tribe of Judah, took some of what was set apart, and the LORD's anger
burned against the Israelites.

2† Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, which is near Beth-aven, east of
Bethel, and told them, "Go up and scout the land." So the men went up and
scouted Ai.

3 After returning to Joshua they reported to him, "Don't send all the
people, but send about 2,000 or 3,000 [A] men to attack Ai. Since the people
of Ai are so few, don't wear out all our people there." 4 So about 3,000
men [B] went up there, but they fled from the men of Ai. 5 The men of Ai
struck down about 36 of them and chased them from outside the gate to the
quarries, [C] striking them down on the descent. As a result, the people's
hearts melted and became like water.

6† Then Joshua tore his clothes and fell before the ark of the LORD with
his face to the ground until evening, as did the elders of Israel; they all put
dust on their heads. 7 "Oh, Lord GOD," Joshua said, "why did You ever
bring these people across the Jordan to hand us over to the Amorites for our
destruction? If only we had been content to remain on the other side of the
Jordan! 8 What can I say, Lord, now that Israel has turned its back and run
from its enemies? 9 When the Canaanites and all who live in the land hear
about this, they will surround us and wipe out our name from the earth.
Then what will You do about Your great name? "

10† The LORD then said to Joshua, "Stand up! Why are you on the
ground? [D] 11 Israel has sinned. They have violated My covenant that I
appointed for them. They have taken some of what was set apart. They have
stolen, deceived, and put the things with their own belongings. 12 This is
why the Israelites cannot stand against their enemies. They will turn their
backs and run from their enemies, because they have been set apart for
destruction. I will no longer be with you unless you remove from you what
is set apart.

13 "Go and consecrate the people. Tell them to consecrate themselves for tomorrow, for this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: There are things that are set apart among you, Israel. You will not be able to stand against your enemies until you remove what is set apart. 14 In the morning you must present yourselves tribe by tribe. The tribe the LORD selects is to come forward clan by clan. The clan the LORD selects is to come forward family by family. The family the LORD selects is to come forward man by man. 15 The one who is caught with the things set apart must be burned, [E] along with everything he has, because he has violated the LORD's covenant and committed an outrage in Israel."

Achan Judged

16† Joshua got up early the next morning. He had Israel come forward tribe by tribe, and the tribe of Judah was selected. 17 He had the clans of Judah come forward, and the Zerahite clan was selected. He had the Zerahite clan come forward by heads of families, [F] and Zabdi was selected.
18 He then had Zabdi's family come forward man by man, and Achan son of Carmi, son of Zabdi, son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, was selected.

19 So Joshua said to Achan, "My son, give glory to the LORD, the God of Israel, and make a confession to Him. [G] I urge you, tell me what you have done. Don't hide anything from me."

20 Achan replied to Joshua, "It is true. I have sinned against the LORD, the God of Israel. This is what I did: 21 When I saw among the spoils a beautiful cloak from Babylon, [H] 200 silver •shekels, and a bar of gold weighing 50 shekels, I coveted them and took them. You can see for yourself. They are concealed in the ground inside my tent, with the money under the cloak." 22 So Joshua sent messengers who ran to the tent, and there was the cloak, concealed in his tent, with the money underneath.
23 They took the things from inside the tent, brought them to Joshua and all the Israelites, and spread them out in the LORD's presence.

24[†] Then Joshua and all Israel with him took Achan son of Zerah, the
silver, the cloak, and the bar of gold, his sons and daughters, his ox, donkey,
and sheep, his tent, and all that he had, and brought them up to the Valley of
Achor. 25 Joshua said, “Why have you troubled us? Today the LORD will
trouble you! ” So all Israel stoned them [I] to death. They burned their
bodies, [J] threw stones on them, 26 and raised over him a large pile of rocks
that remains to this day. Then the LORD turned from His burning anger.
Therefore that place is called the Valley of Achor [K] to this day.

JOSHUA

Conquest of Ai

8 [†]The LORD said to Joshua, “Do not be afraid or discouraged. Take the
whole military force with you and go attack Ai. Look, I have handed
over to you the king of Ai, his people, city, and land. 2 Treat Ai and its king
as you did Jericho and its king; you may plunder its spoil and livestock for
yourselves. Set an ambush behind the city.”

3 So Joshua and the whole military force set out to attack Ai. Joshua
selected 30,000 fighting men and sent them out at night. 4 He commanded
them: “Pay attention. Lie in ambush behind the city, not too far from it, and
all of you be ready. 5 Then I and all the people who are with me will
approach the city. When they come out against us as they did the first time,
we will flee from them. 6 They will come after us until we have drawn them
away from the city, for they will say, ‘They are fleeing from us as before.’
While we are fleeing from them, 7 you are to come out of your ambush and
seize the city, for the LORD your God has handed it over to you. 8 After
taking the city, set it on fire. Follow the LORD’s command — see that you do
as I have ordered you.” 9 So Joshua sent them out, and they went to the
ambush site and waited between Bethel and Ai, to the west of Ai. But he
spent that night with the troops.

10 Joshua started early the next morning and mobilized them. Then he
and the elders of Israel led the troops up to Ai. 11 All those [A] who were with
him went up and approached the city, arriving opposite Ai, and camped to
the north of it, with a valley between them and the city. 12 Now Joshua had
taken about 5,000 men and set them in ambush between Bethel and Ai, to
the west of the city. 13 The military force was stationed in this way: the
main [B] camp to the north of the city and its rear guard to the west of the
city. And that night Joshua went into the valley.

14 When the king of Ai saw the Israelites, the men of the city hurried and
went out early in the morning so that he and all his people could engage
Israel in battle at a suitable place facing the •Arabah. But he did not know
there was an ambush waiting for him behind the city. 15 Joshua and all
Israel pretended to be beaten back by them and fled toward the wilderness.
16 Then all the troops of Ai were summoned to pursue them, and they

pursued Joshua and were drawn away from the city. [17] Not a man was left
in Ai or Bethel who did not go out after Israel, leaving the city exposed
while they pursued Israel.

[18] Then the LORD said to Joshua, “Hold out the sword in your hand
toward Ai, for I will hand the city over to you.” So Joshua held out his
sword toward it. [19] When he held out his hand, the men in ambush rose
quickly from their position. They ran, entered the city, captured it, and
immediately set it on fire.

[20] The men of Ai turned and looked back, and smoke from the city was
rising to the sky! They could not escape in any direction, and the troops
who had fled to the wilderness now became the pursuers. [21] When Joshua
and all Israel saw that the men in ambush had captured the city and that
smoke was rising from it, they turned back and struck down the men of Ai.
[22] Then men in ambush came out of the city against them, and the men of
Ai were trapped between the Israelite forces, some on one side and some on
the other. They struck them down until no survivor or fugitive remained,
[23] but they captured the king of Ai alive and brought him to Joshua.

[24] When Israel had finished killing everyone living in Ai who had
pursued them into the open country, and when every last one of them had
fallen by the sword, all Israel returned to Ai and struck it down with the
sword. [25] The total of those who fell that day, both men and women, was
12,000 — all the people of Ai. [26] Joshua did not draw back his hand that
was holding the sword until all the inhabitants of Ai were •completely
destroyed. [27] Israel plundered only the cattle and spoil of that city for
themselves, according to the LORD’s command that He had given Joshua.

[28] Joshua burned Ai and left it a permanent ruin, desolate to this day.
[29] He hung [C] the body of the king of Ai on a tree [D] until evening, and at
sunset Joshua commanded that they take his body down from the tree.
They threw it down at the entrance of the city gate and put a large pile of
rocks over it, which remains to this day.

Renewed Commitment to the Law

[30] At that time Joshua built an altar on Mount Ebal to the LORD, the God
of Israel, [31] just as Moses the LORD's servant had commanded the Israelites.
He built it according to what is written in the book of the law of Moses: an
altar of uncut stones on which no iron tool has been used. Then they
offered •burnt offerings to the LORD and sacrificed •fellowship offerings on
it. [32] There on the stones, Joshua copied the law of Moses, which he had
written in the presence of the Israelites. [33] All Israel, foreigner and citizen
alike, with their elders, officers, and judges, stood on either side of the ark
of the LORD's covenant facing the Levitical priests who carried it. As Moses
the LORD's servant had commanded earlier, half of them were in front of
Mount Gerizim and half in front of Mount Ebal, to bless the people of
Israel. [34] Afterward, Joshua read aloud all the words of the law — the
blessings as well as the curses — according to all that is written in the book
of the law. [35] There was not a word of all that Moses had commanded that
Joshua did not read before the entire assembly of Israel, including the
women, the little children, and the foreigners who were with them.

JOSHUA

Deception by Gibeon

9 [†]When all the kings heard about Jericho and Ai, those who were west of
the Jordan in the hill country, in the Judean foothills, [A] and all along the
coast of the Mediterranean Sea toward Lebanon — the Hittites, Amorites,
Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites — 2 they formed a unified
alliance to fight against Joshua and Israel.

3[†] When the inhabitants of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done to Jericho
and Ai, 4 they acted deceptively. They gathered provisions and took worn-
out sacks on their donkeys and old wineskins, cracked and mended. 5 They
wore old, patched sandals on their feet and threadbare clothing on their
bodies. Their entire provision of bread was dry and crumbly. 6 They went to
Joshua in the camp at Gilgal and said to him and the men of Israel, “We
have come from a distant land. Please make a treaty with us.”

7 The men of Israel replied to the Hivites, “Perhaps you live among us.
How can we make a treaty with you? ”

8 They said to Joshua, “We are your servants.”

Then Joshua asked them, “Who are you and where do you come from? ”

9 They replied to him, “Your servants have come from a far away land
because of the reputation of the LORD your God. For we have heard of His
fame, and all that He did in Egypt, 10 and all that He did to the two Amorite
kings beyond the Jordan — Sihon king of Heshbon and Og king of Bashan,
who was in Ashtaroth. 11 So our elders and all the inhabitants of our land
told us, ‘Take provisions with you for the journey; go and meet them and
say, “We are your servants. Please make a treaty with us.” ’ 12 This bread of
ours was warm when we took it from our houses as food on the day we left
to come to you. But take a look, it is now dry and crumbly. 13 These
wineskins were new when we filled them, but look, they are cracked. And
these clothes and sandals of ours are worn out from the extremely long
journey.” 14 Then the men of Israel took some of their provisions, but did
not seek the LORD’s counsel. 15 So Joshua established peace with them and

made a treaty to let them live, and the leaders of the community swore an
oath to them.

Gibeon's Deception Discovered

[16] Three days after making the treaty with them, they heard that the
Gibeonites were their neighbors, living among them. [17] So the Israelites set
out and reached the Gibeonite cities on the third day. Now their cities were
Gibeon, Chephirah, Beeroth, and Kiriath-jearim. [18] But the Israelites did
not attack them, because the leaders of the community had sworn an oath
to them by the LORD, the God of Israel. Then the whole community
grumbled against the leaders.

[19] All the leaders answered them, "We have sworn an oath to them by the
LORD, the God of Israel, and now we cannot touch them. [20] This is how we
will treat them: we will let them live, so that no wrath will fall on us
because of the oath we swore to them." [21] They also said, "Let them live."
So the Gibeonites became woodcutters and water carriers for the whole
community, as the leaders had promised them.

[22] Joshua summoned the Gibeonites and said to them, "Why did you
deceive us by telling us you live far away from us, when in fact you live
among us? [23] Therefore you are cursed and will always be
slaves — woodcutters and water carriers for the house of my God."

[24] The Gibeonites answered him, "It was clearly communicated to your
servants that the LORD your God had commanded His servant Moses to give
you all the land and to destroy all the inhabitants of the land before you. We
greatly feared for our lives because of you, and that is why we did this.
[25] Now we are in your hands. Do to us whatever you think is right." [B]
[26] This is what Joshua did to them: he delivered them from the hands of the
Israelites, and they did not kill them. [27] On that day he made them
woodcutters and water carriers — as they are today — for the community
and for the LORD's altar at the place He would choose.

JOSHUA

The Day the Sun Stood Still

10 †Now Adoni-zedek king of Jerusalem heard that Joshua had captured
Ai and •completely destroyed it, treating Ai and its king as he had
Jericho and its king, and that the inhabitants of Gibeon had made peace
with Israel and were living among them. 2 So Adoni-zedek and his people
were greatly alarmed because Gibeon was a large city like one of the royal
cities; it was larger than Ai, and all its men were warriors. 3 Therefore
Adoni-zedek king of Jerusalem sent word to Hoham king of Hebron, Piram
king of Jarmuth, Japhia king of Lachish, and Debir king of Eglon, saying,
4 "Come up and help me. We will attack Gibeon, because they have made
peace with Joshua and the Israelites." 5 So the five Amorite kings — the
kings of Jerusalem, Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish, and Eglon — joined forces,
advanced with all their armies, besieged Gibeon, and fought against it.

6 Then the men of Gibeon sent word to Joshua in the camp at Gilgal:
"Don't abandon [A] your servants. Come quickly and save us! Help us, for all
the Amorite kings living in the hill country have joined forces against us."
7 So Joshua and his whole military force, including all the fighting men,
came from Gilgal.

8 The LORD said to Joshua, "Do not be afraid of them, for I have handed
them over to you. Not one of them will be able to stand against you."

9 So Joshua caught them by surprise, after marching all night from
Gilgal. 10† The LORD threw them into confusion before Israel. He defeated
them in a great slaughter at Gibeon, chased them through the ascent of
Beth-horon, and struck them down as far as Azekah and Makkedah. 11† As
they fled before Israel, the LORD threw large hailstones on them from the
sky along the descent of Beth-horon all the way to Azekah, and they died.
More of them died from the hail than the Israelites killed with the sword.

12† On the day the LORD gave the Amorites over to the Israelites, Joshua
spoke to the LORD in the presence of Israel:

"Sun, stand still over Gibeon,
and moon, over the Valley of Aijalon."
13 And the sun stood still

and the moon stopped
until the nation took vengeance on its enemies.

Isn't this written in the Book of Jashar? [B]

So the sun stopped
in the middle of the sky
and delayed its setting
almost a full day.

14 There has been no day like it before or since, when the LORD listened to
the voice of a man, because the LORD fought for Israel. 15 Then Joshua and
all Israel with him returned to the camp at Gilgal.

Execution of the Five Kings

16† Now the five defeated kings had fled and hidden themselves in the
cave at Makkedah. 17 It was reported to Joshua: "The five kings have been
found; they are hiding in the cave at Makkedah."

18 Joshua said, "Roll large stones against the mouth of the cave, and
station men by it to guard the kings. 19 But as for the rest of you, don't stay
there. Pursue your enemies and attack them from behind. Don't let them
enter their cities, for the LORD your God has handed them over to you."
20 So Joshua and the Israelites finished inflicting a terrible slaughter on
them until they were destroyed, although a few survivors ran away to the
fortified cities. 21 The people returned safely to Joshua in the camp at
Makkedah. And no one dared to threaten [C] the Israelites.

22 Then Joshua said, "Open the mouth of the cave, and bring those five
kings to me out of there." 23 That is what they did. They brought the five
kings of Jerusalem, Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish, and Eglon to Joshua out of
the cave. 24 When they had brought the kings to him, Joshua summoned all
the men of Israel and said to the military commanders who had
accompanied him, "Come here and put your feet on the necks of these
kings." So the commanders came forward and put their feet on their necks.

25 Joshua said to them, “Do not be afraid or discouraged. Be strong and
courageous, for the LORD will do this to all the enemies you fight.”

26 After this, Joshua struck them down and executed them. He hung [D]
their bodies on five trees [E] and they were there until evening. 27 At sunset
Joshua commanded that they be taken down from the trees [F] and thrown
into the cave where they had hidden. Then large stones were placed against
the mouth of the cave, and the stones are there to this day.

Conquest of Southern Cities

28[†] On that day Joshua captured Makkedah and struck it down with the
sword, including its king. He completely destroyed it and everyone in it,
leaving no survivors. So he treated the king of Makkedah as he had the king
of Jericho.

29 Joshua and all Israel with him crossed from Makkedah to Libnah and
fought against Libnah. 30 The LORD also handed it and its king over to
Israel. He struck it down, putting everyone in it to the sword, and left no
survivors in it. He treated Libnah’s king as he had the king of Jericho.

31 From Libnah, Joshua and all Israel with him crossed to Lachish. They
laid siege to it and attacked it. 32 The LORD handed Lachish over to Israel,
and Joshua captured it on the second day. He struck it down, putting
everyone in it to the sword, just as he had done to Libnah. 33 At that time
Horam king of Gezer went to help Lachish, but Joshua struck him down
along with his people, leaving no survivors in it.

34 Then Joshua crossed from Lachish to Eglon and all Israel with him.
They laid siege to it and attacked it. 35 On that day they captured it and
struck it down, putting everyone in it to the sword. He completely destroyed
it that day, just as he had done to Lachish.

36 Next, Joshua and all Israel with him went up from Eglon to Hebron
and attacked it. 37 They captured it and struck down its king, all its villages,

and everyone in it with the sword. He left no survivors, just as he had done at Eglon. He completely destroyed Hebron and everyone in it.

[38] Finally, Joshua turned toward Debir and attacked it. And all Israel was
with him. [39] He captured it — its king and all its villages. They struck them down with the sword and completely destroyed everyone in it, leaving no survivors. He treated Debir and its king as he had treated Hebron and as he had treated Libnah and its king.

[40] So Joshua conquered the whole region — the hill country, the •Negev, the Judean foothills, [G] and the slopes — with all their kings, leaving no survivors. He completely destroyed every living being, as the Lord, the
God of Israel, had commanded. [41] Joshua conquered everyone from Kadesh-barnea to Gaza, and all the land of Goshen as far as Gibeon.
[42] Joshua captured all these kings and their land in one campaign, [H] because
the Lord, the God of Israel, fought for Israel. [43] Then Joshua returned with all Israel to the camp at Gilgal.

JOSHUA

Conquest of Northern Cities

11 [†]When Jabin king of Hazor heard this news, he sent a message to:

Jobab king of Madon,
the kings of Shimron and Achshaph,
2 and the kings of the north in the hill country,
the •Arabah south of Chinnereth,
the Judean foothills, [A]
and the Slopes of Dor [B] to the west,
3 the Canaanites in the east and west,
the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites,
and Jebusites in the hill country,
and the Hivites at the foot of Hermon
in the land of Mizpah.

4 They went out with all their armies — a multitude as numerous as the
sand on the seashore — along with a vast number of horses and chariots.
5 All these kings joined forces; they came together and camped at the waters
of Merom to attack Israel.

6 The LORD said to Joshua, “Do not be afraid of them, for at this time
tomorrow I will cause all of them to be killed before Israel. You are to
hamstring their horses and burn up their chariots.” 7 So Joshua and his
whole military force surprised them at the waters of Merom and attacked
them. 8 The LORD handed them over to Israel, and they struck them down,
pursuing them as far as Great Sidon and Misrephoth-maim, and to the east
as far as the Valley of Mizpeh. They struck them down, leaving no
survivors. 9 Joshua treated them as the LORD had told him; he hamstrung
their horses and burned up their chariots.

10 At that time Joshua turned back, captured Hazor, and struck down its
king with the sword, because Hazor had formerly been the leader of all
these kingdoms. 11 They struck down everyone in it with the sword,
•completely destroying them; he left no one alive. Then he burned down
Hazor.

12 Joshua captured all these kings and their cities and struck them down
with the sword. He completely destroyed them, as Moses the LORD's
servant had commanded. 13 However, Israel did not burn any of the cities
that stood on their mounds except Hazor, which Joshua burned. 14 The
Israelites plundered all the spoils and cattle of these cities for themselves.
But they struck down every person with the sword until they had
annihilated them, leaving no one alive. 15 Just as the LORD had commanded
His servant Moses, Moses commanded Joshua. That is what Joshua did,
leaving nothing undone of all that the LORD had commanded Moses.

Summary of Conquests

16[†] So Joshua took all this land — the hill country, all the •Negev, all the
land of Goshen, the foothills, [C] the Arabah, and the hill country of Israel
with its foothills [D] — 17 from Mount Halak, which ascends to Seir, as far as
Baal-gad in the Valley of Lebanon at the foot of Mount Hermon. He
captured all their kings and struck them down, putting them to death.
18 Joshua waged war with all these kings for a long time. 19 No city made
peace with the Israelites except the Hivites who inhabited Gibeon; all of
them were taken in battle. 20 For it was the LORD's intention to harden their
hearts, so that they would engage Israel in battle, be completely destroyed
without mercy, and be annihilated, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

21 At that time Joshua proceeded to exterminate the Anakim from the hill
country — Hebron, Debir, Anab — all the hill country of Judah and of
Israel. Joshua completely destroyed them with their cities. 22 No Anakim
were left in the land of the Israelites, except for some remaining in Gaza,
Gath, and Ashdod.

23 So Joshua took the entire land, in keeping with all that the LORD had
told Moses. Joshua then gave it as an inheritance to Israel according to their
tribal allotments. After this, the land had rest from war.

JOSHUA

Territory East of the Jordan

12 †The Israelites struck down the following kings of the land and took possession of their land beyond the Jordan to the east and from the Arnon Valley to Mount Hermon, including all the •Arabah eastward:

> 2 Sihon king of the Amorites lived in Heshbon. He ruled over the territory from Aroer on the rim of the Arnon Valley, along the middle of the valley, and half of Gilead up to the Jabbok River (the border of the Ammonites), 3 the Arabah east of the Sea of Chinnereth to the Sea of the Arabah (that is, the Dead Sea), eastward through Beth-jeshimoth and southward [A] below the slopes of Pisgah.
>
> 4 Og king of Bashan, of the remnant of the Rephaim, lived in Ashtaroth and Edrei. 5 He ruled over Mount Hermon, Salecah, all Bashan up to the Geshurite and Maacathite border, and half of Gilead to the border of Sihon, king of Heshbon.

6 Moses the Lord's servant and the Israelites struck them down. And Moses the Lord's servant gave their land as an inheritance to the Reubenites, Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh.

Territory West of the Jordan

7† Joshua and the Israelites struck down the following kings of the land beyond the Jordan to the west, from Baal-gad in the Valley of Lebanon to Mount Halak, which ascends toward Seir (Joshua gave their land as an inheritance to the tribes of Israel according to their allotments: 8 the hill country, the Judean foothills, [B] the Arabah, the slopes, the desert, and the •Negev of the Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites):

9 the king of Jericho	one
the king of Ai, which is next to Bethel	one

[10] the king of Jerusalem	one
the king of Hebron	one
[11] the king of Jarmuth	one
the king of Lachish	one
[12] the king of Eglon	one
the king of Gezer	one
[13] the king of Debir	one
the king of Geder	one
[14] the king of Hormah	one
the king of Arad	one
[15] the king of Libnah	one
the king of Adullam	one
[16] the king of Makkedah	one
the king of Bethel	one
[17] the king of Tappuah	one
the king of Hepher	one
[18] the king of Aphek	one
the king of Lasharon	one

19 the king of Madon	one
the king of Hazor	one
20 the king of Shimron-meron	one
the king of Achshaph	one
21 the king of Taanach	one
the king of Megiddo	one
22 the king of Kedesh	one
the king of Jokneam in Carmel	one
23 the king of Dor in Naphath-dor [C]	one
the king of Goiim in Gilgal	one
24 the king of Tirzah	one
the total number of all kings:	31.

JOSHUA

Unconquered Lands

13 [†]Joshua was now old, getting on in years, and the LORD said to him,
"You have become old, getting on in years, but a great deal of the land
remains to be possessed.
2 This is the land that remains:

All the districts of the Philistines and the Geshurites:
3 from the
Shihor east of Egypt to the border of Ekron on the north
(considered to be Canaanite territory) — the five Philistine rulers
of Gaza, Ashdod, Ashkelon, Gath, and Ekron, as well as the
Avvites
4 in the south; all the land of the Canaanites: from Arah of
the Sidonians to Aphek and as far as the border of the Amorites;
5 the land of the Gebalites; and all Lebanon east from Baal-gad
below Mount Hermon to the entrance of Hamath [A] —
6 all the
inhabitants of the hill country from Lebanon to Misrephoth-
maim, all the Sidonians.

I will drive them out before the Israelites, only distribute the land as an
inheritance for Israel, as I have commanded you.
7 Therefore, divide this
land as an inheritance to the nine tribes and half the tribe of Manasseh."

The Inheritance East of the Jordan

8 With the other half of the tribe, the Reubenites and Gadites had received
the inheritance Moses gave them beyond the Jordan to the east, just as
Moses the LORD's servant had given them:

9 From Aroer on the rim of the Arnon Valley, along with the city
in the middle of the valley, all the Medeba plateau as far as
Dibon,
10 and all the cities of Sihon king of the Amorites, who
reigned in Heshbon, to the border of the Ammonites;
11 also
Gilead and the territory of the Geshurites and Maacathites, all
Mount Hermon, and all Bashan to Salecah —
12 the whole
kingdom of Og in Bashan, who reigned in Ashtaroth and Edrei; he
was one of the remaining Rephaim.

Moses struck them down and drove them out,
13 but the Israelites did not
drive out the Geshurites and Maacathites. So Geshur and Maacath live in

Israel to this day.

[14] He did not give any inheritance to the tribe of Levi. This was its inheritance, just as He had promised: the offerings made by fire to the LORD, the God of Israel.

Reuben's Inheritance

[15][†] To the tribe of the Reubenites by their clans, Moses gave [16] this as their territory:

> From Aroer on the rim of the Arnon Valley, along with the city in the middle of the valley, to the whole plateau as far as Medeba, [17] with Heshbon and all its cities on the plateau — Dibon, Bamoth-baal, Beth-baal-meon, [18] Jahaz, Kedemoth, Mephaath, [19] Kiriathaim, Sibmah, Zereth-shahar on the hill in the valley, [20] Beth-peor, the slopes of Pisgah, and Beth-jeshimoth — [21] all the cities of the plateau, and all the kingdom of Sihon king of the Amorites, who reigned in Heshbon. Moses had killed him and the chiefs of Midian — Evi, Rekem, Zur, Hur, and Reba — the princes of Sihon who lived in the land. [22] Along with those the Israelites put to death, they also killed the diviner, Balaam son of Beor, with the sword.

[23] The border of the Reubenites was the Jordan and its plain. This was the inheritance of the Reubenites by their clans, with the cities and their villages.

Gad's Inheritance

[24] To the tribe of the Gadites by their clans, Moses gave [25] this as their territory:

> Jazer and all the cities of Gilead, and half the land of the Ammonites to Aroer, near Rabbah; [26] from Heshbon to Ramath-mizpeh and Betonim, and from Mahanaim to the border of

Debir; [B] [27] in the valley: Beth-haram, Beth-nimrah, Succoth, and Zaphon — the rest of the kingdom of Sihon king of Heshbon. Their land also included the Jordan and its territory as far as the edge of the Sea of Chinnereth on the east side of the Jordan. [C]

[28] This was the inheritance of the Gadites by their clans, with the cities and their villages.

East Manasseh's Inheritance

[29] And to half the tribe of Manasseh, that is, to half the tribe of Manasseh's descendants by their clans, Moses gave [30] this as their territory:

From Mahanaim through all Bashan — all the kingdom of Og king of Bashan, including all of Jair's Villages [D] that are in Bashan — 60 cities. [31] But half of Gilead, and Og's royal cities in Bashan — Ashtaroth and Edrei — are for the descendants of Machir son of Manasseh, that is, half the descendants of Machir by their clans.

[32] These were the portions Moses gave them on the plains of Moab beyond the Jordan east of Jericho. [33] But Moses did not give a portion to the tribe of Levi. The LORD, the God of Israel, was their inheritance, just as He had promised them.

JOSHUA

Israel's Inheritance in Canaan

14 [†]The Israelites received these portions that Eleazar the priest, Joshua
son of Nun, and the heads of the families of the Israelite tribes gave
them in the land of Canaan. 2 Their inheritance was by lot as the LORD
commanded through Moses for the nine and a half tribes, 3 because Moses
had given the inheritance to the two and a half tribes beyond the Jordan.
But he gave no inheritance among them to the Levites. 4 The descendants of
Joseph became two tribes, Manasseh and Ephraim. No portion of the land
was given to the Levites except cities to live in, along with pasturelands for
their cattle and livestock. 5 So the Israelites did as the LORD commanded
Moses, and they divided the land.

Caleb's Inheritance

6[†] The descendants of Judah approached Joshua at Gilgal, and Caleb son
of Jephunneh the Kenizzite said to him, "You know what the LORD
promised Moses the man of God at Kadesh-barnea about you and me. 7 I
was 40 years old when Moses the LORD's servant sent me from Kadesh-
barnea to scout the land, and I brought back an honest report. 8 My brothers
who went with me caused the people's hearts to melt with fear, but I
remained loyal to the LORD my God. 9 On that day Moses promised me:
'The land where you have set foot will be an inheritance for you and your
descendants forever, because you have remained loyal to the LORD my
God.'

10 "As you see, the LORD has kept me alive these 45 years as He
promised, since the LORD spoke this word to Moses while Israel was
journeying in the wilderness. Here I am today, 85 years old. 11 I am still as
strong today as I was the day Moses sent me out. My strength for battle and
for daily tasks [A] is now as it was then. 12 Now give me this hill country the
LORD promised me on that day, because you heard then that the Anakim are
there, as well as large fortified cities. Perhaps the LORD will be with me and
I will drive them out as the LORD promised."

13 Then Joshua blessed Caleb son of Jephunneh and gave him Hebron as
an inheritance. 14 Therefore, Hebron belongs to Caleb son of Jephunneh the

Kenizzite as an inheritance to this day, because he remained loyal to the LORD, the God of Israel. [15] Hebron's name used to be Kiriath-arba; Arba was the greatest man among the Anakim. After this, the land had rest from war.

JOSHUA

Judah’s Inheritance

15 [†]Now the allotment for the tribe of the descendants of Judah by their clans was in the southernmost region, south to the Wilderness of Zin and over to the border of Edom.

[2] Their southern border began at the tip of the Dead Sea on the
south bay [A] [3] and went south of the Ascent of Akrabbim, [B]
proceeded to Zin, ascended to the south of Kadesh-barnea, passed
Hezron, ascended to Addar, and turned to Karka. [4] It proceeded to
Azmon and to the Brook of Egypt and so the border ended at the
Mediterranean Sea. This is your southern border.

[5] Now the eastern border was along the Dead Sea to the mouth of
the Jordan.

The border on the north side was from the bay of the sea at the
mouth of the Jordan. [6] It ascended to Beth-hoglah, proceeded
north of Beth-arabah, and ascended to the Stone of Bohan son of
Reuben. [7] Then the border ascended to Debir from the Valley of
Achor, turning north to the Gilgal that is opposite the Ascent of
Adummim, which is south of the ravine. The border proceeded to
the waters of En-shemesh and ended at En-rogel. [8] From there the
border ascended the Valley of Hinnom to the southern Jebusite
slope (that is, Jerusalem) and ascended to the top of the hill that
faces the Valley of Hinnom on the west, at the northern end of the
Valley of Rephaim. [9] From the top of the hill the border curved to
the spring of the Waters of Nephtoah, went to the cities of Mount
Ephron, and then curved to Baalah (that is, Kiriath-jearim).
[10] The border turned westward from Baalah to Mount Seir, went
to the northern slope of Mount Jearim (that is, Chesalon),
descended to Beth-shemesh, and proceeded to Timnah. [11] Then
the border reached to the slope north of Ekron, curved to
Shikkeron, proceeded to Mount Baalah, went to Jabneel, and
ended at the Mediterranean Sea.

[12] Now the western border was the coastline of the Mediterranean
Sea.

This was the boundary of the descendants of Judah around their clans.

Caleb and Othniel

13 He gave Caleb son of Jephunneh the following portion among the
descendants of Judah based on the LORD's instruction to Joshua: Kiriath-
arba (that is, Hebron; Arba was the father of Anak). 14 Caleb drove out from
there the three sons of Anak: Sheshai, Ahiman, and Talmai, descendants of
Anak. 15 From there he marched against the inhabitants of Debir whose
name used to be Kiriath-sepher, 16 and Caleb said, "I will give my daughter
Achsah as a wife to the one who strikes down and captures Kiriath-sepher."
17 So Othniel son of Caleb's brother, Kenaz, captured it, and Caleb gave his
daughter Achsah to him as a wife. 18 When she arrived, she persuaded
Othniel to ask her father for a field. As she got off her donkey, Caleb asked
her, "What do you want? " 19 She replied, "Give me a blessing. Since you
have given me land in the •Negev, give me the springs of water also." So he
gave her the upper and lower springs.

ARTICLE

Is the Old Testament Trustworthy? ⇒

Judah's Cities

20 This was the inheritance of the tribe of the descendants of Judah by
their clans.

21 These were the outermost cities of the tribe of the descendants
of Judah toward the border of Edom in the Negev: Kabzeel, Eder,
Jagur, 22 Kinah, Dimonah, Adadah, 23 Kedesh, Hazor, Ithnan,
24 Ziph, Telem, Bealoth, 25 Hazor-hadattah, Kerioth-hezron (that
is, Hazor), 26 Amam, Shema, Moladah, 27 Hazar-gaddah,
Heshmon, Beth-pelet, 28 Hazar-shual, Beer-sheba, Biziothiah,

[29] Baalah, Iim, Ezem, [30] Eltolad, Chesil, Hormah, [31] Ziklag,
Madmannah, Sansannah, [32] Lebaoth, Shilhim, Ain, and
Rimmon — 29 cities in all, with their villages.

[33] In the Judean foothills: [C] Eshtaol, Zorah, Ashnah, [34] Zanoah,
En-gannim, Tappuah, [D] Enam, [35] Jarmuth, Adullam, Socoh, [E]
Azekah, [36] Shaaraim, Adithaim, Gederah, and Gederothaim — 14
cities, with their villages; [37] Zenan, Hadashah, Migdal-gad,
[38] Dilan, Mizpeh, Jokthe-el, [39] Lachish, Bozkath, Eglon,
[40] Cabbon, Lahmam, Chitlish, [41] Gederoth, Beth-dagon, Naamah,
and Makkedah — 16 cities, with their villages; [42] Libnah, Ether,
Ashan, [43] Iphtah, Ashnah, Nezib, [44] Keilah, Achzib, and
Mareshah — nine cities, with their villages; [45] Ekron, with its
towns and villages; [46] from Ekron to the sea, all the cities near
Ashdod, with their villages; [47] Ashdod, with its towns and
villages; Gaza, with its towns and villages, to the Brook of Egypt
and the coastline of the Mediterranean Sea.

[48] In the hill country: Shamir, Jattir, Socoh, [49] Dannah, Kiriath-
sannah (that is, Debir), [50] Anab, Eshtemoh, Anim, [51] Goshen,
Holon, and Giloh — 11 cities, with their villages; [52] Arab,
Dumah, Eshan, [53] Janim, Beth-tappuah, Aphekah, [54] Humtah,
Kiriath-arba (that is, Hebron), and Zior — nine cities, with their
villages; [55] Maon, Carmel, Ziph, Juttah, [56] Jezreel, Jokdeam,
Zanoah, [57] Kain, Gibeah, and Timnah — 10 cities, with their
villages; [58] Halhul, Beth-zur, Gedor, [59] Maarath, Beth-anoth, and
Eltekon — six cities, with their villages; [60] Kiriath-baal (that is,
Kiriath-jearim), and Rabbah — two cities, with their villages.

[61] In the wilderness: Beth-arabah, Middin, Secacah, [62] Nibshan,
the City of Salt, [F] and En-gedi — six cities, with their villages.

[63][†] But the descendants of Judah could not drive out the Jebusites who lived in Jerusalem. So the Jebusites live in Jerusalem among the descendants of Judah to this day.

JOSHUA

Joseph’s Inheritance

16 †The allotment for the descendants of Joseph went from the
Jordan at Jericho to the waters of Jericho on the east,
through the wilderness ascending from Jericho into the hill
country of Bethel. 2 From Bethel it went to Luz and proceeded to
the border of the Archites by Ataroth. 3 It then descended
westward to the border of the Japhletites as far as the border of
lower Beth-horon, then to Gezer, and ended at the Mediterranean
Sea. 4 So Ephraim and Manasseh, the sons of Joseph, received
their inheritance.

Ephraim's Inheritance

5 This was the territory of the descendants of Ephraim by their clans:

The border of their inheritance went from Ataroth-addar on the
east of Upper Beth-horon. 6 In the north the border went westward
from Michmethath; it turned eastward from Taanath-shiloh and
passed it east of Janoah. 7 From Janoah it descended to Ataroth
and Naarah, and then reached Jericho and went to the Jordan.
8 From Tappuah the border went westward along the Brook of
Kanah and ended at the Mediterranean Sea.

This was the inheritance of the tribe of the descendants of Ephraim by
their clans, together with 9 the cities set apart for the descendants of
Ephraim within the inheritance of the descendants of Manasseh — all these
cities with their villages. 10† But, they did not drive out the Canaanites who
lived in Gezer. So the Canaanites live in Ephraim to this day, but they are
forced laborers.

JOSHUA

West Manasseh's Inheritance

17 This was the allotment for the tribe of Manasseh as Joseph's
firstborn. Gilead and Bashan came to Machir, the firstborn of
Manasseh and the father of Gilead, who was a man of war. 2 So the
allotment was for the rest of Manasseh's descendants by their clans, for the
sons of Abiezer, Helek, Asriel, Shechem, Hepher, and Shemida. These are
the male descendants of Manasseh son of Joseph, by their clans.

3[†] Now Zelophehad son of Hepher, son of Gilead, son of Machir, son of
Manasseh, had no sons, only daughters. These are the names of his
daughters: Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah. 4 They came before
Eleazar the priest, Joshua son of Nun, and the leaders, saying, "The LORD
commanded Moses to give us an inheritance among our male relatives." [A]
So they gave them an inheritance among their father's brothers, in keeping
with the LORD's instruction. 5 As a result, 10 tracts fell to Manasseh,
besides the land of Gilead and Bashan, which are beyond the Jordan,
6 because Manasseh's daughters received an inheritance among his sons.
The land of Gilead belonged to the rest of Manasseh's sons.

7 The border of Manasseh went from Asher to Michmethath near
Shechem. It then went southward toward the inhabitants of En-
tappuah. 8 The region of Tappuah belonged to Manasseh, but
Tappuah itself on Manasseh's border belonged to the descendants
of Ephraim. 9 From there the border descended to the Brook of
Kanah; south of the brook, cities belonged to Ephraim among
Manasseh's cities. Manasseh's border was on the north side of the
brook and ended at the Mediterranean Sea. 10 Ephraim's territory
was to the south and Manasseh's to the north, with the Sea as its
border. They reached Asher on the north and Issachar on the east.
11 Within Issachar and Asher, Manasseh had Beth-shean with its
towns, Ibleam with its towns, and the inhabitants of Dor with its
towns; the inhabitants of En-dor with its towns, the inhabitants of
Taanach with its towns, and the inhabitants of Megiddo with its
towns — the three cities of Naphath.

12[†] The descendants of Manasseh could not possess these cities, because the
Canaanites were determined to stay in this land. 13 However, when the
Israelites grew stronger, they imposed forced labor on the Canaanites but
did not drive them out completely.

Joseph's Additional Inheritance

14 Joseph's descendants said to Joshua, "Why did you give us only one
tribal allotment [B] as an inheritance? We have many people, because the
LORD has been blessing us greatly."

15 "If you have so many people," Joshua replied to them, "go to the forest
and clear an area for yourselves there in the land of the Perizzites and the
Rephaim, because Ephraim's hill country is too small for you."

16 But the descendants of Joseph said, "The hill country is not enough for
us, and all the Canaanites who inhabit the valley area have iron chariots,
both at Beth-shean with its towns and in the Jezreel Valley."

17 So Joshua replied to Joseph's family (that is, Ephraim and Manasseh),
"You have many people and great strength. You will not have just one
allotment, 18 because the hill country will be yours also. It is a forest; clear
it and its outlying areas will be yours. You can also drive out the
Canaanites, even though they have iron chariots and are strong."

JOSHUA

Land Distribution at Shiloh

18 †The entire Israelite community assembled at Shiloh where it set up
the tent of meeting there; the land had been subdued by them.
2† Seven tribes among the Israelites were left who had not divided up their
inheritance. 3† So Joshua said to the Israelites, "How long will you delay
going out to take possession of the land that the LORD, the God of your
fathers, gave you? 4† Appoint for yourselves three men from each tribe, and
I will send them out. They are to go and survey the land, write a description
of it for the purpose of their inheritance, and return to me. 5 Then they are to
divide it into seven portions. Judah is to remain in its territory in the south
and Joseph's family in their territory in the north. 6† When you have
written a description of the seven portions of land and brought it to me, I
will cast lots for you here in the presence of the LORD our God. 7 But the
Levites among you do not get a portion, because their inheritance is the
priesthood of the LORD. Gad, Reuben, and half the tribe of Manasseh have
taken their inheritance beyond the Jordan to the east, which Moses the
LORD's servant gave them."

8 As the men prepared to go, Joshua commanded them [A] to write down a
description of the land, saying, "Go and survey the land, write a description
of it, and return to me. I will then cast lots for you here in Shiloh in the
presence of the LORD." 9 So the men left, went through the land, and
described it by towns in a document of seven sections. They returned to
Joshua at the camp in Shiloh. 10 Joshua cast lots for them at Shiloh in the
presence of the LORD where he distributed the land to the Israelites
according to their divisions.

Benjamin's Inheritance

11† The lot came up for the tribe of Benjamin's descendants by their
clans, and their allotted territory lay between Judah's descendants and
Joseph's descendants.

12 Their border on the north side began at the Jordan, ascended to
the slope of Jericho on the north, through the hill country
westward, and ended at the wilderness of Beth-aven. 13 From
there the border went toward Luz, to the southern slope of Luz

(that is, Bethel); it then went down by Ataroth-addar, over the hill south of Lower Beth-horon.

[14] On the west side, from the hill facing Beth-horon on the south, the border curved, turning southward, and ended at Kiriath-baal (that is, Kiriath-jearim), a city of the descendants of Judah. This was the west side of their border.

[15] The south side began at the edge of Kiriath-jearim, and the border extended westward; it went to the spring at the Waters of
Nephtoah. [16] The border descended to the foot of the hill that faces the Valley of Hinnom at the northern end of the Valley of Rephaim. It ran down the Valley of Hinnom toward the south
Jebusite slope and downward to En-rogel. [17] It curved northward and went to En-shemesh and on to Geliloth, which is opposite the Ascent of Adummim, and continued down to the Stone of Bohan
son of Reuben. [18] Then it went north to the slope opposite the
Jordan Valley and proceeded into the valley. [C] [19] The border continued to the north slope of Beth-hoglah and ended at the northern bay of the Dead Sea, at the southern end of the Jordan. This was the southern border.

[20] The Jordan formed the border on the east side.

This was the inheritance of Benjamin's descendants, by their clans, according to its surrounding borders.

Benjamin's Cities

[21] These were the cities of the tribe of Benjamin's descendants by their clans:

Jericho, Beth-hoglah, Emek-keziz, [22] Beth-arabah, Zemaraim,
Bethel, [23] Avvim, Parah, Ophrah, [24] Chephar-ammoni, Ophni, and
Geba — 12 cities, with their villages; [25] Gibeon, Ramah, Beeroth,
[26] Mizpeh, Chephirah, Mozah, [27] Rekem, Irpeel, Taralah, [28] Zela,

Haeleph, Jebus [D] (that is, Jerusalem), Gibeah, and Kiriath — 14 cities, with their villages.

This was the inheritance for Benjamin’s descendants by their clans.

JOSHUA

Simeon's Inheritance

19 [†]The second lot came out for Simeon, for the tribe of his descendants by their clans, but their inheritance was within the portion of Judah's descendants. [2] Their inheritance included:

> Beer-sheba (or Sheba), Moladah, [3] Hazar-shual, Balah, Ezem, [4] Eltolad, Bethul, Hormah, [5] Ziklag, Beth-marcaboth, Hazar-susah, [6] Beth-lebaoth, and Sharuhen — 13 cities, with their villages; [7] Ain, Rimmon, Ether, and Ashan — four cities, with their villages; [8] and all the villages surrounding these cities as far as Baalath-beer (Ramah of the south [A]).

This was the inheritance of the tribe of Simeon's descendants by their clans. [9] The inheritance of Simeon's descendants was within the territory of Judah's descendants, because the share for Judah's descendants was too large for them. So Simeon's descendants received an inheritance within Judah's portion.

Zebulun's Inheritance

[10] The third lot came up for Zebulun's descendants by their clans.

> The territory of their inheritance stretched as far as Sarid; [11] their border went up westward to Maralah, reached Dabbesheth, and met the brook east of Jokneam. [12] From Sarid, it turned east toward the sunrise along the border of Chisloth-tabor, went to Daberath, and went up to Japhia. [13] From there, it went east toward the sunrise to Gath-hepher and to Eth-kazin; it extended to Rimmon, curving around to Neah. [14] The border then circled around Neah on the north to Hannathon and ended at the Valley of Iphtah-el, [15] along with Kattath, Nahalal, Shimron, Idalah, and Bethlehem — 12 cities, with their villages.

[16] This was the inheritance of Zebulun's descendants by their clans, these cities, with their villages.

Issachar's Inheritance

[17] The fourth lot came out for the tribe of Issachar's descendants by their clans.

[18] Their territory went to Jezreel, and included Chesulloth,
Shunem, [19] Hapharaim, Shion, Anaharath, [20] Rabbith, Kishion,
Ebez, [21] Remeth, En-gannim, En-haddah, Beth-pazzez. [22] The
border reached Tabor, Shahazumah, and Beth-shemesh, and ended
at the Jordan — 16 cities, with their villages.

[23] This was the inheritance of the tribe of Issachar's descendants by their clans, the cities, with their villages.

Asher's Inheritance

[24] The fifth lot came out for the tribe of Asher's descendants by their clans.

[25] Their boundary included Helkath, Hali, Beten, Achshaph,
[26] Allammelech, Amad, and Mishal and reached westward to
Carmel and Shihor-libnath. [27] It turned eastward to Beth-dagon,
passed Zebulun and the Valley of Iphtah-el, north toward Beth-
emek and Neiel, and went north to Cabul, [28] Ebron, Rehob,
Hammon, and Kanah, as far as Great Sidon. [29] The boundary then
turned to Ramah as far as the fortified city of Tyre; it turned back
to Hosah and ended at the sea, including Mahalab, Achzib, [B]
[30] Ummah, Aphek, and Rehob — 22 cities, with their villages.

[31] This was the inheritance of the tribe of Asher's descendants by their clans, these cities with their villages.

Naphtali's Inheritance

[32] The sixth lot came out for Naphtali's descendants by their clans.

[33] Their boundary went from Heleph and from the oak in
Zaanannim, including Adami-nekeb and Jabneel, as far as

Lakkum, and ended at the Jordan. 34 To the west, the boundary
turned to Aznoth-tabor and went from there to Hukkok, reaching
Zebulun on the south, Asher on the west, and Judah at the Jordan
on the east. 35 The fortified cities were Ziddim, Zer, Hammath,
Rakkath, Chinnereth, 36 Adamah, Ramah, Hazor, 37 Kedesh,
Edrei, En-hazor, 38 Iron, Migdal-el, Horem, Beth-anath, and Beth-
shemesh — 19 cities, with their villages.

39 This was the inheritance of the tribe of Naphtali's descendants by their
clans, the cities with their villages.

Dan's Inheritance

40 The seventh lot came out for the Danite tribe by its clans.

41 The territory of their inheritance included Zorah, Eshtaol, Ir-
shemesh, 42 Shaalabbin, Aijalon, Ithlah, 43 Elon, Timnah, Ekron,
44 Eltekeh, Gibbethon, Baalath, 45 Jehud, Bene-berak, Gath-
rimmon, 46 Me-jarkon, and Rakkon, with the territory facing
Joppa.

47† When the territory of the Danites slipped out of their control, [C] they
went up and fought against Leshem, captured it, and struck it down with the
sword. So they took possession of it, lived there, and renamed Leshem
after [D] their ancestor Dan. 48 This was the inheritance of the Danite tribe by
its clans, these cities with their villages.

Joshua's Inheritance

49† When they had finished distributing the land into its territories, the
Israelites gave Joshua son of Nun an inheritance among them. 50 By the
LORD's command, they gave him the city Timnath-serah in the hill country
of Ephraim, which he requested. He rebuilt the city and lived in it.

51† These were the portions that Eleazar the priest, Joshua son of Nun,
and the heads of the families distributed to the Israelite tribes by lot at

Shiloh in the LORD's presence at the entrance to the tent of meeting. So they finished dividing up the land.

JOSHUA

Cities of Refuge

20 [†]Then the LORD spoke to Joshua, 2 “Tell the Israelites: Select your
cities of refuge, as I instructed you through Moses, 3[†] so that a person
who kills someone unintentionally or accidentally may flee there. These
will be your refuge from the avenger of blood. 4 When someone flees to
one of these cities, stands at the entrance of the city •gate, and states his
case before [A] the elders of that city, they are to bring him into the city and
give him a place to live among them. 5 And if the avenger of blood pursues
him, they must not hand the one who committed manslaughter over to him,
for he killed his neighbor accidentally and did not hate him beforehand.
6 He is to stay in that city until he stands trial before the assembly and until
the death of the high priest serving at that time. Then the one who
committed manslaughter may return home to his own city from which he
fled.”

7 So they designated Kedesh in the hill country of Naphtali in Galilee,
Shechem in the hill country of Ephraim, and Kiriath-arba (that is, Hebron)
in the hill country of Judah. 8 Across the Jordan east of Jericho, they
selected Bezer on the wilderness plateau from Reuben’s tribe, Ramoth in
Gilead from Gad’s tribe, and Golan in Bashan from Manasseh’s tribe.

9 These are the cities appointed for all the Israelites and foreigners among
them, so that anyone who kills a person unintentionally may flee there and
not die at the hand of the avenger of blood until he stands before the
assembly.

JOSHUA

Cities of the Levites

21 †The heads of the Levite families approached Eleazar the priest,
Joshua son of Nun, and the heads of the families of the Israelite tribes.
2 At Shiloh, in the land of Canaan, they told them, “The Lord commanded
through Moses that we be given cities to live in, with their pasturelands for
our livestock.” 3† So the Israelites, by the Lord’s command, gave the
Levites these cities with their pasturelands from their inheritance.

> 4† The lot came out for the Kohathite clans: The Levites who were
> the descendants of Aaron the priest received 13 cities by lot from
> the tribes of Judah, Simeon, and Benjamin. 5 The remaining
> descendants of Kohath received 10 cities by lot from the clans of
> the tribes of Ephraim, Dan, and half the tribe of Manasseh.
>
> 6 Gershon’s descendants received 13 cities by lot from the clans of
> the tribes of Issachar, Asher, Naphtali, and half the tribe of
> Manasseh in Bashan.
>
> 7 Merari’s descendants received 12 cities for their clans from the
> tribes of Reuben, Gad, and Zebulun.

8 The Israelites gave these cities with their pasturelands around them to the
Levites by lot, as the Lord had commanded through Moses.

Cities of Aaron’s Descendants

9† The Israelites gave these cities by name from the tribes of the
descendants of Judah and Simeon 10 to the descendants of Aaron from the
Kohathite clans of the Levites, because they received the first lot. 11 They
gave them Kiriath-arba (that is, Hebron) with its surrounding pasturelands
in the hill country of Judah. Arba was the father of Anak. 12 But they gave
the fields and villages of the city to Caleb son of Jephunneh as his
possession.

13 They gave to the descendants of Aaron the priest:

> Hebron, the city of refuge for the one who commits manslaughter,
> with its pasturelands, Libnah with its pasturelands, 14 Jattir with

its pasturelands, Eshtemoa with its pasturelands, [15] Holon with its
pasturelands, Debir with its pasturelands, [16] Ain with its
pasturelands, Juttah with its pasturelands, and Beth-shemesh with
its pasturelands — nine cities from these two tribes.

[17] From the tribe of Benjamin they gave:

Gibeon with its pasturelands, Geba with its pasturelands,
[18] Anathoth with its pasturelands, and Almon with its
pasturelands — four cities. [19] All 13 cities with their pasturelands
were for the priests, the descendants of Aaron.

Cities of Kohath's Other Descendants

[20] The allotted cities to the remaining clans of Kohath's descendants, who
were Levites, came from the tribe of Ephraim. [21] The Israelites gave them:

Shechem, the city of refuge for the one who commits
manslaughter, with its pasturelands in the hill country of Ephraim,
Gezer with its pasturelands, [22] Kibzaim with its pasturelands, and
Beth-horon with its pasturelands — four cities.

[23] From the tribe of Dan they gave:

Elteke with its pasturelands, Gibbethon with its pasturelands,
[24] Aijalon with its pasturelands, and Gath-rimmon with its
pasturelands — four cities.

[25] From half the tribe of Manasseh they gave:

Taanach with its pasturelands and Gath-rimmon [A] with its
pasturelands — two cities.

[26] All 10 cities with their pasturelands were for the clans of Kohath's other
descendants.

Cities of Gershon's Descendants

[27] From half the tribe of Manasseh, they gave to the descendants of Gershon, who were one of the Levite clans:

> Golan, the city of refuge for the one who commits manslaughter, with its pasturelands in Bashan, and Beeshterah with its pasturelands — two cities.

[28] From the tribe of Issachar they gave:

> Kishion with its pasturelands, Daberath with its pasturelands,
> [29] Jarmuth with its pasturelands, and En-gannim with its pasturelands — four cities.

[30] From the tribe of Asher they gave:

> Mishal with its pasturelands, Abdon with its pasturelands,
> [31] Helkath with its pasturelands, and Rehob with its pasturelands — four cities.

[32] From the tribe of Naphtali they gave:

> Kedesh in Galilee, the city of refuge for the one who commits manslaughter, with its pasturelands, Hammoth-dor with its pasturelands, and Kartan with its pasturelands — three cities.

[33] All 13 cities with their pasturelands were for the Gershonites by their clans.

Cities of Merari's Descendants

[34] From the tribe of Zebulun, they gave to the clans of the descendants of Merari, who were the remaining Levites:

> Jokneam with its pasturelands, Kartah with its pasturelands,
> [35] Dimnah with its pasturelands, and Nahalal with its pasturelands — four cities.

[36] From the tribe of Reuben they gave:

Bezer with its pasturelands, Jahzah [B] with its pasturelands,
[37] Kedemoth with its pasturelands, and Mephaath with its
pasturelands — four cities.

[38] From the tribe of Gad they gave:

Ramoth in Gilead, the city of refuge for the one who commits
manslaughter, with its pasturelands, Mahanaim with its
pasturelands, [39] Heshbon with its pasturelands, and Jazer with its
pasturelands — four cities in all. [40] All 12 cities were allotted to
the clans of Merari's descendants, the remaining Levite clans.

[41] Within the Israelite possession there were 48 cities in all with their
pasturelands for the Levites. [42] Each of these cities had its own surrounding
pasturelands; this was true for all the cities.

The LORD's Promises Fulfilled

[43†] So the LORD gave Israel all the land He had sworn to give their
fathers, and they took possession of it and settled there. [44] The LORD gave
them rest on every side according to all He had sworn to their fathers. None
of their enemies were able to stand against them, for the LORD handed over
all their enemies to them. [45] None of the good promises the LORD had made
to the house of Israel failed. Everything was fulfilled.

JOSHUA

Eastern Tribes Return Home

22 Joshua summoned the Reubenites, Gadites, and half the tribe of
Manasseh 2 and told them, “You have done everything Moses the
LORD’s servant commanded you and have obeyed me in everything I
commanded you. 3 You have not deserted your brothers even once this
whole time but have carried out the requirement of the command of the
LORD your God. 4 Now that He has given your brothers rest, just as He
promised them, return to your homes in your own land that Moses the
LORD’s servant gave you across the Jordan. 5 Only carefully obey the
command and instruction that Moses the LORD’s servant gave you: to love
the LORD your God, walk in all His ways, keep His commands, remain
faithful [A] to Him, and serve Him with all your heart and all your soul.”

6 Joshua blessed them and sent them on their way, and they went to their
homes. 7 Moses had given territory to half the tribe of Manasseh in Bashan,
but Joshua had given territory to the other half, [B] with their brothers, on the
west side of the Jordan. When Joshua sent them to their homes and blessed
them, 8 he said, “Return to your homes with great wealth: a huge number of
cattle, and silver, gold, bronze, iron, and a large quantity of clothing. Share
the spoil of your enemies with your brothers.”

Eastern Tribes Build an Altar

9† The Reubenites, Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh left the
Israelites at Shiloh in the land of Canaan to return to their own land of
Gilead, which they took possession of according to the LORD’s command
through Moses. 10† When they came to the region of [C] the Jordan in the
land of Canaan, the Reubenites, Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh
built a large, impressive altar there by the Jordan.

11 Then the Israelites heard it said, “Look, the Reubenites, Gadites, and
half the tribe of Manasseh have built an altar on the frontier of the land of
Canaan at the region of [D] the Jordan, on the Israelite side.” 12† When the
Israelites heard this, the entire Israelite community assembled at Shiloh to
go to war against them.

Explanation of the Altar

[13] The Israelites sent Phinehas son of Eleazar the priest to the Reubenites,
Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh, in the land of Gilead. [14] They sent
10 leaders with him — one family leader for each tribe of Israel. All of
them were heads of their families among the clans of Israel. [15] They went
to the Reubenites, Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh, in the land of
Gilead, and told them, [16†] "This is what the LORD's entire community says:
'What is this treachery you have committed today against the God of Israel
by turning away from the LORD and building an altar for yourselves, so that
you are in rebellion against the LORD today? [17] Wasn't the sin of Peor,
which brought a plague on the LORD's community, enough for us, so that we
have not cleansed ourselves from it even to this day, [18] and now, you would
turn away from the LORD? If you rebel against the LORD today, tomorrow He
will be angry with the entire community of Israel. [19] But if the land you
possess is defiled, cross over to the land the LORD possesses where the
LORD's tabernacle stands, and take possession of it among us. But don't
rebel against the LORD or against us by building for yourselves an altar other
than the altar of the LORD our God. [20] Wasn't Achan son of Zerah unfaithful
regarding what was •set apart for destruction, bringing wrath on the entire
community of Israel? He was not the only one who perished because of his
sin.' "

[21] The Reubenites, Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh answered the
leaders of the Israelite clans, [22] "•Yahweh is the God of gods! Yahweh is the
God of gods! [E] He knows, and may Israel also know. Do not spare us
today, if it was in rebellion or treachery against the LORD [23] that we have
built for ourselves an altar to turn away from Him. May the LORD Himself
hold us accountable if we intended to offer •burnt offerings and •grain
offerings on it, or to sacrifice •fellowship offerings on it. [24] We actually did
this from a specific concern that in the future your descendants might say to
our descendants, 'What relationship do you have with the LORD, the God of
Israel? [25] For the LORD has made the Jordan a border between us and you
descendants of Reuben and Gad. You have no share in the LORD! ' So your
descendants may cause our descendants to stop fearing the LORD.

[26] “Therefore we said: Let us take action and build an altar for ourselves,
but not for burnt offering or sacrifice. [27] Instead, it is to be a witness
between us and you, and between the generations after us, so that we may
carry out the worship of the LORD in His presence with our burnt offerings,
sacrifices, and fellowship offerings. Then in the future, your descendants
will not be able to say to our descendants, ‘You have no share in the LORD! ’
[28] We thought that if they said this to us or to our generations in the future,
we would reply: Look at the replica of the LORD’s altar that our fathers
made, not for burnt offering or sacrifice, but as a witness between us and
you. [29] We would never rebel against the LORD or turn away from Him
today by building an altar for burnt offering, grain offering, or sacrifice,
other than the altar of the LORD our God, which is in front of His
tabernacle.”

Conflict Resolved

[30] When Phinehas the priest and the community leaders, the heads of
Israel’s clans who were with him, heard what the descendants of Reuben,
Gad, and Manasseh had to say, they were pleased. [31] Phinehas son of
Eleazar the priest said to the descendants of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh,
“Today we know that the LORD is among us, because you have not
committed this treachery against Him. As a result, you have delivered the
Israelites from the LORD’s power.”

[32] Then Phinehas son of Eleazar the priest and the leaders returned from
the Reubenites and Gadites in the land of Gilead to the Israelites in the land
of Canaan and brought back a report to them. [33†] The Israelites were
pleased with the report, and they praised God. They spoke no more about
going to war against them to ravage the land where the Reubenites and
Gadites lived. [34] So the Reubenites and Gadites named the altar: It is a
witness between us that the LORD is God.

JOSHUA

Joshua’s Farewell Address

23 [†]A long time after the LORD had given Israel rest from all the enemies
around them, Joshua was old, getting on in years. 2 So Joshua
summoned all Israel, including its elders, leaders, judges, and officers, and
said to them, “I am old, getting on in years, 3[†] and you have seen for
yourselves everything the LORD your God did to all these nations on your
account, because it was the LORD your God who was fighting for you.
4 See, I have allotted these remaining nations to you as an inheritance for
your tribes, including all the nations I have destroyed, from the Jordan
westward to the Mediterranean Sea. 5 The LORD your God will force them
back on your account and drive them out before you so that you can take
possession of their land, as the LORD your God promised you.

6 “Be very strong and continue obeying all that is written in the book of
the law of Moses, so that you do not turn from it to the right or left 7 and so
that you do not associate with these nations remaining among you. Do not
call on the names of their gods or make an oath to them; do not worship
them or bow down to them. 8 Instead, remain faithful to the LORD your God,
as you have done to this day.

9 “The LORD has driven out great and powerful nations before you, and
no one is able to stand against you to this day. 10 One of you routed a
thousand because the LORD your God was fighting for you, as He
promised. [A] 11 So be very diligent to love the LORD your God for your own
well-being. 12 For if you turn away and cling to the rest of these nations
remaining among you, and if you intermarry or associate with them and
they with you, 13 know for certain that the LORD your God will not continue
to drive these nations out before you. They will become a snare and a trap
for you, a scourge for your sides and thorns in your eyes, until you
disappear from this good land the LORD your God has given you.

14[†] “I am now going the way of all the earth, and you know with all your
heart and all your soul that none of the good promises the LORD your God
made to you has failed. Everything was fulfilled for you; not one promise
has failed. 15[†] Since every good thing the LORD your God promised you has
come about, so He will bring on you every bad thing until He has

annihilated you from this good land the LORD your God has given you. [16] If
you break the covenant of the LORD your God, which He commanded you,
and go and worship other gods, and bow down to them, the LORD's anger
will burn against you, and you will quickly disappear from this good land
He has given you."

JOSHUA

Review of Israel's History

24 [†]Joshua assembled all the tribes of Israel at Shechem and summoned
Israel’s elders, leaders, judges, and officers, and they presented
themselves before God. 2[†] Joshua said to all the people, “This is what the
LORD, the God of Israel, says: ‘Long ago your ancestors, including Terah,
the father of Abraham and Nahor, lived beyond the Euphrates River and
worshiped other gods. 3 But I took your father Abraham from the region
beyond the Euphrates River, led him throughout the land of Canaan, and
multiplied his descendants. I gave him Isaac, 4 and to Isaac I gave Jacob
and Esau. I gave the hill country of Seir to Esau as a possession, but Jacob
and his sons went down to Egypt.

5 “ ‘Then I sent Moses and Aaron; I plagued Egypt by what I did there
and afterward I brought you out. 6 When I brought your fathers out of Egypt
and you reached the •Red Sea, the Egyptians pursued your fathers with
chariots and horsemen as far as the sea. 7 Your fathers cried out to the LORD,
so He put darkness between you and the Egyptians, and brought the sea
over them, engulfing them. Your own eyes saw what I did to Egypt. After
that, you lived in the wilderness a long time.

8 “ ‘Later, I brought you to the land of the Amorites who lived beyond
the Jordan. They fought against you, but I handed them over to you. You
possessed their land, and I annihilated them before you. 9 Balak son of
Zippor, king of Moab, set out to fight against Israel. He sent for Balaam
son of Beor to curse you, 10 but I would not listen to Balaam. Instead, he
repeatedly blessed you, and I delivered you from his hand.

11 “ ‘You then crossed the Jordan and came to Jericho. The people of
Jericho — as well as the Amorites, Perizzites, Canaanites, Hittites,
Girgashites, Hivites, and Jebusites — fought against you, but I handed them
over to you. 12 I sent the hornet [A] ahead of you, and it drove out the two
Amorite kings before you. It was not by your sword or bow. 13 I gave you a
land you did not labor for, and cities you did not build, though you live in
them; you are eating from vineyards and olive groves you did not plant.’

The Covenant Renewal

14† “Therefore, •fear the LORD and worship Him in sincerity and truth.
Get rid of the gods your fathers worshiped beyond the Euphrates River and
in Egypt, and worship •Yahweh. 15† But if it doesn’t please you to worship
Yahweh, choose for yourselves today the one you will worship: the gods
your fathers worshiped beyond the Euphrates River or the gods of the
Amorites in whose land you are living. As for me and my family, we will
worship Yahweh.”

16† The people replied, “We will certainly not abandon the LORD to
worship other gods! 17 For the LORD our God brought us and our fathers out
of the land of Egypt, out of the place of slavery, and performed these great
signs before our eyes. He also protected us all along the way we went and
among all the peoples whose lands we traveled through. 18 The LORD drove
out before us all the peoples, including the Amorites who lived in the land.
We too will worship the LORD, because He is our God.”

19† But Joshua told the people, “You will not be able to worship Yahweh,
because He is a holy God. He is a jealous God; He will not remove your
transgressions and sins. 20 If you abandon the LORD and worship foreign
gods, He will turn against you, harm you, and completely destroy you, after
He has been good to you.”

21 “No! ” the people answered Joshua. “We will worship the LORD.”

22 Joshua then told the people, “You are witnesses against yourselves that
you yourselves have chosen to worship Yahweh.”

“We are witnesses,” they said.

23 “Then get rid of the foreign gods that are among you and offer your
hearts to the LORD, the God of Israel.”

24 So the people said to Joshua, “We will worship the LORD our God and
obey Him.”

[25] On that day Joshua made a covenant for the people at Shechem and established a statute and ordinance for them. [26] Joshua recorded these things in the book of the law of God; he also took a large stone and set it up there under the oak next to the sanctuary of the LORD. [27] And Joshua said to all the people, "You see this stone — it will be a witness against us, for it has heard all the words the LORD said to us, and it will be a witness against you, so that you will not deny your God." [28] Then Joshua sent the people away, each to his own inheritance.

Burial of Three Leaders

[29†] After these things, the LORD's servant, Joshua son of Nun, died at the age of 110. [30] They buried him in his allotted territory at Timnath-serah, in the hill country of Ephraim north of Mount Gaash. [31] Israel worshiped Yahweh throughout Joshua's lifetime and during the lifetimes of the elders who outlived Joshua and who had experienced all the works Yahweh had done for Israel.

[32] Joseph's bones, which the Israelites had brought up from Egypt, were buried at Shechem in the parcel of land Jacob had purchased from the sons of Hamor, Shechem's father, for 100 *qesitahs*. It was an inheritance for Joseph's descendants.

[33] And Eleazar son of Aaron died, and they buried him at Gibeah, which had been given to his son Phinehas in the hill country of Ephraim.

JUDGES

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JUDGES

Judah’s Leadership against the Canaanites

1 †After the death of Joshua, the Israelites inquired of the LORD, “Who
will be the first to fight for us against the Canaanites? ”

2† The LORD answered, “Judah is to go. I have handed the land over to
him.”

3 Judah said to his brother Simeon, “Come with me to my territory, and
let us fight against the Canaanites. I will also go with you to your territory.”
So Simeon went with him.

4 When Judah attacked, the LORD handed the Canaanites and Perizzites
over to them. They struck down 10,000 men in Bezek. 5 They found
Adoni-bezek in Bezek, fought against him, and struck down the Canaanites
and Perizzites.

6 When Adoni-bezek fled, they pursued him, seized him, and cut off his
thumbs and big toes. 7† Adoni-bezek said, “Seventy kings with their
thumbs and big toes cut off used to pick up scraps [A] under my table. God
has repaid me for what I have done.” They brought him to Jerusalem, and
he died there.

8 The men of Judah fought against Jerusalem and captured it. They put
the city to the sword and set it on fire. 9 Afterward, the men of Judah
marched down to fight against the Canaanites who were living in the hill
country, the •Negev, and the Judean foothills. [B] 10 Judah also marched
against the Canaanites who were living in Hebron (Hebron was formerly
named Kiriath-arba). They struck down Sheshai, Ahiman, and Talmai.
11† From there they marched against the residents of Debir (Debir was
formerly named Kiriath-sepher).

12 Caleb said, “Whoever strikes down and captures Kiriath-sepher, I will
give my daughter Achsah to him as a wife.” 13 So Othniel son of Kenaz,
Caleb’s youngest brother, captured it, and Caleb gave his daughter Achsah
to him as his wife.

[14] When she arrived, she persuaded Othniel to ask her father for a field.
As she got off her donkey, Caleb asked her, “What do you want? ” [15] She
answered him, “Give me a blessing. Since you have given me land in the
Negev, give me springs of water also.” So Caleb gave her both the upper
and lower springs.

[16] The descendants of the Kenite, Moses’ father-in-law, had gone up
with the men of Judah from the City of Palms to the Wilderness of Judah,
which was in the Negev of Arad. They went to live among the people.

[17] Judah went with his brother Simeon, struck the Canaanites who were
living in Zephath, and •completely destroyed the town. So they named the
town Hormah. [18] Judah captured Gaza and its territory, Ashkelon and its
territory, and Ekron and its territory. [19†] The LORD was with Judah and
enabled them to take possession of the hill country, but they could not drive
out the people who were living in the valley because those people had iron
chariots.

[20] Judah gave Hebron to Caleb, just as Moses had promised. Then Caleb
drove out the three sons of Anak who lived there.

Benjamin’s Failure

[21†] At the same time the Benjaminites did not drive out the Jebusites who
were living in Jerusalem. The Jebusites have lived among the Benjaminites
in Jerusalem to this day.

Success of the House of Joseph

[22] The house of Joseph also attacked Bethel, and the LORD was with
them. [23] They sent spies to Bethel (the town was formerly named Luz).
[24] The spies saw a man coming out of the town and said to him, “Please
show us how to get into town, and we will treat you well.” [25] When he
showed them the way into the town, they put the town to the sword but
released the man and his entire family. [26] Then the man went to the land of
the Hittites, built a town, and named it Luz. That is its name to this day.

Failure of the Other Tribes

27 At that time Manasseh failed to take possession of Beth-shean and its
villages, or Taanach and its villages, or the residents of Dor and its
villages, or the residents of Ibleam and its villages, or the residents of
Megiddo and its villages; the Canaanites refused to leave this land.
28 When Israel became stronger, they made the Canaanites serve as forced
labor but never drove them out completely.

29 At that time Ephraim failed to drive out the Canaanites who were
living in Gezer, so the Canaanites have lived among them in Gezer.

30 Zebulun failed to drive out the residents of Kitron or the residents of
Nahalol, so the Canaanites lived among them and served as forced labor.

31 Asher failed to drive out the residents of Acco or of Sidon, or Ahlab,
Achzib, Helbah, Aphik, or Rehob. 32 The Asherites lived among the
Canaanites who were living in the land, because they failed to drive them
out.

33 Naphtali did not drive out the residents of Beth-shemesh or the
residents of Beth-anath. They lived among the Canaanites who were living
in the land, but the residents of Beth-shemesh and Beth-anath served as
their forced labor.

34 The Amorites forced the Danites into the hill country and did not
allow them to go down into the valley. 35 The Amorites refused to leave [C]
Har-heres, Aijalon, and Shaalbim. When the house of Joseph got the upper
hand, [D] the Amorites were made to serve as forced labor. 36 The territory of
the Amorites extended from the Ascent of Akrabbim, that is from Sela
upward.

JUDGES

Pattern of Sin and Judgment

2 †The Angel of the LORD went up from Gilgal to Bochim and said, "I
brought you out of Egypt and led you into the land I had promised to
your fathers. I also said: I will never break My covenant with you. 2 You
are not to make a covenant with the people who are living in this land, and
you are to tear down their altars. But you have not obeyed Me. What is this
you have done? 3 Therefore, I now say: I will not drive out these people
before you. They will be thorns in your sides, and their gods will be a trap
for you." 4 When the Angel of the LORD had spoken these words to all the
Israelites, the people wept loudly. 5 So they named that place Bochim [B] and
offered sacrifices there to the LORD.

Joshua's Death

6† Joshua sent the people away, and the Israelites went to take possession
of the land, each to his own inheritance. 7 The people worshiped the LORD
throughout Joshua's lifetime and during the lifetimes of the elders who
outlived [C] Joshua. They had seen all the LORD's great works He had done
for Israel.

8 Joshua son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died at the age of 110.
9 They buried him in the territory of his inheritance, in Timnath-heres, in
the hill country of Ephraim, north of Mount Gaash. 10 That whole
generation was also gathered to their ancestors. After them another
generation rose up who did not know the LORD or the works He had done
for Israel.

11 The Israelites did what was evil in the LORD's sight. They worshiped
the •Baals 12 and abandoned the LORD, the God of their fathers, who had
brought them out of Egypt. They went after other gods from the
surrounding peoples and bowed down to them. They infuriated the LORD,
13 for they abandoned Him and worshiped Baal and the •Ashtoreths.

14† The LORD's anger burned against Israel, and He handed them over to
marauders who raided them. He sold them to [D] the enemies around them,
and they could no longer resist their enemies. 15 Whenever the Israelites

went out, the LORD [E] was against them and brought disaster on them, just as He had promised and sworn to them. So they suffered greatly.

16 The LORD raised up judges, who saved them from the power of their marauders, 17† but they did not listen to their judges. Instead, they prostituted themselves with other gods, bowing down to them. They quickly turned from the way of their fathers, who had walked in obedience to the LORD's commands. They did not do as their fathers did. 18 Whenever the LORD raised up a judge for the Israelites, the LORD was with him and saved the people from the power of their enemies while the judge was still alive. [F] The LORD was moved to pity whenever they groaned because of those who were oppressing and afflicting them. 19 Whenever the judge died, the Israelites would act even more corruptly than their fathers, going after other gods to worship and bow down to them. They did not turn from their evil practices or their obstinate ways.

20 The LORD's anger burned against Israel, and He declared, "Because this nation has violated My covenant that I made with their fathers and disobeyed Me, 21 I will no longer drive out before them any of the nations Joshua left when he died. 22† I did this to test Israel and to see whether they would keep the LORD's way by walking in it, as their fathers had."
23 The LORD left these nations and did not drive them out immediately. He did not hand them over to Joshua.

JUDGES

The LORD Tests Israel

3 †These are the nations the LORD left in order to test Israel, since the
Israelites had fought none of these in [A] any of the wars with Canaan.
2 This was to teach the future generations of the Israelites how to fight in
battle, especially those who had not fought before. [B] 3 These nations
included: the five rulers of the Philistines and all of the Canaanites, the
Sidonians, and the Hivites who lived in the Lebanese mountains from
Mount Baal-hermon as far as the entrance to Hamath. [C] 4 The LORD left
them to test Israel, to determine if they would keep the LORD's commands
He had given their fathers through [D] Moses. 5† But they settled among the
Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites. 6 The
Israelites took their daughters as wives for themselves, gave their own
daughters to their sons, and worshiped their gods.

Othniel, the First Judge

7 The Israelites did what was evil in the LORD's sight; they forgot the
LORD their God and worshiped the •Baals and the •Asherahs. 8† The LORD's
anger burned against Israel, and He sold them to [E] Cushan-rishathaim [F]
king of Aram-naharaim, and the Israelites served him eight years.

9 The Israelites cried out to the LORD. So the LORD raised up Othniel son
of Kenaz, Caleb's youngest brother as a deliverer to save the Israelites.
10† The Spirit of the LORD came on him, and he judged Israel. Othniel went
out to battle, and the LORD handed over Cushan-rishathaim king of Aram to
him, so that Othniel overpowered him. 11 Then the land was peaceful 40
years, and Othniel son of Kenaz died.

Ehud

12† The Israelites again did what was evil in the LORD's sight. He gave
Eglon king of Moab power over Israel, because they had done what was
evil in the LORD's sight. 13 After Eglon convinced the Ammonites and the
Amalekites to join forces with him, he attacked and defeated Israel and took
possession of the City of Palms. 14 The Israelites served Eglon king of
Moab 18 years.

[15] Then the Israelites cried out to the LORD, and He raised up Ehud son of
Gera, a left-handed Benjaminite, as a deliverer for them. The Israelites
sent him to Eglon king of Moab with tribute money.

[16] Ehud made himself a double-edged sword 18 inches long. [G] He
strapped it to his right thigh under his clothes [17] and brought the tribute to
Eglon king of Moab, who was an extremely fat man. [18] When Ehud had
finished presenting the tribute, he dismissed the people who had carried it.
[19] At the carved images near Gilgal he returned and said, “King Eglon, I
have a secret message for you.” The king called for silence, and all his
attendants left him. [20†] Then Ehud approached him while he was sitting
alone in his room upstairs where it was cool. Ehud said, “I have a word
from God for you,” and the king stood up from his throne. [21] Ehud reached
with his left hand, took the sword from his right thigh, and plunged it into
Eglon’s belly. [22] Even the handle went in after the blade, and Eglon’s fat
closed in over it, so that Ehud did not withdraw the sword from his belly.
And Eglon’s insides came out. [23] Ehud escaped by way of the porch,
closing and locking the doors of the upstairs room behind him.

[24] Ehud was gone when Eglon’s servants came in. They looked and
found the doors of the upstairs room locked and thought he was relieving
himself [H] in the cool room. [25] The servants waited until they became
worried and saw that he had still not opened the doors of the upstairs room.
So they took the key and opened the doors — and there was their lord lying
dead on the floor!

[26] Ehud escaped while the servants waited. He crossed over the Jordan
near the carved images and reached Seirah. [27] After he arrived, he sounded
the ram’s horn throughout the hill country of Ephraim. The Israelites came
down with him from the hill country, and he became their leader. [28] He told
them, “Follow me, because the LORD has handed over your enemies, the
Moabites, to you.” So they followed him, captured the fords of the Jordan
leading to Moab, and did not allow anyone to cross over. [29†] At that time
they struck down about 10,000 Moabites, all strong and able-bodied men.

Not one of them escaped. [30] Moab became subject to Israel that day, and the land was peaceful 80 years.

Shamgar

[31] After Ehud, Shamgar son of Anath became judge. He delivered Israel by striking down 600 Philistines with an oxgoad.

JUDGES

Deborah and Barak

4 The Israelites again did what was evil in the sight of the LORD after
Ehud had died. [2†] So the LORD sold them into the hand of Jabin king of
Canaan, who reigned in Hazor. The commander of his forces was Sisera
who lived in Harosheth of the Nations. [A] [3†] Then the Israelites cried out to
the LORD, because Jabin had 900 iron chariots, and he harshly oppressed
them 20 years.

[4] Deborah, a woman who was a prophetess and the wife of Lappidoth,
was judging Israel at that time. [5] It was her custom to sit under the palm tree
of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim, and
the Israelites went up to her for judgment.

[6†] She summoned Barak son of Abinoam from Kedesh in Naphtali and
said to him, "Hasn't the LORD, the God of Israel, commanded you: 'Go,
deploy the troops on Mount Tabor, and take with you 10,000 men from the
Naphtalites and Zebulunites? [7] Then I will lure Sisera commander of
Jabin's forces, his chariots, and his army at the •Wadi Kishon to fight
against you, and I will hand him over to you.' "

[8] Barak said to her, "If you will go with me, I will go. But if you will not
go with me, I will not go."

[9] "I will go with you," she said, "but you will receive no honor on the
road you are about to take, because the LORD will sell Sisera into a woman's
hand." So Deborah got up and went with Barak to Kedesh. [10] Barak
summoned Zebulun and Naphtali to Kedesh; 10,000 men followed him, and
Deborah also went with him.

[11†] Now Heber the Kenite had moved away from the Kenites, the sons of
Hobab, Moses' father-in-law, and pitched his tent beside the oak tree of
Zaanannim, which was near Kedesh.

[12] It was reported to Sisera that Barak son of Abinoam had gone up
Mount Tabor. [13] Sisera summoned all his 900 iron chariots and all the
people who were with him from Harosheth of the Nations [B] to the Wadi
Kishon. [14] Then Deborah said to Barak, "Move on, for this is the day the

LORD has handed Sisera over to you. Hasn't the LORD gone before you? " So
Barak came down from Mount Tabor with 10,000 men following him.

15[†] The LORD threw Sisera, all his charioteers, and all his army into
confusion with the sword before Barak. Sisera left his chariot and fled on
foot. 16 Barak pursued the chariots and the army as far as Harosheth of the
Nations, [C] and the whole army of Sisera fell by the sword; not a single man
was left.

17 Meanwhile, Sisera had fled on foot to the tent of Jael, the wife of
Heber the Kenite, because there was peace between Jabin king of Hazor and
the family of Heber the Kenite. 18 Jael went out to greet Sisera and said to
him, "Come in, my lord. Come in with me. Don't be afraid." So he went
into her tent, and she covered him with a rug. 19 He said to her, "Please give
me a little water to drink for I am thirsty." She opened a container of milk,
gave him a drink, and covered him again. 20 Then he said to her, "Stand at
the entrance to the tent. If a man comes and asks you, 'Is there a man
here? ' say, 'No.' " 21 While he was sleeping from exhaustion, Heber's wife
Jael took a tent peg, grabbed a hammer, and went silently to Sisera. She
hammered the peg into his temple and drove it into the ground, and he died.

22 When Barak arrived in pursuit of Sisera, Jael went out to greet him and
said to him, "Come and I will show you the man you are looking for." So he
went in with her, and there was Sisera lying dead with a tent peg through
his temple!

23 That day God subdued Jabin king of Canaan before the Israelites.
24 The power of the Israelites continued to increase against Jabin king of
Canaan until they destroyed him.

JUDGES

Deborah's Song

5 [†]On that day Deborah and Barak son of Abinoam sang:

2 When the leaders lead [A] in Israel,
when the people volunteer,
praise the LORD.
3 Listen, kings! Pay attention, princes!
I will sing to the LORD;
I will sing praise to the LORD God of Israel.
4 LORD, when You came from Seir,
when You marched from the fields of Edom,
the earth trembled,
the heavens poured rain,
and the clouds poured water.
5 The mountains melted before the LORD,
even Sinai [B] before the LORD, the God of Israel.

6 In the days of Shamgar son of Anath,
in the days of Jael,
the main ways were deserted
because travelers kept to the side roads.
7 Villages were deserted, [C]
they were deserted in Israel,
until I, Deborah, [D] arose,
a mother in Israel.
8[†] Israel chose new gods,
then war was in the gates.
Not a shield or spear was seen
among 40,000 in Israel.
9 My heart is with the leaders of Israel,
with the volunteers of the people.
Praise the LORD!
10 You who ride on white [E] donkeys,
who sit on saddle blankets,
and who travel on the road, give praise!
11 Let them tell the righteous acts of the LORD,
the righteous deeds of His warriors in Israel,

with the voices of the singers at the watering places. [F]

Then the LORD's people went down to the gates.
12 "Awake! Awake, Deborah!
Awake! Awake, sing a song!
Arise, Barak,
and take hold of your captives,
son of Abinoam! "
13 The survivors came down to the nobles;
the LORD's people came down to me with the warriors.
14 Those with their roots in Amalek came from Ephraim;
Benjamin came with your people after you.
The leaders came down from Machir,
and those who carry a marshal's staff came from Zebulun.
15 The princes of Issachar were with Deborah;
Issachar was with Barak.
They set out at his heels in the valley.
There was great searching of heart
among the clans of Reuben.
16 Why did you sit among the sheepfolds
listening to the playing of pipes for the flocks?
There was great searching of heart
among the clans of Reuben.
17 Gilead remained beyond the Jordan.
Dan, why did you linger at the ships?
Asher remained at the seashore
and stayed in his harbors.
18 Zebulun was a people risking their lives,
Naphtali also, on the heights of the battlefield.

19 Kings came and fought.
Then the kings of Canaan fought
at Taanach by the waters of Megiddo,
but they took no spoil of silver.
20[†] The stars fought from the heavens;
the stars fought with Sisera from their courses.
21 The river Kishon swept them away,

the ancient river, the river Kishon.
March on, my soul, in strength!
[22] The horses' hooves then hammered —
the galloping, galloping of his stallions.
[23] "Curse Meroz," says the Angel of the Lord,
"Bitterly curse her inhabitants,
for they did not come to help the Lord,
to help the Lord against the mighty warriors."

[24] Jael is most blessed of women,
the wife of Heber the Kenite;
she is most blessed among tent-dwelling women.
[25] He asked for water; she gave him milk.
She brought him curdled milk in a majestic bowl.
[26] She reached for a tent peg,
her right hand, for a workman's mallet.
Then she hammered Sisera —
she crushed his head;
she shattered and pierced his temple.
[27] He collapsed, he fell, he lay down at [G] her feet;
he collapsed, he fell at her feet;
where he collapsed, there he fell — dead.

[28] Sisera's mother looked through the window;
she peered through the lattice, crying out:
"Why is his chariot so long in coming?
Why don't I hear the hoofbeats of his horses? " [H]
[29] Her wisest princesses answer her;
she even answers herself: [I]
[30] "Are they not finding and dividing the spoil —
a girl or two for each warrior,
the spoil of colored garments for Sisera,
the spoil of an embroidered garment or two for my neck? " [J]

[31] Lord, may all your enemies perish as Sisera did. [K]
But may those who love Him
be like the rising of the sun in its strength.

And the land was peaceful 40 years.

JUDGES

Midian Oppresses Israel

6 The Israelites did what was evil in the sight of the LORD. So the LORD
handed them over to Midian seven years, 2 and they oppressed Israel.
Because of Midian, the Israelites made hiding places for themselves in the
mountains, caves, and strongholds. 3 Whenever the Israelites planted crops,
the Midianites, Amalekites, and the Qedemites came and attacked them.
4 They encamped against them and destroyed the produce of the land, even
as far as Gaza. They left nothing for Israel to eat, as well as no sheep, ox or
donkey. 5[†] For the Midianites came with their cattle and their tents like a
great swarm of locusts. They and their camels were without number, and
they entered the land to waste it. 6 So Israel became poverty-stricken
because of Midian, and the Israelites cried out to the LORD.

7 When the Israelites cried out to Him because of Midian, 8[†] the LORD
sent a prophet to them. He said to them, "This is what the LORD God of
Israel says: 'I brought you out of Egypt and out of the place of slavery. 9 I
delivered you from the power of Egypt and the power of all who oppressed
you. I drove them out before you and gave you their land. 10 I said to you: I
am •Yahweh your God. Do not fear the gods of the Amorites whose land
you live in. But you did not obey Me.' "

The LORD Calls Gideon

11 The Angel [A] of the LORD came, and He [B] sat under the oak that was in
Ophrah, which belonged to Joash, the Abiezrite. His son Gideon was
threshing wheat in the wine vat in order to hide it from the Midianites.
12[†] Then the Angel of the LORD appeared to him and said: "The LORD is with
you, mighty warrior."

13 Gideon said to Him, "Please Sir, [C] if the LORD is with us, why has all
this happened? [D] And where are all His wonders that our fathers told us
about? They said, 'Hasn't the LORD brought us out of Egypt? ' But now the
LORD has abandoned us and handed us over to Midian."

14 The LORD turned to him and said, "Go in the strength you have and
deliver Israel from the power of Midian. Am I not sending you? "

15 He said to Him, “Please, Lord, how can I deliver Israel? Look, my
family is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the youngest in my father’s
house.”

16 “But I will be with you,” the LORD said to him. “You will strike
Midian down as if it were one man.”

17[†] Then he said to Him, “If I have found favor in Your sight, give me a
sign that You are speaking with me. 18 Please do not leave this place until I
return to You. Let me bring my gift and set it before You.”

And He said, “I will stay until you return.”

19 So Gideon went and prepared a young goat and unleavened bread from
a half bushel [E] of flour. He placed the meat in a basket and the broth in a
pot. He brought them out and offered them to Him under the oak.

20 The Angel of God said to him, “Take the meat with the unleavened
bread, put it on this stone, and pour the broth on it.” And he did so.

21 The Angel of the LORD extended the tip of the staff that was in His
hand and touched the meat and the unleavened bread. Fire came up from
the rock and consumed the meat and the unleavened bread. Then the Angel
of the LORD vanished from his sight.

22[†] When Gideon realized that He was the Angel of the LORD, he said,
“Oh no, Lord GOD! I have seen the Angel of the LORD face to face! ”

23 But the LORD said to him, “Peace to you. Don’t be afraid, for you will
not die.” 24 So Gideon built an altar to the LORD there and called it Yahweh
Shalom. It is in Ophrah of the Abiezrites until today.

Gideon Tears Down a Baal Altar

25[†] On that very night the LORD said to him, “Take your father’s young
bull and a second bull seven years old. Then tear down the altar of •Baal
that belongs to your father and cut down the •Asherah pole beside it.

26 Build a well-constructed altar to the LORD your God on the top of this
rock. Take the second bull and offer it as a •burnt offering with the wood of
the Asherah pole you cut down.” 27 So Gideon took 10 of his male servants
and did as the LORD had told him. But because he was too afraid of his
father’s household and the men of the city to do it in the daytime, he did it
at night.

28 When the men of the city got up in the morning, they found Baal’s
altar torn down, the Asherah pole beside it cut down, and the second bull
offered up on the altar that had been built. 29 They said to each other, “Who
did this? ” After they made a thorough investigation, they said, “Gideon son
of Joash did it.”

30 Then the men of the city said to Joash, “Bring out your son. He must
die, because he tore down Baal’s altar and cut down the Asherah pole
beside it.”

31 But Joash said to all who stood against him, “Would you plead Baal’s
case for him? Would you save him? Whoever pleads his case will be put to
death by morning! If he is a god, let him plead his own case because
someone tore down his altar.” 32 That day, Gideon’s father called him
Jerubbaal, saying, “Let Baal plead his case with him,” because he tore down
his altar.

The Sign of the Fleece

33 All the Midianites, Amalekites, and Qedemites gathered together,
crossed over the Jordan, and camped in the Valley of Jezreel.

34 The Spirit of the LORD took control of [F] Gideon, and he blew the ram’s
horn and the Abiezrites rallied behind him. 35 He sent messengers
throughout all of Manasseh, who rallied behind him. He also sent
messengers throughout Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali, who also came to
meet him.

[36]† Then Gideon said to God, “If You will deliver Israel by my hand, as
You said, [37] I will put a fleece of wool here on the threshing floor. If dew is
only on the fleece, and all the ground is dry, I will know that You will
deliver Israel by my strength, as You said.” [38] And that is what happened.
When he got up early in the morning, he squeezed the fleece and wrung
dew out of it, filling a bowl with water.

[39] Gideon then said to God, “Don’t be angry with me; let me speak one
more time. Please allow me to make one more test with the fleece. Let it
remain dry, and the dew be all over the ground.” [40] That night God did as
Gideon requested: only the fleece was dry, and dew was all over the ground.

JUDGES

God Selects Gideon's Army

7 Jerubbaal (that is, Gideon) and everyone who was with him, got up early
and camped beside the spring of Harod. The camp of Midian was north
of them, below the hill of Moreh, in the valley. [2] The LORD said to Gideon,
“You have too many people for Me to hand the Midianites over to you, [A] or
else Israel might brag: [B] ‘I did it myself.’ [3] Now announce in the presence
of the people: ‘Whoever is fearful and trembling may turn back and leave
Mount Gilead.’ ” So 22,000 of the people turned back, but 10,000
remained.

[4] Then the LORD said to Gideon, “There are still too many people. Take
them down to the water, and I will test them for you there. If I say to you,
‘This one can go with you,’ he can go. But if I say about anyone, ‘This one
cannot go with you,’ he cannot go.” [5†] So he brought the people down to
the water, and the LORD said to Gideon, “Separate everyone who laps water
with his tongue like a dog. Do the same with everyone who kneels to
drink.” [6] The number of those who lapped with their hands to their mouths
was 300 men, and all the rest of the people knelt to drink water. [7] The LORD
said to Gideon, “I will deliver you with the 300 men who lapped and hand
the Midianites over to you. But everyone else is to go home.” [8] So Gideon
sent all the Israelites to their tents but kept the 300, who took [C] the people’s
provisions and their trumpets. The camp of Midian was below him in the
valley.

Gideon Spies on the Midianite Camp

[9†] That night the LORD said to him, “Get up and go into the camp, for I
have given it into your hand. [10†] But if you are afraid to go to the camp, go
with Purah your servant. [11] Listen to what they say, and then you will be
strengthened to go to the camp.” So he went with Purah his servant to the
outpost of the troops [D] who were in the camp.

[12†] Now the Midianites, Amalekites, and all the Qedemites had settled
down in the valley like a swarm of locusts, and their camels were as
innumerable as the sand on the seashore. [13] When Gideon arrived, there was
a man telling his friend about a dream. He said, “Listen, I had a dream: a

loaf of barley bread came tumbling into the Midianite camp, struck a tent, and it fell. The loaf turned the tent upside down so that it collapsed."

[14] His friend answered: "This is nothing less than the sword of Gideon son of Joash, the Israelite. God has handed the entire Midianite camp over to him."

Gideon Attacks the Midianites

[15] When Gideon heard the account of the dream and its interpretation, he bowed in worship. He returned to Israel's camp and said, "Get up, for the
LORD has handed the Midianite camp over to you." [16] Then he divided the
300 men into three companies and gave each of the men a trumpet in one hand and an empty pitcher with a torch inside it in the other.

[17] "Watch me," he said, [E] "and do the same. When I come to the outpost
of the camp, do as I do. [18] When I and everyone with me blow our trumpets,
you are also to blow your trumpets all around the camp. Then you will say, 'For •Yahweh and for Gideon! ' "

[19] Gideon and the 100 men who were with him went to the outpost of the camp at the beginning of the middle watch after the sentries had been stationed. They blew their trumpets and broke the pitchers that were in their
hands. [20] The three companies blew their trumpets and shattered their
pitchers. They held their torches in their left hands, their trumpets [F] in their
right hands, and shouted, "A sword for Yahweh and for Gideon! " [21†] Each
Israelite took his position around the camp, and the entire Midianite army
fled, and cried out as they ran. [22] When Gideon's men blew their 300
trumpets, the LORD set the swords of each man in the army against each other. They fled to Beth-shittah in the direction of Zererah as far as the
border of Abel-meholah near Tabbath. [23] Then the men of Israel were
called from Naphtali, Asher, and Manasseh, and they pursued the Midianites.

The Men of Ephraim Join the Battle

[24] Gideon sent messengers throughout the hill country of Ephraim with this message: “Come down to intercept the Midianites and take control of the watercourses ahead of them as far as Beth-barah and the Jordan.” So all the men of Ephraim were called out, and they took control of the watercourses as far as Beth-barah and the Jordan. [25] They captured Oreb and Zeeb, the two princes of Midian; they killed Oreb at the rock of Oreb and Zeeb at the winepress of Zeeb, while they were pursuing the Midianites. They brought the heads of Oreb and Zeeb to Gideon across the Jordan.

JUDGES

8 [†]The men of Ephraim said to him, “Why have you done this to us, not calling us when you went to fight against the Midianites? ” And they argued with him violently.

[2] So he said to them, “What have I done now compared to you? Is not the
gleaning of Ephraim better than the vintage of Abiezer? [3] God handed
over to you Oreb and Zeeb, the two princes of Midian. What was I able to do compared to you? ” When he said this, their anger against him subsided.

Gideon Pursues the Kings of Midian

[4] Gideon and the 300 men came to the Jordan and crossed it. They were
exhausted but still in pursuit. [5†] He said to the men of Succoth, “Please
give some loaves of bread to the people who are following me, [A] because they are exhausted, for I am pursuing Zebah and Zalmunna, the kings of Midian.”

[6] But the princes of Succoth asked, “Are [B] Zebah and Zalmunna now in your hands that we should give bread to your army? ”

[7] Gideon replied, “Very well, when the LORD has handed Zebah and
Zalmunna over to me, I will trample [C] your flesh on thorns and briers from
the wilderness! ” [8] He went from there to Penuel and asked the same thing
from them. The men of Penuel answered just as the men of Succoth had
answered. [9] He also told the men of Penuel, “When I return in peace, I will tear down this tower! ”

[10†] Now Zebah and Zalmunna were in Karkor, and with them was their
army of about 15,000 men, who were all those left of the entire army of the
Qedemites. Those who had been killed were 120,000 warriors. [D] [11] Gideon
traveled on the caravan route [E] east of Nobah and Jogbehah and attacked
their army while the army was unsuspecting. [12] Zebah and Zalmunna fled,
and he pursued them. He captured these two kings of Midian and routed the entire army.

13 Gideon son of Joash returned from the battle by the Ascent of Heres.
14 He captured a youth from the men of Succoth and interrogated him. The
youth wrote down for him the names of the 77 princes and elders of
Succoth. 15 Then he went to the men of Succoth and said, “Here are Zebah
and Zalmunna. You taunted me about them, saying, ‘Are [F] Zebah and
Zalmunna now in your power that we should give bread to your exhausted
men? ’ ” 16 So he took the elders of the city, and he took some thorns and
briers from the wilderness, and he disciplined the men of Succoth with
them. 17 He also tore down the tower of Penuel and killed the men of the
city.

18 He asked Zebah and Zalmunna, “What kind of men did you kill at
Tabor? ”

“They were like you,” they said. “Each resembled the son of a king.”

19 So he said, “They were my brothers, the sons of my mother! As the
LORD lives, if you had let them live, I would not kill you.” 20 Then he said
to Jether, his firstborn, “Get up and kill them.” The youth did not draw his
sword, for he was afraid because he was still a youth.

21 Zebah and Zalmunna said, “Get up and kill us yourself, for a man is
judged by his strength.” So Gideon got up, killed Zebah and Zalmunna, and
took the crescent ornaments that were on the necks of their camels.

Gideon’s Legacy

22 Then the Israelites said to Gideon, “Rule over us, you as well as your
sons and your grandsons, for you delivered us from the power of Midian.”

23 But Gideon said to them, “I will not rule over you, and my son will not
rule over you; the LORD will rule over you.” 24 Then he said to them, “Let
me make a request of you: Everyone give me an earring from his plunder.”
Now the enemy had gold earrings because they were Ishmaelites.

25 They said, “We agree to give them.” So they spread out a mantle, and
everyone threw an earring from his plunder on it. 26† The weight of the gold
earrings he requested was about 43 pounds [G] of gold, in addition to the
crescent ornaments and ear pendants, the purple garments on the kings of
Midian, and the chains on the necks of their camels. 27† Gideon made an
ephod from all this and put it in Ophrah, his hometown. Then all Israel
prostituted themselves with it there, and it became a snare to Gideon and his
household.

28 So Midian was subdued before the Israelites, and they were no longer
a threat. [H] The land was peaceful 40 years during the days of Gideon.
29 Jerubbaal (that is, Gideon) son of Joash went back to live at his house.

30† Gideon had 70 sons, his own offspring, since he had many wives.
31 His concubine who was in Shechem also bore him a son, and he named
him Abimelech. 32 Then Gideon son of Joash died at a ripe old age and was
buried in the tomb of his father Joash in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.

33 When Gideon died, the Israelites turned and prostituted themselves
with the •Baals and made Baal-berith [I] their god. 34 The Israelites did not
remember the Lord their God who had delivered them from the power of
the enemies around them. 35 They did not show kindness to the house of
Jerubbaal (that is, Gideon) for all the good he had done for Israel.

JUDGES

Abimelech Becomes King

9 Abimelech son of Jerubbaal went to his mother’s brothers at Shechem
and spoke to them and to all his maternal grandfather’s clan, saying,
2 “Please speak in the presence of all the lords of Shechem, ‘Is it better for
you that 70 men, all the sons of Jerubbaal, rule over you or that one man
rule over you? ’ Remember that I am your own flesh and blood.” [A]

3 His mother’s relatives spoke all these words about him in the presence
of all the lords of Shechem, and they were favorable to Abimelech, for they
said, “He is our brother.” 4 So they gave him 70 pieces of silver from the
temple of Baal-berith. [B] Abimelech hired worthless and reckless men with
this money, and they followed him. 5† He went to his father’s house in
Ophrah and killed his 70 brothers, the sons of Jerubbaal, on top of a large
stone. But Jotham, the youngest son of Jerubbaal, survived, because he hid
himself. 6 Then all the lords of Shechem and of Beth-millo gathered
together and proceeded to make Abimelech king at the oak of the pillar in
Shechem.

Jotham’s Parable

7 When they told Jotham, he climbed to the top of Mount Gerizim, raised
his voice, and called to them:

Listen to me, lords of Shechem,
and may God listen to you:

8 The trees set out
to anoint a king over themselves.
They said to the olive tree, “Reign over us.”
9 But the olive tree said to them,
“Should I stop giving my oil
that honors both God and man,
and rule [C] over the trees? ”

10 Then the trees said to the fig tree,
“Come and reign over us.”
11 But the fig tree said to them,
“Should I stop giving

my sweetness and my good fruit,
and rule [D] over trees? ”

[12] Later, the trees said to the grapevine,
“Come and reign over us.”
[13†] But the grapevine said to them,
“Should I stop giving my wine
that cheers both God and man,
and rule [E] over trees? ”

[14] Finally, all the trees said to the bramble,
“Come and reign over us.”
[15] The bramble said to the trees,
“If you really are anointing me
as king over you,
come and find refuge in my shade.
But if not,
may fire come out from the bramble
and consume the cedars of Lebanon.”

[16] “Now if you have acted faithfully and honestly in making Abimelech
king, if you have done well by Jerubbaal and his family, and if you have
rewarded him appropriately for what he did — [17] for my father fought for
you, risked his life, and delivered you from the hand of Midian, [18] and now
you have attacked my father’s house today, killed his 70 sons on top of a
large stone, and made Abimelech, the son of his slave, king over the lords
of Shechem ‘because he is your brother’ — [19] if then you have acted
faithfully and honestly with Jerubbaal and his house this day, rejoice in
Abimelech and may he also rejoice in you. [20] But if not, may fire come
from Abimelech and consume the lords of Shechem and Beth-millo, and
may fire come from the lords of Shechem and Beth-millo and consume
Abimelech.” [21] Then Jotham fled, escaping to Beer, and lived there because
of his brother Abimelech.

Abimelech’s Punishment

[22] When Abimelech had ruled over Israel three years, [23†] God sent an evil spirit between Abimelech and the lords of Shechem. They treated Abimelech deceitfully, [24] so that the crime against the 70 sons of Jerubbaal might come to justice and their blood would be avenged on their brother Abimelech, who killed them, and on the lords of Shechem, who had helped him kill his brothers. [25] The lords of Shechem rebelled against him by putting people on the tops of the mountains to ambush and rob everyone who passed by them on the road. So this was reported to Abimelech.

[26] Gaal son of Ebed came with his brothers and crossed into Shechem, and the lords of Shechem trusted him. [27] So they went out to the countryside and harvested grapes from their vineyards. They trampled the grapes and held a celebration. Then they went to the house of their god, and as they ate and drank, they cursed Abimelech. [28] Gaal son of Ebed said, “Who is Abimelech and who is Shechem that we should serve him? Isn’t he the son of Jerubbaal, and isn’t Zebul his officer? You are to serve the men of Hamor, the father of Shechem. Why should we serve Abimelech? [29] If only these people were in my power, I would remove Abimelech.” So he said to Abimelech, “Gather your army and come out.”

[30] When Zebul, the ruler of the city, heard the words of Gaal son of Ebed, he was angry. [31] So he sent messengers secretly to Abimelech, saying, “Look, Gaal son of Ebed, with his brothers, have come to Shechem and are turning the city against you. [F] [32] Now tonight, you and the people with you are to come wait in ambush in the countryside. [33] Then get up early, and at sunrise charge the city. When he and the people who are with him come out against you, do to him whatever you can.” [G] [34] So Abimelech and all the people with him got up at night and waited in ambush for Shechem in four units.

[35†] Gaal son of Ebed went out and stood at the entrance of the city gate. Then Abimelech and the people who were with him got up from their ambush. [36] When Gaal saw the people, he said to Zebul, “Look, people are coming down from the mountaintops! ” But Zebul said to him, “The shadows of the mountains look like men to you.”

37 Then Gaal spoke again, “Look, people are coming down from the
central part of the land, and one unit is coming from the direction of the
Diviners’ Oak.” 38 Zebul replied, [H] “Where is your mouthing off now? You
said, ‘Who is Abimelech that we should serve him? ’ Aren’t these the
people you despised? Now go and fight them! ”

39 So Gaal went out leading the lords of Shechem and fought against
Abimelech, 40 but Abimelech pursued him, and Gaal fled before him. Many
wounded died as far as the entrance of the gate. 41 Abimelech stayed in
Arumah, and Zebul drove Gaal and his brothers from Shechem.

42 The next day when the people went into the countryside, this was
reported to Abimelech. 43 He took the people, divided them into three
companies, and waited in ambush in the countryside. He looked, and the
people were coming out of the city, so he arose against them and struck
them down. 44 Then Abimelech and the units that were with him rushed
forward and took their stand at the entrance of the city gate. The other two
units rushed against all who were in the countryside and struck them down.
45 So Abimelech fought against the city that entire day, captured it, and
killed the people who were in it. Then he tore down the city and sowed it
with salt.

46 When all the lords of the Tower of Shechem heard, they entered the
inner chamber [I] of the temple of El-berith. 47 Then it was reported to
Abimelech that all the lords of the Tower of Shechem had gathered
together. 48 So Abimelech and all the people who were with him went up to
Mount Zalmon. Abimelech took his ax in his hand and cut a branch from
the trees. He picked up the branch, put it on his shoulder, and said to the
people who were with him, “Hurry and do what you have seen me do.”
49 Each person also cut his own branch and followed Abimelech. They put
the branches against the inner chamber and set it on fire around the people,
and all the people in the Tower of Shechem died — about 1,000 men and
women.

[50] Abimelech went to Thebez, camped against it, and captured it.
[51] There was a strong tower inside the city, and all the men, women, and
lords of the city fled there. They locked themselves in and went up to the
roof of the tower. [52] When Abimelech came to attack the tower, he
approached its entrance to set it on fire. [53] But a woman threw the upper
portion of a millstone on Abimelech’s head and fractured his skull. [54] He
quickly called his armor-bearer and said to him, “Draw your sword and kill
me, or they’ll say about me, ‘A woman killed him.’ ” So his armor-bearer
thrust him through, and he died. [55] When the Israelites saw that Abimelech
was dead, they all went home.

[56][†] In this way, God turned back on Abimelech the evil that he had done
against his father, by killing his 70 brothers. [57] And God also returned all
the evil of the men of Shechem on their heads. So the curse of Jotham son
of Jerubbaal came on them.

JUDGES

Tola and Jair

10 After Abimelech, Tola son of Puah, son of Dodo became judge and
began to deliver Israel. He was from Issachar and lived in Shamir in
the hill country of Ephraim. 2 Tola judged Israel 23 years and when he died,
was buried in Shamir.

3 After him came Jair the Gileadite, who judged Israel 22 years. 4 He had
30 sons who rode on 30 donkeys. They had 30 towns in Gilead, which are
called Jair's Villages [A] to this day. 5 When Jair died, he was buried in
Kamon.

Israel's Rebellion and Repentance

6 Then the Israelites again did what was evil in the sight of the LORD.
They worshiped the •Baals and the •Ashtoreths, the gods of Aram, Sidon,
and Moab, and the gods of the Ammonites and the Philistines. They
abandoned •Yahweh and did not worship Him. 7† So the LORD's anger
burned against Israel, and He sold them to [B] the Philistines and the
Ammonites. 8 They shattered and crushed the Israelites that year, and for 18
years they did the same to all the Israelites who were on the other side of
the Jordan in the land of the Amorites in Gilead. 9 The Ammonites also
crossed the Jordan to fight against Judah, Benjamin, and the house of
Ephraim. Israel was greatly oppressed, 10† so they cried out to the LORD,
saying, "We have sinned against You. We have abandoned our God and
worshiped the Baals."

11 The LORD said to the Israelites, "When the Egyptians, Amorites,
Ammonites, Philistines, 12 Sidonians, Amalekites, and Maonites oppressed
you, and you cried out to Me, did I not deliver you from their power? 13 But
you have abandoned Me and worshiped other gods. Therefore, I will not
deliver you again. 14 Go and cry out to the gods you have chosen. Let them
deliver you in the time of your oppression."

15 But the Israelites said, "We have sinned. Deal with us as You see fit; [C]
only deliver us today! " 16 So they got rid of the foreign gods among them
and worshiped the LORD, and He became weary of Israel's misery.

17 The Ammonites were called together, and they camped in Gilead. So
the Israelites assembled and camped at Mizpah. 18 The rulers [D] of Gilead
said to one another, “Which man will lead the fight against the Ammonites?
He will be the leader of all the inhabitants of Gilead.”

JUDGES

Jephthah Becomes Israel's Leader

11 †Jephthah the Gileadite was a great warrior, but he was the son of a prostitute, and Gilead was his father. 2 Gilead's wife bore him sons, and when they grew up, they drove Jephthah out and said to him, "You will have no inheritance in our father's house, because you are the son of another woman." 3 So Jephthah fled from his brothers and lived in the land of Tob. Then some lawless men joined Jephthah and traveled with him.

4 Some time later, the Ammonites fought against Israel. 5 When the Ammonites made war with Israel, the elders of Gilead went to get Jephthah from the land of Tob. 6 They said to him, "Come, be our commander, and let's fight against the Ammonites."

7 Jephthah replied to the elders of Gilead, "Didn't you hate me and drive me from my father's house? Why then have you come to me now when you're in trouble? "

8 They answered Jephthah, "Since that's true, we now turn to you. Come with us, fight the Ammonites, and you will become leader of all the inhabitants of Gilead."

9 So Jephthah said to them, "If you are bringing me back to fight the Ammonites and the Lord gives them to me, I will be your leader."

10 The elders of Gilead said to Jephthah, "The Lord is our witness if we don't do as you say." 11 So Jephthah went with the elders of Gilead. The people put him over themselves as leader and commander, and Jephthah repeated all his terms in the presence of the Lord at Mizpah.

Jephthah Rejects Ammonite Claims

12 Jephthah sent messengers to the king of the Ammonites, saying, "What do you have against me that you have come to fight against me in my land? "

13 The king of the Ammonites said to Jephthah's messengers, "When Israel came from Egypt, they seized my land from the Arnon to the Jabbok

and the Jordan. Now restore it peaceably.”

[14] Jephthah again sent messengers to the king of the Ammonites [15] to tell
him, “This is what Jephthah says: Israel did not take away the land of Moab
or the land of the Ammonites. [16] But when they came from Egypt, Israel
traveled through the wilderness to the •Red Sea and came to Kadesh.
[17] Israel sent messengers to the king of Edom, saying, ‘Please let us travel
through your land,’ but the king of Edom would not listen. They also sent
messengers to the king of Moab, but he refused. So Israel stayed in Kadesh.

ARTICLE

How Should We Handle Unresolved Questions About the Bible? ⇒

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[18] “Then they traveled through the wilderness and around the lands of
Edom and Moab. They came to the east side of the land of Moab and
camped on the other side of the Arnon but did not enter into the territory of
Moab, for the Arnon was the boundary of Moab.

[19] “Then Israel sent messengers to Sihon king of the Amorites, king of
Heshbon. Israel said to him, ‘Please let us travel through your land to our
country,’ [20] but Sihon would not trust Israel to pass through his territory.
Instead, Sihon gathered all his people, camped at Jahaz, and fought with
Israel. [21] Then the Lord God of Israel handed over Sihon and all his people
to Israel, and they defeated them. So Israel took possession of the entire
land of the Amorites who lived in that country. [22] They took possession of
all the territory of the Amorites from the Arnon to the Jabbok and from the
wilderness to the Jordan.

[23] “The Lord God of Israel has now driven out the Amorites before His
people Israel, and will you now force us out? [24†] Isn’t it true that you may
possess whatever your god Chemosh drives out for you, and we may
possess everything the Lord our God drives out before us? [25] Now are you

any better than Balak son of Zippor, king of Moab? Did he ever contend
with Israel or fight against them? [26] While Israel lived 300 years in
Heshbon and its villages, in Aroer and its villages, and in all the cities that
are on the banks of the Arnon, why didn't you take them back at that time?
[27] I have not sinned against you, but you have wronged me by fighting
against me. Let the LORD who is the Judge decide today between the
Israelites and the Ammonites." [28] But the king of the Ammonites would not
listen to Jephthah's message that he sent him.

Jephthah's Vow and Sacrifice

[29†] The Spirit of the LORD came on Jephthah, who traveled through
Gilead and Manasseh, and then through Mizpah of Gilead. He crossed over
to the Ammonites from Mizpah of Gilead. [30] Jephthah made this vow to
the LORD: "If You will hand over the Ammonites to me, [31] whatever comes
out of the doors of my house to greet me when I return in peace from the
Ammonites will belong to the LORD, and I will offer it as a •burnt offering."

[32] Jephthah crossed over to the Ammonites to fight against them, and the
LORD handed them over to him. [33] He defeated 20 of their cities with a
great slaughter from Aroer all the way to the entrance of Minnith and to
Abel-keramim. So the Ammonites were subdued before the Israelites.

[34†] When Jephthah went to his home in Mizpah, there was his daughter,
coming out to meet him with tambourines and dancing! She was his only
child; he had no other son or daughter besides her. [35] When he saw her, he
tore his clothes and said, "No! Not my daughter! You have devastated me!
You have brought great misery on me. [A] I have given my word to the LORD
and cannot take it back."

[36] Then she said to him, "My father, you have given your word to the
LORD. Do to me as you have said, for the LORD brought vengeance on your
enemies, the Ammonites." [37] She also said to her father, "Let me do this
one thing: Let me wander two months through the mountains with my
friends and mourn my virginity."

[38] “Go,” he said. And he sent her away two months. So she left with her
friends and mourned her virginity as she wandered through the mountains.
[39] At the end of two months, she returned to her father, and he kept the vow
he had made about her. And she had never been intimate with a man. Now
it became a custom in Israel [40] that four days each year the young women of
Israel would commemorate the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite.

Conflict with Ephraim

12 The men of Ephraim were called together and crossed the Jordan to Zaphon. They said to Jephthah, “Why have you crossed over to fight against the Ammonites but didn’t call us to go with you? We will burn your house down with you in it! ”

2 Then Jephthah said to them, “My people and I had a serious conflict with the Ammonites. So I called for you, but you didn’t deliver me from their power. 3 When I saw that you weren’t going to deliver me, I took my life in my own hands and crossed over to the Ammonites, and the LORD handed them over to me. Why then have you come [A] today to fight against me? ”

4 Then Jephthah gathered all of the men of Gilead. They fought and defeated Ephraim, because Ephraim had said, “You Gileadites are Ephraimite fugitives in the territories of Ephraim and Manasseh.” 5 The Gileadites captured the fords of the Jordan leading to Ephraim. Whenever a fugitive from Ephraim said, “Let me cross over,” the Gileadites asked him, “Are you an Ephraimite? ” If he answered, “No,” 6[†] they told him, “Please say Shibboleth.” If he said, “Sibboleth,” because he could not pronounce it correctly, they seized him and killed him at the fords of the Jordan. At that time 42,000 from Ephraim died.

7 Jephthah judged Israel six years, and when he died, he was buried in one of the cities of Gilead.

Ibzan, Elon, and Abdon

8 Ibzan, who was from Bethlehem, judged Israel after Jephthah 9 and had 30 sons. He gave his 30 daughters in marriage to men outside the tribe and brought back 30 wives for his sons from outside the tribe. Ibzan judged Israel seven years, 10 and when he died, he was buried in Bethlehem.

11 Elon, who was from Zebulun, judged Israel after Ibzan. He judged Israel 10 years, 12 and when he died, he was buried in Aijalon in the land of Zebulun.

[13] After Elon, Abdon son of Hillel, who was from Pirathon, judged
Israel. [14] He had 40 sons and 30 grandsons, who rode on 70 donkeys.
Abdon judged Israel eight years, [15] and when he died, he was buried in
Pirathon in the land of Ephraim, in the hill country of the Amalekites.

JUDGES

Birth of Samson, the Last Judge

13 [†]The Israelites again did what was evil in the LORD's sight, so the
LORD handed them over to the Philistines 40 years. 2[†] There was a
certain man from Zorah, from the family of Dan, whose name was
Manoah; his wife was unable to conceive and had no children. 3 The Angel
of the LORD appeared to the woman and said to her, "It is true that you are
unable to conceive and have no children, but you will conceive and give
birth to a son. 4[†] Now please be careful not to drink wine or beer, or to eat
anything •unclean; 5[†] for indeed, you will conceive and give birth to a son.
You must never cut his hair, [A] because the boy will be a Nazirite to God
from birth, and he will begin to save Israel from the power of the
Philistines."

6 Then the woman went and told her husband, "A man of God came to
me. He looked like the awe-inspiring Angel of God. I didn't ask Him where
He came from, and He didn't tell me His name. 7 He said to me, 'You will
conceive and give birth to a son. Therefore, do not drink wine or beer, and
do not eat anything unclean, because the boy will be a Nazirite to God from
birth until the day of his death.' "

8 Manoah prayed to the LORD and said, "Please Lord, let the man of God
you sent come again to us and teach us what we should do for the boy who
will be born."

9 God listened to [B] Manoah, and the Angel of God came again to the
woman. She was sitting in the field, and her husband Manoah was not with
her. 10 The woman ran quickly to her husband and told him, "The man who
came to me today has just come back! "

11 So Manoah got up and followed his wife. When he came to the man,
he asked, "Are You the man who spoke to my wife? "

"I am," He said.

12 Then Manoah asked, "When Your words come true, what will the
boy's responsibilities and mission [C] be? "

13 The Angel of the LORD answered Manoah, “Your wife needs to do
everything I told her. 14 She must not eat anything that comes from the
grapevine or drink wine or beer. And she must not eat anything unclean.
Your wife must do everything I have commanded her.”

15 “Please stay here,” Manoah told Him, “and we will prepare a young
goat for You.”

16 The Angel of the LORD said to him, “If I stay, I won’t eat your food.
But if you want to prepare a •burnt offering, offer it to the LORD.” For
Manoah did not know He was the Angel of the LORD.

ARTICLE

Why Does God Hide Himself? ⇒

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17 Then Manoah said to Him, “What is Your name, so that we may honor
You when Your words come true? ”

18 “Why do you ask My name,” the Angel of the LORD asked him, “since
it is wonderful.”

19 Manoah took a young goat and a •grain offering and offered them on a
rock to the LORD, and He did a wonderful thing while Manoah and his wife
were watching. 20 When the flame went up from the altar to the sky, the
Angel of the LORD went up in its flame. When Manoah and his wife saw
this, they fell facedown on the ground. 21 The Angel of the LORD did not
appear again to Manoah and his wife. Then Manoah realized that it was the
Angel of the LORD.

22† “We’re going to die,” he said to his wife, “because we have seen
God! ”

23 But his wife said to him, “If the Lord had intended to kill us, He
wouldn’t have accepted the burnt offering and the grain offering from us,
and He would not have shown us all these things or spoken to us now like
this.”

24[†] So the woman gave birth to a son and named him Samson. The boy
grew, and the Lord blessed him. 25 Then the Spirit of the Lord began to
direct him in the Camp of Dan, [D] between Zorah and Eshtaol.

JUDGES

Samson’s Riddle

14 [†]Samson went down to Timnah and saw a young Philistine woman
there. 2 He went back and told his father and his mother: “I have seen
a young Philistine woman in Timnah. Now get her for me as a wife.”

3 But his father and mother said to him, “Can’t you find [A] a young
woman among your relatives or among any of our people? Must you go to
the uncircumcised Philistines for a wife? ”

But Samson told his father, “Get her for me, because I want her.” [B]
4 Now his father and mother did not know this was from the LORD, who
was seeking an occasion against the Philistines. At that time, the Philistines
were ruling over Israel.

5[†] Samson went down to Timnah with his father and mother and came to
the vineyards of Timnah. Suddenly a young lion came roaring at him, 6 the
Spirit of the LORD took control of [C], him, and he tore the lion apart with his
bare hands as he might have torn a young goat. But he did not tell his father
or mother what he had done. 7 Then he went and spoke to the woman,
because Samson wanted her. [D]

8 After some time, when he returned to get her, he left the road to see the
lion’s carcass, and there was a swarm of bees with honey in the carcass.
9 He scooped some honey into his hands and ate it as he went along. When
he returned to his father and mother, he gave some to them and they ate it.
But he did not tell them that he had scooped the honey from the lion’s
carcass.

10 His father went to visit the woman, and Samson prepared a feast there,
as young men were accustomed to do. 11 When the Philistines saw him,
they brought 30 men to accompany him.

12[†] “Let me tell you a riddle,” Samson said to them. “If you can explain
it to me during the seven days of the feast and figure it out, I will give you
30 linen garments and 30 changes of clothes. 13 But if you can’t explain it
to me, you must give me 30 linen garments and 30 changes of clothes.”

“Tell us your riddle,” they replied. [E] “Let’s hear it.”

[14] So he said to them:

Out of the eater came something to eat,
and out of the strong came something sweet.

After three days, they were unable to explain the riddle. [15] On the fourth day they said to Samson’s wife, “Persuade your husband to explain the riddle to us, or we will burn you and your father’s household to death. Did you invite us here to rob us? ”

[16] So Samson’s wife came to him, weeping, and said, “You hate me and don’t love me! You told my people the riddle, but haven’t explained it to me.”

“Look,” he said, [F] “I haven’t even explained it to my father or mother, so why should I explain it to you? ”

[17] She wept the whole seven days of the feast, and at last, on the seventh day, he explained it to her, because she had nagged him so much. Then she explained it to her people. [18] On the seventh day, before sunset, the men of the city said to him:

What is sweeter than honey?
What is stronger than a lion?

So he said to them:

If you hadn’t plowed with my young cow,
you wouldn’t know my riddle now!

[19][†] The Spirit of the Lord took control of him, and he went down to Ashkelon and killed 30 of their men. He stripped them and gave their clothes to those who had explained the riddle. In a rage, Samson returned to his father’s house, [20] and his wife was given to one of the men who had accompanied him.

JUDGES

Samson's Revenge

15 [†]Later on, during the wheat harvest, Samson took a young goat as a gift and visited his wife. "I want to go to my wife in her room," he said. But her father would not let him enter.

2 "I was sure you hated her," her father said, "so I gave her to one of the men who accompanied you. Isn't her younger sister more beautiful than she is? Why not take her instead? "

3[†] Samson said to them, "This time I won't be responsible when I harm
the Philistines." 4 So he went out and caught 300 foxes. He took torches,
turned the foxes tail-to-tail, and put a torch between each pair of tails.
5 Then he ignited the torches and released the foxes into the standing grain
of the Philistines. He burned up the piles of grain and the standing grain as
well as the vineyards and olive groves.

6 Then the Philistines asked, "Who did this? "

They were told, "It was Samson, the Timnite's son-in-law, because he has taken Samson's wife and given her to another man." So the Philistines went to her and her father and burned them to death.

7 Then Samson told them, "Because you did this, I swear that I won't rest
until I have taken vengeance on you." 8 He tore them limb from limb [A] with
a great slaughter, and he went down and stayed in the cave at the rock of
Etam.

9 The Philistines went up, camped in Judah, and raided Lehi. 10[†] So the
men of Judah said, "Why have you attacked us? "

They replied, "We have come to arrest Samson and pay him back for what he did to us."

11 Then 3,000 men of Judah went to the cave at the rock of Etam, and they asked Samson, "Don't you realize that the Philistines rule over us? What have you done to us? "

"I have done to them what they did to me," he answered. [B]

[12] They said to him, “We’ve come to arrest you and hand you over to the Philistines.”

Then Samson told them, “Swear to me that you yourselves won’t kill me.”

[13] “No,” they said, [C] “we won’t kill you, but we will tie you up securely and hand you over to them.” So they tied him up with two new ropes and led him away from the rock.

[14] When he came to Lehi, the Philistines came to meet him shouting. The Spirit of the LORD took control of [D] him, and the ropes that were on his arms became like burnt flax and his bonds fell off his wrists. [15] He found a fresh jawbone of a donkey, reached out his hand, took it, and killed 1,000 men with it. [16] Then Samson said:

With the jawbone of a donkey
I have piled them in a heap.
With the jawbone of a donkey
I have killed 1,000 men.

[17] When he finished speaking, he threw away the jawbone and named that place Ramath-lehi. [18] He became very thirsty and called out to the LORD: “You have accomplished this great victory through [E] Your servant. Must I now die of thirst and fall into the hands of the uncircumcised? ” [19†] So God split a hollow place in the ground at Lehi, and water came out of it. After Samson drank, his strength returned, and he revived. That is why he named it En-hakkore, which is in Lehi to this day. [20] And he judged Israel 20 years in the days of the Philistines.

JUDGES

Samson and Delilah

16 [†]Samson went to Gaza, where he saw a prostitute and went to bed
with her. 2 When the Gazites heard that Samson was there, they
surrounded the place and waited in ambush for him all that night at the city
gate. While they were waiting quietly, [A] they said, “Let us wait until dawn;
then we will kill him.” 3[†] But Samson stayed in bed until midnight when he
got up, took hold of the doors of the city gate along with the two gateposts,
and pulled them out, bar and all. He put them on his shoulders and took
them to the top of the mountain overlooking Hebron.

4 Some time later, he fell in love with a woman named Delilah, who lived
in the Sorek Valley. 5 The Philistine leaders went to her and said, “Persuade
him to tell you [B] where his great strength comes from, so we can overpower
him, tie him up, and make him helpless. Each of us will then give you 1,100
pieces of silver.”

6[†] So Delilah said to Samson, “Please tell me, where does your great
strength come from? How could someone tie you up and make you
helpless? ”

7 Samson told her, “If they tie me up with seven fresh bowstrings that
have not been dried, I will become weak and be like any other man.”

8 The Philistine leaders brought her seven fresh bowstrings that had not
been dried, and she tied him up with them. 9 While the men in ambush were
waiting in her room, she called out to him, “Samson, the Philistines are
here! ” [C] But he snapped the bowstrings as a strand of yarn snaps when it
touches fire. The secret of his strength remained unknown.

10 Then Delilah said to Samson, “You have mocked me and told me lies!
Won’t you please tell me how you can be tied up? ”

11 He told her, “If they tie me up with new ropes that have never been
used, I will become weak and be like any other man.”

12 Delilah took new ropes, tied him up with them, and shouted, “Samson,
the Philistines are here! ” [D] But while the men in ambush were waiting in

her room, he snapped the ropes off his arms like a thread.

13 Then Delilah said to Samson, “You have mocked me all along and told me lies! Tell me how you can be tied up.”

He told her, “If you weave the seven braids on my head with the web of a loom — ”

14 She fastened the braids with a pin and called to him, “Samson, the Philistines are here! ” [E] He awoke from his sleep and pulled out the pin, with the loom and the web.

15 “How can you say, ‘I love you,’ ” she told him, “when your heart is not with me? This is the third time you have mocked me and not told me what makes your strength so great! ”

16 Because she nagged him day after day and pleaded with him until she wore him out, [F] 17† he told her the whole truth and said to her, “My hair has never been cut, [G] because I am a Nazirite to God from birth. If I am shaved, my strength will leave me, and I will become weak and be like any other man.”

18 When Delilah realized that he had told her the whole truth, she sent this message to the Philistine leaders: “Come one more time, for he has told me the whole truth.” The Philistine leaders came to her and brought the money with them.

19 Then she let him fall asleep on her lap and called a man to shave off the seven braids on his head. In this way, she made him helpless, and his strength left him. 20 Then she cried, “Samson, the Philistines are here! ” [H] When he awoke from his sleep, he said, “I will escape as I did before and shake myself free.” But he did not know that the Lord had left him.

Samson’s Defeat and Death

21 The Philistines seized him and gouged out his eyes. They brought him down to Gaza and bound him with bronze shackles, and he was forced to

grind grain in the prison. [22] But his hair began to grow back after it had been shaved.

[23] Now the Philistine leaders gathered together to offer a great sacrifice to their god Dagon. They rejoiced and said:

Our god has handed over
our enemy Samson to us.

[24] When the people saw him, they praised their god and said:

Our god has handed over to us
our enemy who destroyed our land
and who multiplied our dead.

[25] When they were drunk, [I] they said, "Bring Samson here to entertain us." So they brought Samson from prison, and he entertained them. They had him stand between the pillars.

[26] Samson said to the young man who was leading him by the hand,
"Lead me where I can feel the pillars supporting the temple, so I can lean
against them." [27†] The temple was full of men and women; all the leaders of
the Philistines were there, and about 3,000 men and women were on the
roof watching Samson entertain them. [28] He called out to the LORD: "Lord
GOD, please remember me. Strengthen me, God, just once more. With one
act of vengeance, let me pay back the Philistines for my two eyes."
[29] Samson took hold of the two middle pillars supporting the temple and
leaned against them, one on his right hand and the other on his left.
[30] Samson said, "Let me die with the Philistines." He pushed with all his
might, and the temple fell on the leaders and all the people in it. And the
dead he killed at his death were more than those he had killed in his life.

[31] Then his brothers and his father's family came down, carried him back, and buried him between Zorah and Eshtaol in the tomb of his father Manoah. So he judged Israel 20 years.

JUDGES

Micah's Priest

17 There was a man from the hill country of Ephraim named Micah.
2† He said to his mother, "The 1,100 pieces of silver taken from you, and that I heard you utter a curse about — here, I have the silver with me. I took it. So now I return it to you."

Then his mother said, "My son, you are blessed by the LORD! "

3† He returned the 1,100 pieces of silver to his mother, and his mother said, "I personally consecrate the silver to the LORD for my son's benefit to
make a carved image overlaid with silver." [A] 4 So he returned the silver to
his mother, and she took five pounds of silver and gave it to a silversmith. He made it into a carved image overlaid with silver, [B] and it was in Micah's house.

5 This man Micah had a shrine, and he made an •ephod and household
idols, and installed one of his sons to be his priest. 6† In those days there
was no king in Israel; everyone did whatever he wanted. [C]

7 There was a young man, a Levite from Bethlehem in Judah, who
resided within the clan of Judah. 8 The man left the town of Bethlehem in
Judah to settle wherever he could find a place. On his way he came to Micah's home in the hill country of Ephraim.

9 "Where do you come from? " Micah asked him.

He answered him, "I am a Levite from Bethlehem in Judah, and I'm going to settle wherever I can find a place."

10 Micah replied, [D] "Stay with me and be my father and priest, and I will give you four ounces of silver a year, along with your clothing and
provisions." So the Levite went in 11 and agreed to stay with the man, and
the young man became like one of his sons. 12 Micah consecrated the
Levite, and the young man became his priest and lived in Micah's house.
13 Then Micah said, "Now I know that the LORD will be good to me, because a Levite has become my priest."

JUDGES

Dan’s Invasion and Idolatry

18 [†]In those days, there was no king in Israel, and the Danite tribe was
looking for territory to occupy. Up to that time no territory had been
captured by them among the tribes of Israel. 2 So the Danites sent out five
brave men from all their clans, from Zorah and Eshtaol, to scout out the
land and explore it. They told them, “Go and explore the land.”

They came to the hill country of Ephraim as far as the home of Micah
and spent the night there. 3 While they were near Micah’s home, they
recognized the speech of the young Levite. So they went over to him and
asked, “Who brought you here? What are you doing in this place? What is
keeping you here? ” 4 He told them what Micah had done for him and that
he had hired him as his priest.

5[†] Then they said to him, “Please inquire of God so we will know if we
will have a successful journey.”

6 The priest told them, “Go in peace. The LORD is watching over the
journey you are going on.”

7 The five men left and came to Laish. They saw that the people who
were there were living securely, in the same way as the Sidonians, quiet and
unsuspecting. There was nothing lacking [A] in the land and no oppressive
ruler. They were far from the Sidonians, having no alliance with anyone.

8 When the men went back to their clans at Zorah and Eshtaol, their
people asked them, “What did you find out? ”

9 They answered, “Come on, let’s go up against them, for we have seen
the land, and it is very good. Why wait? Don’t hesitate to go and invade and
take possession of the land! 10 When you get there, you will come to an
unsuspecting people and a spacious land, for God has handed it over to you.
It is a place where nothing on earth is lacking.” 11 Six hundred Danites
departed from Zorah and Eshtaol armed with weapons of war. 12 They went
up and camped at Kiriath-jearim in Judah. This is why the place is called
the Camp of Dan [B] to this day; it is west of Kiriath-jearim. 13 From there
they traveled to the hill country of Ephraim and arrived at Micah’s house.

14 The five men who had gone to scout out the land of Laish told their
brothers, “Did you know that there are an •ephod, household gods, and a
carved image overlaid with silver [C] in these houses? Now think about what
you should do.” 15 So they detoured there and went to the house of the
young Levite at the home of Micah and greeted him. 16 The 600 Danite men
were standing by the entrance of the gate, armed with their weapons of war.
17 Then the five men who had gone to scout out the land went in and took
the carved image overlaid with silver, [D] the ephod, and the household idols,
while the priest was standing by the entrance of the gate with the 600 men
armed with weapons of war.

18 When they entered Micah’s house and took the carved image overlaid
with silver, [E] the ephod, and the household idols, the priest said to them,
“What are you doing? ”

19 They told him, “Be quiet. Keep your mouth shut. [F] Come with us and
be a father and a priest to us. Is it better for you to be a priest for the house
of one person or for you to be a priest for a tribe and family in Israel? ”
20 So the priest was pleased and took his ephod, household idols, and
carved image, and went with the people. 21 They prepared to leave, putting
their small children, livestock, and possessions in front of them.

22 After they were some distance from Micah’s house, the men who were
in the houses near it mobilized and caught up with the Danites. 23 They
called to the Danites, who turned to face them, and said to Micah, “What’s
the matter with you that you mobilized the men? ”

24 He said, “You took the gods I had made and the priest, and went away.
What do I have left? How can you say to me, ‘What’s the matter with
you? ’ ”

25 The Danites said to him, “Don’t raise your voice against us, or angry
men will attack you, and you and your family will lose your lives.” 26 The
Danites went on their way, and Micah turned to go back home, because he
saw that they were stronger than he was.

[27] After they had taken the gods Micah had made and the priest that
belonged to him, they went to Laish, to a quiet and unsuspecting people.
They killed them with their swords and burned down the city. [28] There was
no one to rescue them because it was far from Sidon and they had no
alliance with anyone. It was in a valley that belonged to Beth-rehob. They
rebuilt the city and lived in it. [29] They named the city Dan, after the name of
their ancestor Dan, who was born to Israel. The city was formerly named
Laish.

[30]† The Danites set up the carved image for themselves. Jonathan son of
Gershom, son of Moses, and his sons were priests for the Danite tribe until
the time of the exile from the land. [31] So they set up for themselves
Micah's carved image that he had made, and it was there as long as the
house of God was in Shiloh.

JUDGES

Outrage in Benjamin

19 [†]In those days, when there was no king in Israel, a Levite living in a
remote part of the hill country of Ephraim acquired a woman from
Bethlehem in Judah as his concubine. 2[†] But she was unfaithful to him and
left him for her father's house in Bethlehem in Judah. She was there for a
period of four months. 3 Then her husband got up and went after her to
speak kindly to her [A] and bring her back. He had his servant with him and a
pair of donkeys. So she brought him to her father's house, and when the
girl's father saw him, he gladly welcomed him. 4 His father-in-law, the girl's
father, detained him, and he stayed with him for three days. They ate, drank,
and spent the nights there.

5 On the fourth day, they got up early in the morning and prepared to go,
but the girl's father said to his son-in-law, "Have something to eat to keep
up your strength and then you can go." 6 So they sat down and the two of
them ate and drank together. Then the girl's father said to the man, "Please
agree to stay overnight and enjoy yourself." 7 The man got up to go, but his
father-in-law persuaded him, so he stayed and spent the night there again.
8 He got up early in the morning of the fifth day to leave, but the girl's
father said to him, "Please keep up your strength." So they waited until late
afternoon and the two of them ate. 9 The man got up to go with his
concubine and his servant, when his father-in-law, the girl's father, said to
him, "Look, night is coming. Please spend the night. See, the day is almost
over. Spend the night here, enjoy yourself, then you can get up early
tomorrow for your journey and go home."

10 But the man was unwilling to spend the night. He got up, departed, and
arrived opposite Jebus (that is, Jerusalem). The man had his two saddled
donkeys and his concubine with him. 11 When they were near Jebus and the
day was almost gone, the servant said to his master, "Please, why not [B] let
us stop at this Jebusite city and spend the night here? "

12 But his master replied to him, "We will not stop at a foreign city where
there are no Israelites. Let's move on to Gibeah." 13 "Come on," he said, [C]
"let's try to reach one of these places and spend the night in Gibeah or
Ramah." 14 So they continued on their journey, and the sun set as they

neared Gibeah in Benjamin. 15 They stopped [D] to go in and spend the night
in Gibeah. The Levite went in and sat down in the city square, but no one
took them into their home to spend the night.

16 In the evening, an old man came in from his work in the field. He was
from the hill country of Ephraim but was residing in Gibeah, and the men
of that place were Benjaminites. 17 When he looked up and saw the traveler
in the city square, the old man asked, “Where are you going, and where do
you come from? ”

18 He answered him, “We’re traveling from Bethlehem in Judah to the
remote hill country of Ephraim, where I am from. I went to Bethlehem in
Judah, and now I’m going to the house of the LORD. No one has taken me
into his home, 19 although we have both straw and feed for our donkeys,
and bread and wine for me, your female servant, and the young man with
your servant. There is nothing we lack.”

20 “Peace to you,” said the old man. “I’ll take care of everything you
need. Only don’t spend the night in the square.” 21 So he brought him to his
house and fed the donkeys. Then they washed their feet and ate and drank.
22 While they were enjoying themselves, all of a sudden, •perverted men of
the city surrounded the house and beat on the door. They said to the old
man who was the owner of the house, “Bring out the man who came to your
house so we can have sex with him! ”

23 The owner of the house went out and said to them, “No, don’t do this
evil, my brothers. After all, this man has come into my house. Don’t do this
horrible thing. 24 Here, let me bring out my virgin daughter and the man’s
concubine now. Use them and do whatever you want [E] to them. But don’t
do this horrible thing to this man.”

25 But the men would not listen to him, so the man seized his concubine
and took her outside to them. They raped [F] her and abused her all night until
morning. At daybreak they let her go. 26 Early that morning, the woman
made her way back, and as it was getting light, she collapsed at the
doorway of the man’s house where her master was.

27 When her master got up in the morning, opened the doors of the house,
and went out to leave on his journey, there was the woman, his concubine,
collapsed near the doorway of the house with her hands on the threshold.
28 “Get up,” he told her. “Let’s go.” But there was no response. So the man
put her on his donkey and set out for home.

29 When he entered his house, he picked up a knife, took hold of his
concubine, cut her into 12 pieces, limb by limb, and then sent her
throughout the territory of Israel. 30 Everyone who saw it said, “Nothing
like this has ever happened or has been seen since the day the Israelites
came out of the land of Egypt to this day. Think it over, discuss it, and
speak up! ”

JUDGES

War against Benjamin

20 All the Israelites from Dan to Beer-sheba and from the land of Gilead
came out, and the community assembled as one body before the LORD
at Mizpah. [2] The leaders of all the people and of all the tribes of Israel
presented themselves in the assembly of God's people: 400,000 armed foot
soldiers. [3] The Benjaminites heard that the Israelites had gone up to
Mizpah.

The Israelites asked, "Tell us, how did this outrage occur? "

[4] The Levite, the husband of the murdered woman, answered: "I went to
Gibeah in Benjamin with my concubine to spend the night. [5] Citizens of
Gibeah ganged up on me and surrounded the house at night. They intended
to kill me, but they raped my concubine, and she died. [6] Then I took my
concubine and cut her in pieces, and sent her throughout Israel's territory,
because they committed a horrible shame in Israel. [7] Look, all of you are
Israelites. Give your judgment and verdict here and now."

[8] Then all the people stood united and said, "None of us will go to his
tent or return to his house. [9] Now this is what we will do to Gibeah: we will
go against it by lot. [10] We will take 10 men out of every 100 from all the
tribes of Israel, and 100 out of every 1,000, and 1,000 out of every 10,000
to get provisions for the people when they go to Gibeah in Benjamin to
punish them for all the horror they did in Israel."

[11] So all the men of Israel gathered united against the city. [12] Then the
tribes of Israel sent men throughout the tribe of Benjamin, saying, "What is
this outrage that has occurred among you? [13] Hand over the •perverted men
in Gibeah so we can put them to death and eradicate evil from Israel." But
the Benjaminites would not obey their fellow Israelites. [14] Instead, the
Benjaminites gathered together from their cities to Gibeah to go out and
fight against the Israelites. [15] On that day the Benjaminites rallied 26,000
armed men from their cities, besides 700 choice men rallied by the
inhabitants of Gibeah. [16†] There were 700 choice men who were left-
handed among all these people; all could sling a stone at a hair and not
miss.

17 The Israelites, apart from Benjamin, rallied 400,000 armed men, every
one an experienced warrior. 18 They set out, went to Bethel, and inquired of
God. The Israelites asked, “Who is to go first to fight for us against the
Benjaminites? ”

And the LORD answered, “Judah will be first.”

19 In the morning, the Israelites set out and camped near Gibeah. 20 The
men of Israel went out to fight against Benjamin and took their battle
positions against Gibeah. 21† The Benjaminites came out of Gibeah and
slaughtered 22,000 men of Israel on the field that day. 22 But the Israelite
army rallied and again took their battle positions in the same place where
they positioned themselves on the first day. 23 They went up, wept before
the LORD until evening, and inquired of Him: “Should we again fight
against our brothers the Benjaminites? ”

And the LORD answered: “Fight against them.”

24 On the second day the Israelites advanced against the Benjaminites.
25 That same day the Benjaminites came out from Gibeah to meet them and
slaughtered an additional 18,000 Israelites on the field; all were armed men.

26 The whole Israelite army went to Bethel where they wept and sat
before the LORD. They fasted that day until evening and offered •burnt
offerings and •fellowship offerings to the LORD. 27 Then the Israelites
inquired of the LORD. In those days, the ark of the covenant of God was
there, 28 and Phinehas son of Eleazar, son of Aaron, was serving before it.
The Israelites asked: “Should we again fight against our brothers the
Benjaminites or should we stop? ”

The LORD answered: “Fight, because I will hand them over to you
tomorrow.” 29 So Israel set up an ambush around Gibeah. 30 On the third
day the Israelites fought against the Benjaminites and took their battle
positions against Gibeah as before. 31 Then the Benjaminites came out
against the people and were drawn away from the city. They began to
attack the people as before, killing about 30 men of Israel on the highways,

one of which goes up to Bethel and the other to Gibeah through the open
country. [32] The Benjaminites said, “We are defeating them as before.”

But the Israelites said, “Let’s flee and draw them away from the city to
the highways.” [33] So all the men of Israel got up from their places and took
their battle positions at Baal-tamar, while the Israelites in ambush charged
out of their places west of Geba. [34] Then 10,000 choice men from all Israel
made a frontal assault against Gibeah, and the battle was fierce, but the
Benjaminites did not know that disaster was about to strike them. [35] The
LORD defeated Benjamin in the presence of Israel, and on that day the
Israelites slaughtered 25,100 men of Benjamin; all were armed men.
[36] Then the Benjaminites realized they had been defeated.

The men of Israel had retreated before Benjamin, because they were
confident in the ambush they had set against Gibeah. [37] The men in ambush
had rushed quickly against Gibeah; they advanced and put the whole city to
the sword. [38] The men of Israel had a prearranged signal with the men in
ambush: when they sent up a great cloud of smoke from the city, [39] the men
of Israel would return to the battle. When Benjamin had begun to strike
them down, killing about 30 men of Israel, they said, “They’re defeated
before us, just as they were in the first battle.” [40] But when the column of
smoke began to go up from the city, Benjamin looked behind them, and the
whole city was going up in smoke. [A] [41] Then the men of Israel returned, and
the men of Benjamin were terrified when they realized that disaster had
struck them. [42] They retreated before the men of Israel toward the
wilderness, but the battle overtook them, and those who came out of the
cities slaughtered those between them. [43] They surrounded the
Benjaminites, pursued them, and easily overtook them near Gibeah toward
the east. [44] There were 18,000 men who died from Benjamin; all were
warriors. [45] Then Benjamin turned and fled toward the wilderness to the
rock of Rimmon, and Israel killed 5,000 men on the highways. They
overtook them at Gidom and struck 2,000 more dead.

[46†] All the Benjaminites who died that day were 25,000 armed men; all
were warriors. [47] But 600 men escaped into the wilderness to the rock of

Rimmon and stayed there four months. 48 The men of Israel turned back
against the other Benjaminites and killed them with their swords — the
entire city, the animals, and everything that remained. They also burned
down all the cities that remained.

JUDGES

Brides for Benjamin

21 [†]The men of Israel had sworn an oath at Mizpah: "None of us will
give his daughter to a Benjaminite in marriage." 2 So the people went
to Bethel and sat there before God until evening. They wept loudly and
bitterly, 3 and cried out, "Why, LORD God of Israel, has it occurred [A] that
one tribe is missing in Israel today? " 4 The next day the people got up
early, built an altar there, and offered •burnt offerings and •fellowship
offerings. 5 The Israelites asked, "Who of all the tribes of Israel didn't come
to the LORD with the assembly? " For a great oath had been taken that
anyone who had not come to the LORD at Mizpah would certainly be put to
death.

6 But the Israelites had compassion on their brothers, the Benjaminites,
and said, "Today a tribe has been cut off from Israel. 7 What should we do
about wives for the survivors? We've sworn to the LORD not to give them
any of our daughters as wives." 8 They asked, "Which city among the tribes
of Israel didn't come to the LORD at Mizpah? " It turned out that no one
from Jabesh-gilead had come to the camp and the assembly. 9 For when the
people were counted, no one was there from the inhabitants of Jabesh-
gilead.

10 The congregation sent 12,000 brave warriors [B] there and commanded
them: "Go and kill the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead with the sword,
including women and children. 11 This is what you should do: •Completely
destroy every male, as well as every female who has slept with a man."
12 They found among the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead 400 young women,
who had not had sexual relations with a man, and they brought them to the
camp at Shiloh in the land of Canaan.

13 The whole congregation sent a message of peace to the Benjaminites
who were at the rock of Rimmon. 14 Benjamin returned at that time, and
Israel gave them the women they had kept alive from Jabesh-gilead. But
there were not enough for them.

15 The people had compassion on Benjamin, because the LORD had made
this gap in the tribes of Israel. 16 The elders of the congregation said, "What

should we do about wives for those who are left, since the women of
Benjamin have been destroyed? ” [17] They said, “There must be heirs for the
survivors of Benjamin, so that a tribe of Israel will not be wiped out. [18] But
we can’t give them our daughters as wives.” For the Israelites had sworn,
“Anyone who gives a wife to a Benjaminite is cursed.” [19] They also said,
“Look, there’s an annual festival to the LORD in Shiloh, which is north of
Bethel, east of the highway that goes up from Bethel to Shechem, and south
of Lebonah.”

[20] Then they commanded the Benjaminites: “Go and hide in the
vineyards. [21] Watch, and when you see the young women of Shiloh come
out to perform the dances, each of you leave the vineyards and catch a wife
for yourself from the young women of Shiloh, and go to the land of
Benjamin. [22] When their fathers or brothers come to us and protest, we will
tell them, ‘Show favor to them, since we did not get enough wives for each
of them in the battle. You didn’t actually give the women to them, so [C] you
are not •guilty of breaking your oath.’ ”

[23] The Benjaminites did this and took the number of women they needed
from the dancers they caught. They went back to their own inheritance,
rebuilt their cities, and lived in them. [24] At that time, each of the Israelites
returned from there to his own tribe and family. Each returned from there to
his own inheritance.

[25] In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did whatever he
wanted. [D]

RUTH

Ruth 1 Ruth 2 Ruth 3 Ruth 4

Introduction to Ruth

RUTH

Naomi’s Family in Moab

1 [†]During the time [A] of the judges, there was a famine in the land. A man
left Bethlehem in Judah with his wife and two sons to live in the land of
Moab for a while. 2 The man's name was Elimelech, and his wife's name
was Naomi. The names of his two sons were Mahlon and Chilion. They
were Ephrathites from Bethlehem in Judah. They entered the land of Moab
and settled there. 3 Naomi's husband Elimelech died, and she was left with
her two sons. 4 Her sons took Moabite women as their wives: one was
named Orpah and the second was named Ruth. After they lived in Moab
about 10 years, 5 both Mahlon and Chilion also died, and Naomi was left
without her two children and without her husband.

Ruth's Loyalty to Naomi

6 She and her daughters-in-law prepared to leave the land of Moab,
because she had heard in Moab that the LORD had paid attention to His
people's need by providing them food. 7 She left the place where she had
been living, accompanied by her two daughters-in-law, and traveled along
the road leading back to the land of Judah.

8 She said to them, "Each of you go back to your mother's home. May
the LORD show faithful love to you as you have shown to the dead and to
me. 9 May the LORD enable each of you to find security in the house of
your new husband." She kissed them, and they wept loudly.

10 "No," they said to her. "We will go with you to your people."

11 But Naomi replied, "Return home, my daughters. Why do you want to
go with me? Am I able to have any more sons [B] who could become your
husbands? 12 Return home, my daughters. Go on, for I am too old to have
another husband. Even if I thought there was still hope for me to have a
husband tonight and to bear sons, 13 would you be willing to wait for them
to grow up? Would you restrain yourselves from remarrying? [C] No, my
daughters, my life is much too bitter for you to share, [D] because the LORD's
hand has turned against me." 14 Again they wept loudly, and Orpah kissed
her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her. 15 Naomi said, "Look, your sister-

in-law has gone back to her people and to her god. [E] Follow your sister-in-law."

[16] But Ruth replied:

Do not persuade me to leave you
or go back and not follow you.
For wherever you go, I will go,
and wherever you live, I will live;
your people will be my people,
and your God will be my God.
[17] Where you die, I will die,
and there I will be buried.
May •Yahweh punish me,
and do so severely,
if anything but death separates you and me.

[18] When Naomi saw that Ruth was determined to go with her, she stopped trying to persuade her.

[19] The two of them traveled until they came to Bethlehem. When they entered Bethlehem, the whole town was excited about their arrival [F] and the local women exclaimed, "Can this be Naomi? "

[20†] "Don't call me Naomi. Call me Mara," she answered, [G] "for the •Almighty has made me very bitter. [21] I went away full, but the LORD has brought me back empty. Why do you call me Naomi, since the LORD has pronounced judgment on me, and the Almighty has afflicted me? "

[22] So Naomi came back from the land of Moab with her daughter-in-law Ruth the Moabitess. They arrived in Bethlehem at the beginning of the barley harvest.

RUTH

Ruth and Boaz Meet

2 Now Naomi had a relative on her husband's side named Boaz. He was a prominent man of noble character from Elimelech's family.

[2] Ruth the Moabitess asked Naomi, "Will you let me go into the fields and gather fallen grain behind someone who allows me to? "

Naomi answered her, "Go ahead, my daughter." [3] So Ruth left and entered the field to gather grain behind the harvesters. She happened to be in the portion of land belonging to Boaz, who was from Elimelech's family.

[4] Later, when Boaz arrived from Bethlehem, he said to the harvesters, "The LORD be with you."

"The LORD bless you," they replied.

[5] Boaz asked his servant who was in charge of the harvesters, "Whose young woman is this? "

[6] The servant answered, "She is the young Moabite woman who returned with Naomi from the land of Moab. [7] She asked, 'Will you let me gather fallen grain among the bundles behind the harvesters? ' She came and has remained from early morning until now, except that she rested a little in the shelter."

[8] Then Boaz said to Ruth, "Listen, my daughter. [A] Don't go and gather grain in another field, and don't leave this one, but stay here close to my female servants. [9] See which field they are harvesting, and follow them. Haven't I ordered the young men not to touch you? When you are thirsty, go and drink from the jars the young men have filled."

[10†] She bowed with her face to the ground and said to him, "Why are you so kind to notice me, although I am a foreigner? "

[11] Boaz answered her, "Everything you have done for your mother-in-law since your husband's death has been fully reported to me: how you left your father and mother and the land of your birth, and how you came to a people you didn't previously know. [12] May the LORD reward you for what you have

done, and may you receive a full reward from the LORD God of Israel, under whose wings you have come for refuge.”

13 “My lord,” she said, “you have been so kind to me, for you have comforted and encouraged [B] your slave, although I am not like one of your female servants.”

14 At mealtime Boaz told her, “Come over here and have some bread and dip it in the vinegar sauce.” So she sat beside the harvesters, and he offered her roasted grain. She ate and was satisfied and had some left over.

15 When she got up to gather grain, Boaz ordered his young men, “Let her even gather grain among the bundles, and don’t humiliate her. 16 Pull out some stalks from the bundles for her and leave them for her to gather. Don’t rebuke her.” 17 So Ruth gathered grain in the field until evening. She beat out what she had gathered, and it was about 26 quarts [C] of barley. 18 She picked up the grain and went into the town, where her mother-in-law saw what she had gleaned. Then she brought out what she had left over from her meal and gave it to her.

19 Then her mother-in-law said to her, “Where did you gather barley today, and where did you work? May the LORD bless the man who noticed you.”

Ruth told her mother-in-law about the men she had worked with and said, “The name of the man I worked with today is Boaz.”

20 Then Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, “May he be blessed by the LORD, who has not forsaken his [D] kindness to the living or the dead.” Naomi continued, “The man is a close relative. He is one of our •family redeemers.”

21 Ruth the Moabitess said, “He also told me, ‘Stay with my young men until they have finished all of my harvest.’ ”

[22] So Naomi said to her daughter-in-law Ruth, “My daughter, it is good
for you to work [E] with his female servants, so that nothing will happen to
you in another field.” [23] Ruth stayed close to Boaz’s female servants and
gathered grain until the barley and the wheat harvests were finished. And
she lived with her mother-in-law.

RUTH

Ruth’s Appeal to Boaz

3 [†]Ruth’s mother-in-law Naomi said to her, “My daughter, shouldn’t I find
security for you, so that you will be taken care of? 2 Now isn’t Boaz our
relative? Haven’t you been working with his female servants? This evening
he will be winnowing barley on the threshing floor. 3 Wash, put on
perfumed oil, and wear your best clothes. Go down to the threshing floor,
but don’t let the man know you are there until he has finished eating and
drinking. 4 When he lies down, notice the place where he’s lying, go in and
uncover his feet, and lie down. Then he will explain to you what you should
do.”

5 So Ruth said to her, “I will do everything you say.” 6 She went down to
the threshing floor and did everything her mother-in-law had instructed her.
7 After Boaz ate, drank, and was in good spirits, [A] he went to lie down at the
end of the pile of barley. Then she went in secretly, uncovered his feet, and
lay down.

8 At midnight, Boaz was startled, turned over, and there lying at his feet
was a woman! 9[†] So he asked, “Who are you? ”

“I am Ruth, your slave,” she replied. “Spread your cloak [B] over me, for
you are a •family redeemer.”

10 Then he said, “May the LORD bless you, my daughter. You have shown
more kindness now than before, [C] because you have not pursued younger
men, whether rich or poor. 11 Now don’t be afraid, my daughter. I will do
for you whatever you say, since all the people in my town [D] know that you
are a woman of noble character. 12 Yes, it is true that I am a family
redeemer, but there is a redeemer closer than I am. 13[†] Stay here tonight,
and in the morning, if he wants to redeem you, that’s good. Let him redeem
you. But if he doesn’t want to redeem you, as the LORD lives, I will. Now
lie down until morning.”

14 So she lay down at his feet until morning but got up while it was still
dark. [E] Then Boaz said, “Don’t let it be known that a woman came to the
threshing floor.” 15 And he told Ruth, “Bring the shawl you’re wearing and

hold it out." When she held it out, he shoveled six measures of barley into her shawl, and she went into the town.

[16] She went to her mother-in-law, Naomi, who asked her, "How did it go, [F] my daughter? "

Then Ruth told her everything the man had done for her. [17] She said, "He gave me these six measures of barley, because he said, 'Don't go back to your mother-in-law empty-handed.' "

[18] Naomi said, "My daughter, wait until you find out how things go, for he won't rest unless he resolves this today."

RUTH

Ruth and Boaz Marry

4 Boaz went to the •gate of the town and sat down there. Soon the •family
redeemer Boaz had spoken about came by. Boaz called him by name
and said, "Come [A] over here and sit down." So he went over and sat down.
2 Then Boaz took 10 men of the town's elders and said, "Sit here." And
they sat down. 3 He said to the redeemer, "Naomi, who has returned from
the land of Moab, is selling a piece of land that belonged to our brother
Elimelech. 4 I thought I should inform you: [B] Buy it back in the presence of
those seated here and in the presence of the elders of my people. If you
want to redeem it, do so. But if you do not want to redeem it, tell me so
that I will know, because there isn't anyone other than you to redeem it, and
I am next after you."

"I want to redeem it," he answered.

5 Then Boaz said, "On the day you buy the land from Naomi, you will also acquire Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the deceased man, to perpetuate the man's name on his property."

6 The redeemer replied, "I can't redeem it myself, or I will ruin my own inheritance. Take my right of redemption, because I can't redeem it."

7 At an earlier period in Israel, a man removed his sandal and gave it to the other party in order to make any matter legally binding concerning the right of redemption or the exchange of property. This was the method of legally binding a transaction in Israel.

8 So the redeemer removed his sandal and said to Boaz, "Buy back the property yourself."

9 Boaz said to the elders and all the people, "You are witnesses today that
I am buying from Naomi everything that belonged to Elimelech, Chilion,
and Mahlon. 10† I will also acquire Ruth the Moabitess, Mahlon's widow, as
my wife, to perpetuate the deceased man's name on his property, so that his
name will not disappear among his relatives or from the gate of his home.
You are witnesses today."

11 The elders and all the people who were at the gate said, “We are
witnesses. May the LORD make the woman who is entering your house like
Rachel and Leah, who together built the house of Israel. May you be
powerful in Ephrathah and famous in Bethlehem. 12 May your house
become like the house of Perez, the son Tamar bore to Judah, because of
the offspring the LORD will give you by this young woman.”

13† Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife. When he was intimate with
her, the LORD enabled her to conceive, and she gave birth to a son. 14 Then
the women said to Naomi, “Praise the LORD, who has not left you without a
family redeemer today. May his name become well known in Israel. 15 He
will renew your life and sustain you in your old age. Indeed, your daughter-
in-law, who loves you and is better to you than seven sons, has given birth
to him.” 16 Naomi took the child, placed him on her lap, and took care of
him. 17† The neighbor women said, “A son has been born to Naomi,” and
they named him Obed. He was the father of Jesse, the father of David.

David’s Genealogy from Judah’s Son

18 Now this is the genealogy of Perez:

Perez fathered Hezron.
19 Hezron fathered Ram,
who fathered Amminadab.
20 Amminadab fathered Nahshon,
who fathered Salmon.
21 Salmon fathered Boaz,
who fathered Obed.
22 And Obed fathered Jesse,
who fathered David.

1 SAMUEL

Introduction to 1 Samuel

1 SAMUEL

Hannah's Vow

1 †There was a man from Ramathaim-zophim in [A] the hill country of
Ephraim. His name was Elkanah son of Jeroham, son of Elihu, son of
Tohu, son of Zuph, an Ephraimite. 2† He had two wives, the first named
Hannah and the second Peninnah. Peninnah had children, but Hannah was
childless. 3 This man would go up from his town every year to worship and
to sacrifice to the LORD of •Hosts at Shiloh, where Eli's two sons, Hophni
and Phinehas, were the LORD's priests.

4 Whenever Elkanah offered a sacrifice, he always gave portions of the
meat to his wife Peninnah and to each of her sons and daughters. 5† But he
gave a double [B] portion to Hannah, for he loved her even though the LORD
had kept her from conceiving. 6 Her rival would taunt her severely just to
provoke her, because the LORD had kept Hannah from conceiving.
7 Whenever she went up to the LORD's house, her rival taunted her in this
way every year. Hannah wept and would not eat. 8 "Hannah, why are you
crying? " her husband Elkanah asked. "Why won't you eat? Why are you
troubled? Am I not better to you than 10 sons? "

9† Hannah got up after they ate and drank at Shiloh. Eli the priest was
sitting on a chair by the doorpost of the LORD's tabernacle. 10 Deeply hurt,
Hannah prayed to the LORD and wept with many tears. 11† Making a vow,
she pleaded, "LORD of Hosts, if You will take notice of Your servant's
affliction, remember and not forget me, and give Your servant a son, [C] I
will give him to the LORD all the days of his life, and his hair will never be
cut." [D]

12 While she continued praying in the LORD's presence, Eli watched her
lips. 13 Hannah was praying silently, [E] and though her lips were moving,
her voice could not be heard. Eli thought she was drunk 14 and scolded her,
"How long are you going to be drunk? Get rid of your wine! "

15 "No, my lord," Hannah replied. "I am a woman with a broken heart. I
haven't had any wine or beer; I've been pouring out my heart before the
LORD. 16 Don't think of me as a wicked woman; I've been praying from
the depth of my anguish and resentment."

[17] Eli responded, “Go in peace, and may the God of Israel grant the petition you’ve requested from Him.”

[18] “May your servant find favor with you,” she replied. Then Hannah went on her way; she ate and no longer looked despondent. [F]

Samuel’s Birth and Dedication

[19] The next morning Elkanah and Hannah got up early to bow in worship before the LORD. Afterward, they returned home to Ramah. Then Elkanah was intimate with his wife Hannah, and the LORD remembered her. [20] After some time, [G] Hannah conceived and gave birth to a son. She named him Samuel, because she said, “I requested him from the LORD.”

[21] When Elkanah and all his household went up to make the annual sacrifice and his vow offering to the LORD, [22] Hannah did not go and explained to her husband, “After the child is weaned, I’ll take him to appear in the LORD’s presence and to stay there permanently.”

[23] Her husband Elkanah replied, “Do what you think is best, [H], and stay here until you’ve weaned him. May the LORD confirm your word.” So Hannah stayed there and nursed her son until she weaned him. [24†] When she had weaned him, she took him with her to Shiloh, as well as a three-year-old bull, half a bushel [I] of flour, and a jar of wine. Though the boy was still young, [J] she took him to the LORD’s house at Shiloh. [25] Then they slaughtered the bull and brought the boy to Eli.

[26] “Please, my lord,” she said, “as sure as you live, my lord, I am the woman who stood here beside you praying to the LORD. [27] I prayed for this boy, and since the LORD gave me what I asked Him for, [28] I now give the boy to the LORD. For as long as he lives, he is given to the LORD.” Then he bowed in worship to the LORD there.

1 SAMUEL

Hannah's Triumphant Prayer

2 [†]Hannah prayed:

My heart rejoices in the LORD;
my •horn is lifted up by the LORD.
My mouth boasts over my enemies,
because I rejoice in Your salvation.
2 There is no one holy like the LORD.
There is no one besides You!
And there is no rock like our God.
3 Do not boast so proudly,
or let arrogant words come out of your mouth,
for the LORD is a God of knowledge,
and actions are weighed by Him.
4 The bows of the warriors are broken,
but the feeble are clothed with strength.
5 Those who are full hire themselves out for food,
but those who are starving hunger no more.
The woman who is childless gives birth to seven,
but the woman with many sons pines away.
6 The LORD brings death and gives life;
He sends some to •Sheol, and He raises others up.
7 The LORD brings poverty and gives wealth;
He humbles and He exalts.
8 He raises the poor from the dust
and lifts the needy from the garbage pile.
He seats them with noblemen
and gives them a throne of honor.
For the foundations of the earth are the LORD's;
He has set the world on them.
9 He guards the steps [A] of His faithful ones,
but the wicked perish in darkness,
for a man does not prevail by his own strength.
10 Those who oppose the LORD will be shattered;
He will thunder in the heavens against them.
The LORD will judge the ends of the earth.
He will give power to His king;

He will lift up the horn of His anointed.

[11] Elkanah went home to Ramah, but the boy served the LORD in the
presence of Eli the priest.

Eli's Family Judged

[12] Eli's sons were •wicked men; they had no regard for the LORD [13] or
for the priests' share of the sacrifices from the people. When any man
offered a sacrifice, the priest's servant would come with a three-pronged
meat fork while the meat was boiling [14] and plunge it into the container or
kettle or cauldron or cooking pot. The priest would claim for himself
whatever the meat fork brought up. This is the way they treated all the
Israelites who came there to Shiloh. [15] Even before the fat was burned, the
priest's servant would come and say to the man who was sacrificing, "Give
the priest some meat to roast, because he won't accept boiled meat from
you — only raw." [16] If that man said to him, "The fat must be burned first;
then you can take whatever you want for yourself," the servant would
reply, "No, I insist that you hand it over right now. If you don't, I'll take it
by force! " [17] So the servants' sin was very severe in the presence of the
LORD, because they treated the LORD's offering with contempt.

[18] The boy Samuel served in the LORD's presence and wore a linen
ephod. [19] Each year his mother made him a little robe and took it to him
when she went with her husband to offer the annual sacrifice. [20] Eli would
bless Elkanah and his wife: "May the LORD give you children by this
woman in place of the one she has given to the LORD." Then they would go
home.

[21] The LORD paid attention to Hannah's need, and she conceived and
gave birth to three sons and two daughters. Meanwhile, the boy Samuel
grew up in the presence of the LORD.

[22] Now Eli was very old. He heard about everything his sons were doing
to all Israel and how they were sleeping with the women who served at the
entrance to the tent of meeting. [23†] He said to them, "Why are you doing

these things? I have heard about your evil actions from all these people.
24 No, my sons, the report I hear from the LORD's people is not good. 25† If a
man sins against another man, God can intercede for him, but if a man sins
against the LORD, who can intercede for him? " But they would not listen to
their father, since the LORD intended to kill them. 26 By contrast, the boy
Samuel grew in stature and in favor with the LORD and with men.

27 A man of God came to Eli and said to him, "This is what the LORD
says: 'Didn't I reveal Myself to your ancestral house when it was in Egypt
and belonged to Pharaoh's palace? 28 Out of all the tribes of Israel, I
selected your house [B] to be priests, to offer sacrifices on My altar, to burn
incense, and to wear an •ephod in My presence. I also gave your house all
the Israelite fire offerings. 29 Why, then, do all of you despise My sacrifices
and offerings that I require at the place of worship? You have honored your
sons more than Me, by making yourselves fat with the best part of all of the
offerings of My people Israel.'

30 "Therefore, this is the declaration of the LORD, the God of Israel:

'Although I said
your family and your ancestral house
would walk before Me forever,
the LORD now says, "No longer! "
I will honor those who honor Me,
but those who despise Me will be disgraced.

31 " 'Look, the days are coming when I will cut off your strength and the
strength of your ancestral family, so that none in your family will reach old
age. 32 You will see distress in the place of worship, in spite of all that is
good in Israel, and no one in your family will ever again reach old age.
33 Any man from your family I do not cut off from My altar will bring
grief [C] and sadness to you. All your descendants will die violently. 34 This
will be the sign that will come to you concerning your two sons Hophni and
Phinehas: both of them will die on the same day.

[35] “ ‘Then I will raise up a faithful priest for Myself. He will do
whatever is in My heart and mind. I will establish a lasting dynasty for
him, and he will walk before My anointed one for all time. [36] Anyone who
is left in your family will come and bow down to him for a piece of silver or
a loaf of bread. He will say: Please appoint me to some priestly office so I
can have a piece of bread to eat.’ ”

1 SAMUEL

Samuel's Call

3 The boy Samuel served the LORD in Eli's presence. In those days the
word of the LORD was rare and prophetic visions were not widespread.

2 One day Eli, whose eyesight was failing, was lying in his room.
3 Before the lamp of God had gone out, Samuel was lying down in the
tabernacle of the LORD, where the ark of God was located.

4 Then the LORD called Samuel, and he answered, "Here I am." 5 He ran
to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me."

"I didn't call," Eli replied. "Go back and lie down." So he went and lay down.

6 Once again the LORD called, "Samuel! "

Samuel got up, went to Eli, and said, "Here I am; you called me."

"I didn't call, my son," he replied. "Go back and lie down."

7 Now Samuel had not yet experienced the LORD, because the word of the
LORD had not yet been revealed to him. 8 Once again, for the third time, the
LORD called Samuel. He got up, went to Eli, and said, "Here I am; you
called me."

Then Eli understood that the LORD was calling the boy. 9 He told Samuel,
"Go and lie down. If He calls you, say, 'Speak, LORD, for Your servant is
listening.' " So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

10 The LORD came, stood there, and called as before, "Samuel, Samuel! "

Samuel responded, "Speak, for Your servant is listening."

11 The LORD said to Samuel, "I am about to do something in Israel that
everyone who hears about it will shudder. 12 On that day I will carry out
against Eli everything I said about his family, from beginning to end. 13 I
told him that I am going to judge his family forever because of the iniquity
he knows about: his sons are defiling the sanctuary, and he has not stopped

them. [14] Therefore, I have sworn to Eli's family: The iniquity of Eli's
family will never be wiped out by either sacrifice or offering."

[15] Samuel lay down until the morning; then he opened the doors of the
LORD's house. He was afraid to tell Eli the vision, [16] but Eli called him and
said, "Samuel, my son."

"Here I am," answered Samuel.

[17] "What was the message He gave you? " Eli asked. "Don't hide it from
me. May God punish you and do so severely if you hide anything from me
that He told you." [18] So Samuel told him everything and did not hide
anything from him. Eli responded, "He is the LORD. He will do what He
thinks is good." [A]

[19] Samuel grew, and the LORD was with him, and He fulfilled everything
Samuel prophesied. [B], [20] All Israel from Dan to Beer-sheba knew that
Samuel was a confirmed prophet of the LORD. [21†] The LORD continued to
appear in Shiloh, because there He revealed Himself to Samuel by His
word.

1 SAMUEL

4 [†] And Samuel's words came to all Israel.

The Ark Captured by the Philistines

Israel went out to meet the Philistines in battle and camped at Ebenezer
while the Philistines camped at Aphek. 2 The Philistines lined up in battle
formation against Israel, and as the battle intensified, Israel was defeated by
the Philistines, who struck down about 4,000 men on the battlefield.

3[†] When the troops returned to the camp, the elders of Israel asked, "Why
did the LORD let us be defeated today by the Philistines? Let's bring the ark
of the LORD's covenant from Shiloh. Then it [A] will go with us and save us
from the hand of our enemies." 4 So the people sent men to Shiloh to bring
back the ark of the covenant of the LORD of •Hosts, who dwells between the
•cherubim. Eli's two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, were there with the ark of
the covenant of God. 5 When the ark of the covenant of the LORD entered
the camp, all the Israelites raised such a loud shout that the ground shook.

6 The Philistines heard the sound of the war cry and asked, "What's this
loud shout in the Hebrews' camp? " When the Philistines discovered that
the ark of the LORD had entered the camp, 7 they panicked. "The gods have
entered their camp! " they said. "Woe to us, nothing like this has happened
before. [B] 8[†] Woe to us, who will rescue us from the hand of these
magnificent gods? These are the gods that slaughtered the Egyptians with
all kinds of plagues in the wilderness. 9 Show some courage and be men,
Philistines! Otherwise, you'll serve the Hebrews just as they served you.
Now be men and fight! "

10 So the Philistines fought, and Israel was defeated, and each man fled
to his tent. The slaughter was severe — 30,000 of the Israelite foot soldiers
fell. 11 The ark of God was captured, and Eli's two sons, Hophni and
Phinehas, died.

Eli's Death and Ichabod's Birth

12 That same day, a Benjaminite man ran from the battle and came to Shiloh. His clothes were torn, and there was dirt on his head. 13 When he arrived, there was Eli sitting on his chair beside the road watching, because he was anxious about the ark of God. When the man entered the city to give a report, the entire city cried out.

14 Eli heard the outcry and asked, “Why this commotion? ” The man quickly came and reported to Eli. 15 At that time Eli was 98 years old, and his gaze was fixed [C] because he couldn’t see.

16 The man said to Eli, “I’m the one who came from the battle. I fled from there today.”

“What happened, my son? ” Eli asked.

17 The messenger answered, “Israel has fled from the Philistines, and also there was a great slaughter among the people. Your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, are both dead, and the ark of God has been captured.” 18 When he mentioned the ark of God, Eli fell backward off the chair by the city gate, and since he was old and heavy, his neck broke and he died. Eli had judged Israel 40 years.

19 Eli’s daughter-in-law, the wife of Phinehas, was pregnant and about to give birth. When she heard the news about the capture of God’s ark and the deaths of her father-in-law and her husband, she collapsed and gave birth because her labor pains came on her. 20 As she was dying, the women taking care of her said, “Don’t be afraid. You’ve given birth to a son! ” But she did not respond or pay attention. 21 She named the boy Ichabod, saying, “The glory has departed from Israel,” referring to the capture of the ark of God and to the deaths of her father-in-law and her husband. 22 “The glory has departed from Israel,” she said, “because the ark of God has been captured.”

1 SAMUEL

The Ark in Philistine Hands

5 After the Philistines had captured the ark of God, they took it from
Ebenezer to Ashdod, 2 brought it into the temple of Dagon and placed
it next to his statue. [A] 3 When the people of Ashdod got up early the next
morning, there was Dagon, fallen with his face to the ground before the ark
of the LORD. So they took Dagon and returned him to his place. 4 But when
they got up early the next morning, there was Dagon, fallen with his face to
the ground before the ark of the LORD. This time, both Dagon's head and the
palms of his hands were broken off and lying on the threshold. Only
Dagon's torso remained. 5 That is why, to this day, the priests of Dagon and
everyone who enters the temple of Dagon in Ashdod do not step on
Dagon's threshold.

6[†] The LORD's hand was heavy on the people of Ashdod, terrorizing and
afflicting the people of Ashdod and its territory with tumors. , 7 When the
men of Ashdod saw what was happening, they said, "The ark of Israel's
God must not stay here with us, because His hand is strongly against us and
our god Dagon." 8 So they called all the Philistine rulers together and
asked, "What should we do with the ark of Israel's God? "

"The ark of Israel's God should be moved to Gath," they replied. So the
men of Ashdod moved the ark. 9 After they had moved it, the LORD's hand
was against the city of Gath, causing a great panic. He afflicted the men of
the city, from the youngest to the oldest, with an outbreak of tumors.

10 The Gittites then sent the ark of God to Ekron, but when it got there,
the Ekronites cried out, "They've moved the ark of Israel's God to us to kill
us and our people! "

11 The Ekronites called all the Philistine rulers together. They said,
"Send the ark of Israel's God away. It must return to its place so it won't
kill us and our people! " For the fear of death pervaded the city; God's
hand was oppressing them. 12 The men who did not die were afflicted with
tumors, and the outcry of the city went up to heaven.

1 SAMUEL

The Return of the Ark

6 When the ark of the LORD had been in the land of the Philistines for
seven months, [2] the Philistines summoned the priests and the diviners
and pleaded, “What should we do with the ark of the LORD? Tell us how we
can send it back to its place.”

[3] They replied, “If you send the ark of Israel’s God away, you must not
send it without an offering. You must send back a restitution offering to
Him, and you will be healed. Then the reason His hand hasn’t been
removed from you will be revealed.”

[4] They asked, “What restitution offering should we send back to Him? ”

And they answered, “Five gold tumors and five gold mice corresponding
to the number of Philistine rulers, since there was one plague for both you
and your rulers. [5] Make images of your tumors and of your mice that are
destroying the land. Give glory to Israel’s God, and perhaps He will stop
oppressing you, [A], your gods, and your land. [6†] Why harden your hearts as
the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened theirs? When He afflicted them, didn’t
they send Israel away, and Israel left?

[7] “Now then, prepare one new cart and two milk cows that have never
been yoked. Hitch the cows to the cart, but take their calves away and pen
them up. [8] Take the ark of the LORD, place it on the cart, and put the gold
objects that you’re sending Him as a restitution offering in a box beside the
ark. Send it off and let it go its way. [9] Then watch: If it goes up the road to
its homeland toward Beth-shemesh, it is the LORD who has made this
terrible trouble for us. However, if it doesn’t, we will know that it was not
His hand that punished us — it was just something that happened to us by
chance.”

[10] The men did this: They took two milk cows, hitched them to the cart,
and confined their calves in the pen. [11] Then they put the ark of the LORD on
the cart, along with the box containing the gold mice and the images of their
tumors. [12] The cows went straight up the road to Beth-shemesh. They
stayed on that one highway, lowing as they went; they never strayed to the

right or to the left. The Philistine rulers were walking behind them to the
territory of Beth-shemesh.

[13] The people of Beth-shemesh were harvesting wheat in the valley, and
when they looked up and saw the ark, they were overjoyed to see it. [14] The
cart came to the field of Joshua of Beth-shemesh and stopped there near a
large rock. The people of the city chopped up the cart and offered the cows
as a •burnt offering to the LORD. [15] The Levites removed the ark of the
LORD, along with the box containing the gold objects, and placed them on
the large rock. That day the men of Beth-shemesh offered burnt offerings
and made sacrifices to the LORD. [16] When the five Philistine rulers observed
this, they returned to Ekron that same day.

[17] As a restitution offering to the LORD, the Philistines had sent back one
gold tumor for each city: Ashdod, Gaza, Ashkelon, Gath, and Ekron.
[18] The number of gold mice also corresponded to the number of Philistine
cities of the five rulers, the fortified cities and the outlying villages. The
large rock on which the ark of the LORD was placed is in the field of Joshua
of Beth-shemesh to this day.

[19†] God struck down the men of Beth-shemesh because they looked
inside the ark of the LORD. He struck down 70 men out of 50,000 men. The
people mourned because the LORD struck them with a great slaughter. [20] The
men of Beth-shemesh asked, “Who is able to stand in the presence of this
holy LORD God? Who should the ark go to from here? ”

[21] They sent messengers to the residents of Kiriath-jearim, saying, “The
Philistines have returned the ark of the LORD. Come down and get it.” [B]

1 SAMUEL

7 So the men of Kiriath-jearim came for the ark of the LORD and took it to
Abinadab’s house on the hill. They consecrated his son Eleazar to take
care of it.

Victory at Mizpah

[2] Time went by until 20 years had passed since the ark had been taken to
Kiriath-jearim. Then the whole house of Israel began to seek the LORD.
[3] Samuel told them, “If you are returning to the LORD with all your heart,
get rid of the foreign gods and the •Ashtoreths that are among you,
dedicate yourselves to [A] the LORD, and worship only Him. Then He will
rescue you from the hand of the Philistines.” [4] So the Israelites removed the
•Baals and the Ashtoreths and only worshiped the LORD.

[5] Samuel said, “Gather all Israel at Mizpah, and I will pray to the LORD
on your behalf.” [6] When they gathered at Mizpah, they drew water and
poured it out in the LORD’s presence. They fasted that day, and there they
confessed, “We have sinned against the LORD.” And Samuel judged the
Israelites at Mizpah.

[7] When the Philistines heard that the Israelites had gathered at Mizpah,
their rulers marched up toward Israel. When the Israelites heard about it,
they were afraid because of the Philistines. [8] The Israelites said to Samuel,
“Don’t stop crying out to the LORD our God for us, so that He will save us
from the hand of the Philistines.”

[9] Then Samuel took a young lamb and offered it as a whole •burnt
offering to the LORD. He cried out to the LORD on behalf of Israel, and the
LORD answered him. [10†] Samuel was offering the burnt offering as the
Philistines drew near to fight against Israel. The LORD thundered loudly
against the Philistines that day and threw them into such confusion that they
fled before Israel. [11] Then the men of Israel charged out of Mizpah and
pursued the Philistines striking them down all the way to a place below
Beth-car.

12† Afterward, Samuel took a stone and set it upright between Mizpah
and Shen. He named it Ebenezer, explaining, “The LORD has helped us to
this point.” 13† So the Philistines were subdued and did not invade Israel’s
territory again. The LORD’s hand was against the Philistines all of Samuel’s
life. 14 The cities from Ekron to Gath, which they had taken from Israel,
were restored; Israel even rescued their surrounding territories from
Philistine control. There was also peace between Israel and the Amorites.

15† Samuel judged Israel throughout his life. 16 Every year he would go
on a circuit to Bethel, Gilgal, and Mizpah and would judge Israel at all
these locations. 17 Then he would return to Ramah because his home was
there, he judged Israel there, and he built an altar to the LORD there.

1 SAMUEL

Israel's Demand for a King

8 When Samuel grew old, he appointed his sons as judges over Israel.
2† His firstborn son's name was Joel and his second was Abijah. They
were judges in Beer-sheba. 3 However, his sons did not walk in his
ways — they turned toward dishonest gain, took bribes, and perverted
justice.

4 So all the elders of Israel gathered together and went to Samuel at
Ramah. 5† They said to him, "Look, you are old, and your sons do not
follow your example. Therefore, appoint a king to judge us the same as all
the other nations have."

6 When they said, "Give us a king to judge us," Samuel considered their
demand sinful, so he prayed to the LORD. 7 But the LORD told him, "Listen
to the people and everything they say to you. They have not rejected you;
they have rejected Me as their king. 8 They are doing the same thing to you
that they have done to Me, since the day I brought them out of Egypt until
this day, abandoning Me and worshiping other gods. 9 Listen to them, but
you must solemnly warn them and tell them about the rights of the king
who will rule over them."

10 Samuel told all the LORD's words to the people who were asking him
for a king. 11 He said, "These are the rights of the king who will rule over
you: He will take your sons and put them to his use in his chariots, on his
horses, or running in front of his chariots. 12 He can appoint them for his
use as commanders of thousands or commanders of fifties, to plow his
ground or reap his harvest, or to make his weapons of war or the equipment
for his chariots. 13 He can take your daughters to become perfumers, cooks,
and bakers. 14 He can take your best fields, vineyards, and olive orchards
and give them to his servants. 15 He can take a tenth of your grain and your
vineyards and give them to his officials and servants. 16 He can take your
male servants, your female servants, your best young men, and your
donkeys and use them for his work. 17 He can take a tenth of your flocks,
and you yourselves can become his servants. 18 When that day comes, you
will cry out because of the king you've chosen for yourselves, but the LORD
won't answer you on that day."

[19] The people refused to listen to Samuel. “No! ” they said. “We must have a king over us. [20] Then we’ll be like all the other nations: our king will judge us, go out before us, and fight our battles.”

[21†] Samuel listened to all the people’s words and then repeated them to the LORD. [A] [22] “Listen to them,” the LORD told Samuel. “Appoint a king for them.”

Then Samuel told the men of Israel, “Each of you, go back to your city.”

1 SAMUEL

Saul Anointed King

9 [†]There was an influential man of Benjamin named Kish son of Abiel,
son of Zeror, son of Becorath, son of Aphiah, son of a Benjaminite. 2 He
had a son named Saul, an impressive young man. There was no one more
impressive among the Israelites than he. He stood a head taller than anyone
else. [A]

3 One day the donkeys of Saul’s father Kish wandered off. Kish said to
his son Saul, “Take one of the attendants with you and go look for the
donkeys.” 4 Saul and his attendant went through the hill country of
Ephraim and then through the region of Shalishah, but they didn’t find
them. They went through the region of Shaalim — nothing. Then they went
through the Benjaminite region but still didn’t find them.

5 When they came to the land of Zuph, Saul said to the attendant who
was with him, “Come on, let’s go back, or my father will stop worrying
about the donkeys and start worrying about us.”

6 “Look,” the attendant said, “there’s a man of God in this city who is
highly respected; everything he says is sure to come true. Let’s go there
now. Maybe he’ll tell us which way we should go.”

7 “Suppose we do go,” Saul said to his attendant, “what do we take the
man? The food from our packs is gone, and there’s no gift to take to the
man of God. What do we have? ”

8 The attendant answered Saul: “Here, I have a piece [B] of silver. I’ll give
it to the man of God, and he will tell us our way.”

9 Formerly in Israel, a man who was going to inquire of God would say,
“Come, let’s go to the seer,” for the prophet of today was formerly called
the seer.

10 “Good,” Saul replied to his attendant. “Come on, let’s go.” So they
went to the city where the man of God was. 11 As they were climbing the
hill to the city, they found some young women coming out to draw water
and asked, “Is the seer here? ”

[12] The women answered, “Yes, he is ahead of you. Hurry, he just now
came to the city, because there’s a sacrifice for the people at the •high
place today. [13] If you go quickly, you can catch up with him before he goes
to the high place to eat. The people won’t eat until he comes because he
must bless the sacrifice; after that, the guests can eat. Go up
immediately — you can find him now.” [14] So they went up toward the city.

Saul and his attendant were entering the city when they saw Samuel
coming toward them on his way to the high place. [15†] Now the day before
Saul’s arrival, the LORD had informed Samuel, [C], [16] “At this time tomorrow
I will send you a man from the land of Benjamin. Anoint him ruler over My
people Israel. He will save them from the hand of the Philistines because I
have seen the affliction of My people, for their cry has come to Me.”
[17†] When Samuel saw Saul, the LORD told him, “Here is the man I told you
about; he will rule over My people.”

[18] Saul approached Samuel in the gate area and asked, “Would you please
tell me where the seer’s house is? ”

[19] “I am the seer,” Samuel answered. [D] “Go up ahead of me to the high
place and eat with me today. When I send you off in the morning, I’ll tell
you everything that’s in your heart. [20] As for the donkeys that wandered
away from you three days ago, don’t worry about them because they’ve
been found. And who does all Israel desire but you and all your father’s
family? ”

[21] Saul responded, “Am I not a Benjaminite from the smallest of Israel’s
tribes and isn’t my clan the least important of all the clans of the
Benjaminite tribe? So why have you said something like this to me? ”

[22] Samuel took Saul and his attendant, brought them to the banquet hall,
and gave them a place at the head of the 30 or so men who had been
invited. [23] Then Samuel said to the cook, “Get the portion of meat that I
gave you and told you to set aside.”

[24] The cook picked up the thigh and what was attached to it and set it
before Saul. Then Samuel said, “Notice that the reserved piece is set before
you. Eat it because it was saved for you for this solemn event at the time I
said, ‘I’ve invited the people.’ ” So Saul ate with Samuel that day.
[25] Afterward, they went down from the high place to the city, and Samuel
spoke with Saul on the roof.

[26] They got up early, and just before dawn, Samuel called to Saul on the
roof, “Get up, and I’ll send you on your way! ” Saul got up, and both he and
Samuel went outside. [27] As they were going down to the edge of the city,
Samuel said to Saul, “Tell the attendant to go on ahead of us, but you stay
for a while, and I’ll reveal the word of God to you.” So the attendant went
on.

1 SAMUEL

10 Samuel took the flask of oil, poured it out on Saul's head, kissed
him, and said, "Hasn't the LORD anointed you ruler over His
inheritance? 2 Today when you leave me, you'll find two men at Rachel's
Grave at Zelzah in the land of Benjamin. They will say to you, 'The
donkeys you went looking for have been found, and now your father has
stopped being concerned about the donkeys and is worried about you,
asking: What should I do about my son? '

3 "You will proceed from there until you come to the oak of Tabor. Three
men going up to God at Bethel will meet you there, one bringing three
goats, one bringing three loaves of bread, and one bringing a skin of wine.
4 They will ask how you are and give you two loaves of bread, which you
will accept from them.

5† "After that you will come to the Hill of God [A], where there are
Philistine garrisons. [B] When you arrive at the city, you will meet a group of
prophets coming down from the •high place prophesying. They will be
preceded by harps, tambourines, flutes, and lyres. 6 The Spirit of the LORD
will control you, you will prophesy with them, and you will be
transformed into a different person. 7 When these signs have happened to
you, do whatever your circumstances require [C] because God is with you.
8† Afterward, go ahead of me to Gilgal. I will come to you to offer •burnt
offerings and to sacrifice •fellowship offerings. Wait seven days until I
come to you and show you what to do."

9 When Saul turned around [D] to leave Samuel, God changed his heart, [E]
and all the signs came about that day. 10 When Saul and his attendant
arrived at Gibeah, a group of prophets met him. Then the Spirit of God took
control of him, and he prophesied along with them.

11† Everyone who knew him previously and saw him prophesy with the
prophets asked each other, "What has happened to the son of Kish? Is Saul
also among the prophets? "

12 Then a man who was from there asked, "And who is their father? "

As a result, "Is Saul also among the prophets? " became a popular saying.
13 Then Saul finished prophesying and went to the high place.

14 Saul's uncle asked him and his attendant, "Where did you go? "

"To look for the donkeys," Saul answered. "When we saw they weren't there, we went to Samuel."

15 "Tell me," Saul's uncle asked, "what did Samuel say to you? "

16 Saul told him, "He assured us the donkeys had been found." However, Saul did not tell him what Samuel had said about the matter of kingship.

Saul Received as King

17† Samuel summoned the people to the LORD at Mizpah 18 and said to
the Israelites, "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'I brought
Israel out of Egypt, and I rescued you from the power of the Egyptians and
all the kingdoms that were oppressing you.' 19† But today you have rejected
your God, who saves you from all your troubles and afflictions. You said to
Him, 'You must set a king over us.' Now therefore present yourselves
before the LORD by your tribes and clans."

20 Samuel had all the tribes of Israel come forward, and the tribe of
Benjamin was selected. 21 Then he had the tribe of Benjamin come forward
by its clans, and the Matrite clan was selected. Finally, Saul son of Kish
was selected. But when they searched for him, they could not find him.
22 They again inquired of the LORD, "Has the man come here yet? "

The LORD replied, "There he is, hidden among the supplies."

23 They ran and got him from there. When he stood among the people, he
stood a head taller than anyone else. F 24 Samuel said to all the people, "Do
you see the one the LORD has chosen? There is no one like him among the
entire population."

And all the people shouted, "Long live the king! "

25† Samuel proclaimed to the people the rights of kingship. He wrote them on a scroll, which he placed in the presence of the LORD. Then Samuel sent all the people away, each to his home.

26 Saul also went to his home in Gibeah, and brave men whose hearts
God had touched went with him. 27† But some •wicked men said, "How can
this guy save us? " They despised him and did not bring him a gift, but Saul said nothing.

1 SAMUEL

Saul's Deliverance of Jabesh-gilead

11 Nahash the Ammonite came up and laid siege to Jabesh-gilead. All
the men of Jabesh said to him, “Make a treaty with us, and we will
serve you.”

2 Nahash the Ammonite replied, “I’ll make one with you on this
condition: that I gouge out everyone’s right eye and humiliate all Israel.”

3 “Don’t do anything to us for seven days,” the elders of Jabesh said to
him, “and let us send messengers throughout the territory of Israel. If no
one saves us, we will surrender to you.”

4 When the messengers came to Gibeah, Saul’s hometown, and told the
terms to [A] the people, all wept aloud. 5 Just then Saul was coming in from
the field behind his oxen. “What’s the matter with the people? Why are they
weeping? ” Saul inquired, and they repeated to him the words of the men
from Jabesh.

6 When Saul heard these words, the Spirit of God suddenly took control
of him, and his anger burned furiously. 7 He took a team of oxen, cut them
in pieces, and sent them throughout the land of Israel by messengers who
said, “This is what will be done to the ox of anyone who doesn’t march
behind Saul and Samuel.” As a result, the terror of the LORD fell on the
people, and they went out united.

8[†] Saul counted them at Bezek. There were 300,000 Israelites and
30,000 men from Judah. 9 He told the messengers who had come, “Tell this
to the men of Jabesh-gilead: ‘Deliverance will be yours tomorrow by the
time the sun is hot.’ ” So the messengers told the men of Jabesh, and they
rejoiced.

10 Then the men of Jabesh said to Nahash, “Tomorrow we will come out,
and you can do whatever you want [B] to us.”

11 The next day Saul organized the troops into three divisions. During
the morning watch, they invaded the Ammonite camp and slaughtered them

until the heat of the day. There were survivors, but they were so scattered that no two of them were left together.

Saul's Confirmation as King

[12] Afterward, the people said to Samuel, "Who said that Saul should not reign over us? Give us those men so we can kill them! "

[13] But Saul ordered, "No one will be executed this day, for today the LORD has provided deliverance in Israel."

[14]† Then Samuel said to the people, "Come, let's go to Gilgal, so we can
renew the kingship there." [15] So all the people went to Gilgal, and there in
the LORD's presence they made Saul king. There they sacrificed •fellowship offerings in the LORD's presence, and Saul and all the men of Israel greatly rejoiced.

1 SAMUEL

Samuel's Final Public Speech

12 Then Samuel said to all Israel, “I have carefully listened to everything
you said to me and placed a king over you. 2† Now you can see that
the king is leading you. As for me, I’m old and gray, and my sons are here
with you. I have led you from my youth until today. 3 Here I am. Bring
charges against me before the LORD and His anointed: Whose ox or donkey
have I taken? Whom have I wronged or mistreated? From whose hand have
I taken a bribe to overlook something? , I will return it to you.”

4 “You haven’t wronged us, you haven’t mistreated us, and you haven’t
taken anything from anyone’s hand,” they responded.

5 He said to them, “The LORD is a witness against you, and His anointed
is a witness today that you haven’t found anything in my hand.”

“He is a witness,” they said.

6 Then Samuel said to the people, “The LORD, who appointed Moses and
Aaron and who brought your ancestors up from the land of Egypt, is a
witness. 7 Now present yourselves, so I may confront you before the LORD
about all the righteous acts He has done for you and your ancestors.

8 “When Jacob went to Egypt, your ancestors cried out to the LORD, and
He sent them Moses and Aaron, who led your ancestors out of Egypt and
settled them in this place. 9 But they forgot the LORD their God, so He
handed them over to Sisera commander of the army of Hazor, to the
Philistines, and to the king of Moab. These enemies fought against them.
10 Then they cried out to the LORD and said, ‘We have sinned, for we
abandoned the LORD and worshiped the •Baals and the •Ashtoreths. Now
deliver us from the power of our enemies, and we will serve You.’ 11† So
the LORD sent Jerubbaal, Barak, Jephthah, and Samuel. He rescued you
from the power of the enemies around you, and you lived securely. 12 But
when you saw that Nahash king of the Ammonites was coming against you,
you said to me, ‘No, we must have a king rule over us’ — even though the
LORD your God is your king.

[13] "Now here is the king you've chosen, the one you requested. Look,
this is the king the LORD has placed over you. [14] If you •fear the LORD,
worship and obey Him, and if you don't rebel against the LORD's command,
then both you and the king who rules over you will follow the LORD your
God. [15] However, if you disobey the LORD and rebel against His command,
the LORD's hand will be against you and against your ancestors.

[16] "Now, therefore, present yourselves and see this great thing that the
LORD will do before your eyes. [17†] Isn't the wheat harvest today? I will call
on the LORD and He will send thunder and rain, so that you will know and
see what a great evil you committed in the LORD's sight by requesting a king
for yourselves." [18] Samuel called on the LORD, and on that day the LORD
sent thunder and rain. As a result, all the people greatly feared the LORD and
Samuel.

[19] They pleaded with Samuel, "Pray to the LORD your God for your
servants, so we won't die! For we have added to all our sins the evil of
requesting a king for ourselves."

[20] Samuel replied, "Don't be afraid. Even though you have committed all
this evil, don't turn away from following the LORD. Instead, worship the
LORD with all your heart. [21] Don't turn away to follow worthless things that
can't profit or deliver you; they are worthless. [22] The LORD will not
abandon His people, because of His great name and because He has
determined to make you His own people.

[23] "As for me, I vow that I will not sin against the LORD by ceasing to
pray for you. I will teach you the good and right way. [24] Above all, fear the
LORD and worship Him faithfully with all your heart; consider the great
things He has done for you. [25] However, if you continue to do what is evil,
both you and your king will be swept away."

1 SAMUEL

Saul’s Failure

13 [†] Saul was 30 years old when he became king, and he reigned 42
years over Israel. [2] He chose 3,000 men from Israel for himself:
2,000 were with Saul at Michmash and in Bethel's hill country, and 1,000
were with Jonathan in Gibeah of Benjamin. He sent the rest of the troops
away, each to his own tent.

[3] Jonathan attacked the Philistine garrison [A], that was in Geba, and the
Philistines heard about it. So Saul blew the ram's horn throughout the land
saying, "Let the Hebrews hear! " [4] And all Israel heard the news, "Saul has
attacked the Philistine garrison, [B] and Israel is now repulsive to the
Philistines." Then the troops were summoned to join Saul at Gilgal.

[5†] The Philistines also gathered to fight against Israel: 3,000 chariots,
6,000 horsemen, and troops as numerous as the sand on the seashore. They
went up and camped at Michmash, east of Beth-aven.

[6] The men of Israel saw that they were in trouble because the troops were
in a difficult situation. They hid in caves, thickets, among rocks, and in
holes and cisterns. [7] Some Hebrews even crossed the Jordan to the land of
Gad and Gilead.

Saul, however, was still at Gilgal, and all his troops were gripped with
fear. [8†] He waited seven days for the appointed time that Samuel had set,
but Samuel didn't come to Gilgal, and the troops were deserting him. [9] So
Saul said, "Bring me the •burnt offering and the •fellowship offerings."
Then he offered the burnt offering.

[10] Just as he finished offering the burnt offering, Samuel arrived. So Saul
went out to greet him, [11] and Samuel asked, "What have you done? "

Saul answered, "When I saw that the troops were deserting me and you
didn't come within the appointed days and the Philistines were gathering at
Michmash, [12] I thought: The Philistines will now descend on me at Gilgal,
and I haven't sought the LORD's favor. So I forced myself to offer the burnt
offering."

13[†] Samuel said to Saul, "You have been foolish. You have not kept the
command which the LORD your God gave you. It was at this time that the
LORD would have permanently established your reign over Israel, 14 but
now your reign will not endure. The LORD has found a man loyal to Him, [C]
and the LORD has appointed him as ruler over His people, because you have
not done what the LORD commanded." 15 Then Samuel went from Gilgal to
Gibeah in Benjamin. Saul registered the troops who were with him, about
600 men.

16 Saul, his son Jonathan, and the troops who were with them were
staying in Geba of Benjamin, and the Philistines were camped at
Michmash. 17 Raiding parties went out from the Philistine camp in three
divisions. One division headed toward the Ophrah road leading to the land
of Shual. 18 The next division headed toward the Beth-horon road, and the
last division headed down the border road that looks out over the Valley of
Zeboim toward the wilderness.

19 No blacksmith could be found in all the land of Israel, because the
Philistines had said, "Otherwise, the Hebrews will make swords or spears."
20 So all the Israelites went to the Philistines to sharpen their plows,
mattocks, axes, and sickles. 21 The price was two-thirds of a •shekel [D] for
plows and mattocks, and one-third of a shekel for pitchforks and axes, and
for putting a point on an oxgoad. 22 So on the day of battle not a sword or
spear could be found in the hand of any of the troops who were with Saul
and Jonathan; only Saul and his son Jonathan had weapons.

Jonathan's Victory over the Philistines

23 Now a Philistine garrison took control of the pass at Michmash.

1 SAMUEL

14 That same day Saul's son Jonathan said to the attendant who carried his weapons, "Come on, let's cross over to the Philistine garrison on the other side." However, he did not tell his father.

[2] Saul was staying under the pomegranate tree in Migron on the outskirts of Gibeah. The troops with him numbered about 600. [3†] Ahijah, who was wearing an •ephod, was also there. He was the son of Ahitub, the brother of Ichabod son of Phinehas, son of Eli the LORD's priest at Shiloh. But the troops did not know that Jonathan had left.

[4] There were sharp columns [A] of rock on both sides of the pass that Jonathan intended to cross to reach the Philistine garrison. One was named Bozez and the other Seneh; [5] one stood to the north in front of Michmash and the other to the south in front of Geba. [6] Jonathan said to the attendant who carried his weapons, "Come on, let's cross over to the garrison of these uncircumcised men. Perhaps the LORD will help us. Nothing can keep the LORD from saving, whether by many or by few."

[7] His armor-bearer responded, "Do what is in your heart. You choose. I'm right here with you whatever you decide."

[8] "All right," Jonathan replied, "we'll cross over to the men and then let them see us. [9] If they say, 'Wait until we reach you,' then we will stay where we are and not go up to them. [10] But if they say, 'Come on up,' then we'll go up, because the LORD has handed them over to us — that will be our sign."

[11] They let themselves be seen by the Philistine garrison, and the Philistines said, "Look, the Hebrews are coming out of the holes where they've been hiding! " [12] The men of the garrison called to Jonathan and his armor-bearer. "Come on up, and we'll teach you a lesson! " they said.

"Follow me," Jonathan told his armor-bearer, "for the LORD has handed them over to Israel." [13] Jonathan climbed up using his hands and feet, with his armor-bearer behind him. Jonathan cut them down, and his armor-bearer

followed and finished them off. [14] In that first assault Jonathan and his armor-bearer struck down about 20 men in a half-acre field.

A Defeat for the Philistines

[15][†] Terror spread through the Philistine camp and the open fields to all the troops. Even the garrison and the raiding parties were terrified. The earth shook, and terror spread from God. [B] [16] When Saul's watchmen in Gibeah of Benjamin looked, they saw the panicking troops scattering in every direction. [17] So Saul said to the troops with him, "Call the roll and determine who has left us." They called the roll and saw that Jonathan and his armor-bearer were gone.

[18] Saul told Ahijah, "Bring the ark of God," for it was with the Israelites at that time. [19] While Saul spoke to the priest, the panic in the Philistine camp increased in intensity. So Saul said to the priest, "Stop what you're doing." [C]

[20] Saul and all the troops with him assembled and marched to the battle, and there, the Philistines were fighting against each other in great confusion! [21] There were Hebrews from the area who had gone earlier into the camp to join the Philistines, but even they joined the Israelites who were with Saul and Jonathan. [22] When all the Israelite men who had been hiding in the hill country of Ephraim heard that the Philistines were fleeing, they also joined Saul and Jonathan in the battle. [23] So the LORD saved Israel that day.

Saul's Rash Oath

The battle extended beyond Beth-aven, [24] and the men of Israel were worn out that day, for Saul had placed the troops under an oath: "The man who eats food before evening, before I have taken vengeance on my enemies is cursed." So none of the troops tasted any food.

[25] Everyone [D] went into the forest, and there was honey on the ground. [26] When the troops entered the forest, they saw the flow of honey, but none

of them ate any of it [E] because they feared the oath. 27 However, Jonathan
had not heard his father make the troops swear the oath. He reached out
with the end of the staff he was carrying and dipped it into the honeycomb.
When he ate the honey, [F] he had renewed energy. 28 Then, one of the troops
said, “Your father made the troops solemnly swear, ‘The man who eats food
today is cursed,’ and the troops are exhausted.”

29 Jonathan replied, “My father has brought trouble to the land. Just look
at how I have renewed energy because I tasted a little honey. 30 How much
better if the troops had eaten freely today from the plunder they took from
their enemies! Then the slaughter of the Philistines would have been much
greater.”

31 The Israelites struck down the Philistines that day from Michmash all
the way to Aijalon. Since the Israelites were completely exhausted, 32 they
rushed to the plunder, took sheep, cattle, and calves, slaughtered them on
the ground, and ate meat with the blood still in it. 33 Some reported to Saul:
“Look, the troops are sinning against the LORD by eating meat with the
blood still in it.”

Saul said, “You have been unfaithful. Roll a large stone over here at
once.” 34 He then said, “Go among the troops and say to them, ‘Each man
must bring me his ox or his sheep. Do the slaughtering here and then you
can eat. Don’t sin against the LORD by eating meat with the blood in it.’ ” So
every one of the troops brought his ox that night and slaughtered it there.
35 Then Saul built an altar to the LORD; it was the first time he had built an
altar to the LORD.

36 Saul said, “Let’s go down after the Philistines tonight and plunder
them until morning. Don’t let even one remain! ”

“Do whatever you want,” [G] the troops replied.

But the priest said, “We must consult God here.”

[37] So Saul inquired of God, "Should I go after the Philistines? Will You hand them over to Israel? " But God did not answer him that day.

[38] Saul said, "All you leaders of the troops, come here. Let us investigate how this sin has occurred today. [39] As surely as the LORD lives who saves Israel, even if it is because of my son Jonathan, he must die! " Not one of the troops answered him.

[40] So he said to all Israel, "You will be on one side, and I and my son Jonathan will be on the other side."

And the troops replied, "Do whatever you want." [H]

[41] So Saul said to the LORD, "God of Israel, give us the right decision." Jonathan and Saul were selected, and the troops were cleared of the charge.

[42] Then Saul said, "Cast the lot between me and my son Jonathan," and Jonathan was selected. [43] Saul commanded him, "Tell me what you did."

Jonathan told him, "I tasted a little honey with the end of the staff I was carrying. I am ready to die! "

[44] Saul declared to him, "May God punish me and do so severely if you do not die, Jonathan! "

[45] But the people said to Saul, "Must Jonathan die, who accomplished such a great deliverance for Israel? No, as the LORD lives, not a hair of his head will fall to the ground, for he worked with God's help today." So the people redeemed Jonathan, and he did not die. [46] Then Saul gave up the pursuit of the Philistines, and the Philistines returned to their own territory.

Summary of Saul's Kingship

[47] When Saul assumed the kingship over Israel, he fought against all his enemies in every direction: against Moab, the Ammonites, Edom, the kings of Zobah, and the Philistines. Wherever he turned, he caused havoc. [48] He

fought bravely, defeated the Amalekites, and delivered Israel from the hand of those who plundered them.

49† Saul's sons were Jonathan, Ishvi, and Malchishua. The names of his
two daughters were: Merab, his firstborn, and Michal, the younger. 50 The
name of Saul's wife was Ahinoam daughter of Ahimaaz. The name of the
commander of his army was Abner son of Saul's uncle Ner. 51† Saul's
father was Kish. Abner's father was Ner son of Abiel.

52 The conflict with the Philistines was fierce all of Saul's days, so whenever Saul noticed any strong or brave man, he enlisted him.

1 SAMUEL

Saul Rejected as King

15 Samuel told Saul, “The LORD sent me to anoint you as king over His
people Israel. Now, listen to the words of the LORD. 2 This is what the
LORD of •Hosts says: ‘I witnessed what the Amalekites did to the Israelites
when they opposed them along the way as they were coming out of Egypt.
3† Now go and attack the Amalekites and •completely destroy everything
they have. Do not spare them. Kill men and women, children and infants,
oxen and sheep, camels and donkeys.’ ”

4 Then Saul summoned the troops and counted them at Telaim: 200,000
foot soldiers and 10,000 men from Judah. 5 Saul came to the city of Amalek
and set up an ambush in the •wadi. 6 He warned the Kenites, “Since you
showed kindness to all the Israelites when they came out of Egypt, go on
and leave! Get away from the Amalekites, or I’ll sweep you away with
them.” So the Kenites withdrew from the Amalekites.

7† Then Saul struck down the Amalekites from Havilah all the way to
Shur, which is next to Egypt. 8† He captured Agag king of Amalek alive,
but he completely destroyed all the rest of the people with the sword. 9 Saul
and the troops spared Agag, and the best of the sheep, cattle, and choice
animals, [A] as well as the young rams and the best of everything else. They
were not willing to destroy them, but they did destroy all the worthless and
unwanted things.

10 Then the word of the LORD came to Samuel, 11† “I regret that I made
Saul king, for he has turned away from following Me and has not carried
out My instructions.” So Samuel became angry and cried out to the LORD
all night.

12 Early in the morning Samuel got up to confront Saul, but it was
reported to Samuel, “Saul went to Carmel where he set up a monument for
himself. Then he turned around and went down to Gilgal.” 13 When Samuel
came to him, Saul said, “May the LORD bless you. I have carried out the
LORD’s instructions.”

14 Samuel replied, “Then what is this sound of sheep [B] and cattle I
hear? ”

15 Saul answered, “The troops brought them from the Amalekites and
spared the best sheep and cattle in order to offer a sacrifice to the LORD your
God, but the rest we destroyed.”

16 “Stop! ” exclaimed Samuel. “Let me tell you what the LORD said to me
last night.”

“Tell me,” he replied.

17 Samuel continued, “Although you once considered yourself
unimportant, have you not become the leader of the tribes of Israel? The
LORD anointed you king over Israel 18† and then sent you on a mission and
said: ‘Go and completely destroy the sinful Amalekites. Fight against them
until you have annihilated them.’ 19 So why didn’t you obey the LORD?
Why did you rush on the plunder and do what was evil in the LORD’s
sight? ”

20 “But I did obey the LORD! ” Saul answered. C “I went on the mission
the LORD gave me: I brought back Agag, king of Amalek, and I completely
destroyed the Amalekites. 21 The troops took sheep and cattle from the
plunder — the best of what was •set apart for destruction — to sacrifice to
the LORD your God at Gilgal.”

22† Then Samuel said:

Does the LORD take pleasure in •burnt offerings and sacrifices
as much as in obeying the LORD?

Look: to obey is better than sacrifice,
to pay attention is better than the fat of rams.
23 For rebellion is like the sin of •divination,
and defiance is like wickedness and idolatry.
Because you have rejected the word of the LORD,
He has rejected you as king.

24 Saul answered Samuel, “I have sinned. I have transgressed the LORD’s
command and your words. Because I was afraid of the people, I obeyed

them. [25] Now therefore, please forgive my sin and return with me so I can
worship the LORD."

[26] Samuel replied to Saul, "I will not return with you. Because you
rejected the word of the LORD, the LORD has rejected you from being king
over Israel." [27] When Samuel turned to go, Saul grabbed the hem of his
robe, and it tore. [28] Samuel said to him, "The LORD has torn the kingship of
Israel away from you today and has given it to your neighbor who is better
than you. [29†] Furthermore, the Eternal One of Israel does not lie or change
His mind, for He is not man who changes his mind."

[30] Saul said, "I have sinned. Please honor me now before the elders of
my people and before Israel. Come back with me so I can bow in worship
to the LORD your God." [31] Then Samuel went back, following Saul, and
Saul bowed down to the LORD.

[32] Samuel said, "Bring me Agag king of Amalek."

Agag came to him trembling, [D] for he thought, "Certainly the bitterness of death has come."

[33] Samuel declared:

As your sword has made women childless,
so your mother will be childless among women.

Then he hacked Agag to pieces before the LORD at Gilgal.

[34] Samuel went to Ramah, and Saul went up to his home in Gibeah of
Saul. [35†] Even to the day of his death, Samuel never again visited Saul.
Samuel mourned for Saul, and the LORD regretted He had made Saul king
over Israel.

1 SAMUEL

Samuel Anoints David

16 The LORD said to Samuel, “How long are you going to mourn for
Saul, since I have rejected him as king over Israel? Fill your horn
with oil and go. I am sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem because I have
selected a king from his sons.”

[2†] Samuel asked, “How can I go? Saul will hear about it and kill me! ”

The LORD answered, “Take a young cow with you and say, ‘I have come
to sacrifice to the LORD.’ [3] Then invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will let
you know what you are to do. You are to anoint for Me the one I indicate to
you.”

[4] Samuel did what the LORD directed and went to Bethlehem. When the
elders of the town met him, they trembled [A] and asked, “Do you come in
peace? ”

[5] “In peace,” he replied. “I’ve come to sacrifice to the LORD. Consecrate
yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice.” Then he consecrated Jesse
and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice. [6†] When they arrived, Samuel
saw Eliab and said, “Certainly the LORD’s anointed one is here before
Him.”

[7] But the LORD said to Samuel, “Do not look at his appearance or his
stature, because I have rejected him. Man does not see what the LORD sees,
for man sees what is visible, [B] but the LORD sees the heart.”

[8] Jesse called Abinadab and presented him to Samuel. “The LORD hasn’t
chosen this one either,” Samuel said. [9] Then Jesse presented Shammah, but
Samuel said, “The LORD hasn’t chosen this one either.” [10] After Jesse
presented seven of his sons to him, Samuel told Jesse, “The LORD hasn’t
chosen any of these.” [11] Samuel asked him, “Are these all the sons you
have? ”

"There is still the youngest," he answered, "but right now he's tending the sheep." Samuel told Jesse, "Send for him. We won't sit down to eat until he gets here." [12] So Jesse sent for him. He had beautiful eyes and a healthy, [C] handsome appearance.

Then the LORD said, "Anoint him, for he is the one." [13] So Samuel took the horn of oil, anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and the Spirit of the LORD took control of David from that day forward. Then Samuel set out and went to Ramah.

David in Saul's Court

[14†] Now the Spirit of the LORD had left Saul, and an evil spirit sent from the LORD began to torment him, [15] so Saul's servants said to him, "You see that an evil spirit from God is tormenting you. [16] Let our lord command your servants here in your presence to look for someone who knows how to play the lyre. Whenever the evil spirit from God troubles you, that person can play the lyre, and you will feel better."

[17] Then Saul commanded his servants, "Find me someone who plays well and bring him to me."

[18] One of the young men answered, "I have seen a son of Jesse of Bethlehem who knows how to play the lyre. He is also a valiant man, a warrior, eloquent, handsome, and the LORD is with him."

[19] Then Saul dispatched messengers to Jesse and said, "Send me your son David, who is with the sheep." [20] So Jesse took a donkey loaded with bread, a skin of wine, and one young goat and sent them by his son David to Saul.
[21†] When David came to Saul and entered his service, Saul admired him greatly, and David became his armor-bearer. [22] Then Saul sent word to

Jesse: “Let David remain in my service, for I am pleased with him.”
23† Whenever the spirit from God troubled Saul, David would pick up his lyre and play, and Saul would then be relieved, feel better, and the evil spirit would leave him.

1 SAMUEL

David versus Goliath

17 The Philistines gathered their forces for war at Socoh in Judah and
camped between Socoh and Azekah in Ephes-dammim. 2 Saul and
the men of Israel gathered and camped in the Valley of Elah; then they
lined up in battle formation to face the Philistines.

3 The Philistines were standing on one hill, and the Israelites were
standing on another hill with a ravine between them. 4[†] Then a champion
named Goliath, from Gath, came out from the Philistine camp. He was nine
feet, nine inches tall 5 and wore a bronze helmet [B] and bronze scale armor
that weighed 125 pounds. [C] 6 There was bronze armor on his shins, and a
bronze sword was slung between his shoulders. 7 His spear shaft was like a
weaver's beam, and the iron point of his spear weighed 15 pounds. [D] In
addition, a shield-bearer was walking in front of him.

8 He stood and shouted to the Israelite battle formations: "Why do you
come out to line up in battle formation? " He asked them, "Am I not a
Philistine and are you not servants of Saul? Choose one of your men and
have him come down against me. 9 If he wins in a fight against me and kills
me, we will be your servants. But if I win against him and kill him, then
you will be our servants and serve us." 10 Then the Philistine said, "I defy
the ranks of Israel today. Send me a man so we can fight each other! "
11 When Saul and all Israel heard these words from the Philistine, they lost
their courage and were terrified.

12[†] Now David was the son of the Ephrathite from Bethlehem of Judah
named Jesse. Jesse had eight sons and during Saul's reign was already an
old man. 13 Jesse's three oldest sons had followed Saul to the war, and their
names were Eliab, the firstborn, Abinadab, the next, and Shammah, the
third, 14 and David was the youngest. The three oldest had followed Saul,
15 but David kept going back and forth from Saul to tend his father's flock
in Bethlehem.

16 Every morning and evening for 40 days the Philistine came forward
and took his stand. 17 One day Jesse had told his son David: "Take this half-
bushel [E] of roasted grain along with these 10 loaves of bread for your

brothers and hurry to their camp. [18] Also take these 10 portions of cheese to the field commander. [F] Check on the welfare of your brothers and bring a confirmation from them. [19] They are with Saul and all the men of Israel in the Valley of Elah fighting with the Philistines."

[20] So David got up early in the morning, left the flock with someone to keep it, loaded up, and set out as Jesse had instructed him.

He arrived at the perimeter of the camp as the army was marching out to its battle formation shouting their battle cry. [21] Israel and the Philistines lined up in battle formation facing each other. [22] David left his supplies in the care of the quartermaster and ran to the battle line. When he arrived, he asked his brothers how they were. [23] While he was speaking with them, suddenly the champion named Goliath, the Philistine from Gath, came forward from the Philistine battle line and shouted his usual words, which David heard. [24] When all the Israelite men saw Goliath, they retreated from him terrified.

[25] Previously, an Israelite man had declared: "Do you see this man who keeps coming out? He comes to defy Israel. The king will make the man who kills him very rich and will give him his daughter. The king will also make the household of that man's father exempt from paying taxes in Israel."

[26] David spoke to the men who were standing with him: "What will be done for the man who kills that Philistine and removes this disgrace from Israel? Just who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God? "

[27] The people told him about the offer, concluding, "That is what will be done for the man who kills him."

[28] David's oldest brother Eliab listened as he spoke to the men, and became angry with him. "Why did you come down here? " he asked. "Who did you leave those few sheep with in the wilderness? I know your arrogance and your evil heart — you came down to see the battle! "

29 “What have I done now? ” protested David. “It was just a question.”
30 Then he turned from those beside him to others in front of him and asked
about the offer. The people gave him the same answer as before.

31 What David said was overheard and reported to Saul, so he had David
brought to him. 32 David said to Saul, “Don’t let anyone be discouraged
by [G] him; your servant will go and fight this Philistine! ”

33 But Saul replied, “You can’t go fight this Philistine. You’re just a
youth, and he’s been a warrior since he was young.”

34 David answered Saul: “Your servant has been tending his father’s
sheep. Whenever a lion or a bear came and carried off a lamb from the
flock, 35 I went after it, struck it down, and rescued the lamb from its
mouth. If it reared up against me, I would grab it by its fur, strike it down,
and kill it. 36 Your servant has killed lions and bears; this uncircumcised
Philistine will be like one of them, for he has defied the armies of the living
God.” 37 Then David said, “The LORD who rescued me from the paw of the
lion and the paw of the bear will rescue me from the hand of this
Philistine.”

Saul said to David, “Go, and may the LORD be with you.”

38 Then Saul had his own military clothes put on David. He put a bronze
helmet on David’s head and had him put on armor. 39 David strapped his
sword on over the military clothes and tried to walk, but he was not used to
them. “I can’t walk in these,” David said to Saul, “I’m not used to them.”
So David took them off. 40 Instead, he took his staff in his hand and chose
five smooth stones from the •wadi and put them in the pouch, in his
shepherd’s bag. Then, with his sling in his hand, he approached the
Philistine.

41 The Philistine came closer and closer to David, with the shield-bearer
in front of him. 42 When the Philistine looked and saw David, he despised
him because he was just a youth, healthy [H] and handsome. 43 He said to

David, “Am I a dog that you come against me with sticks? ” Then he
cursed David by his gods. [44] “Come here,” the Philistine called to David,
“and I’ll give your flesh to the birds of the sky and the wild beasts! ”

[45] David said to the Philistine: “You come against me with a dagger,
spear, and sword, but I come against you in the name of •Yahweh of •Hosts,
the God of Israel’s armies — you have defied Him. [46] Today, the LORD will
hand you over to me. Today, I’ll strike you down, cut your head off, and
give the corpses of the Philistine camp to the birds of the sky and the
creatures of the earth. Then all the world will know that Israel has a God,
[47] and this whole assembly will know that it is not by sword or by spear that
the LORD saves, for the battle is the LORD’s. He will hand you over to us.”

[48] When the Philistine started forward to attack him, David ran quickly to
the battle line to meet the Philistine. [49] David put his hand in the bag, took
out a stone, slung it, and hit the Philistine on his forehead. The stone sank
into his forehead, and he fell on his face to the ground. [50†] David defeated
the Philistine with a sling and a stone. Even though David had no sword, he
struck down the Philistine and killed him. [51] David ran and stood over him.
He grabbed the Philistine’s sword, pulled it from its sheath, and used it to
kill him. Then he cut off his head. When the Philistines saw that their hero
was dead, they ran. [52] The men of Israel and Judah rallied, shouting their
battle cry, and chased the Philistines to the entrance of the valley and to the
gates of Ekron. Philistine bodies were strewn all along the Shaaraim road
to Gath and Ekron.

[53] When the Israelites returned from the pursuit of the Philistines, they
plundered their camps. [54†] David took Goliath’s [I] head and brought it to
Jerusalem, but he put Goliath’s weapons in his own tent.

[55†] When Saul had seen David going out to confront the Philistine, he
asked Abner the commander of the army, “Whose son is this youth,
Abner? ”

“My king, as surely as you live, I don’t know,” Abner replied.

[56] The king said, “Find out whose son this young man is! ”

[57] When David returned from killing the Philistine, Abner took him and
brought him before Saul with the Philistine’s head still in his hand. [58] Saul
said to him, “Whose son are you, young man? ”

“The son of your servant Jesse of Bethlehem,” David answered.

1 SAMUEL

David's Success

18 [†]When David had finished speaking with Saul, Jonathan committed
himself to David, and loved him as much as he loved himself. 2 Saul
kept David with him from that day on and did not let him return to his
father's house.

3 Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as much
as himself. 4 Then Jonathan removed the robe he was wearing and gave it to
David, along with his military tunic, his sword, his bow, and his belt.

5 David marched out with the army and was successful in everything Saul
sent him to do. Saul put him in command of the soldiers, which pleased all
the people and Saul's servants as well.

6 As the troops were coming back, when David was returning from
killing the Philistine, the women came out from all the cities of Israel to
meet King Saul, singing and dancing with tambourines, with shouts of joy,
and with three-stringed instruments. 7 As they celebrated, the women sang:

Saul has killed his thousands,
but David his tens of thousands.

8 Saul was furious and resented this song. [A] "They credited tens of
thousands to David," he complained, "but they only credited me with
thousands. What more can he have but the kingdom? " 9 So Saul watched
David jealously from that day forward.

Saul Attempts to Kill David

10[†] The next day an evil spirit sent from God took control of Saul, and he
began to rave [B] inside the palace. David was playing the lyre as usual, but
Saul was holding a spear, 11 and he threw it, thinking, "I'll pin David to the
wall." But David got away from him twice.

12[†] Saul was afraid of David, because the LORD was with David but had
left Saul. 13 Therefore, Saul reassigned David and made him commander
over 1,000 men. David led the troops 14 and continued to be successful in

all his activities because the LORD was with him. 15 When Saul observed
that David was very successful, he dreaded him. 16 But all Israel and Judah
loved David because he was leading their troops. 17 Saul told David, “Here
is my oldest daughter Merab. I’ll give her to you as a wife, if you will be a
warrior for me and fight the LORD’s battles.” But Saul was thinking, “My
hand doesn’t need to be against him; let the hand of the Philistines be
against him.”

18 Then David responded, “Who am I, and what is my family or my
father’s clan in Israel that I should become the king’s son-in-law? ”
19[†] When it was time to give Saul’s daughter Merab to David, she was given
to Adriel the Meholathite as a wife.

David’s Marriage to Michal

20 Now Saul’s daughter Michal loved David, and when it was reported to
Saul, it pleased him. [C] 21 “I’ll give her to him,” Saul thought. “She’ll be a
trap for him, and the hand of the Philistines will be against him.” So Saul
said to David a second time, “You can now be my son-in-law.”

22 Saul then ordered his servants, “Speak to David in private and tell him,
‘Look, the king is pleased with you, and all his servants love you.
Therefore, you should become the king’s son-in-law.’ ”

23 Saul’s servants reported these words directly to David, [D] but he
replied, “Is it trivial in your sight to become the king’s son-in-law? I am a
poor man who is common.”

24 The servants reported back to Saul, “These are the words David
spoke.”

25 Then Saul replied, “Say this to David: ‘The king desires no other
bride-price except 100 Philistine foreskins, to take revenge on his
enemies.’ ” Actually, Saul intended to cause David’s death at the hands of
the Philistines.

[26] When the servants reported these terms to David, he was pleased [E] to
become the king's son-in-law. Before the wedding day arrived, [F] [27†] David
and his men went out and killed 200 Philistines. He brought their foreskins
and presented them as full payment to the king to become his son-in-law.
Then Saul gave his daughter Michal to David as his wife. [28] Saul realized
that the LORD was with David and that his daughter Michal loved him,
[29] and he became even more afraid of David. As a result, Saul was David's
enemy from then on.

[30] Every time the Philistine commanders came out to fight, David was
more successful than all of Saul's officers. So his name became well
known.

1 SAMUEL

David Delivered from Saul

19 †Saul ordered his son Jonathan and all his servants to kill David. But
Saul's son Jonathan liked David very much, 2 so he told him: "My
father Saul intends to kill you. Be on your guard in the morning and hide in
a secret place and stay there. 3 I'll go out and stand beside my father in the
field where you are and talk to him about you. When I see what he says, I'll
tell you."

4 Jonathan spoke well of David to his father Saul. He said to him: "The
king should not sin against his servant David. He hasn't sinned against you;
in fact, his actions have been a great advantage to you. 5 He took his life in
his hands when he struck down the Philistine, and the LORD brought about
a great victory for all Israel. You saw it and rejoiced, so why would you sin
against innocent blood by killing David for no reason? "

6 Saul listened to Jonathan's advice and swore an oath: "As surely as the
LORD lives, David will not be killed." 7 So Jonathan summoned David and
told him all these words. Then Jonathan brought David to Saul, and he
served him as he did before.

8 When war broke out again, David went out and fought against the
Philistines. He defeated them with such a great force that they fled from
him.

9† Now an evil spirit sent from the LORD came on Saul as he was sitting
in his palace holding a spear. David was playing the lyre, 10 and Saul tried
to pin David to the wall with the spear. As the spear struck the wall, David
eluded Saul, ran away, and escaped that night. 11 Saul sent agents to David's
house to watch for him and kill him in the morning. But his wife Michal
warned David, "If you don't escape tonight, you will be dead tomorrow! "
12 So she lowered David from the window, and he fled and escaped.
13† Then Michal took the household idol and put it on the bed, placed some
goat hair on its head, and covered it with a garment. 14 When Saul sent
agents to seize David, Michal said, "He's sick."

15 Saul sent the agents back to see David and said, “Bring him on his bed
so I can kill him.” 16 When the messengers arrived, to their surprise, the
household idol was on the bed with some goat hair on its head.

17 Saul asked Michal, “Why did you deceive me like this? You sent my
enemy away, and he has escaped! ”

She answered him, “He said to me, ‘Let me go! Why should I kill
you? ’ ”

18 So David fled and escaped and went to Samuel at Ramah and told him
everything Saul had done to him. Then he and Samuel left and stayed at
Naioth.

19† When it was reported to Saul that David was at Naioth in Ramah,
20 he sent agents to seize David. However, when they saw the group of
prophets prophesying with Samuel leading them, the Spirit of God came on
Saul’s agents, and they also started prophesying. 21 When they reported to
Saul, he sent other agents, and they also began prophesying. So Saul tried
again and sent a third group of agents, and even they began prophesying.
22 Then Saul himself went to Ramah. He came to the large cistern at Secu,
looked around, and asked, “Where are Samuel and David? ”

“At Naioth in Ramah,” someone said.

23† So he went to Naioth in Ramah. The Spirit of God also came on him,
and as he walked along, he prophesied until he entered Naioth in Ramah.
24† Saul then removed his clothes and also prophesied before Samuel; he
collapsed and lay naked all that day and all that night. That is why they say,
“Is Saul also among the prophets? ”

1 SAMUEL

Jonathan Protects David

20 David fled from Naioth in Ramah and came to Jonathan and asked,
"What have I done? What did I do wrong? How have I sinned against
your father so that he wants to take my life? "

[2] Jonathan said to him, "No, you won't die. Listen, my father doesn't do
anything, great or small, without telling me. [A] So why would he hide this
matter from me? This can't be true."

[3] But David said, "Your father certainly knows that you have come to
look favorably on me. He has said, 'Jonathan must not know of this, or else
he will be grieved.' " David also swore, "As surely as the LORD lives and as
you yourself live, there is but a step between me and death."

[4] Jonathan said to David, "Whatever you say, I will do for you."

[5] So David told him, "Look, tomorrow is the New Moon, and I'm
supposed to sit down and eat with the king. Instead, let me go, and I'll hide
in the field until the third night. [6†] If your father misses me at all, say,
'David urgently requested my permission to quickly go to his town
Bethlehem for an annual sacrifice there involving the whole clan.' [7] If he
says, 'Good,' then your servant is safe, but if he becomes angry, you will
know he has evil intentions. [8] Deal faithfully with your servant, for you
have brought me into a covenant with you before the LORD. If I have done
anything wrong, then kill me yourself; why take me to your father? "

[9] "No! " Jonathan responded. "If I ever find out my father has evil
intentions against you, wouldn't I tell you about it? "

[10] So David asked Jonathan, "Who will tell me if your father answers you
harshly? "

[11] He answered David, "Come on, let's go out to the field." So both of
them went out to the field. [12] "By the LORD, the God of Israel, I will sound
out my father by this time tomorrow or the next day. If I find out that he is
favorable toward you, will I not send for you and tell you? [B] [13] If my father
intends to bring evil on you, may God punish Jonathan and do so severely

if I do not tell you [C] and send you away so you may go in peace. May the
LORD be with you, just as He was with my father. [14] If I continue to live,
treat me with the LORD's faithful love, but if I die, [15] don't ever withdraw
your faithful love from my household — not even when the LORD cuts off
every one of David's enemies from the face of the earth." [16] Then Jonathan
made a covenant with the house of David, saying, "May the LORD hold
David's enemies accountable." [D], [17†] Jonathan once again swore to David
in his love for him, because he loved him as he loved himself.

[18] Then Jonathan said to him, "Tomorrow is the New Moon; you'll be
missed because your seat will be empty. [19] The following day hurry down
and go to the place where you hid on the day this incident began and stay
beside the rock Ezel. [20] I will shoot three arrows beside it as if I'm aiming
at a target. [21] Then I will send the young man and say, 'Go and find the
arrows! ' Now, if I expressly say to the young man, 'Look, the arrows are
on this side of you — get them,' then come, because as the LORD lives, it is
safe for you and there is no problem. [22] But if I say this to the youth: 'Look,
the arrows are beyond you! ' then go, for the LORD is sending you away.
[23] As for the matter you and I have spoken about, the LORD will be a
witness between you and me forever." [24] So David hid in the field.

At the New Moon, the king sat down to eat the meal. [25] He sat at his
usual place on the seat by the wall. Jonathan sat facing him and Abner took
his place beside Saul, but David's place was empty. [26] Saul did not say
anything that day because he thought, "Something unexpected has
happened; he must be ceremonially •unclean — yes, that's it, he is
unclean."

[27] However, the day after the New Moon, the second day, David's place
was still empty, and Saul asked his son Jonathan, "Why didn't Jesse's son
come to the meal either yesterday or today? "

[28†] Jonathan answered, "David asked for my permission to go to
Bethlehem. [29] He said, 'Please let me go because our clan is holding a
sacrifice in the town, and my brother has told me to be there. So now, if you

are pleased with me, let me go so I can see my brothers.' That's why he
didn't come to the king's table."

[30] Then Saul became angry with Jonathan and shouted, "You son of a
perverse and rebellious woman! Don't I know that you are siding with
Jesse's son to your own shame and to the disgrace of your mother? [E]
[31] Every day Jesse's son lives on earth you and your kingship are not
secure. Now send for him and bring him to me — he deserves to die."

[32] Jonathan answered his father back: "Why is he to be killed? What has
he done? "

[33] Then Saul threw his spear at Jonathan to kill him, so he knew that his
father was determined to kill David. [34] He got up from the table in fierce
anger and did not eat any food that second day of the New Moon, for he
was grieved because of his father's shameful behavior toward David.

[35] In the morning Jonathan went out to the field for the appointed
meeting with David. A small young man was with him. [36] He said to the
young man, "Run and find the arrows I'm shooting." As the young man
ran, Jonathan shot an arrow beyond him. [37] He came to the location of the
arrow that Jonathan had shot, but Jonathan called to him and said, "The
arrow is beyond you, isn't it? " [38] Then Jonathan called to him, "Hurry up
and don't stop! " Jonathan's young man picked up the arrow and returned to
his master. [39] He did not know anything; only Jonathan and David knew the
arrangement. [40] Then Jonathan gave his equipment to the young man who
was with him and said, "Go, take it back to the city."

[41] When the young man had gone, David got up from the south side of
the stone Ezel, fell with his face to the ground, and bowed three times.
Then he and Jonathan kissed each other and wept with each other, though
David wept more.

[42] Jonathan then said to David, "Go in the assurance the two of us
pledged in the name of the LORD when we said: The LORD will be a witness

between you and me and between my offspring and your offspring
forever.” Then David left, and Jonathan went into the city.

1 SAMUEL

David Flees to Nob

21 †David went to Ahimelech the priest at Nob. Ahimelech was afraid
to meet David, so he said to him, “Why are you alone and no one is
with you? ”

2† David answered Ahimelech the priest, “The king gave me a mission,
but he told me, ‘Don’t let anyone know anything about the mission I’m
sending you on or what I have ordered you to do.’ I have stationed my
young men at a certain place. 3 Now what do you have on hand? Give me
five loaves of bread or whatever can be found.”

4 The priest told him, “There is no ordinary bread on hand. However,
there is consecrated bread, but the young men may eat it only if they have
kept themselves from women.”

5 David answered him, “I swear that women are being kept from us, as
always when I go out to battle. The young men’s bodies [A] are consecrated
even on an ordinary mission, so of course their bodies are consecrated
today.” 6 So the priest gave him the consecrated bread, for there was no
bread there except the •bread of the Presence that had been removed from
the presence of the LORD. When the bread was removed, it had been
replaced with warm bread.

7 One of Saul’s servants, detained before the LORD, was there that day.
His name was Doeg the Edomite, chief of Saul’s shepherds.

8 David said to Ahimelech, “Do you have a spear or sword on hand? I
didn’t even bring my sword or my weapons since the king’s mission was
urgent.”

9 The priest replied, “The sword of Goliath the Philistine, whom you
killed in the Valley of Elah, is here, wrapped in a cloth behind the •ephod. If
you want to take it for yourself, then take it, for there isn’t another one
here.”

“There’s none like it! ” David said. “Give it to me.”

David Flees to Gath

[10] David fled that day from Saul’s presence and went to King Achish of
Gath. [11] But Achish’s servants said to him, “Isn’t this David, the king of the
land? Don’t they sing about him during their dances:

Saul has killed his thousands,
but David his tens of thousands? ”

[12†] David took this to heart [B] and became very afraid of King Achish of
Gath, [13] so he pretended to be insane in their presence. He acted like a
madman around them, [C] scribbling on the doors of the gate and letting
saliva run down his beard.

[14] “Look! You can see the man is crazy,” Achish said to his servants.
“Why did you bring him to me? [15] Do I have such a shortage of crazy
people that you brought this one to act crazy around me? Is this one going
to come into my house? ”

1 SAMUEL

Saul’s Increasing Paranoia

22 So David left Gath and took refuge in the cave of Adullam. When
David’s brothers and his father’s whole family heard, they went down
and joined him there. 2 In addition, every man who was desperate, in debt,
or discontented rallied around him, and he became their leader. About 400
men were with him.

3 From there David went to Mizpeh of Moab where he said to the king of
Moab, “Please let my father and mother stay with you until I know what
God will do for me.” 4 So he left them in the care of the king of Moab, and
they stayed with him the whole time David was in the stronghold.

5 Then the prophet Gad said to David, “Don’t stay in the stronghold.
Leave and return to the land of Judah.” So David left and went to the forest
of Hereth.

6 Saul heard that David and his men had been discovered. At that time
Saul was in Gibeah, sitting under the tamarisk tree at the •high place. His
spear was in his hand, and all his servants were standing around him. 7 Saul
said to his servants, “Listen, men of Benjamin: Is Jesse’s son going to give
all of you fields and vineyards? Do you think he’ll make all of you
commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds? 8 That’s why all
of you have conspired against me! Nobody tells me [A] when my own son
makes a covenant with Jesse’s son. None of you cares about me or tells
me [B] that my son has stirred up my own servant to wait in ambush for me,
as is the case today.”

9 Then Doeg the Edomite, who was in charge of Saul’s servants,
answered: “I saw Jesse’s son come to Ahimelech son of Ahitub at Nob.
10 Ahimelech inquired of the Lord for him and gave him provisions. He
also gave him the sword of Goliath the Philistine.”

Slaughter of the Priests

11 The king sent messengers to summon Ahimelech the priest, son of
Ahitub, and his father’s whole family, who were priests in Nob. All of them
came to the king. 12 Then Saul said, “Listen, son of Ahitub! ”

"I'm at your service, my lord," he said.

[13] Saul asked him, "Why did you and Jesse's son conspire against me?
You gave him bread and a sword and inquired of God for him, so he could
rise up against me and wait in ambush, as is the case today."

[14] Ahimelech replied to the king: "Who among all your servants is as
faithful as David? He is the king's son-in-law, captain of your bodyguard,
and honored in your house. [15] Was today the first time I inquired of God for
him? Of course not! Please don't let the king make an accusation against
your servant or any of my father's household, for your servant didn't have
any idea [C] about all this."

[16] But the king said, "You will die, Ahimelech — you and your father's
whole family! "

[17] Then the king ordered the guards standing by him, "Turn and kill the
priests of the LORD because they sided with David. For they knew he was
fleeing, but they didn't tell me." [D] But the king's servants would not lift a
hand to execute the priests of the LORD.

[18†] So the king said to Doeg, "Go and execute the priests! " So Doeg the
Edomite went and executed the priests himself. On that day, he killed 85
men who wore linen •ephods. [19] He also struck down Nob, the city of the
priests, with the sword — both men and women, children and infants, oxen,
donkeys, and sheep.

[20†] However, one of the sons of Ahimelech son of Ahitub escaped. His
name was Abiathar, and he fled to David. [21] Abiathar told David that Saul
had killed the priests of the LORD. [22] Then David said to Abiathar, "I knew
that Doeg the Edomite was there that day and that he was sure to report to
Saul. I myself am responsible for the lives of everyone in your father's
family. [23] Stay with me. Don't be afraid, for the one who wants to take my
life wants to take your life. You will be safe with me."

1 SAMUEL

Deliverance at Keilah

23 [†]It was reported to David: “Look, the Philistines are fighting against
Keilah and raiding the threshing floors.”

2 So David inquired of the LORD: “Should I launch an attack against
these Philistines? ”

The LORD answered David, “Launch an attack against the Philistines and
rescue Keilah.”

3 But David’s men said to him, “Look, we’re afraid here in Judah; how
much more if we go to Keilah against the Philistine forces! ”

4 Once again, David inquired of the LORD, and the LORD answered him:
“Go at once to Keilah, for I will hand the Philistines over to you.” 5 Then
David and his men went to Keilah, fought against the Philistines, drove
their livestock away, and inflicted heavy losses on them. So David rescued
the inhabitants of Keilah. 6 Abiathar son of Ahimelech fled to David at
Keilah, and he brought an •ephod with him.

7 When it was reported to Saul that David had gone to Keilah, he said,
“God has handed him over to me, for he has trapped himself by entering a
town with barred gates.” 8 Then Saul summoned all the troops to go to war
at Keilah and besiege David and his men.

9 When David learned that Saul was plotting evil against him, he said to
Abiathar the priest, “Bring the ephod.”

10 Then David said, “LORD God of Israel, Your servant has heard that
Saul intends to come to Keilah and destroy the town because of me. 11 Will
the citizens of Keilah hand me over to him? Will Saul come down as Your
servant has heard? LORD God of Israel, please tell Your servant.”

The LORD answered, “He will come down.”

12 Then David asked, “Will the citizens of Keilah hand me and my men
over to Saul? ”

“They will,” the LORD responded.

[13][†] So David and his men, numbering about 600, left Keilah at once and
moved from place to place. When it was reported to Saul that David had
escaped from Keilah, he called off the expedition. [14] David then stayed in
the wilderness strongholds and in the hill country of the Wilderness of
Ziph. Saul searched for him every day, but God did not hand David over to
him.

A Renewed Covenant

[15] David was in the Wilderness of Ziph in Horesh when he saw that Saul
had come out to take his life. [16] Then Saul’s son Jonathan came to David in
Horesh and encouraged him in his faith in God, [17] saying, “Don’t be afraid,
for my father Saul will never lay a hand on you. You yourself will be king
over Israel, and I’ll be your second-in-command. Even my father Saul
knows it is true.” [18] Then the two of them made a covenant in the LORD’s
presence. Afterward, David remained in Horesh, while Jonathan went
home.

David’s Narrow Escape

[19] Some Ziphites came up to Saul at Gibeah and said, “David is [A] hiding
among us in the strongholds in Horesh on the hill of Hachilah south of
Jeshimon. [20] Now, whenever the king wants to come down, let him come
down. Our part will be to hand him over to the king.”

[21] “May you be blessed by the LORD,” replied Saul, “for you have taken
pity on me. [22] Go and check again. Investigate and watch carefully where
he goes [B] and who has seen him there; they tell me he is extremely cunning.
[23] Look and find out all the places where he hides. Then come back to me
with accurate information, and I’ll go with you. If it turns out he really is in
the region, I’ll search for him among all the clans [C] of Judah.” [24] So they
went to Ziph ahead of Saul.

Now David and his men were in the wilderness near Maon in the •Arabah south of Jeshimon, [25] and Saul and his men went to look for him. When David was told about it, he went down to the rock and stayed in the Wilderness of Maon. Saul heard of this and pursued David there.

[26] Saul went along one side of the mountain and David and his men went along the other side. Even though David was hurrying to get away from Saul, Saul and his men were closing in on David and his men to capture them. [27] Then a messenger came to Saul saying, “Come quickly, because the Philistines have raided the land! ” [28] So Saul broke off his pursuit of David and went to engage the Philistines. Therefore, that place was named the Rock of Separation. [29] From there David went up and stayed in the strongholds of En-gedi.

1 SAMUEL

David Spares Saul

24 When Saul returned from pursuing the Philistines, he was told,
"David is in the wilderness near En-gedi." 2 So Saul took 3,000 of
Israel's choice men and went to look for David and his men in front of the
Rocks of the Wild Goats. 3 When Saul came to the sheep pens along the
road, a cave was there, and he went in to relieve himself. [A] David and his
men were staying in the back of the cave, 4 so they said to him, "Look, this
is the day the LORD told you about: 'I will hand your enemy over to you so
you can do to him whatever you desire.' " Then David got up and secretly
cut off the corner of Saul's robe.

5† Afterward, David's conscience bothered [B], him because he had cut off
the corner of Saul's robe. 6 He said to his men, "I swear before the LORD: I
would never do such a thing to my lord, the LORD's anointed. I will never
lift my hand against him, since he is the LORD's anointed." 7 With these
words David persuaded [C] his men, and he did not let them rise up against
Saul.

Then Saul left the cave and went on his way. 8 After that, David got up,
went out of the cave, and called to Saul, "My lord the king! " When Saul
looked behind him, David bowed to the ground in homage. 9 David said to
Saul, "Why do you listen to the words of people who say, 'Look, David
intends to harm you'? 10 You can see with your own eyes that the LORD
handed you over to me today in the cave. Someone advised me to kill you,
but I took pity on you and said: I won't lift my hand against my lord, since
he is the LORD's anointed. 11 See, my father! Look at the corner of your
robe in my hand, for I cut it off, but I didn't kill you. Look and recognize
that there is no evil or rebellion in me. I haven't sinned against you even
though you are hunting me down to take my life.

12 "May the LORD judge between you and me, and may the LORD take
vengeance on you for me, but my hand will never be against you. 13 As the
old proverb says, 'Wickedness comes from wicked people.' My hand will
never be against you. 14 Who has the king of Israel come after? What are
you chasing after? A dead dog? A flea? 15 May the LORD be judge and

decide between you and me. May He take notice and plead my case and
deliver [E] me from you."

16 When David finished saying these things to him, Saul replied, "Is that
your voice, David my son? " Then Saul wept aloud 17 and said to David,
"You are more righteous than I, for you have done what is good to me
though I have done what is evil to you. 18 You yourself have told me today
what good you did for me: when the LORD handed me over to you, you
didn't kill me. 19 When a man finds his enemy, does he let him go
unharmed? [F] May the LORD repay you with good for what you've done for
me today.

20 "Now I know for certain you will be king, and the kingdom of Israel
will be established [G] in your hand. 21† Therefore swear to me by the LORD
that you will not cut off my descendants or wipe out my name from my
father's family." 22 So David swore to Saul. Then Saul went back home,
and David and his men went up to the stronghold.

1 SAMUEL

David, Nabal, and Abigail

25 [†]Samuel died, and all Israel assembled to mourn for him, and they
buried him by his home in Ramah. David then went down to the
Wilderness of Paran.

2 A man in Maon had a business in Carmel; he was a very rich man with
3,000 sheep and 1,000 goats and was shearing his sheep in Carmel. 3 The
man's name was Nabal, and his wife's name, Abigail. The woman was
intelligent and beautiful, but the man, a Calebite, was harsh and evil in his
dealings.

4 While David was in the wilderness, he heard that Nabal was shearing
sheep, 5 so David sent 10 young men instructing them, "Go up to Carmel,
and when you come to Nabal, greet him in my name. [A] 6 Then say this:
'Long life to you, [B] and peace to you, to your family, and to all that is
yours. 7 I hear that you are shearing. [C] When your shepherds were with us,
we did not harass them, and nothing of theirs was missing the whole time
they were in Carmel. 8 Ask your young men, and they will tell you. So let
my young men find favor with you, for we have come on a feast [D] day.
Please give whatever you can afford to your servants and to your son
David.' "

9 David's young men went and said all these things to Nabal on David's
behalf, [E] and they waited. 10 Nabal asked them, "Who is David? Who is
Jesse's son? Many slaves these days are running away from their masters.
11 Am I supposed to take my bread, my water, and my meat that I butchered
for my shearers and give them to these men? I don't know where they are
from."

12 David's men retraced their steps. When they returned to him, they
reported all these words. 13 He said to his men, "All of you, put on your
swords! " So David and all his men put on their swords. About 400 men
followed David while 200 stayed with the supplies.

14 One of Nabal's young men informed Abigail, Nabal's wife: "Look,
David sent messengers from the wilderness to greet our master, but he

yelled at them. 15 The men treated us well. When we were in the field, we
weren’t harassed and nothing of ours was missing the whole time we were
living among them. 16 They were a wall around us, both day and night, the
entire time we were herding the sheep. 17 Now consider carefully what you
must do, because there is certain to be trouble for our master and his entire
family. He is such a worthless fool nobody can talk to him! ”

18 Abigail hurried, taking 200 loaves of bread, two skins of wine, five
butchered sheep, a bushel [F] of roasted grain, 100 clusters of raisins, and 200
cakes of pressed figs, and loaded them on donkeys. 19 Then she said to her
male servants, “Go ahead of me. I will be right behind you.” But she did
not tell her husband Nabal.

20 As she rode the donkey down a mountain pass hidden from view, she
saw David and his men coming toward her and met them. 21 David had just
said, “I guarded everything that belonged to this man in the wilderness for
nothing. He was not missing anything, yet he paid me back evil for good.
22 May God punish me and do so severely if I let any of his men [G] survive
until morning.”

23 When Abigail saw David, she quickly got off the donkey and fell with
her face to the ground in front of David. 24 She fell at his feet and said,
“The •guilt is mine, my lord, but please let your servant speak to you
directly. Listen to the words of your servant. 25 My lord should pay no
attention to this worthless man Nabal, for he lives up to his name: [H] His
name is Nabal, and stupidity is all he knows. [I] I, your servant, didn’t see
my lord’s young men whom you sent. 26 Now my lord, as surely as the
Lord lives and as you yourself live, it is the Lord who kept you from
participating in bloodshed and avenging yourself by your own hand. May
your enemies and those who want trouble for my lord be like Nabal.
27 Accept this gift your servant has brought to my lord, and let it be given
to the young men who follow my lord. 28 Please forgive your servant’s
offense, for the Lord is certain to make a lasting dynasty for my lord
because he fights the Lord’s battles. Throughout your life, may evil [J] not
be found in you.

29 “When someone pursues you and attempts to take your life, my lord’s
life will be tucked safely in the place [K] where the Lord your God protects
the living. However, He will fling away your enemies’ lives like stones
from a sling. 30 When the Lord does for my lord all the good He promised
and appoints you ruler over Israel, 31 there will not be remorse or a
troubled conscience for my lord because of needless bloodshed or my lord’s
revenge. And when the Lord does good things for my lord, may you
remember me your servant.”

32 Then David said to Abigail, “Praise to the Lord God of Israel, who
sent you to meet me today! 33 Your discernment is blessed, and you are
blessed. Today you kept me from participating in bloodshed and avenging
myself by my own hand. 34 Otherwise, as surely as the Lord God of Israel
lives, who prevented me from harming you, if you had not come quickly to
meet me, Nabal wouldn’t have had any men [L] left by morning light.”
35 Then David accepted what she had brought him and said, “Go home in
peace. See, I have heard what you said and have granted your request.”

36 Then Abigail went to Nabal, and there he was in his house, holding a
feast fit for a king. Nabal was in a good mood [M] and very drunk, so she
didn’t say anything [N] to him until morning light.

37[†] In the morning when Nabal sobered up, [O] his wife told him about
these events. Then he had a seizure [P] and became paralyzed. [Q] 38 About 10
days later, the Lord struck Nabal dead.

39 When David heard that Nabal was dead, he said, “Praise the Lord who
championed my cause against Nabal’s insults and restrained His servant
from doing evil. The Lord brought Nabal’s evil deeds back on his own
head.”

Then David sent messengers to speak to Abigail about marrying him.
40 When David’s servants came to Abigail at Carmel, they said to her,
“David sent us to bring you to him as a wife.”

[41] She stood up, then bowed her face to the ground and said, “Here I am,
your servant, to wash the feet of my lord’s servants.” [42] Then Abigail got
up quickly, and with her five female servants accompanying her, rode on
the donkey following David’s messengers. And so she became his wife.

[43]† David also married Ahinoam of Jezreel, and the two of them became
his wives. [44]† But Saul gave his daughter Michal, David’s wife, to Palti son
of Laish, who was from Gallim.

1 SAMUEL

David Again Spares Saul

26 Then the Ziphites came to Saul at Gibeah saying, “David is hiding on
the hill of Hachilah opposite Jeshimon.” [2] So Saul, accompanied by
3,000 of the choice men of Israel, went to the Wilderness of Ziph to search
for David there. [3] Saul camped beside the road at the hill of Hachilah
opposite Jeshimon. David was living in the wilderness and discovered Saul
had come there after him. [4] So David sent out spies and knew for certain
that Saul had come. [5] Immediately, David went to the place where Saul had
camped. He saw the place where Saul and Abner son of Ner, the general of
his army, were lying down. Saul was lying inside the inner circle of the
camp with the troops camped around him. [6] Then David asked Ahimelech
the Hittite and Joab’s brother Abishai son of Zeruiah, “Who will go with
me into the camp to Saul? ”

“I’ll go with you,” answered Abishai.

[7] That night, David and Abishai came to the troops, and Saul was lying
there asleep in the inner circle of the camp with his spear stuck in the
ground by his head. Abner and the troops were lying around him. [8] Then
Abishai said to David, “Today God has handed your enemy over to you. Let
me thrust the spear through him into the ground just once. I won’t have to
strike him twice! ”

[9] But David said to Abishai, “Don’t destroy him, for who can lift a hand
against the LORD’s anointed and be blameless? ” [10] David added, “As the
LORD lives, the LORD will certainly strike him down: either his day will
come and he will die, or he will go into battle and perish. [11] However,
because of the LORD, I will never lift my hand against the LORD’s anointed.
Instead, take the spear and the water jug by his head, and let’s go.”

[12] So David took the spear and the water jug by Saul’s head, and they
went their way. No one saw them, no one knew, and no one woke up; they
all remained asleep because a deep sleep from the LORD came over them.
[13] David crossed to the other side and stood on top of the mountain at a
distance; there was a considerable space between them. [14] Then David
shouted to the troops and to Abner son of Ner: “Aren’t you going to answer,
Abner? ”

“Who are you who calls to the king? ” Abner asked.

15 David called to Abner, “You’re a man, aren’t you? Who in Israel is
your equal? So why didn’t you protect your lord the king when one of the
people came to destroy him? 16 What you have done is not good. As the
LORD lives, all of you deserve to die since you didn’t protect your lord, the
LORD’s anointed. Now look around; where are the king’s spear and water
jug that were by his head? ”

17 Saul recognized David’s voice and asked, “Is that your voice, my son
David? ”

“It is my voice, my lord and king,” David said. 18 Then he continued,
“Why is my lord pursuing his servant? What have I done? What evil is in
my hand? 19 Now, may my lord the king please hear the words of his
servant: If it is the LORD who has incited you against me, then may He
accept an offering. But if it is people, may they be cursed in the presence
of the LORD, for today they have driven me away from sharing in the
inheritance of the LORD saying, ‘Go and worship other gods.’ 20 So don’t
let my blood fall to the ground far from the LORD’s presence, for the king of
Israel has come out to search for a flea, like one who pursues a partridge in
the mountains.”

21 Saul responded, “I have sinned. Come back, my son David, I will
never harm you again because today you considered my life precious. I
have been a fool! I’ve committed a grave error.”

22 David answered, “Here is the king’s spear; have one of the young men
come over and get it. 23 May the LORD repay every man for his
righteousness and his loyalty. I wasn’t willing to lift my hand against the
LORD’s anointed, even though the LORD handed you over to me today.
24 Just as I considered your life valuable today, so may the LORD consider
my life valuable and rescue me from all trouble.”

25 Saul said to him, “You are blessed, my son David. You will certainly
do great things and will also prevail.” Then David went on his way, and

Saul returned home.

1 SAMUEL

David Flees to Ziklag

27 David said to himself, “One of these days I’ll be swept away by Saul.
There is nothing better for me than to escape immediately to the land
of the Philistines. Then Saul will stop searching for me everywhere in
Israel, and I’ll escape from him.” 2 So David set out with his 600 men and
went to Achish son of Maoch, the king of Gath. 3 David and his men
stayed with Achish in Gath. Each man had his family with him, and David
had his two wives: Ahinoam of Jezreel and Abigail of Carmel, Nabal’s
widow. 4 When it was reported to Saul that David had fled to Gath, he no
longer searched for him.

5 Now David said to Achish, “If I have found favor with you, let me be
given a place in one of the outlying towns, so I can live there. Why should
your servant live in the royal city with you? ” 6 That day Achish gave
Ziklag to him, and it still belongs to the kings of Judah today. 7† The time
that David stayed in the Philistine territory amounted to a year and four
months.

8† David and his men went up and raided the Geshurites, the Girzites,
and the Amalekites. From ancient times they had been the inhabitants of
the region through Shur as far as the land of Egypt. 9† Whenever David
attacked the land, he did not leave a single person alive, either man or
woman, but he took flocks, herds, donkeys, camels, and clothing. Then he
came back to Achish, 10† who inquired, “Where did you raid today? ”

David replied, “The south country of Judah,” “The south country of the
Jerahmeelites,” or “Against the south country of the Kenites.”

11 David did not let a man or woman live to be brought to Gath, for he
said, “Or they will inform on us and say, ‘This is what David did.’ ” This
was David’s custom during the whole time he stayed in the Philistine
territory. 12† So Achish trusted David, thinking, “Since he has made himself
detestable to his people Israel, he will be my servant forever.”

1 SAMUEL

Saul and the Medium

28 †At that time, the Philistines brought their military units together into one army to fight against Israel. So Achish said to David, "You know, of course, that you and your men must march out in the army with me."

2 David replied to Achish, "Good, you will find out what your servant can do."

So Achish said to David, "Very well, I will appoint you as my permanent bodyguard."

3 By this time Samuel had died, and all Israel had mourned for him and
buried him in Ramah, his city, and Saul had removed the mediums and
spiritists from the land. 4 The Philistines came together and camped at
Shunem. So Saul gathered all Israel, and they camped at Gilboa. 5 When
Saul saw the Philistine camp, he was afraid and trembled violently. 6† He
inquired of the LORD, but the LORD did not answer him in dreams or by the
•Urim or by the prophets. 7 Saul then said to his servants, "Find me a
woman who is a medium, so I can go and consult her."

TWISTED SCRIPTURE

1 Samuel 28:5-20

Many channelers and trance mediums cite this passage as evidence that communication with the dead is possible. Even if such an argument could be made, biblical law strictly forbids contacting spiritualist mediums (see Lv 19:31; 20:27; Dt 18:10-12; Is 8:19). Despite these injunctions, King Saul asked the medium of Endor to conjure up the spirit of Samuel, the dead prophet. Whether she actually succeeded or not is debatable. Saul's actions were costly: "Saul died for his unfaithfulness to the Lord because he did not keep the LORD's word. He even consulted a medium for guidance, but he did not inquire of the LORD. So the LORD put him to death and turned the kingdom over to David son of Jesse" (1 Ch 10:13-14).

His servants replied, "There is a woman at En-dor who is a medium."

8[†] Saul disguised himself by putting on different clothes and set out with two of his men. They came to the woman at night, and Saul said, “Consult a spirit for me. Bring up for me the one I tell you.”

9 But the woman said to him, “You surely know what Saul has done, how he has killed the mediums and spiritists in the land. Why are you setting a trap for me to get me killed? ”

ARTICLE

What Is The Occult? ⇒

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10 Then Saul swore to her by the LORD: “As surely as the LORD lives, nothing bad will happen to you because of this.”

11 “Who is it that you want me to bring up for you? ” the woman asked.

“Bring up Samuel for me,” he answered.

12 When the woman saw Samuel, she screamed, and then she asked Saul, “Why did you deceive me? You are Saul! ”

13 But the king said to her, “Don’t be afraid. What do you see? ”

“I see a spirit form [A] coming up out of the earth,” the woman answered.

14 Then Saul asked her, “What does he look like? ”

“An old man is coming up,” she replied. “He’s wearing a robe.” Then Saul knew that it was Samuel, and he bowed his face to the ground and paid homage.

15 “Why have you disturbed me by bringing me up? ” Samuel asked Saul.

“I’m in serious trouble,” replied Saul. “The Philistines are fighting
against me and God has turned away from me. He doesn’t answer me
anymore, either through the prophets or in dreams. So I’ve called on you to
tell me what I should do.”

[16] Samuel answered, “Since the LORD has turned away from you and has
become your enemy, why are you asking me? [17] The LORD has done
exactly what He said through me: The LORD has torn the kingship out of
your hand and given it to your neighbor David. [18] You did not obey the
LORD and did not carry out His burning anger against Amalek; therefore the
LORD has done this to you today. [19†] The LORD will also hand Israel over to
the Philistines along with you. Tomorrow you and your sons will be with
me, and the LORD will hand Israel’s army over to the Philistines.”

[20] Immediately, Saul fell flat on the ground. He was terrified by Samuel’s
words and was also weak because he hadn’t had any food all day and all
night. [21] The woman came over to Saul, and she saw that he was terrified
and said to him, “Look, your servant has obeyed you. I took my life in my
hands and did what you told me to do. [22] Now please listen to your servant.
Let me set some food in front of you. Eat and it will give you strength so
you can go on your way.”

[23] He refused, saying, “I won’t eat,” but when his servants and the
woman urged him, he listened to them. He got up off the ground and sat on
the bed.

[24] The woman had a fattened calf at her house, and she quickly
slaughtered it. She also took flour, kneaded it, and baked unleavened bread.
[25] She served it to Saul and his servants, and they ate. Afterward, they got
up and left that night.

1 SAMUEL

Philistines Reject David

29 The Philistines brought all their military units together at Aphek
while Israel was camped by the spring in Jezreel. 2 As the Philistine
leaders were passing in review with their units of hundreds and thousands,
David and his men were passing in review behind them with Achish.
3 Then the Philistine commanders asked, “What are these Hebrews doing
here? ”

Achish answered the Philistine commanders, “That is David, servant of
King Saul of Israel. He has been with me a considerable period of time. [A]
From the day he defected until today, I’ve found no fault with him.”

4 The Philistine commanders, however, were enraged with Achish and
told him, “Send that man back and let him return to the place you assigned
him. He must not go down with us into battle only to become our adversary
during the battle. What better way could he regain his master’s favor than
with the heads of our men? 5 Isn’t this the David they sing about during
their dances:

Saul has killed his thousands,
but David his tens of thousands? ”

6[†] So Achish summoned David and told him, “As the LORD lives, you are
an honorable man. I think it is good [B] to have you working [C] with me in the
camp, because I have found no fault in you from the day you came to me
until today. But the leaders don’t think you are reliable. 7 Now go back
quietly and you won’t be doing anything the Philistine leaders think is
wrong.”

8 “But what have I done? ” David replied to Achish. “From the first day
I was with you until today, what have you found against your servant to
keep me from going along to fight against the enemies of my lord the
king? ”

9 Achish answered David, “I’m convinced that you are as reliable as the
Angel of God. But the Philistine commanders have said, ‘He must not go
into battle with us.’ 10 So get up early in the morning, you and your

masters' servants who came with you. When you've all gotten up early, go as soon as it's light." [11] So David and his men got up early in the morning to return to the land of the Philistines. And the Philistines went up to Jezreel.

1 SAMUEL

David's Defeat of the Amalekites

30 David and his men arrived in Ziklag on the third day. The
Amalekites had raided the •Negev and attacked and burned down
Ziklag. 2 They also had kidnapped the women and everyone in it from the
youngest to the oldest. They had killed no one but had carried them off as
they went on their way.

3 When David and his men arrived at the town, they found it burned
down. Their wives, sons, and daughters had been kidnapped. 4 David and
the troops with him wept loudly until they had no strength left to weep.
5 David's two wives, Ahinoam the Jezreelite and Abigail the widow of
Nabal the Carmelite, had also been kidnapped. 6 David was in a difficult
position because the troops talked about stoning him, for they were all very
bitter over the loss of their sons and daughters. But David found strength in
the LORD his God.

7 David said to Abiathar the priest, son of Ahimelech, "Bring me the
•ephod." So Abiathar brought it to him, 8 and David asked the LORD:
"Should I pursue these raiders? Will I overtake them? "

The LORD replied to him, "Pursue them, for you will certainly overtake
them and rescue the people."

9 David and the 600 men with him went as far as the •Wadi Besor, where
200 men who were to remain behind would stop. 10 They stopped because
they were too exhausted to cross the Wadi Besor. David and 400 of the men
continued in pursuit.

11 They found an Egyptian in the open country and brought him to David.
They gave him some bread to eat and water to drink. 12 Then they gave him
some pressed figs and two clusters of raisins. After he ate he revived, for
he hadn't eaten food or drunk water for three days and three nights.

13 Then David said to him, "Who do you belong to? Where are you
from? "

“I’m an Egyptian, the slave of an Amalekite man,” he said. “My master abandoned me when I got sick three days ago. [14] We raided the south country of the Cherethites, the territory of Judah, and the south country of Caleb, and we burned down Ziklag.”

[15] David then asked him, “Will you lead me to these raiders? ”

He said, “Swear to me by God that you won’t kill me or turn me over to my master, and I will lead you to them.”

[16] So he led him, and there were the Amalekites, spread out over the entire area, eating, drinking, and celebrating because of the great amount of plunder they had taken from the land of the Philistines and the land of Judah. [17] David slaughtered them from twilight until the evening of the next day. None of them escaped, except 400 young men who got on camels and fled.

[18] David recovered everything the Amalekites had taken; he also rescued his two wives. [19] Nothing of theirs was missing from the youngest to the oldest, including the sons and daughters, of all the plunder the Amalekites had taken. David got everything back. [20] He took all the sheep and cattle, which were driven ahead of the other livestock, and the people shouted, “This is David’s plunder! ”

[21] When David came to the 200 men who had been too exhausted to go with him and had been left at the Wadi Besor, they came out to meet him and to meet the troops with him. When David approached the men, he greeted them, [22] but all the corrupt and •worthless men among those who had gone with David argued, “Because they didn’t go with us, we will not give any of the plunder we recovered to them except for each man’s wife and children. They may take them and go.”

[23] But David said, “My brothers, you must not do this with what the LORD has given us. He protected us and handed over to us the raiders who came against us. [24] Who can agree to your proposal? The share of the one who goes into battle is to be the same as the share of the one who remains

with the supplies. They will share equally." [25] And it has been so from that day forward. David established this policy as a law and an ordinance for Israel and it continues to this very day.

[26] When David came to Ziklag, he sent some of the plunder to his friends, the elders of Judah, saying, "Here is a gift for you from the plunder of the LORD's enemies." [27] He sent gifts to those in Bethel, in Ramoth of the Negev, and in Jattir; [28] to those in Aroer, in Siphmoth, and in Eshtemoa; [29] to those in Racal, in the towns of the Jerahmeelites, and in the towns of the Kenites; [30] to those in Hormah, in Bor-ashan, and in Athach; [31] to those in Hebron, and to those in all the places where David and his men had roamed.

1 SAMUEL

The Death of Saul and His Sons

31 The Philistines fought against Israel, and Israel's men fled from them.
Many were killed on Mount Gilboa. 2 The Philistines overtook Saul
and his sons and killed his sons, Jonathan, Abinadab, and Malchishua.
3† When the battle intensified against Saul, the archers caught up with him
and severely wounded him. 4† Then Saul said to his armor-bearer, "Draw
your sword and run me through with it, or these uncircumcised men will
come and run me through and torture me." But his armor-bearer would not
do it because he was terrified. Then Saul took his sword and fell on it.
5 When his armor-bearer saw that Saul was dead, he also fell on his own
sword and died with him. 6 So on that day, Saul died together with his three
sons, his armor-bearer, and all his men.

7 When the men of Israel on the other side of the valley and on the other
side of the Jordan saw that Israel's men had run away and that Saul and his
sons were dead, they abandoned the cities and fled. So the Philistines came
and settled in them.

8 The next day when the Philistines came to strip the dead, they found
Saul and his three sons dead on Mount Gilboa. 9 They cut off Saul's head,
stripped off his armor, and sent messengers throughout the land of the
Philistines to spread the good news in the temples of their idols and among
the people. 10 Then they put his armor in the temple of the •Ashtoreths and
hung his body on the wall of Beth-shan.

11 When the residents of Jabesh-gilead heard what the Philistines had
done to Saul, 12 all their brave men set out, journeyed all night, and
retrieved the body of Saul and the bodies of his sons from the wall of Beth-
shan. When they arrived at Jabesh, they burned the bodies there.
13 Afterward, they took their bones and buried them under the tamarisk tree
in Jabesh and fasted seven days.

2 SAMUEL

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Exploits of David's Warriors (2 Samuel 23:8-39)

Chapter 24

2 SAMUEL

Responses to Saul's Death

1 After the death of Saul, David returned from defeating the Amalekites
and stayed at Ziklag two days. 2 On the third day a man with torn
clothes and dust on his head came from Saul's camp. When he came to
David, he fell to the ground and paid homage.

3 David asked him, "Where have you come from? "

He replied to him, "I've escaped from the Israelite camp."

4 "What was the outcome? Tell me," David asked him.

"The troops fled from the battle," he answered. "Many of the troops have
fallen and are dead. Also, Saul and his son Jonathan are dead."

5 David asked the young man who had brought him the report, "How do
you know Saul and his son Jonathan are dead? "

6† "I happened to be on Mount Gilboa," he replied, "and there was Saul,
leaning on his spear. At that very moment the chariots and the cavalry were
closing in on him. 7 When he turned around and saw me, he called out to
me, so I answered: I'm at your service. 8† He asked me, 'Who are you? ' I
told him: I'm an Amalekite. 9 Then he begged me, 'Stand over me and kill
me, for I'm mortally wounded, but my life still lingers.' 10 So I stood over
him and killed him because I knew that after he had fallen he couldn't
survive. I took the crown that was on his head and the armband that was on
his arm, and I've brought them here to my lord."

11 Then David took hold of his clothes and tore them, and all the men
with him did the same. 12 They mourned, wept, and fasted until the evening
for those who died by the sword — for Saul, his son Jonathan, the LORD's
people, and the house of Israel.

13 David inquired of the young man who had brought him the report,
"Where are you from? "

"I'm the son of a foreigner," he said. "I'm an Amalekite."

[14] David questioned him, “How is it that you were not afraid to lift your
hand to destroy the LORD’s anointed? ” [15] Then David summoned one of
his servants and said, “Come here and kill him! ” The servant struck him,
and he died. [16] For David had said to the Amalekite, “Your blood is on
your own head because your own mouth testified against you by saying, ‘I
killed the LORD’s anointed.’ ”

[17] David sang the following lament for Saul and his son Jonathan,
[18†] and he ordered that the Judahites be taught The Song of the Bow. It is
written in the Book of Jashar: [A]

[19] The splendor of Israel lies slain on your heights.
How the mighty have fallen!
[20] Do not tell it in Gath,
don’t announce it in the marketplaces of Ashkelon,
or the daughters of the Philistines will rejoice,
and the daughters of the uncircumcised will gloat.
[21] Mountains of Gilboa,
let no dew or rain be on you,
or fields of offerings,
for there the shield of the mighty was defiled —
the shield of Saul, no longer anointed with oil.
[22] Jonathan’s bow never retreated,
Saul’s sword never returned unstained, [B]
from the blood of the slain,
from the bodies of the mighty.
[23] Saul and Jonathan,
loved and delightful,
they were not parted in life or in death.
They were swifter than eagles, stronger than lions.
[24] Daughters of Israel, weep for Saul,
who clothed you in scarlet, with luxurious things,
who decked your garments with gold ornaments.
[25] How the mighty have fallen in the thick of battle!
Jonathan lies slain on your heights.

26† I grieve for you, Jonathan, my brother.
You were such a friend to me.
Your love for me was more wonderful
than the love of women.
27 How the mighty have fallen
and the weapons of war have perished!

2 SAMUEL

David, King of Judah

2 Some time later, David inquired of the Lord: "Should I go to one of the towns of Judah? "

The Lord answered him, "Go."

Then David asked, "Where should I go? "

"To Hebron," the Lord replied.

2† So David went there with his two wives, Ahinoam the Jezreelite and
Abigail, the widow of Nabal the Carmelite. 3 In addition, David brought
the men who were with him, each one with his household, and they settled
in the towns near Hebron. 4 Then the men of Judah came, and there they
anointed David king over the house of Judah. They told David: "It was the
men of Jabesh-gilead who buried Saul."

5 David sent messengers to the men of Jabesh-gilead and said to them,
"The Lord bless you, because you have shown this kindness to Saul your
lord when you buried him. 6 Now, may the Lord show kindness and
faithfulness to you, and I will also show the same goodness to you because
you have done this deed. 7 Therefore, be strong and courageous, for though
Saul your lord is dead, the house of Judah has anointed me king over them."

8† Abner son of Ner, commander of Saul's army, took Saul's son Ish-
bosheth and moved him to Mahanaim. 9 He made him king over Gilead,
Asher, Jezreel, Ephraim, Benjamin — over all Israel. 10 Saul's son Ish-
bosheth was 40 years old when he began his reign over Israel; he ruled for
two years. The house of Judah, however, followed David. 11 The length of
time that David was king in Hebron over the house of Judah was seven
years and six months.

12 Abner son of Ner and soldiers of Ish-bosheth son of Saul marched out
from Mahanaim to Gibeon. 13 So Joab son of Zeruiah and David's soldiers
marched out and met them by the pool of Gibeon. The two groups took up
positions on opposite sides of the pool.

[14] Then Abner said to Joab, “Let’s have the young men get up and compete in front of us.”

“Let them get up,” Joab replied.

[15] So they got up and were counted off — 12 for Benjamin and Ish-bosheth son of Saul, and 12 from David’s soldiers. [16] Then each man grabbed his opponent by the head and thrust his sword into his opponent’s side so that they all died together. So this place, which is in Gibeon, is named Field of Blades. [A]

[17] The battle that day was extremely fierce, and Abner and the men of Israel were defeated by David’s soldiers. [18] The three sons of Zeruiah were there: Joab, Abishai, and Asahel. Asahel was a fast runner, like one of the wild gazelles. [19] He chased Abner and did not turn to the right or the left in his pursuit of him. [20] Abner glanced back and said, “Is that you, Asahel? ”

“Yes it is,” Asahel replied.

[21] Abner said to him, “Turn to your right or left, seize one of the young soldiers, and take whatever you can get from him.” But Asahel would not stop chasing him. [22] Once again, Abner warned Asahel, “Stop chasing me. Why should I strike you to the ground? How could I ever look your brother Joab in the face? ”

[23] But Asahel refused to turn away, so Abner hit him in the stomach with the end of his spear. The spear went through his body, and he fell and died right there. When all who came to the place where Asahel had fallen and died, they stopped, [24] but Joab and Abishai pursued Abner. By sunset, they had gone as far as the hill of Ammah, which is opposite Giah on the way to the wilderness of Gibeon.

[25] The Benjaminites rallied to Abner; they formed a single unit and took their stand on top of a hill. [26] Then Abner called out to Joab: “Must the sword devour forever? Don’t you realize this will only end in bitterness? How long before you tell the troops to stop pursuing their brothers? ”

[27] “As God lives,” Joab replied, “if you had not spoken up, the troops wouldn’t have stopped pursuing their brothers until morning.” [28] Then Joab blew the ram’s horn, and all the troops stopped; they no longer pursued Israel or continued to fight. [29] So Abner and his men marched through the •Arabah all that night. They crossed the Jordan, marched all morning, [B] and arrived at Mahanaim.

[30] When Joab had turned back from pursuing Abner, he gathered all the troops. In addition to Asahel, 19 of David’s soldiers were missing, [31] but they had killed 360 of the Benjaminites and Abner’s men. [32] Afterward, they carried Asahel to his father’s tomb in Bethlehem and buried him. Then Joab and his men marched all night and reached Hebron at dawn.

2 SAMUEL

Civil War

3 The war between the house of Saul and the house of David was long and drawn out, with David growing stronger and the house of Saul becoming weaker.

2† Sons were born to David in Hebron:

his firstborn was Amnon,
by Ahinoam the Jezreelite;
3† his second was Chileab,
by Abigail, the widow of Nabal the Carmelite;
the third was Absalom,
son of Maacah the daughter of King Talmai of Geshur;
4 the fourth was Adonijah,
son of Haggith;
the fifth was Shephatiah,
son of Abital;
5 the sixth was Ithream,
by David's wife Eglah.

These were born to David in Hebron.

6 During the war between the house of Saul and the house of David,
Abner kept acquiring more power in the house of Saul. 7 Now Saul had a
concubine whose name was Rizpah daughter of Aiah, and Ish-bosheth
questioned Abner, "Why did you sleep with my father's concubine? "

8 Abner was very angry about Ish-bosheth's accusation. "Am I a dog's
head who belongs to Judah? " he asked. "All this time I've been loyal to
the house of your father Saul, to his brothers, and to his friends and haven't
handed you over to David, but now you accuse me of wrongdoing with this
woman! 9 May God punish Abner and do so severely if I don't do for David
what the LORD swore to him: 10 to transfer the kingdom from the house of
Saul and establish the throne of David over Israel and Judah from Dan to
Beer-sheba." 11 Ish-bosheth could not answer Abner because he was afraid
of him.

12 Abner sent messengers as his representatives to say to David, “Whose land is it? Make your covenant with me, and you can be certain I am on your side to hand all Israel over to you.”

13 David replied, “Good, I will make a covenant with you. However, there’s one thing I require of you: Do not appear before me unless you bring Saul’s daughter Michal here when you come to see me.”

14† Then David sent messengers to say to Ish-bosheth son of Saul, “Give me back my wife, Michal. I was •engaged to her for the price of 100 Philistine foreskins.”

15 So Ish-bosheth sent someone to take her away from her husband,
Paltiel son of Laish. 16 Her husband followed her, weeping all the way to
Bahurim. Abner said to him, “Go back.” So he went back.

The Assassination of Abner

17 Abner conferred with the elders of Israel: “In the past you wanted
David to be king over you. 18 Now take action, because the LORD has
spoken concerning David: ‘Through My servant David I will save My
people Israel from the power of the Philistines and the power of all Israel’s
enemies.’ ”

19 Abner also informed the Benjaminites and went to Hebron to inform
David about all that was agreed on by Israel and the whole house of
Benjamin. 20 When Abner and 20 men came to David at Hebron, David
held a banquet for him and his men.

21 Abner said to David, “Let me now go and I will gather all Israel to my lord the king. They will make a covenant with you, and you will rule over all you desire.” So David dismissed Abner, and he went in peace.

22 Just then David’s soldiers and Joab returned from a raid and brought a large amount of plundered goods with them. Abner was not with David in Hebron because David had dismissed him, and he had gone in peace.

[23] When Joab and all his army arrived, Joab was informed, “Abner son of Ner came to see the king, the king dismissed him, and he went in peace.”

[24] Joab went to the king and said, “What have you done? Look here, Abner came to you. Why did you dismiss him? Now he’s getting away.
[25] You know that Abner son of Ner came to deceive you and to find out
about your activities and everything you’re doing.” [26] Then Joab left David
and sent messengers after Abner. They brought him back from the well [A] of
Sirah, but David was unaware of it. [27] When Abner returned to Hebron,
Joab pulled him aside to the middle of the gateway, as if to speak to him privately, and there Joab stabbed him in the stomach. So Abner died in revenge for the death of Asahel, [B] Joab’s brother.

[28] David heard about it later and said: “I and my kingdom are forever
innocent before the LORD concerning the blood of Abner son of Ner. [29] May
it hang over Joab’s head and his father’s whole house, and may the house of Joab never be without someone who has a discharge or a skin disease, or a man who can only work a spindle, or someone who falls by the sword or
starves.” [30] Joab and his brother Abishai killed Abner because he had put
their brother Asahel to death in the battle at Gibeon.

[31] David then ordered Joab and all the people who were with him, “Tear your clothes, put on •sackcloth, and mourn over Abner.” And King David walked behind the funeral procession. [C]

[32] When they buried Abner in Hebron, the king wept aloud at Abner’s
tomb. All the people wept, [33] and the king sang a lament for Abner:

Should Abner die as a fool dies?
[34] Your hands were not bound,
your feet not placed in bronze shackles.
You fell like one who falls victim to criminals.

And all the people wept over him even more.

35† Then they came to urge David to eat bread while it was still day, but
David took an oath: “May God punish me and do so severely if I taste bread
or anything else before sunset! ” 36 All the people took note of this, and it
pleased them. In fact, everything the king did pleased them. 37 On that day
all the troops and all Israel were convinced that the king had no part in the
killing of Abner son of Ner.

38 Then the king said to his soldiers, “You must know that a great leader
has fallen in Israel today. 39 As for me, even though I am the anointed king,
I have little power today. These men, the sons of Zeruiah, are too fierce for
me. May the LORD repay the evildoer according to his evil! ”

2 SAMUEL

The Assassination of Ish-bosheth

4 When Saul's son Ish-bosheth heard that Abner had died in Hebron, his
courage failed, and all Israel was dismayed. 2 Saul's son had two men
who were leaders of raiding parties: one named Baanah and the other
Rechab, sons of Rimmon the Beerothite of the Benjaminites. Beeroth is also
considered part of Benjamin, 3 and the Beerothites fled to Gittaim and still
live there as foreigners to this very day.

4 Saul's son Jonathan had a son whose feet were crippled. He was five
years old when the report about Saul and Jonathan came from Jezreel. The
one who had nursed him [A] picked him up and fled, but as she was hurrying
to flee, he fell and became lame. His name was Mephibosheth.

5 Rechab and Baanah, the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, set out and
arrived at Ish-bosheth's house during the heat of the day while the king was
taking his midday nap. 6[†] They entered the interior of the house as if to get
wheat and stabbed him in the stomach. Then Rechab and his brother
Baanah escaped. 7 They had entered the house while Ish-bosheth was lying
on his bed in his bedroom and stabbed and killed him. Then they beheaded
him, took his head, and traveled by way of the •Arabah all night. 8 They
brought Ish-bosheth's head to David at Hebron and said to the king, "Here's
the head of Ish-bosheth son of Saul, your enemy who intended to take your
life. Today the Lord has granted vengeance to my lord the king against Saul
and his offspring."

9 But David answered Rechab and his brother Baanah, sons of Rimmon
the Beerothite, "As the Lord lives, the One who has redeemed my life from
every distress, 10 when the person told me, 'Look, Saul is dead,' he thought
he was a bearer of good news, but I seized him and put him to death at
Ziklag. That was my reward to him for his news! 11 How much more when
wicked men kill a righteous man in his own house on his own bed! So now,
should I not require his blood from your hands and wipe you off the
earth? "

12 So David gave orders to the young men, and they killed Rechab and
Baanah. They cut off their hands and feet and hung their bodies by the pool

in Hebron, but they took Ish-bosheth’s head and buried it in Abner’s tomb in Hebron.

2 SAMUEL

David, King of Israel

5 All the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron and said, “Here we are,
your own flesh and blood. [A] 2 Even while Saul was king over us, you
were the one who led us out to battle and brought us back. The LORD also
said to you, ‘You will shepherd My people Israel and be ruler over Israel.’ ”

3 So all the elders of Israel came to the king at Hebron. King David made
a covenant with them at Hebron in the LORD’s presence, and they anointed
David king over Israel.

4 David was 30 years old when he began his reign; he reigned 40 years.
5 In Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months, and in
Jerusalem he reigned 33 years over all Israel and Judah.

6† The king and his men marched to Jerusalem against the Jebusites who
inhabited the land. The Jebusites had said to David: “You will never get in
here. Even the blind and lame can repel you,” thinking, “David can’t get in
here.”

7 Yet David did capture the stronghold of •Zion, that is, the city of
David. 8† He said that day, “Whoever attacks the Jebusites must go through
the water shaft to reach the lame and the blind who are despised by David.”
For this reason it is said, “The blind and the lame will never enter the
house.” [B]

9 David took up residence in the stronghold, which he named the city of
David. He built it up all the way around from the supporting terraces
inward. 10 David became more and more powerful, and the LORD God of
•Hosts was with him. 11 King Hiram of Tyre sent envoys to David; he also
sent cedar logs, carpenters, and stonemasons, and they built a palace for
David. 12 Then David knew that the LORD had established him as king over
Israel and had exalted his kingdom for the sake of His people Israel.

13 After he arrived from Hebron, David took more concubines and wives
from Jerusalem, and more sons and daughters were born to him. 14† These
are the names of those born to him in Jerusalem: Shammua, Shobab,

Nathan, Solomon, [15] Ibhar, Elishua, Nepheg, Japhia, [16] Elishama, Eliada,
and Eliphelet.

[17] When the Philistines heard that David had been anointed king over
Israel, they all went in search of David, but he heard about it and went
down to the stronghold. [18] So the Philistines came and spread out in the
Valley of Rephaim.

[19] Then David inquired of the LORD: "Should I go to war against the
Philistines? Will you hand them over to me? "

The LORD replied to David, "Go, for I will certainly hand the Philistines
over to you."

[20] So David went to Baal-perazim and defeated them there and said,
"Like a bursting flood, the LORD has burst out against my enemies before
me." Therefore, he named that place the Lord Bursts Out. [C] [21†] The
Philistines abandoned their idols there, and David and his men carried them
off.

[22] The Philistines came up again and spread out in the Valley of
Rephaim. [23] So David inquired of the LORD, and He answered, "Do not
make a frontal assault. Circle around behind them and attack them opposite
the balsam trees. [24†] When you hear the sound of marching in the tops of
the balsam trees, act decisively, for then the LORD will have marched out
ahead of you to attack the camp of the Philistines." [25] So David did exactly
as the LORD commanded him, and he struck down the Philistines all the way
from Geba to Gezer.

2 SAMUEL

David Moves the Ark

6 †David again assembled all the choice men in Israel, 30,000. 2 He and
all his troops set out to bring the ark of God from Baale-judah. The ark
is called by the Name, the name of •Yahweh of •Hosts who dwells between
the •cherubim. 3 They set the ark of God on a new cart and transported it
from Abinadab's house, which was on the hill. Uzzah and Ahio, [A] sons of
Abinadab, were guiding the cart 4 and brought it with the ark of God from
Abinadab's house on the hill. Ahio walked in front of the ark. 5† David and
the whole house of Israel were celebrating before the LORD with all kinds of
fir wood instruments, lyres, harps, tambourines, sistrums, and cymbals.

6† When they came to Nacon's threshing floor, Uzzah reached out to the
ark of God and took hold of it because the oxen had stumbled. 7 Then the
LORD's anger burned against Uzzah, and God struck him dead on the spot
for his irreverence, and he died there next to the ark of God. 8 David was
angry because of the LORD's outburst against Uzzah, so he named that place
an Outburst Against Uzzah, [B] as it is today. 9 David feared the LORD that
day and said, "How can the ark of the LORD ever come to me? " 10† So he
was not willing to move the ark of the LORD to the city of David; instead,
he took it to the house of Obed-edom the Gittite. 11 The ark of the LORD
remained in his house three months, and the LORD blessed Obed-edom and
his whole family.

12 It was reported to King David: "The LORD has blessed Obed-edom's
family and all that belongs to him because of the ark of God." So David
went and had the ark of God brought up from Obed-edom's house to the
city of David with rejoicing. 13 When those carrying the ark of the LORD
advanced six steps, he sacrificed an ox and a fattened calf. 14† David was
dancing [C] with all his might before the LORD wearing a linen •ephod. 15 He
and the whole house of Israel were bringing up the ark of the LORD with
shouts and the sound of the ram's horn. 16 As the ark of the LORD was
entering the city of David, Saul's daughter Michal looked down from the
window and saw King David leaping and dancing before the LORD, and she
despised him in her heart.

[17] They brought the ark of the LORD and set it in its place inside the tent David had set up for it. Then David offered •burnt offerings and •fellowship offerings in the LORD's presence. [18] When David had finished offering the burnt offering and the fellowship offerings, he blessed the people in the name of Yahweh of Hosts. [19] Then he distributed a loaf of bread, a date cake, and a raisin cake to each one in the entire Israelite community, both men and women. Then all the people left, each to his own home.

[20†] When David returned home to bless his household, Saul's daughter Michal came out to meet him. "How the king of Israel honored himself today! " she said. "He exposed himself today in the sight of the slave girls of his subjects like a vulgar person would expose himself."

[21] David replied to Michal, "I was dancing before the LORD who chose me over your father and his whole family to appoint me ruler over the LORD's people Israel. I will celebrate before the LORD, [22] and I will humble myself even more and humiliate myself. I will be honored by the slave girls you spoke about." [23†] And Saul's daughter Michal had no child to the day of her death.

2 SAMUEL

The LORD's Covenant with David

7 When the king had settled into his palace and the LORD had given him
rest on every side from all his enemies, 2 the king said to Nathan the
prophet, “Look, I am living in a cedar house while the ark of God sits inside
tent curtains.”

3 So Nathan told the king, “Go and do all that is on your heart, for the
LORD is with you.”

4 But that night the word of the LORD came to Nathan: 5 “Go to My
servant David and say, ‘This is what the LORD says: Are you to build a
house for Me to live in? 6 From the time I brought the Israelites out of
Egypt until today I have not lived in a house; instead, I have been moving
around with a tent as My dwelling. 7 In all My journeys with all the
Israelites, have I ever asked anyone among the tribes of Israel, whom I
commanded to shepherd My people Israel: Why haven’t you built Me a
house of cedar? ’

8 “Now this is what you are to say to My servant David: ‘This is what the
LORD of •Hosts says: I took you from the pasture and from following the
sheep to be ruler over My people Israel. 9 I have been with you wherever
you have gone, and I have destroyed all your enemies before you. I will
make a name for you like that of the greatest in the land. 10 I will establish
a place for My people Israel and plant them, so that they may live there and
not be disturbed again. Evildoers will not afflict them as they have done
11 ever since the day I ordered judges to be over My people Israel. I will
give you rest from all your enemies.

“ ‘The LORD declares to you: The LORD Himself will make a house for
you. 12 When your time comes and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up
after you your descendant, who will come from your body, and I will
establish his kingdom. 13 He will build a house for My name, and I will
establish the throne of his kingdom forever. 14 I will be a father to him, and
he will be a son to Me. When he does wrong, I will discipline him with a
human rod and with blows from others. 15 But My faithful love will never
leave him as I removed it from Saul; I removed him from your way.

16† Your house and kingdom will endure before Me forever, and your
throne will be established forever.' "

17 Nathan spoke all these words and this entire vision to David.

David's Prayer of Thanksgiving

18 Then King David went in, sat in the LORD's presence, and said,

Who am I, Lord GOD, and what is my house that You have
brought me this far? 19 What You have done so far [A] was a little
thing to You, Lord GOD, for You have also spoken about Your
servant's house in the distant future. And this is a revelation [B] for
mankind, Lord GOD. 20 What more can David say to You? You
know Your servant, Lord GOD. 21 Because of Your word and
according to Your will, You have revealed all these great things to
Your servant.

22 This is why You are great, Lord GOD. There is no one like You,
and there is no God besides You, as all we have heard confirms.
23 And who is like Your people Israel? God came to one nation on
earth in order to redeem a people for Himself, to make a name for
Himself, and to perform for them great and awesome acts,
driving out nations and their gods before Your people You
redeemed for Yourself from Egypt. 24 You established Your
people Israel to be Your own people forever, and You, LORD, have
become their God.

25 Now, LORD God, fulfill the promise forever that You have made
to Your servant and his house. Do as You have promised, 26 so
that Your name will be exalted forever, when it is said, "The LORD
of Hosts is God over Israel." The house of Your servant David
will be established before You 27 since You, LORD of Hosts, God
of Israel, have revealed this to Your servant when You said, "I will
build a house for you." Therefore, Your servant has found the
courage to pray this prayer to You. 28 Lord GOD, You are God;
Your words are true, and You have promised this grace to Your

servant. [29] Now, please bless Your servant's house so that it will
continue before You forever. For You, Lord GOD, have spoken,
and with Your blessing Your servant's house will be blessed
forever.

2 SAMUEL

David's Victories

8 [†]After this, David defeated the Philistines, subdued them, and took
Metheg-ammah [A] from Philistine control. 2 He also defeated the
Moabites, and after making them lie down on the ground, he measured
them off with a cord. He measured every two cord lengths of those to be put
to death and one length of those to be kept alive. So the Moabites became
David's subjects and brought tribute.

3 David also defeated Hadadezer son of Rehob, king of Zobah, who went
to restore his control at the Euphrates River. 4[†] David captured 1,700
horsemen and 20,000 foot soldiers from him, and he hamstrung all the
horses and kept 100 chariots. [B]

5 When the Arameans of Damascus came to assist King Hadadezer of
Zobah, David struck down 22,000 Aramean men. 6 Then he placed
garrisons in Aram of Damascus, and the Arameans became David's subjects
and brought tribute. The LORD made David victorious wherever he went.

7 David took the gold shields of Hadadezer's officers and brought them
to Jerusalem. 8[†] King David also took huge quantities of bronze from
Betah and Berothai, Hadadezer's cities.

9 When King Toi of Hamath heard that David had defeated the entire
army of Hadadezer, 10 he sent his son Joram to King David to greet him and
to congratulate him because David had fought against Hadadezer and
defeated him, for Toi and Hadadezer had fought many wars. Joram had
items of silver, gold, and bronze with him. 11 King David also dedicated
these to the LORD, along with the silver and gold he had dedicated from all
the nations he had subdued — 12 from Edom, Moab, the Ammonites, the
Philistines, the Amalekites, and the spoil of Hadadezer son of Rehob, king
of Zobah.

13[†] David made a reputation for himself when he returned from striking
down 18,000 Edomites in the Valley of Salt. 14 He placed garrisons
throughout Edom, and all the Edomites were subject to David. The LORD
made David victorious wherever he went.

15 So David reigned over all Israel, administering justice and righteousness for all his people.

16 Joab son of Zeruiah was over the army;
Jehoshaphat son of Ahilud was court historian;
17† Zadok son of Ahitub
and Ahimelech son of Abiathar were priests;
Seraiah was court secretary;
18 Benaiah son of Jehoiada was over
the Cherethites and the Pelethites;
and David’s sons were chief officials.

2 SAMUEL

David’s Kindness to Mephibosheth

9 David asked, “Is there anyone remaining from Saul’s family I can show
kindness to because of Jonathan? ” 2 There was a servant of Saul’s
family named Ziba. They summoned him to David, and the king said to
him, “Are you Ziba? ”

“I am your servant,” he replied.

3 So the king asked, “Is there anyone left of Saul’s family that I can show
the kindness of God to? ”

Ziba said to the king, “There is still Jonathan’s son who was injured in
both feet.”

4 The king asked him, “Where is he? ”

Ziba answered the king, “You’ll find him in Lo-debar at the house of
Machir son of Ammiel.” 5 So King David had him brought from the house
of Machir son of Ammiel in Lo-debar.

6 Mephibosheth son of Jonathan son of Saul came to David, bowed down
to the ground and paid homage. David said, “Mephibosheth! ”

“I am your servant,” he replied.

7 “Don’t be afraid,” David said to him, “since I intend to show you
kindness because of your father Jonathan. I will restore to you all your
grandfather Saul’s fields, and you will always eat meals at my table.”

8 Mephibosheth bowed down and said, “What is your servant that you
take an interest in a dead dog like me? ”

9 Then the king summoned Saul’s attendant Ziba and said to him, “I have
given to your master’s grandson all that belonged to Saul and his family.
10 You, your sons, and your servants are to work the ground for him, and
you are to bring in the crops so your master’s grandson will have food to
eat. But Mephibosheth, your master’s grandson, is always to eat at my
table.” Now Ziba had 15 sons and 20 servants.

[11] Ziba said to the king, “Your servant will do all my lord the king
commands.”

So Mephibosheth ate at David’s table just like one of the king’s sons.
[12] Mephibosheth had a young son whose name was Mica. All those living
in Ziba’s house were Mephibosheth’s servants. [13] However, Mephibosheth
lived in Jerusalem because he always ate at the king’s table. His feet had
been injured.

2 SAMUEL

War with the Ammonites

10 Some time later the king of the Ammonites died, and his son Hanun
became king in his place. [2] Then David said, “I’ll show kindness to
Hanun son of Nahash, just as his father showed kindness to me.”

So David sent his emissaries to console Hanun concerning his father.
However, when they arrived in the land of the Ammonites, [3] the Ammonite
leaders said to Hanun their lord, “Just because David has sent men with
condolences for you, do you really believe he’s showing respect for your
father? Instead, hasn’t David sent his emissaries in order to scout out the
city, spy on it, and demolish it? ” [4] So Hanun took David’s emissaries,
shaved off half their beards, cut their clothes in half at the hips, and sent
them away.

[5] When this was reported to David, he sent someone to meet them, since
they were deeply humiliated. The king said, “Stay in Jericho until your
beards grow back; then return.”

[6] When the Ammonites realized they had become repulsive to David,
they hired 20,000 foot soldiers from the Arameans of Beth-rehob and
Zobah, 1,000 men from the king of Maacah, and 12,000 men from Tob.

[7] David heard about it and sent Joab and all the fighting men. [8] The
Ammonites marched out and lined up in battle formation at the entrance to
the city gate while the Arameans of Zobah and Rehob and the men of Tob
and Maacah were in the field by themselves. [9] When Joab saw that there
was a battle line in front of him and another behind him, he chose some
men out of all the elite troops of Israel and lined up in battle formation to
engage the Arameans. [10] He placed the rest of the forces under the
command of his brother Abishai who lined up in battle formation to engage
the Ammonites.

[11] “If the Arameans are too strong for me,” Joab said, “then you will be
my help. However, if the Ammonites are too strong for you, I’ll come to
help you. [12] Be strong! We must prove ourselves strong for our people and
for the cities of our God. May the LORD’s will be done.” [A]

[13] Joab and his troops advanced to fight against the Arameans, and they
fled before him. [14] When the Ammonites saw that the Arameans had fled,
they too fled before Abishai and entered the city. So Joab withdrew from
the attack against the Ammonites and went to Jerusalem.

[15] When the Arameans saw that they had been defeated by Israel, they
regrouped. [16] Hadadezer sent messengers to bring the Arameans who were
across the Euphrates River, and they came to Helam with Shobach,
commander of Hadadezer's army, leading them.

[17] When this was reported to David, he gathered all Israel, crossed the
Jordan, and went to Helam. Then the Arameans lined up in formation to
engage David in battle and fought against him. [18†] But the Arameans fled
before Israel, and David killed 700 of those chariots and 40,000 foot
soldiers. He also struck down Shobach commander of their army, who died
there. [19] When all the kings who were Hadadezer's subjects saw that they
had been defeated by Israel, they made peace with Israel and became their
subjects. After this, the Arameans were afraid to ever help the Ammonites
again.

2 SAMUEL

David's Adultery with Bathsheba

11 In the spring when kings march out to war, David sent Joab with his
officers and all Israel. They destroyed the Ammonites and besieged
Rabbah, but David remained in Jerusalem.

2† One evening David got up from his bed and strolled around on the roof
of the palace. From the roof he saw a woman bathing — a very beautiful
woman. 3 So David sent someone to inquire about her, and he reported,
"This is Bathsheba, daughter of Eliam and wife of Uriah the Hittite."

ARTICLE

Has the Bible Been Accrately Copied Down Through the Centuries? ⇒

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4 David sent messengers to get her, and when she came to him, he slept
with her. Now she had just been purifying herself from her uncleanness.
Afterward, she returned home. 5 The woman conceived and sent word to
inform David: "I am pregnant."

6 David sent orders to Joab: "Send me Uriah the Hittite." So Joab sent
Uriah to David. 7 When Uriah came to him, David asked how Joab and the
troops were doing and how the war was going. 8† Then he said to Uriah,
"Go down to your house and wash your feet." So Uriah left the palace, and
a gift from the king followed him. 9 But Uriah slept at the door of the palace
with all his master's servants; he did not go down to his house.

10 When it was reported to David, "Uriah didn't go home," David
questioned Uriah, "Haven't you just come from a journey? Why didn't you
go home? "

11 Uriah answered David, "The ark, Israel, and Judah are dwelling in
tents, and my master Joab and his soldiers [A] are camping in the open field.

How can I enter my house to eat and drink and sleep with my wife? As
surely as you live and by your life, I will not do this! ”

12 “Stay here today also,” David said to Uriah, “and tomorrow I will send
you back.” So Uriah stayed in Jerusalem that day and the next. 13 Then
David invited Uriah to eat and drink with him, and David got him drunk.
He went out in the evening to lie down on his cot with his master’s servants,
but he did not go home.

Uriah’s Death Arranged

14 The next morning David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it with Uriah.
15 In the letter he wrote:

> Put Uriah at the front of the fiercest fighting, then withdraw from him so that he is struck down and dies.

16 When Joab was besieging the city, he put Uriah in the place where he
knew the best enemy soldiers were. 17 Then the men of the city came out
and attacked Joab, and some of the men from David’s soldiers fell in battle;
Uriah the Hittite also died.

18 Joab sent someone to report to David all the details of the battle. 19 He
commanded the messenger, “When you’ve finished telling the king all the
details of the battle — 20 if the king’s anger gets stirred up and he asks you,
‘Why did you get so close to the city to fight? Didn’t you realize they
would shoot from the top of the wall? 21† At Thebez, who struck Abimelech
son of Jerubbesheth? Didn’t a woman drop an upper millstone on him from
the top of the wall so that he died? Why did you get so close to the
wall? ’ — then say, ‘Your servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also.’ ” 22 Then
the messenger left.

When he arrived, he reported to David all that Joab had sent him to tell.
23 The messenger reported to David, “The men gained the advantage over
us and came out against us in the field, but we counterattacked right up to
the entrance of the gate. 24 However, the archers shot down on your soldiers

from the top of the wall, and some of the king's soldiers died. Your servant Uriah the Hittite is also dead."

[25] David told the messenger, "Say this to Joab: 'Don't let this matter upset you because the sword devours all alike. Intensify your fight against the city and demolish it.' Encourage him."

[26] When Uriah's wife heard that her husband Uriah had died, she
mourned for him. [B] [27] When the time of mourning ended, David had her
brought to his house. She became his wife and bore him a son. However, the LORD considered what David had done to be evil.

2 SAMUEL

Nathan's Parable and David's Repentance

12 So the LORD sent Nathan to David. When he arrived, he said to him:

There were two men in a certain city, one rich and the other poor.
2 The rich man had a large number of sheep and cattle, 3 but the
poor man had nothing except one small ewe lamb that he had
bought. He raised it, and it grew up, living with him and his
children. It shared his meager food and drank from his cup; it
slept in his arms, and it was like a daughter to him. 4 Now a
traveler came to the rich man, but the rich man could not bring
himself to take one of his own sheep or cattle to prepare for the
traveler who had come to him. Instead, he took the poor man's
lamb and prepared it for his guest. [A]

5 David was infuriated with the man and said to Nathan: "As the LORD
lives, the man who did this deserves to die! 6 Because he has done this thing
and shown no pity, he must pay four lambs for that lamb."

7 Nathan replied to David, "You are the man! This is what the LORD God
of Israel says: 'I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you from
the hand of Saul. 8 I gave your master's house to you and your master's
wives into your arms, [B] and I gave you the house of Israel and Judah, and if
that was not enough, I would have given you even more. 9 Why then have
you despised the command of the LORD by doing what I consider evil? You
struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword and took his wife as your own
wife — you murdered him with the Ammonite's sword. 10 Now therefore,
the sword will never leave your house because you despised Me and took
the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your own wife.'

11 "This is what the LORD says, 'I am going to bring disaster on you from
your own family: I will take your wives and give them to another [C] before
your very eyes, and he will sleep with them publicly. [D] 12 You acted in
secret, but I will do this before all Israel and in broad daylight.' " [E]

13† David responded to Nathan, "I have sinned against the LORD."

Then Nathan replied to David, “The LORD has taken away your sin; you will not die. [14†] However, because you treated the LORD with such contempt in this matter, the son born to you will die.” [15] Then Nathan went home.

The Death of Bathsheba’s Son

The LORD struck the baby that Uriah’s wife had borne to David, and he became ill. [16] David pleaded with God for the boy. He fasted, went home, and spent the night lying on the ground. [17] The elders of his house stood beside him to get him up from the ground, but he was unwilling and would not eat anything with them.

[18] On the seventh day the baby died. But David’s servants were afraid to tell him the baby was dead. They said, “Look, while the baby was alive, we spoke to him, and he wouldn’t listen to us. So how can we tell him the baby is dead? He may do something desperate.”

[19] When David saw that his servants were whispering to each other, he guessed that the baby was dead. So he asked his servants, “Is the baby dead? ”

“He is dead,” they replied.

[20] Then David got up from the ground. He washed, anointed himself, changed his clothes, went to the LORD’s house, and worshiped. Then he went home and requested something to eat. So they served him food, and he ate.

[21] His servants asked him, “What did you just do? While the baby was alive, you fasted and wept, but when he died, you got up and ate food.”

[22] He answered, “While the baby was alive, I fasted and wept because I thought, ‘Who knows? The LORD may be gracious to me and let him live.’
[23] But now that he is dead, why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I’ll go to him, but he will never return to me.”

The Birth of Solomon

[24] Then David comforted his wife Bathsheba; he went and slept with her.
She gave birth to a son and named him Solomon. The LORD loved him,
[25] and He sent a message through Nathan the prophet, who named [F] him
Jedidiah, because of the LORD.

Capture of the City of Rabbah

[26] Joab fought against Rabbah of the Ammonites and captured the royal
fortress. [27] Then Joab sent messengers to David to say, “I have fought
against Rabbah and have also captured the water supply. [28] Now therefore,
assemble the rest of the troops, lay siege to the city, and capture it.
Otherwise I will be the one to capture the city, and it will be named after
me.” [29] So David assembled all the troops and went to Rabbah; he fought
against it and captured it. [30] He took the crown from the head of their king,
and it was placed on David’s head. The crown weighed 75 pounds [G] of
gold, and it had a precious stone in it. In addition, David took away a large
quantity of plunder from the city. [31][†] He removed the people who were in
the city and put them to work with saws, iron picks, and iron axes, and to
labor at brickmaking. He did the same to all the Ammonite cities. Then he
and all his troops returned to Jerusalem.

2 SAMUEL

Amnon Rapes Tamar

13 Some time passed. David’s son Absalom had a beautiful sister named Tamar, and David’s son Amnon was infatuated with her. 2 Amnon was frustrated to the point of making himself sick over his sister Tamar because she was a virgin, but it seemed impossible to do anything to her. 3 Amnon had a friend named Jonadab, a son of David’s brother Shimeah. Jonadab was a very shrewd man, 4 and he asked Amnon, “Why are you, the king’s son, so miserable every morning? Won’t you tell me? ”

Amnon replied, “I’m in love with Tamar, my brother Absalom’s sister.”

5 Jonadab said to him, “Lie down on your bed and pretend you’re sick. When your father comes to see you, say to him, ‘Please let my sister Tamar come and give me something to eat. Let her prepare food in my presence so I can watch and eat from her hand.’ ”

6 So Amnon lay down and pretended to be sick. When the king came to see him, Amnon said to him, “Please let my sister Tamar come and make a couple of cakes in my presence so I can eat from her hand.”

7 David sent word to Tamar at the palace: “Please go to your brother Amnon’s house and prepare a meal for him.”

8 Then Tamar went to his house while Amnon was lying down. She took dough, kneaded it, made cakes in his presence, and baked them. 9 She brought the pan and set it down in front of him, but he refused to eat. Amnon said, “Everyone leave me! ” And everyone left him. 10 “Bring the meal to the bedroom,” Amnon told Tamar, “so I can eat from your hand.” Tamar took the cakes she had made and went to her brother Amnon’s bedroom. 11 When she brought them to him to eat, he grabbed her and said, [A] “Come sleep with me, my sister! ”

12 “Don’t, my brother! ” she cried. “Don’t humiliate me, for such a thing should never be done in Israel. Don’t do this horrible thing! 13 Where could I ever go with my disgrace? And you — you would be like one of the immoral men in Israel! Please, speak to the king, for he won’t keep me from

you.” 14 But he refused to listen to her, and because he was stronger than
she was, he raped her.

15 After this, Amnon hated Tamar with such intensity that the hatred he
hated her with was greater than the love he had loved her with. “Get out of
here! ” he said.

16 “No,” she cried, [B] “sending me away is much worse than the great
wrong you’ve already done to me! ” But he refused to listen to her.
17 Instead, he called to the servant who waited on him: “Throw this woman
out and bolt the door behind her! ” 18[†] Amnon’s servant threw her out and
bolted the door behind her. Now Tamar was wearing a long-sleeved [C]
garment, because this is what the king’s virgin daughters wore. 19[†] Tamar
put ashes on her head and tore the long-sleeved garment she was wearing.
She put her hand on her head and went away crying out.

20 Her brother Absalom said to her: “Has your brother Amnon been with
you? Be quiet for now, my sister. He is your brother. Don’t take this thing to
heart.” So Tamar lived as a desolate woman in the house of her brother
Absalom.

Absalom Murders Amnon

21 When King David heard about all these things, he was furious.
22 Absalom didn’t say anything to Amnon, either good or bad, because he
hated Amnon since he disgraced his sister Tamar.

23 Two years later, Absalom’s sheepshearers were at Baal-hazor near
Ephraim, and Absalom invited all the king’s sons. 24 Then he went to the
king and said, “Your servant has just hired sheepshearers. Will the king and
his servants please come with your servant? ”

25 The king replied to Absalom, “No, my son, we should not all go, or we
would be a burden to you.” Although Absalom urged him, he wasn’t willing
to go, though he did bless him.

[26] "If not," Absalom said, "please let my brother Amnon go with us."

The king asked him, "Why should he go with you? " [27] But Absalom urged him, so he sent Amnon and all the king's sons.

[28] Now Absalom commanded his young men, "Watch Amnon until he is in a good mood from the wine. When I order you to strike Amnon, then kill him. Don't be afraid. Am I not the one who has commanded you? Be strong and courageous! " [29] So Absalom's young men did to Amnon just as Absalom had commanded. Then all the rest of the king's sons got up, and each fled on his mule.

[30] While they were on the way, a report reached David: "Absalom struck down all the king's sons; not even one of them survived! " [31] In response the king stood up, tore his clothes, and lay down on the ground, and all his servants stood by with their clothes torn.

[32] But Jonadab, son of David's brother Shimeah, spoke up: "My lord must not think they have killed all the young men, the king's sons, because only Amnon is dead. In fact, Absalom has planned this [D] ever since the day Amnon disgraced his sister Tamar. [33] So now, my lord the king, don't take seriously the report that says all the king's sons are dead. Only Amnon is dead."

[34] Meanwhile, Absalom had fled. When the young man who was standing watch looked up, there were many people coming from the road west of him from the side of the mountain. [35] Jonadab said to the king, "Look, the king's sons have come! It's exactly like your servant said." [36] Just as he finished speaking, the king's sons entered and wept loudly. Then the king and all his servants also wept bitterly.

[37] Now Absalom fled and went to Talmai son of Ammihud, king of Geshur. And David mourned for his son every day. [38] Absalom had fled and gone to Geshur where he stayed three years. [39] Then King David longed to go to Absalom, for David had finished grieving over Amnon's death.

2 SAMUEL

Absalom Restored to David

14 Joab son of Zeruiah observed that the king’s mind was on Absalom.
2 So Joab sent someone to Tekoa to bring a clever woman from
there. He told her, “Pretend to be in mourning: dress in mourning clothes
and don’t put on any oil. Act like a woman who has been mourning for the
dead for a long time. 3 Go to the king and speak these words to him.” Then
Joab told her exactly what to say.

4 When the woman from Tekoa came to the king, she fell with her face
to the ground in homage and said, “Help me, my king! ”

5 “What’s the matter? ” the king asked her.

“To tell the truth, I am a widow; my husband died,” she said. 6 “Your
servant had two sons. They were fighting in the field with no one to
separate them, and one struck the other and killed him. 7 Now the whole
clan has risen up against your servant and said, ‘Hand over the one who
killed his brother so we may put him to death for the life of the brother he
murdered. We will destroy the heir! ’ They would extinguish my one
remaining ember by not preserving my husband’s name or posterity on
earth.”

8 The king told the woman, “Go home. I will issue a command on your
behalf.”

9 Then the woman of Tekoa said to the king, “My lord the king, may any
blame be on me and my father’s house, and may the king and his throne be
innocent.”

10 “Whoever speaks to you,” the king said, “bring him to me. He will not
trouble you again! ”

11 She replied, “Please, may the king invoke the LORD your God, so that
the avenger of blood will not increase the loss, and they will not eliminate
my son! ”

“As the LORD lives,” he vowed, “not a hair of your son will fall to the
ground.”

[12] Then the woman said, “Please, may your servant speak a word to my
lord the king? ”

“Speak,” he replied.

[13] The woman asked, “Why have you devised something similar against
the people of God? When the king spoke as he did about this matter, he has
pronounced his own •guilt. The king has not brought back his own banished
one. [14] We will certainly die and be like water poured out on the ground,
which can’t be recovered. But God would not take away a life; He would
devise plans so that the one banished from Him does not remain banished.

[15] “Now therefore, I’ve come to present this matter to my lord the king
because the people have made me afraid. Your servant thought: I must
speak to the king. Perhaps the king will grant his servant’s request. [16] The
king will surely listen in order to rescue his servant from the hand of this
man who would eliminate both me and my son from God’s inheritance.
[17] Your servant thought: May the word of my lord the king bring relief, for
my lord the king is able to discern the good and the bad like the Angel of
God. May the LORD your God be with you.”

[18] Then the king answered the woman, “I’m going to ask you something;
don’t conceal it from me! ”

“Let my lord the king speak,” the woman replied.

[19] The king asked, “Did Joab put you up to [A] all this? ”

The woman answered. “As you live, my lord the king, no one can turn to
the right or left from all my lord the king says. Yes, your servant Joab is the
one who gave orders to me; he told your servant exactly what to say. [20] Joab
your servant has done this to address the issue indirectly, [B] but my lord has
wisdom like the wisdom of the Angel of God, knowing everything on
earth.”

[21] Then the king said to Joab, “I hereby grant this request. Go, bring back the young man Absalom.”

[22] Joab fell with his face to the ground in homage and praised the king. “Today,” Joab said, “your servant knows I have found favor with you, my lord the king, because the king has granted the request of your servant.”

[23] So Joab got up, went to Geshur, and brought Absalom to Jerusalem.
[24] However, the king added, “He may return to his house, but he may not see my face.” So Absalom returned to his house, but he did not see the king. [C]

[25] No man in all Israel was as handsome and highly praised as Absalom. From the sole of his foot to the top of his head, he did not have a single
flaw. [26†] When he shaved his head — he shaved it every year because his hair got so heavy for him that he had to shave it off — he would weigh the hair from his head and it would be five pounds [D] according to the royal standard.

[27†] Three sons were born to Absalom, and a daughter named Tamar, who
was a beautiful woman. [28] Absalom resided in Jerusalem two years but
never saw the king. [29] Then Absalom sent for Joab in order to send him to
the king, but Joab was unwilling to come. So he sent again, a second time,
but he still wouldn’t come. [30] Then Absalom said to his servants, “See, Joab
has a field right next to mine, and he has barley there. Go and set fire to it! ” So Absalom’s servants set the field on fire.

[31] Then Joab came to Absalom’s house and demanded, “Why did your servants set my field on fire? ”

[32] “Look,” Absalom explained to Joab, “I sent for you and said, ‘Come here. I want to send you to the king to ask: Why have I come back from Geshur? I’d be better off if I were still there.’ So now, let me see the king. If I am guilty, let him kill me.”

33 Joab went to the king and told him. So David summoned Absalom, who came to the king and bowed down with his face to the ground before him. Then the king kissed Absalom.

2 SAMUEL

Absalom’s Revolt

15 After this, Absalom got himself a chariot, horses, and 50 men to run
before him. 2 He would get up early and stand beside the road leading
to the city •gate. Whenever anyone had a grievance to bring before the king
for settlement, Absalom called out to him and asked, “What city are you
from? ” If he replied, “Your servant is from one of the tribes of Israel,”
3 Absalom said to him, “Look, your claims are good and right, but the king
does not have anyone to listen to you.” 4 He added, “If only someone would
appoint me judge in the land. Then anyone who had a grievance or dispute
could come to me, and I would make sure he received justice.” 5 When a
person approached to bow down to him, Absalom reached out his hand,
took hold of him, and kissed him. 6 Absalom did this to all the Israelites
who came to the king for a settlement. So Absalom stole the hearts of the
men of Israel.

7† When four years had passed, Absalom said to the king, “Please let me
go to Hebron to fulfill a vow I made to the Lord. 8 For your servant made a
vow when I lived in Geshur of Aram, saying: If the Lord really brings me
back to Jerusalem, I will worship the Lord in Hebron.”

9 “Go in peace,” the king said to him. So he went to Hebron.

10 Then Absalom sent messengers throughout the tribes of Israel with this
message: “When you hear the sound of the ram’s horn, you are to say,
‘Absalom has become king in Hebron! ’ ”

11 Two hundred men from Jerusalem went with Absalom. They had been
invited and were going innocently, for they knew nothing about the whole
matter. 12 While he was offering the sacrifices, Absalom sent for David’s
adviser Ahithophel the Gilonite, from his city of Giloh. So the conspiracy
grew strong, and the people supporting Absalom continued to increase.

13 Then an informer came to David and reported, “The hearts of the men
of Israel are with Absalom.”

14 David said to all the servants with him in Jerusalem, “Get up. We have
to flee, or we will not escape from Absalom! Leave quickly, or he will soon

overtake us, heap disaster on us, and strike the city with the edge of the
sword."

[15] The king's servants said to him, "Whatever my lord the king decides,
we are your servants." [16] Then the king set out, and his entire household
followed him. But he left behind 10 concubines to take care of the palace.
[17] So the king set out, and all the people followed him. They stopped at the
last house [18] while all his servants marched past him. Then all the
Cherethites, the Pelethites, and the Gittites — 600 men who came with him
from Gath — marched past the king.

[19] The king said to Ittai the Gittite, "Why are you also going with us? Go
back and stay with the new king since you're both a foreigner and an exile
from your homeland. [20] Besides, you only arrived yesterday; should I make
you wander around with us today while I go wherever I can? Go back and
take your brothers with you. May the LORD show you kindness and
faithfulness."

[21] But in response, Ittai vowed to the king, "As the LORD lives and as my
lord the king lives, wherever my lord the king is, whether it means life or
death, your servant will be there! "

[22] "March on," David replied to Ittai. So Ittai the Gittite marched past
with all his men and the children who were with him. [23] Everyone in the
countryside was weeping loudly while all the people were marching past.
As the king was crossing the Kidron Valley, all the people were marching
past on the road that leads to the desert.

[24] Zadok was also there, and all the Levites with him were carrying the
ark of the covenant of God. They set the ark of God down, and Abiathar
offered sacrifices [A] until the people had finished marching past. [25] Then the
king instructed Zadok, "Return the ark of God to the city. If I find favor in
the LORD's eyes, He will bring me back and allow me to see both it and its
dwelling place. [26] However, if He should say, 'I do not delight in you,' then
here I am — He can do with me whatever pleases Him." [B]

[27] The king also said to Zadok the priest, "Look, return to the city in
peace and your two sons with you: your son Ahimaaz and Abiathar's son
Jonathan. [28] Remember, I'll wait at the fords of the wilderness until word
comes from you to inform me." [29] So Zadok and Abiathar returned the ark
of God to Jerusalem and stayed there.

[30] David was climbing the slope of the Mount of Olives, weeping as he ascended. His head was covered, and he was walking barefoot. Each of the people with him covered their heads and went up, weeping as they ascended.

[31] Then someone reported to David: "Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom."

"LORD," David pleaded, "please turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness! "

[32] When David came to the summit where he used to worship God,
Hushai the Archite was there to meet him with his robe torn and dust on his
head. [33] David said to him, "If you go away with me, you'll be a burden to
me, [34] but if you return to the city and tell Absalom, 'I will be your servant,
my king! Previously, I was your father's servant, but now I will be your
servant,' then you can counteract Ahithophel's counsel for me. [35] Won't
Zadok and Abiathar the priests be there with you? Report everything you
hear from the king's palace to Zadok and Abiathar the priests. [36] Take note:
their two sons, Zadok's son Ahimaaz and Abiathar's son Jonathan, are there
with them. Send me everything you hear through them." [37] So Hushai,
David's personal adviser, entered Jerusalem just as Absalom was entering
the city.

2 SAMUEL

Ziba Helps David

16 When David had gone a little beyond the summit, Ziba,
Mephibosheth's servant, was right there to meet him. He had a pair of
saddled donkeys loaded with 200 loaves of bread, 100 clusters of raisins,
100 bunches of summer fruit, and a skin of wine. 2 The king said to Ziba,
"Why do you have these? "

Ziba answered, "The donkeys are for the king's household to ride, the bread and summer fruit are for the young men to eat, and the wine is for those to drink who become exhausted in the desert."

3 "Where is your master's grandson? " the king asked.

"Why, he's staying in Jerusalem," Ziba replied to the king, "for he said, 'Today, the house of Israel will restore my grandfather's kingdom to me.' "

4 The king said to Ziba, "All that belongs to Mephibosheth is now yours! "

"I bow before you," Ziba said. "May you look favorably on me, my lord the king! "

Shimei Curses David

5 When King David got to Bahurim, a man belonging to the family of the
house of Saul was just coming out. His name was Shimei son of Gera, and
he was yelling curses as he approached. 6 He threw stones at David and at
all the royal [A] servants, the people and the warriors on David's right and
left. 7 Shimei said as he cursed: "Get out, get out, you worthless murderer!
8 The LORD has paid you back for all the blood of the house of Saul in
whose place you became king, and the LORD has handed the kingdom over
to your son Absalom. Look, you are in trouble because you're a murderer! "

9 Then Abishai son of Zeruiah said to the king, "Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king? Let me go over and cut his head off! "

10 The king replied, "Sons of Zeruiah, do we agree on anything? He curses me this way because the LORD told him, 'Curse David! ' Therefore,

who can say, 'Why did you do that? ' " [11] Then David said to Abishai and
all his servants, "Look, my own son, my own flesh and blood, [B] intends to
take my life — how much more now this Benjaminite! Leave him alone
and let him curse me; the LORD has told him to. [12] Perhaps the LORD will see
my affliction and restore goodness to me instead of Shimei's curses today."
[13] So David and his men proceeded along the road as Shimei was going
along the ridge of the hill opposite him. As Shimei went, he cursed David,
and threw stones and dirt at him. [14] Finally, the king and all the people with
him arrived exhausted, so they rested there.

Absalom's Advisers

[15] Now Absalom and all the Israelites came to Jerusalem. Ahithophel was
also with him. [16] When David's friend Hushai the Archite came to
Absalom, Hushai said to Absalom, "Long live the king! Long live the
king! "

[17] "Is this your loyalty to your friend? " Absalom asked Hushai. "Why
didn't you go with your friend? "

[18] "Not at all," Hushai answered Absalom. "I am on the side of the one
that the LORD, the people, and all the men of Israel have chosen. I will stay
with him. [19] Furthermore, whom will I serve if not his son? As I served in
your father's presence, I will also serve in yours."

[20] Then Absalom said to Ahithophel, "Give me your advice. What should
we do? "

[21] Ahithophel replied to Absalom, "Sleep with your father's concubines
he left to take care of the palace. When all Israel hears that you have
become repulsive to your father, everyone with you will be encouraged."
[22] So they pitched a tent for Absalom on the roof, and he slept with his
father's concubines in the sight of all Israel.

[23] Now the advice Ahithophel gave in those days was like someone
asking about a word from God — such was the regard that both David and

Absalom had for Ahithophel’s advice.

2 SAMUEL

17 Ahithophel said to Absalom, “Let me choose 12,000 men, and I will
set out in pursuit of David tonight. 2 I will attack him while he is
weak and weary, throw him into a panic, and all the people with him will
scatter. I will strike down only the king 3 and bring all the people back to
you. When everyone returns except the man you’re seeking, all the people
will be at peace.” 4 This proposal seemed good to Absalom and all the
elders of Israel.

5 Then Absalom said, “Summon Hushai the Archite also. Let’s hear what
he has to say as well.”

6 So Hushai came to Absalom, and Absalom told him: “Ahithophel
offered this proposal. Should we carry out his proposal? If not, what do you
say? ”

7 Hushai replied to Absalom, “The advice Ahithophel has given this time
is not good.” 8 Hushai continued, “You know your father and his men. They
are warriors and are desperate like a wild bear robbed of her cubs. Your
father is an experienced soldier who won’t spend the night with the people.
9 He’s probably already hiding in one of the caves [A] or some other place. If
some of our troops fall [B] first, someone is sure to hear and say, ‘There’s
been a slaughter among the people who follow Absalom.’ 10 Then, even a
brave man with the heart of a lion will melt because all Israel knows that
your father and the valiant men with him are warriors. 11 Instead, I advise
that all Israel from Dan to Beer-sheba — as numerous as the sand by the
sea — be gathered to you and that you personally go into battle. 12 Then we
will attack David wherever we find him, and we will descend on him like
dew on the ground. Not even one will be left of all the men with him. 13 If
he retreats to some city, all Israel will bring ropes to that city, and we will
drag its stones into the valley until not even a pebble can be found there.”
14 Since the LORD had decreed that Ahithophel’s good advice be
undermined in order to bring about Absalom’s ruin, Absalom and all the
men of Israel said, “The advice of Hushai the Archite is better than
Ahithophel’s advice.”

David Informed of Absalom's Plans

[15] Hushai then told the priests Zadok and Abiathar, "This is what [C]
Ahithophel advised Absalom and the elders of Israel, and this is what [D] I
advised. [16] Now send someone quickly and tell David, 'Don't spend the
night at the wilderness ford of the Jordan, but be sure to cross over, or the
king and all the people with him will be destroyed.' "

[17] Jonathan and Ahimaaz were staying at En-rogel, where a servant girl
would come and pass along information to them. They in turn would go and
inform King David, because they dared not be seen entering the city.
[18†] However, a young man did see them and informed Absalom. So the two
left quickly and came to the house of a man in Bahurim. He had a well in
his courtyard, and they climbed down into it. [19] Then his wife took the
cover, placed it over the mouth of the well, and scattered grain on it so
nobody would know anything.

[20] Absalom's servants came to the woman at the house and asked,
"Where are Ahimaaz and Jonathan? "

"They passed by toward the water," [E] the woman replied to them. The
men searched but did not find them, so they returned to Jerusalem.

[21] After they had gone, Ahimaaz and Jonathan climbed out of the well
and went and informed King David. They told him, "Get up and
immediately ford the river, for Ahithophel has given this advice against
you." [22] So David and all the people with him got up and crossed the
Jordan. By daybreak, there was no one who had not crossed the Jordan.
[23] When Ahithophel realized that his advice had not been followed, he
saddled his donkey and set out for his house in his hometown. He set his
affairs in order [F] and hanged himself. So he died and was buried in his
father's tomb.

[24] David had arrived at Mahanaim by the time Absalom crossed the
Jordan with all the men of Israel. [25†] Now Absalom had appointed Amasa
over the army in Joab's place. Amasa was the son of a man named Ithra [G]

the Israelite; Ithra had married Abigail daughter of Nahash. Abigail was a
sister to Zeruiah, Joab's mother. [26] And Israel and Absalom camped in the
land of Gilead. [27] When David came to Mahanaim, Shobi son of Nahash
from Rabbah of the Ammonites, Machir son of Ammiel from Lo-debar,
and Barzillai the Gileadite from Rogelim [28] brought beds, basins, and
pottery items. They also brought wheat, barley, flour, roasted grain, beans,
lentils, [29] honey, curds, sheep, and cheese [H] from the herd for David and
the people with him to eat. They had reasoned, "The people must be
hungry, exhausted, and thirsty in the desert."

2 SAMUEL

Absalom's Defeat

18 David reviewed his troops and appointed commanders of hundreds
and of thousands over them. 2 He then sent out the troops, a third
under Joab, a third under Joab's brother Abishai son of Zeruiah, and a third
under Ittai the Gittite. The king said to the troops, "I will also march out
with you."

3 "You must not go! " the people pleaded. "If we have to flee, they will
not pay any attention to us. Even if half of us die, they will not pay any
attention to us because you are worth 10,000 of us. Therefore, it is better if
you support us from the city."

4 "I will do whatever you think is best," the king replied to them. So he
stood beside the gate while all the troops marched out by hundreds and
thousands. 5 The king commanded Joab, Abishai, and Ittai, "Treat the
young man Absalom gently for my sake." All the people heard the king's
orders to all the commanders about Absalom.

6[†] Then David's forces marched into the field to engage Israel in battle,
which took place in the forest of Ephraim. 7 The people of Israel were
defeated by David's soldiers, and the slaughter there was vast that
day — 20,000 casualties. 8 The battle spread over the entire region, and that
day the forest claimed more people than the sword.

Absalom's Death

9[†] Absalom was riding on his mule when he happened to meet David's
soldiers. When the mule went under the tangled branches of a large oak
tree, Absalom's head was caught fast in the tree. The mule under him kept
going, so he was suspended in midair. [A] 10 One of the men saw him and
informed Joab. He said, "I just saw Absalom hanging in an oak tree! "

11 "You just saw him! " Joab exclaimed. [B] "Why didn't you strike him to
the ground right there? I would have given you 10 silver pieces and a
belt! "

[12] The man replied to Joab, "Even if I had the weight of 1,000 pieces of
silver in my hand, I would not raise my hand against the king's son. For we
heard the king command you, Abishai, and Ittai, 'Protect the young man
Absalom for me.' [13] If I had jeopardized my own life — and nothing is
hidden from the king — you would have abandoned me."

[14] Joab said, "I'm not going to waste time with you! " He then took three
spears in his hand and thrust them into Absalom's heart while he was still
alive in the oak tree, [15] and 10 young men who were Joab's armor-bearers
surrounded Absalom, struck him, and killed him.

[16] Afterward, Joab blew the ram's horn, and the troops broke off their
pursuit of Israel because Joab restrained them. [17] They took Absalom, threw
him into a large pit in the forest, and piled a huge mound of stones over
him. And all Israel fled, each to his tent.

[18]† When he was alive, Absalom had set up a pillar for himself in the
King's Valley, for he had said, "I have no son to preserve the memory of
my name." So he gave the pillar his name. It is still called Absalom's
Monument today.

[19] Ahimaaz son of Zadok said, "Please let me run and tell the king the
good news that the LORD has delivered him from his enemies."

[20] Joab replied to him, "You are not the man to take good news today.
You may do it another day, but today you aren't taking good news, because
the king's son is dead." [21] Joab then said to the •Cushite, "Go tell the king
what you have seen." The Cushite bowed to Joab and took off running.

[22] However, Ahimaaz son of Zadok persisted and said to Joab, "No
matter what, please let me also run behind the Cushite! "

Joab replied, "My son, why do you want to run since you won't get a
reward? "

[23] "No matter what I want to run! "

"Then run! " Joab said to him. So Ahimaaz ran by way of the plain and outran the Cushite.

24 David was sitting between the two gates when the watchman went up to the roof of the gate and over to the wall. The watchman looked out and saw a man running alone.
25 He called out and told the king.

The king said, "If he's alone, he bears good news."

As the first runner came closer,
26 the watchman saw another man running. He called out to the gatekeeper, "Look! Another man is running alone! "

"This one is also bringing good news," said the king.

27 The watchman said, "The way the first man runs looks to me like the way Ahimaaz son of Zadok runs."

"This is a good man; he comes with good news," the king commented.

28 Ahimaaz called out to the king, "All is well," and then bowed down to the king with his face to the ground. He continued, "May the LORD your God be praised! He delivered up the men who rebelled against my lord the king."

29 The king asked, "Is the young man Absalom all right? "

Ahimaaz replied, "When Joab sent the king's servant and your servant, I saw a big disturbance, but I don't know what it was."

30 The king said, "Move aside and stand here." So he stood to one side.

31 Just then the Cushite came and said, "May my lord the king hear the good news: today the LORD has delivered you from all those rising up against you! "

32 The king asked the Cushite, "Is the young man Absalom all right? "

The Cushite replied, “May what has become of the young man happen to the enemies of my lord the king and to all who rise up against you with evil intent.”

33 The king was deeply moved and went up to the gate chamber and wept. As he walked, he cried, “My son Absalom! My son, my son Absalom! If only I had died instead of you, Absalom, my son, my son! ”

2 SAMUEL

David's Kingdom Restored

19 It was reported to Joab, “The king is weeping. He’s mourning over
Absalom.” [2] That day’s victory was turned into mourning for all the
troops because on that day the troops heard, “The king is grieving over his
son.” [3] So they returned to the city quietly that day like people come in
when they are humiliated after fleeing in battle. [4] But the king hid his face
and cried out at the top of his voice, “My son Absalom! Absalom, my son,
my son! ”

[5] Then Joab went into the house to the king and said, “Today you have
shamed all your soldiers — those who rescued your life and the lives of
your sons and daughters, your wives, and your concubines. [6] You love your
enemies and hate those who love you! Today you have made it clear that the
commanders and soldiers mean nothing to you. In fact, today I know that if
Absalom were alive and all of us were dead, it would be fine with you! [A]

[7] “Now get up! Go out and encourage [B] your soldiers, for I swear by the
LORD that if you don’t go out, not a man will remain with you tonight. This
will be worse for you than all the trouble that has come to you from your
youth until now! ”

[8] So the king got up and sat in the •gate, and all the people were told:
“Look, the king is sitting in the gate.” Then they all came into the king’s
presence.

Meanwhile, each Israelite had fled to his tent. [9] All the people among all
the tribes of Israel were arguing: “The king delivered us from the grasp of
our enemies, and he rescued us from the grasp of the Philistines, but now
he has fled from the land because of Absalom. [10] But Absalom, the man we
anointed over us, has died in battle. So why do you say nothing about
restoring the king? ”

[11] King David sent word to the priests, Zadok and Abiathar: “Say to the
elders of Judah, ‘Why should you be the last to restore the king to his
palace? The talk of all Israel has reached the king at his house. [12] You are
my brothers, my flesh and blood. So why should you be the last to restore
the king? ’ [13] And tell Amasa, ‘Aren’t you my flesh and blood? May God

punish me and do so severely if you don’t become commander of the army
from now on instead of Joab! ’ ”

[14] So he won over [C] all the men of Judah, and they sent word to the king:
“Come back, you and all your servants.” [15] Then the king returned. When
he arrived at the Jordan, Judah came to Gilgal to meet the king and escort
him across the Jordan.

[16] Shimei son of Gera, a Benjaminite from Bahurim, hurried down with
the men of Judah to meet King David. [17] There were 1,000 men from
Benjamin with him. Ziba, an attendant from the house of Saul, with his 15
sons and 20 servants also rushed down to the Jordan ahead of the king.
[18] They forded the Jordan to bring the king’s household across and do
whatever the king desired. [D]

When Shimei son of Gera crossed the Jordan, he fell down before the
king [19] and said to him, “My lord, don’t hold me •guilty, and don’t
remember your servant’s wrongdoing on the day my lord the king left
Jerusalem. May the king not take it to heart. [20†] For your servant knows
that I have sinned. But look! Today I am the first one of the entire house of
Joseph to come down to meet my lord the king.”

[21] Abishai son of Zeruiah asked, “Shouldn’t Shimei be put to death for
this, because he cursed the LORD’s anointed? ”

[22] David answered, “Sons of Zeruiah, do we agree on anything? Have
you become my adversary today? Should any man be killed in Israel today?
Am I not aware that today I’m king over Israel? ” [23†] So the king said to
Shimei, “You will not die.” Then the king gave him his oath.

[24] Mephibosheth, Saul’s grandson, also went down to meet the king. He
had not taken care of his feet, trimmed his mustache, or washed his clothes
from the day the king left until the day he returned safely. [25] When he came
from Jerusalem to meet the king, the king asked him, “Mephibosheth, why
didn’t you come with me? ”

[26] "My lord the king," he replied, "my servant Ziba betrayed me.
Actually your servant said: 'I'll saddle the donkey for myself so that I may
ride it and go with the king' — for your servant is lame. [27] Ziba slandered
your servant to my lord the king. But my lord the king is like the Angel of
God, so do whatever you think best. [E] [28] For my grandfather's entire family
deserves death from my lord the king, but you set your servant among those
who eat at your table. So what further right do I have to keep on making
appeals to the king? "

[29] The king said to him, "Why keep on speaking about these matters of
yours? I hereby declare: you and Ziba are to divide the land."

[30] Mephibosheth said to the king, "Instead, since my lord the king has
come to his palace safely, let Ziba take it all! "

[31] Barzillai the Gileadite had come down from Rogelim and
accompanied the king to the Jordan River to see him off at the Jordan.
[32] Barzillai was a very old man — 80 years old — and since he was a very
wealthy man, he had provided for the needs of the king while he stayed in
Mahanaim.

[33] The king said to Barzillai, "Cross over with me, and I'll provide for
you at my side in Jerusalem."

[34] Barzillai replied to the king, "How many years of my life are left that I
should go up to Jerusalem with the king? [35] I'm now 80 years old. Can I
discern what is pleasant and what is not? Can your servant taste what he
eats or drinks? Can I still hear the voice of male and female singers? Why
should your servant be an added burden to my lord the king? [36] Since your
servant is only going with the king a little way across the Jordan, why
should the king repay me with such a reward? [37] Please let your servant
return so that I may die in my own city near the tomb of my father and
mother. But here is your servant Chimham: let him cross over with my lord
the king. Do for him what seems good to you." [F]

[38] The king replied, "Chimham will cross over with me, and I will do for
him what seems good to you, [G] and whatever you desire from me I will do
for you." [39] So all the people crossed the Jordan, and then the king crossed.
The king kissed Barzillai and blessed him, and Barzillai returned to his
home.

[40] The king went on to Gilgal, and Chimham went with him. All the
troops of Judah and half of Israel's escorted the king. [41] Suddenly, all the
men of Israel came to the king. They asked him, "Why did our brothers, the
men of Judah, take you away secretly and transport the king and his
household across the Jordan, along with all of David's men? "

[42] All the men of Judah responded to the men of Israel, "Because the king
is our relative. Why does this make you angry? Have we ever eaten
anything of the king's or been honored at all? "

[43†] The men of Israel answered the men of Judah: "We have 10 shares in
the king, so we have a greater claim to David than you. Why then do you
despise us? Weren't we the first to speak of restoring our king? " But the
words of the men of Judah were harsher than those of the men of Israel.

2 SAMUEL

Sheba's Revolt

20 Now a •wicked man, a Benjaminite named Sheba son of Bichri,
happened to be there. He blew the ram's horn and shouted:

We have no portion in David,
no inheritance in Jesse's son.
Each man to his tent, Israel!

2 So all the men of Israel deserted David and followed Sheba son of Bichri,
but the men of Judah from the Jordan all the way to Jerusalem remained
loyal to their king.

3 When David came to his palace in Jerusalem, he took the 10 concubines
he had left to take care of the palace and placed them under guard. He
provided for them, but he was not intimate with them. They were confined
until the day of their death, living as widows.

4 The king said to Amasa, "Summon the men of Judah to me within three
days and be here yourself." 5 Amasa went to summon Judah, but he took
longer than the time allotted him. 6 So David said to Abishai, "Sheba son of
Bichri will do more harm to us than Absalom. Take your lord's soldiers and
pursue him, or he will find fortified cities and elude us." [A]

7 So Joab's men, the Cherethites, the Pelethites, and all the warriors
marched out under Abishai's command; [B] they left Jerusalem to pursue
Sheba son of Bichri. 8 They were at the great stone in Gibeon when Amasa
joined them. Joab was wearing his uniform and over it was a belt around his
waist with a sword in its sheath. As he approached, the sword fell out.
9 Joab asked Amasa, "Are you well, my brother? " Then with his right hand
Joab grabbed Amasa by the beard to kiss him. 10 Amasa was not on guard
against the sword in Joab's hand, and Joab stabbed him in the stomach with
it and spilled his intestines out on the ground. Joab did not stab him again
for Amasa was dead. Joab and his brother Abishai pursued Sheba son of
Bichri.

11 One of Joab's young men had stood over Amasa saying, "Whoever
favors Joab and whoever is for David, follow Joab! " 12 Now Amasa was

writhing in his blood in the middle of the highway, and the man had seen
that all the people stopped. So he moved Amasa from the highway to the
field and threw a garment over him because he realized that all those who
encountered Amasa were stopping. [13] When he was removed from the
highway, all the men passed by and followed Joab to pursue Sheba son of
Bichri.

[14]† Sheba passed through all the tribes of Israel to Abel of Beth-maacah.
All the Berites came together and followed him. [15] Joab's troops came and
besieged Sheba in Abel of Beth-maacah. They built an assault ramp against
the outer wall of the city. While all the troops with Joab were battering the
wall to make it collapse, [16] a wise woman called out from the city, "Listen!
Listen! Please tell Joab to come here and let me speak with him."

[17] When he had come near her, the woman asked, "Are you Joab? "

"I am," he replied.

"Listen to the words of your servant," she said to him.

He answered, "I'm listening."

[18] She said, "In the past they used to say, 'Seek counsel in Abel,' and
that's how they settled disputes. [19] I am a peaceful person, one of the
faithful in Israel, but you're trying to destroy a city that is like a mother in
Israel. Why would you devour the LORD's inheritance? "

[20] Joab protested: "Never! I do not want to destroy! [21] That is not my
intention. There is a man named Sheba son of Bichri, from the hill country
of Ephraim, who has rebelled against King David. Deliver this one man,
and I will withdraw from the city."

The woman replied to Joab, "All right. His head will be thrown over the
wall to you." [22] The woman went to all the people with her wise counsel,
and they cut off the head of Sheba son of Bichri and threw it to Joab. So he
blew the ram's horn, and they dispersed from the city, each to his own tent.
Joab returned to the king in Jerusalem.

[23†] Joab commanded the whole army of Israel; Benaiah son of Jehoiada
was over the Cherethites and Pelethites; [24] Adoram was in charge of forced
labor; Jehoshaphat son of Ahilud was court historian; [25] Sheva was court
secretary; Zadok and Abiathar were priests; [26] and in addition, Ira the Jairite
was David’s priest.

2 SAMUEL

Justice for the Gibeonites

21 During David's reign there was a famine for three successive years, so
David inquired of the LORD. The LORD answered, "It is because of the
blood shed by Saul and his family when he killed the Gibeonites."

2† The Gibeonites were not Israelites but rather a remnant of the
Amorites. The Israelites had taken an oath concerning them, but Saul had
tried to kill them in his zeal for the Israelites and Judah. So David
summoned the Gibeonites and spoke to them. 3 He asked the Gibeonites,
"What should I do for you? How can I make atonement so that you will
bring a blessing on [A] the LORD's inheritance? "

4 The Gibeonites said to him, "We are not asking for money from [B] Saul
or his family, and we cannot put anyone to death in Israel."

"Whatever you say, I will do for you," he said.

5 They replied to the king, "As for the man who annihilated us and
plotted to destroy us so we would not exist within the whole territory of
Israel, 6 let seven of his male descendants be handed over to us so we may
hang [C] them in the presence of the LORD at Gibeah of Saul, the LORD's
chosen."

The king answered, "I will hand them over."

7 David spared Mephibosheth, the son of Saul's son Jonathan, because of
the oath of the LORD that was between David and Jonathan, Saul's son.
8† But the king took Armoni and Mephibosheth, who were the two sons
whom Rizpah daughter of Aiah had borne to Saul, and the five sons whom
Merab daughter of Saul had borne to Adriel son of Barzillai the
Meholathite 9 and handed them over to the Gibeonites. They hanged [D] them
on the hill in the presence of the LORD; the seven of them died together.
They were executed in the first days of the harvest at the beginning of the
barley harvest.

The Burial of Saul's Family

[10] Rizpah, Aiah's daughter, took •sackcloth and spread it out for herself
on the rock from the beginning of the harvest until the rain poured down
from heaven on the bodies. She kept the birds of the sky from them by day
and the wild animals by night.

[11] When it was reported to David what Saul's concubine Rizpah,
daughter of Aiah, had done, [12] he went and got the bones of Saul and his
son Jonathan from the leaders of Jabesh-gilead. They had stolen them from
the public square of Beth-shan where the Philistines had hung the bodies
the day the Philistines killed Saul at Gilboa. [13] David had the bones
brought from there. They gathered up the bones of Saul's family who had
been hung [E] [14] and buried the bones of Saul and his son Jonathan at Zela in
the land of Benjamin in the tomb of Saul's father Kish. They did everything
the king commanded. After this, God answered prayer for the land.

The Philistine Giants

[15] The Philistines again waged war against Israel. David went down with
his soldiers, and they fought the Philistines, but David became exhausted.
[16†] Then Ishbi-benob, one of the descendants of the giant, [F] whose bronze
spear weighed about eight pounds [G] and who wore new armor, intended to
kill David. [17] But Abishai son of Zeruiah came to his aid, struck the
Philistine, and killed him. Then David's men swore to him: "You must
never again go out with us to battle. You must not extinguish the lamp of
Israel."

[18] After this, there was another battle with the Philistines at Gob. At that
time Sibbecai the Hushathite killed Saph, who was one of the descendants
of the giant. [H]

[19†] Once again there was a battle with the Philistines at Gob, and Elhanan
son of Jaare-oregim the Bethlehemite killed Goliath the Gittite. The shaft
of his spear was like a weaver's beam.

[20] At Gath there was still another battle. A huge man was there with six
fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot — 24 in all. He, too, was

descended from the giant. [I] 21 When he taunted Israel, Jonathan, son of David's brother Shimei, killed him.

22 These four were descended from the giant [J] in Gath and were killed by David and his soldiers.

2 SAMUEL

David's Song of Thanksgiving

22 David spoke the words of this song to the LORD on the day the LORD rescued him from the hand of all his enemies and from the hand of Saul. 2† He said:

The LORD is my rock, my fortress, and my deliverer,
3 my God, my mountain where I seek refuge.
My shield, the •horn of my salvation, my stronghold, my refuge,
and my Savior, You save me from violence.
4 I called to the LORD, who is worthy of praise,
and I was saved from my enemies.
5 For the waves of death engulfed me;
the torrents of destruction terrified me.
6 The ropes of •Sheol entangled me;
the snares of death confronted me.

7 I called to the LORD in my distress;
I called to my God.
From His temple He heard my voice,
and my cry for help reached His ears.
8 Then the earth shook and quaked;
the foundations of the heavens trembled;
they shook because He burned with anger.
9† Smoke rose from His nostrils,
and consuming fire came from His mouth;
coals were set ablaze by it. [A]
10 He parted the heavens and came down,
a dark cloud beneath His feet.
11 He rode on a cherub and flew,
soaring on the wings of the wind.
12 He made darkness a canopy around Him,
a gathering [B] of water and thick clouds.
13 From the radiance of His presence,
flaming coals were ignited.
14 The LORD thundered from heaven;
the •Most High projected His voice.

15 He shot arrows and scattered them;
He hurled lightning bolts and routed them.
16 The depths of the sea became visible,
the foundations of the world were exposed
at the rebuke of the LORD,
at the blast of the breath of His nostrils.

17 He reached down from heaven
and took hold of me;
He pulled me out of deep waters.
18 He rescued me from my powerful enemy
and from those who hated me,
for they were too strong for me.
19 They confronted me in the day of my distress,
but the LORD was my support.
20 He brought me out to a spacious place;
He rescued me because He delighted in me.

21 The LORD rewarded me
according to my righteousness;
He repaid me
according to the cleanness of my hands.
22 For I have kept the ways of the LORD
and have not turned from my God to wickedness.
23 Indeed, I have kept all His ordinances in mind [C]
and have not disregarded His statutes.
24 I was blameless before Him
and kept myself from sinning.
25 So the LORD repaid me
according to my righteousness,
according to my cleanness in His sight.

26 With the faithful
You prove Yourself faithful;
with the blameless man
You prove Yourself blameless;
27 with the pure

You prove Yourself pure,
but with the crooked
You prove Yourself shrewd.
28 You rescue an afflicted people,
but Your eyes are set against the proud —
You humble them.
29 LORD, You are my lamp;
the LORD illuminates my darkness.
30 With You I can attack a barrier, [D]
and with my God I can leap over a wall.
31 God — His way is perfect;
the word of the LORD is pure.
He is a shield to all who take refuge in Him.

32 For who is God besides the LORD?
And who is a rock? Only our God.
33 God is my strong refuge;
He makes my way perfect.
34 He makes my feet like the feet of a deer
and sets me securely on the heights. [E]
35 He trains my hands for war;
my arms can bend a bow of bronze.
36 You have given me the shield of Your salvation;
Your help exalts me.
37 You widen a place beneath me for my steps,
and my ankles do not give way.
38 I pursue my enemies and destroy them;
I do not turn back until they are wiped out.
39 I wipe them out and crush them,
and they do not rise;
they fall beneath my feet.
40 You have clothed me with strength for battle;
You subdue my adversaries beneath me.
41 You have made my enemies retreat before me; [F]
I annihilate those who hate me.

42 They look, but there is no one to save them —
they look to the LORD, but He does not answer them.
43 I pulverize them like dust of the earth;
I crush them and trample them like mud in the streets.

44 You have freed me from the feuds among my people;
You have appointed me the head of nations;
a people I had not known serve me.
45 Foreigners submit to me grudgingly;
as soon as they hear, they obey me.
46 Foreigners lose heart
and come trembling from their fortifications.

47 The LORD lives — may my rock be praised!
God, the rock of my salvation, is exalted.
48 God — He gives me vengeance
and casts down peoples under me.
49 He frees me from my enemies.
You exalt me above my adversaries;
You rescue me from violent men.

50 Therefore I will praise You, LORD, among the nations;
I will sing about Your name.
51 He is a tower of salvation for His king;
He shows loyalty to His anointed,
to David and his descendants forever.

2 SAMUEL

David's Last Words

23 These are the last words of David:

The declaration of David son of Jesse,
the declaration of the man raised on high, [A]
the one anointed by the God of Jacob,
the favorite singer of Israel:
2 The Spirit of the LORD spoke through me,
His word was on my tongue.
3 The God of Israel spoke;
the Rock of Israel said to me,
"The one who rules the people with justice,
who rules in the •fear of God,
4 is like the morning light when the sun rises
on a cloudless morning,
the glisten of rain on sprouting grass."

5 Is it not true my house is with God?
For He has established an everlasting covenant with me,
ordered and secured in every detail.
Will He not bring about
my whole salvation and my every desire?
6 But all the wicked are like thorns raked aside;
they can never be picked up by hand.
7 The man who touches them
must be armed with iron and the shaft of a spear.
They will be completely burned up on the spot.

Exploits of David's Warriors

8† These are the names of David's warriors:

Josheb-basshebeth the Tahchemonite was chief of the officers. He wielded his spear against 800 men that he killed at one time.

9 After him, Eleazar son of Dodo son of an Ahohite was among the three warriors with David when they defied the Philistines. The men of Israel
retreated in the place they had gathered for battle, 10 but Eleazar stood his

ground and attacked the Philistines until his hand was tired and stuck to his
sword. The LORD brought about a great victory that day. Then the troops
came back to him, but only to plunder the dead.

[11] After him was Shammah son of Agee the Hararite. The Philistines had
assembled in formation where there was a field full of lentils. The troops
fled from the Philistines, [12] but Shammah took his stand in the middle of
the field, defended it, and struck down the Philistines. So the LORD brought
about a great victory.

[13] Three of the 30 leading warriors went down at harvest time and came
to David at the cave of Adullam, while a company of Philistines was
camping in the Valley of Rephaim. [14] At that time David was in the
stronghold, and a Philistine garrison was at Bethlehem. [15] David was
extremely thirsty [B] and said, “If only someone would bring me water to
drink from the well at the city gate of Bethlehem! ” [16] So three of the
warriors broke through the Philistine camp and drew water from the well at
the gate of Bethlehem. They brought it back to David, but he refused to
drink it. Instead, he poured it out to the LORD. [17] David said, “LORD, I would
never do such a thing! Is this not the blood of men who risked their lives? ”
So he refused to drink it. Such were the exploits of the three warriors.

[18] Abishai, Joab’s brother and son of Zeruiah, was leader of the Three.
He raised his spear against 300 men and killed them, gaining a reputation
among the Three. [19] Was he not more honored than the Three? He became
their commander even though he did not become one of the Three.

[20†] Benaiah son of Jehoiada was the son of a brave man from Kabzeel, a
man of many exploits. Benaiah killed two sons of Ariel [C] of Moab, and he
went down into a pit on a snowy day and killed a lion. [21] He also killed an
Egyptian, a huge man. Even though the Egyptian had a spear in his hand,
Benaiah went down to him with a club, snatched the spear out of the
Egyptian’s hand, and then killed him with his own spear. [22] These were the
exploits of Benaiah son of Jehoiada, who had a reputation among the three

warriors. [23] He was the most honored of the Thirty, but he did not become one of the Three. David put him in charge of his bodyguard.

[24] Among the Thirty were:

Joab's brother Asahel,
Elhanan son of Dodo of Bethlehem,
[25] Shammah the Harodite,
Elika the Harodite,
[26] Helez the Paltite,
Ira son of Ikkesh the Tekoite,
[27] Abiezer the Anathothite,
Mebunnai the Hushathite,
[28] Zalmon the Ahohite,
Maharai the Netophathite,
[29] Heleb son of Baanah the Netophahite,
Ittai son of Ribai from Gibeah of the Benjaminites,
[30] Benaiah the Pirathonite,
Hiddai from the •wadis of Gaash, [D]
[31] Abi-albon the Arbathite,
Azmaveth the Barhumite,
[32] Eliahba the Shaalbonite,
the sons of Jashen,
Jonathan son of [33] Shammah the Hararite,
Ahiam son of Sharar the Hararite,
[34] Eliphelet son of Ahasbai son of the Maacathite,
Eliam son of Ahithophel the Gilonite,
[35] Hezro the Carmelite,
Paarai the Arbite,
[36] Igal son of Nathan from Zobah,
Bani the Gadite,
[37] Zelek the Ammonite,
Naharai the Beerothite, the armor-bearer for Joab son of Zeruiah,
[38] Ira the Ithrite,

Gareb the Ithrite,
39 and Uriah the Hittite.

There were 37 in all.

2 SAMUEL

David's Military Census

24 †The LORD's anger burned against Israel again, and He stirred up
David against them to say: "Go, count the people of Israel and
Judah."

2 So the king said to Joab, the commander of his army, "Go through all
the tribes of Israel from Dan to Beer-sheba and register the troops so I can
know their number."

3 Joab replied to the king, "May the LORD your God multiply the troops
100 times more than they are — while my lord the king looks on! But why
does my lord the king want to do this? "

4 Yet the king's order prevailed over Joab and the commanders of the
army. So Joab and the commanders of the army left the king's presence to
register the troops of Israel.

5 They crossed the Jordan and camped in Aroer, south of the town in the
middle of the valley, and then proceeded toward Gad and Jazer. 6 They went
to Gilead and to the land of the Hittites and continued on to Dan-jaan and
around to Sidon. 7 They went to the fortress of Tyre and all the cities of the
Hivites and Canaanites. Afterward, they went to the •Negev of Judah at
Beer-sheba.

8 When they had gone through the whole land, they returned to Jerusalem
at the end of nine months and 20 days. 9† Joab gave the king the total of the
registration of the troops. There were 800,000 fighting men from Israel and
500,000 men from Judah.

10 David's conscience troubled him after he had taken a census of the
troops. He said to the LORD, "I have sinned greatly in what I've done. Now,
LORD, because I've been very foolish, please take away Your servant's
•guilt."

David's Punishment

11 When David got up in the morning, a revelation from the LORD had
come to the prophet Gad, David's seer: 12 "Go and say to David, 'This is
what the LORD says: I am offering you three choices. Choose one of them,
and I will do it to you.' "

13 So Gad went to David, told him the choices, and asked him, "Do you
want three years of famine to come on your land, to flee from your foes
three months while they pursue you, or to have a plague in your land three
days? Now, think it over and decide what answer I should take back to the
One who sent me."

14 David answered Gad, "I have great anxiety. Please, let us fall into the
LORD's hands because His mercies are great, but don't let me fall into
human hands."

15 So the LORD sent a plague on Israel from that morning until the
appointed time, and from Dan to Beer-sheba 70,000 men died. 16 Then the
angel extended his hand toward Jerusalem to destroy it, but the LORD
relented concerning the destruction and said to the angel who was
destroying the people, "Enough, withdraw your hand now! " The angel of
the LORD was then at the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite.

17 When David saw the angel striking the people, he said to the LORD,
"Look, I am the one who has sinned; I am the one who has done wrong.
But these sheep, what have they done? Please, let Your hand be against me
and my father's family."

David's Altar

18 Gad came to David that day and said to him, "Go up and set up an altar
to the LORD on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite." 19 David went
up in obedience to Gad's command, just as the LORD had commanded.
20 Araunah looked down and saw the king and his servants coming toward
him, so he went out and bowed to the king with his face to the ground.

21 Araunah said, "Why has my lord the king come to his servant? "

David replied, “To buy the threshing floor from you in order to build an altar to the LORD, so the plague on the people may be halted.”

[22] Araunah said to David, “My lord the king may take whatever he wants [A] and offer it. Here are the oxen for a •burnt offering and the threshing sledges and ox yokes for the wood. [23] My king, Araunah gives everything here to the king.” Then he said to the king, “May the LORD your God accept you.”

[24†] The king answered Araunah, “No, I insist on buying it from you for a price, for I will not offer to the LORD my God burnt offerings that cost me nothing.” David bought the threshing floor and the oxen for 20 ounces [B] of silver. [25] He built an altar to the LORD there and offered burnt offerings and •fellowship offerings. Then the LORD answered prayer on behalf of the land, and the plague on Israel ended.

1 KINGS

Introduction to 1 Kings

1 KINGS

David's Last Days

1 Now King David was old and getting on in years. Although they
covered him with bedclothes, he could not get warm. 2† So his servants
said to him: “Let us [A] search for a young virgin for my lord the king. She is
to attend the king and be his caregiver. She is to lie by your side so that my
lord the king will get warm.” 3 They searched for a beautiful girl throughout
the territory of Israel; they found Abishag the Shunammite and brought
her to the king. 4 The girl was of unsurpassed beauty, and she became the
king’s caregiver. She served him, but he was not intimate with [B] her.

Adonijah’s Bid for Power

5† Adonijah son of Haggith kept exalting himself, saying, “I will be
king! ” He prepared chariots, cavalry, and 50 men to run ahead of him.
6† But his father had never once reprimanded [C], him by saying, “Why do
you act this way? ” In addition, he was quite handsome and was born after
Absalom. 7 He conspired [D] with Joab son of Zeruiah and with Abiathar the
priest. They supported Adonijah, 8† but Zadok the priest, Benaiah son of
Jehoiada, Nathan the prophet, Shimei, Rei, and David’s warriors did not
side with Adonijah.

9† Adonijah sacrificed sheep, oxen, and fattened cattle near the stone of
Zoheleth, which is next to En-rogel. He invited all his royal brothers and
all the men of Judah, the servants of the king, 10 but he did not invite
Nathan the prophet, Benaiah, the warriors, or his brother Solomon.

Nathan’s and Bathsheba’s Appeals

11 Then Nathan said to Bathsheba, Solomon’s mother, “Have you not
heard that Adonijah son of Haggith has become king and our lord David
does not know it? 12 Now please come and let me advise you. Save your
life and the life of your son Solomon. 13† Go, approach King David and say
to him, ‘My lord the king, did you not swear to your servant: Your son
Solomon is to become king after me, and he is the one who is to sit on my
throne? So why has Adonijah become king? ’ 14 At that moment, while you

are still there speaking with the king, I'll come in after you and confirm
your words."

15 So Bathsheba went to the king in his bedroom. Since the king was very
old, Abishag the Shunammite was serving him. 16 Bathsheba bowed down
and paid homage to the king, and he asked, "What do you want? "

17 She replied, "My lord, you swore to your servant by the LORD your
God, 'Your son Solomon is to become king after me, and he is the one who
is to sit on my throne.' 18 Now look, Adonijah has become king. And, my
lord the king, you didn't know it. 19 He has lavishly sacrificed oxen,
fattened cattle, and sheep. He invited all the king's sons, Abiathar the priest,
and Joab the commander of the army, but he did not invite your servant
Solomon. 20 Now, my lord the king, the eyes of all Israel are on you to tell
them who will sit on the throne of my lord the king after him. 21 Otherwise,
when my lord the king rests with his fathers, I and my son Solomon will be
regarded as criminals."

22 At that moment, while she was still speaking with the king, Nathan the
prophet arrived, 23† and it was announced to the king, "Nathan the prophet
is here." He came into the king's presence and bowed to him with his face
to the ground.

24 "My lord the king," Nathan said, "did you say, 'Adonijah is to become
king after me, and he is the one who is to sit on my throne'? 25 For today he
went down and lavishly sacrificed oxen, fattened cattle, and sheep. He
invited all the sons of the king, the commanders of the army, and Abiathar
the priest. And look! They're eating and drinking in his presence, and
they're saying, 'Long live King Adonijah! ' 26 But he did not invite
me — me, your servant — or Zadok the priest or Benaiah son of Jehoiada
or your servant Solomon. 27† I'm certain my lord the king would not have
let this happen without letting your servant know who will sit on my lord
the king's throne after him."

Solomon Confirmed King

[28] King David responded by saying, “Call in Bathsheba for me.” So she came into the king’s presence and stood before him. [29] The king swore an oath and said, “As the LORD lives, who has redeemed my life from every difficulty, [30] just as I swore to you by the LORD God of Israel: Your son Solomon is to become king after me, and he is the one who is to sit on my throne in my place, that is exactly what I will do this very day.”

[31] Bathsheba bowed with her face to the ground, paying homage to the king, and said, “May my lord King David live forever! ”

[32] King David then said, “Call in Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah son of Jehoiada for me.” So they came into the king’s presence. [33†] The king said to them, “Take my servants with you, have my son Solomon ride on my own mule, and take him down to Gihon. [34] There, Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet are to anoint him as king over Israel. You are to blow the ram’s horn and say, ‘Long live King Solomon! ’ [35†] You are to come up after him, and he is to come in and sit on my throne. He is the one who is to become king in my place; he is the one I have commanded to be ruler over Israel and Judah.”

[36] “•Amen,” Benaiah son of Jehoiada replied to the king. “May the LORD, the God of my lord the king, so affirm it. [37] Just as the LORD was with my lord the king, so may He be with Solomon and make his throne greater than the throne of my lord King David.”

[38†] Then Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, Benaiah son of Jehoiada, the Cherethites, and the Pelethites went down, had Solomon ride on King David’s mule, and took him to Gihon. [39] Zadok the priest took the horn of oil from the tabernacle and anointed Solomon. Then they blew the ram’s horn, and all the people proclaimed, “Long live King Solomon! ” [40] All the people followed him, playing flutes and rejoicing with such a great joy that the earth split open from the sound.

Adonijah Hears of Solomon’s Coronation

[41]† Adonijah and all the invited guests who were with him heard the
noise as they finished eating. Joab heard the sound of the ram's horn and
said, "Why is the town in such an uproar? " [42]† He was still speaking when
Jonathan son of Abiathar the priest, suddenly arrived. Adonijah said,
"Come in, for you are an excellent man, and you must be bringing good
news."

[43] "Unfortunately not," Jonathan answered him. "Our lord King David
has made Solomon king. [44] And with Solomon, the king has sent Zadok the
priest, Nathan the prophet, Benaiah son of Jehoiada, the Cherethites, and
the Pelethites, and they have had him ride on the king's mule. [45]† Zadok the
priest and Nathan the prophet have anointed him king in Gihon. They have
gone from there rejoicing. The town has been in an uproar; that's the noise
you heard. [46] Solomon has even taken his seat on the royal throne.

[47] "The king's servants have also gone to congratulate our lord King
David, saying, 'May your God make the name of Solomon more well
known than your name, and may He make his throne greater than your
throne.' Then the king bowed in worship on his bed. [48] And the king went
on to say this: 'May the Lord God of Israel be praised! Today He has
provided one to sit on my throne, and I am a witness.' " [E]

[49]† Then all of Adonijah's guests got up trembling and went their
separate ways. [50]† Adonijah was afraid of Solomon, so he got up and went
to take hold of the horns of the altar.

[51] It was reported to Solomon: "Look, Adonijah fears King Solomon, and
he has taken hold of the horns of the altar, saying, 'Let King Solomon first
swear to me that he will not kill his servant with the sword.' "

[52]† Then Solomon said, "If he is a man of character, not a single hair of
his will fall to the ground, but if evil is found in him, he dies." [53] So King
Solomon sent for him, and they took him down from the altar. He came and
paid homage to King Solomon, and Solomon said to him, "Go to your
home."

1 KINGS

David's Dying Instructions to Solomon

2 As the time approached for David to die, he instructed his son
Solomon, 2 “As for me, I am going the way of all of the earth. Be
strong and be courageous like a man, 3† and keep your obligation to the
Lord your God to walk in His ways and to keep His statutes, commands,
ordinances, and decrees. This is written in the law of Moses, so that you
will have success in everything you do and wherever you turn, 4 and so that
the Lord will carry out His promise that He made to me: ‘If your sons are
careful to walk faithfully before Me with their whole mind and heart, you
will never fail to have a man on the throne of Israel.’

5 “You also know what Joab son of Zeruiah did to me and what he did to
the two commanders of Israel’s army, Abner son of Ner and Amasa son of
Jether. He murdered them in a time of peace to avenge blood shed in war.
He spilled that blood on his own waistband and on the sandals of his feet.
6† Act according to your wisdom, and do not let his gray head descend to
•Sheol in peace.

7† “Show loyalty to the sons of Barzillai the Gileadite and let them be
among those who eat at your table because they supported me when I fled
from your brother Absalom.

8† “Keep an eye on Shimei son of Gera, the Benjaminite from Bahurim
who is with you. He uttered malicious curses against me the day I went to
Mahanaim. But he came down to meet me at the Jordan River, and I swore
to him by the Lord: ‘I will never kill you with the sword.’ 9† So don’t let
him go unpunished, for you are a wise man. You know how to deal with
him to bring his gray head down to Sheol with blood.”

10 Then David rested with his fathers and was buried in the city of
David. 11 The length of time David reigned over Israel was 40 years: he
reigned seven years in Hebron and 33 years in Jerusalem. 12 Solomon sat
on the throne of his father David, and his kingship was firmly established.

Adonijah’s Foolish Request

[13] Now Adonijah son of Haggith came to Bathsheba, Solomon's mother. She asked, "Do you come peacefully? "

"Peacefully," he replied, [14] and then asked, "May I talk with you? " [A]

"Go ahead," she answered.

[15] "You know the kingship was mine," he said. "All Israel expected me to be king, but then the kingship was turned over to my brother, for the LORD gave it to him. [16†] So now I have just one request of you; don't turn me down." [B]

She said to him, "Go on."

[17] He replied, "Please speak to King Solomon since he won't turn you down. Let him give me Abishag the Shunammite as a wife."

[18] "Very well," Bathsheba replied. "I will speak to the king for you."

[19] So Bathsheba went to King Solomon to speak to him about Adonijah. The king stood up to greet her, bowed to her, sat down on his throne, and had a throne placed for the king's mother. So she sat down at his right hand.

[20] Then she said, "I have just one small request of you. Don't turn me down."

"Go ahead and ask, mother," the king replied, "for I won't turn you down."

[21] So she said, "Let Abishag the Shunammite be given to your brother Adonijah as a wife."

[22†] King Solomon answered his mother, "Why are you requesting Abishag the Shunammite for Adonijah? Since he is my elder brother, you might as well ask the kingship for him, for Abiathar the priest, and for Joab son of Zeruiah." [23] Then Solomon took an oath by the LORD: "May God

punish me and do so severely if Adonijah has not made this request at the
cost of his life. 24 And now, as the LORD lives, the One who established me,
seated me on the throne of my father David, and made me a dynasty as He
promised — I swear Adonijah will be put to death today! ” 25 Then King
Solomon gave the order to Benaiah son of Jehoiada, who struck down
Adonijah, and he died.

Abiathar's Banishment

26 The king said to Abiathar the priest, "Go to your fields in Anathoth.
Even though you deserve to die, I will not put you to death today, since you
carried the ark of the Lord GOD in the presence of my father David and you
suffered through all that my father suffered." 27† So Solomon banished
Abiathar from being the LORD's priest, and it fulfilled the LORD's prophecy
He had spoken at Shiloh against Eli's family.

Joab's Execution

28† The news reached Joab. Since he had supported Adonijah but not Absalom, Joab fled to the LORD's tabernacle and took hold of the horns of the altar.

29 It was reported to King Solomon: "Joab has fled to the LORD's tabernacle and is now beside the altar." Then Solomon sent Benaiah son of Jehoiada and told him, "Go and strike him down! "

30 So Benaiah went to the tabernacle and said to Joab, "This is what the king says: 'Come out! ' "

But Joab said, "No, for I will die here."

So Benaiah took a message back to the king, "This is what Joab said, and this is how he answered me."

31 The king said to him, "Do just as he says. Strike him down and bury
him in order to remove from me and from my father's house the blood that
Joab shed without just cause. 32 The LORD will bring back his own blood on

his head because he struck down two men more righteous and better than
he, without my father David's knowledge. With his sword, Joab murdered
Abner son of Ner, commander of Israel's army, and Amasa son of Jether,
commander of Judah's army. 33 Their blood will come back on Joab's head
and on the head of his descendants forever, but for David, his descendants,
his dynasty, and his throne, there will be peace from the LORD forever."

34† Benaiah son of Jehoiada went up, struck down Joab, and put him to
death. He was buried at his house in the wilderness. 35 Then the king
appointed Benaiah son of Jehoiada in Joab's place over the army, and he
appointed Zadok the priest in Abiathar's place.

Shimei's Banishment and Execution

36 Then the king summoned Shimei and said to him, "Build a house for
yourself in Jerusalem and live there, but don't leave there and go anywhere
else. 37† On the day you do leave and cross the Kidron Valley, know for
sure that you will certainly die. Your blood will be on your own head."

38 Shimei said to the king, "The sentence is fair; your servant will do as
my lord the king has spoken." And Shimei lived in Jerusalem for a long
time.

39† But then, at the end of three years, two of Shimei's slaves ran away to
Achish son of Maacah, king of Gath. Shimei was informed, "Look, your
slaves are in Gath." 40 So Shimei saddled his donkey and set out to Achish
at Gath to search for his slaves. He went and brought them back from Gath.

41 It was reported to Solomon that Shimei had gone from Jerusalem to
Gath and had returned. 42 So the king summoned Shimei and said to him,
"Didn't I make you swear by the LORD and warn you, saying, 'On the day
you leave and go anywhere else, know for sure that you will certainly die'?
And you said to me, 'The sentence is fair; I will obey.' 43 So why have you
not kept the LORD's oath and the command that I gave you? " 44 The king
also said, "You yourself know all the evil that you did to my father David.
Therefore, the LORD has brought back your evil on your head, 45 but King

Solomon will be blessed, and David's throne will remain established before the LORD forever."

46† Then the king commanded Benaiah son of Jehoiada, and he went out
and struck Shimei down, and he died. So the kingdom was established in
Solomon's hand.

1 KINGS

The LORD Appears to Solomon

3 [†]Solomon made an alliance [A] with Pharaoh king of Egypt by marrying
Pharaoh's daughter. Solomon brought her to live in the city of David
until he finished building his palace, the LORD's temple, and the wall
surrounding Jerusalem. 2[†] However, the people were sacrificing on the
•high places, because until that time a temple for the LORD's name had not
been built. 3[†] Solomon loved the LORD by walking in the statutes of his
father David, but he also sacrificed and burned incense on the high places.

4[†] The king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there because it was the most
famous high place. He offered 1,000 •burnt offerings on that altar. 5 At
Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream at night. God said,
"Ask. What should I give you? "

6 And Solomon replied, "You have shown great and faithful love to Your
servant, my father David, because he walked before You in faithfulness,
righteousness, and [B] integrity. You have continued this great and faithful
love for him by giving him a son to sit on his throne, as it is today.

7[†] "LORD my God, You have now made Your servant king in my father
David's place. Yet I am just a youth with no experience in leadership. [C],
8 Your servant is among Your people You have chosen, a [D] people too
numerous to be numbered or counted. 9 So give Your servant an obedient
heart to judge Your people and to discern between good and evil. For who
is able to judge this great people of Yours? "

10 Now it pleased the Lord that Solomon had requested this. 11[†] So God
said to him, "Because you have requested this and did not ask for long life [E]
or riches for yourself, or the death [F] of your enemies, but you asked
discernment for yourself to understand justice, 12 I will therefore do what
you have asked. I will give you a wise and understanding heart, so that
there has never been anyone like you before and never will be again. 13 In
addition, I will give you what you did not ask for: both riches and honor, so
that no man in any kingdom will be your equal during your entire life. 14 If
you walk in My ways and keep My statutes and commands just as your
father David did, I will give you a long life."

15 Then Solomon woke up and realized it had been a dream. He went to
Jerusalem, stood before the ark of the Lord's covenant, and offered burnt
offerings and •fellowship offerings. Then he held a feast for all his
servants.

Solomon's Wisdom

16[†] Then two women who were prostitutes came to the king and stood
before him. 17 One woman said, "Please my lord, this woman and I live in
the same house, and I had a baby while she was in the house. 18[†] On the
third day after I gave birth, she also had a baby and we were alone. No one
else [G] was with us in the house; just the two of us were there. 19 During the
night this woman's son died because she lay on him. 20 She got up in the
middle of the night and took my son from my side while your servant was
asleep. She laid him at her breast, and she put her dead son in my arms.
21 When I got up in the morning to nurse my son, I discovered he was dead.
That morning, when I looked closely at him I realized that he was not the
son I gave birth to."

22 "No," the other woman said. "My son is the living one; your son is the
dead one."

The first woman said, "No, your son is the dead one; my son is the living
one." So they argued before the king.

23 The king replied, "This woman says, 'This is my son who is alive, and
your son is dead,' but that woman says, 'No, your son is dead, and my son
is alive.' " 24 The king continued, "Bring me a sword." So they brought the
sword to the king. 25 Solomon said, "Cut the living boy in two and give half
to one and half to the other."

26 The woman whose son was alive spoke to the king because she felt
great compassion [H] for her son. "My lord, give her the living baby," she
said, "but please don't have him killed! "

But the other one said, "He will not be mine or yours. Cut him in two! "

[27] The king responded, “Give the living baby to the first woman, and
don’t kill him. She is his mother.” [28] All Israel heard about the judgment the
king had given, and they stood in awe of the king because they saw that
God’s wisdom was in him to carry out justice.

1 KINGS

Solomon's Officials

4

King Solomon ruled over Israel, [2†] and these were his officials:

Azariah son of Zadok, priest;
[3] Elihoreph and Ahijah the sons of Shisha, secretaries;
Jehoshaphat son of Ahilud, court historian;
[4†] Benaiah son of Jehoiada, in charge of the army;
Zadok and Abiathar, priests;
[5] Azariah son of Nathan, in charge of the deputies;
Zabud son of Nathan, a priest and adviser to the king;
[6] Ahishar, in charge of the palace;
and Adoniram son of Abda, in charge of forced labor.

[7†] Solomon had 12 deputies for all Israel. They provided food for the
king and his household; each one made provision for one month out of the
year. [8†] These were their names:

Ben-hur, in the hill country of Ephraim;
[9†] Ben-deker, in Makaz, Shaalbim, Beth-shemesh, and Elon-beth-hanan;
[10†] Ben-hesed, in Arubboth (he had Socoh and the whole land of Hepher);
[11†] Ben-abinadab, in all Naphath-dor (Taphath daughter of Solomon was his wife);
[12†] Baana son of Ahilud, in Taanach, Megiddo, and all Beth-shean which is beside Zarethan below Jezreel, from Beth-shean to Abel-meholah, as far as the other side of Jokmeam;
[13†] Ben-geber, in Ramoth-gilead (he had the villages of Jair son of Manasseh, which are in Gilead, and he had the region of Argob, which is in Bashan, 60 great cities with walls and bronze bars);
[14†] Ahinadab son of Iddo, in Mahanaim;
[15†] Ahimaaz, in Naphtali (he also had married a daughter of Solomon — Basemath);
[16†] Baana son of Hushai, in Asher and Bealoth;
[17†] Jehoshaphat son of Paruah, in Issachar;

18[†] Shimei son of Ela, in Benjamin;
19[†] Geber son of Uri, in the land of Gilead, the country of Sihon king of
the Amorites and of Og king of Bashan.

There was one deputy in the land of Judah.

Solomon's Provisions

20 Judah and Israel were as numerous as the sand by the sea; they were
eating, drinking, and rejoicing. 21 [A]Solomon ruled over all the kingdoms
from the Euphrates River to the land of the Philistines and as far as the
border of Egypt. They offered tribute and served Solomon all the days of
his life.

22 Solomon's provisions for one day were 150 bushels [B] of fine flour and
300 bushels [C] of meal, 23 10 fattened oxen, 20 range oxen, and 100 sheep,
besides deer, gazelles, roebucks, and pen-fed poultry, [D], 24[†] for he had
dominion over everything west of the Euphrates from Tiphsah to Gaza and
over all the kings west of the Euphrates. He had peace on all his
surrounding borders. 25 Throughout Solomon's reign, Judah and Israel lived
in safety from Dan to Beer-sheba, each man under his own vine and his
own fig tree. 26[†] Solomon had 40,000 stalls of horses for his chariots, and
12,000 horsemen. 27 Each of those deputies for a month in turn provided
food for King Solomon and for everyone who came to King Solomon's
table. They neglected nothing. 28 Each man brought the barley and the straw
for the chariot teams and the other horses to the required place according to
his assignment. [E]

Solomon's Wisdom and Literary Gifts

29 God gave Solomon wisdom, very great insight, and understanding as
vast as the sand on the seashore. 30 Solomon's wisdom was greater than the
wisdom of all the people of the East, greater than all the wisdom of Egypt.
31 He was wiser than anyone — wiser than Ethan the Ezrahite, and
Heman, Calcol, and Darda, sons of Mahol. His reputation extended to all
the surrounding nations.

[32]† Solomon composed 3,000 proverbs, and his songs numbered 1,005.
[33] He described trees, from the cedar in Lebanon to the hyssop growing out
of the wall. He also taught about animals, birds, reptiles, and fish. [34] People
came from everywhere, sent by every king on earth who had heard of his
wisdom, to listen to Solomon's wisdom.

1 KINGS

Chapter 5 *Hiram's Building Materials*

[1]Hiram king of Tyre sent his servants to Solomon when he heard that he
had been anointed king in his father's place, for Hiram had always been
friends with David.

[2] Solomon sent this message to Hiram: [3] "You know my father David
was not able to build a temple for the name of •Yahweh his God. This was
because of the warfare all around him until the LORD put his enemies under
his feet. [4] The LORD my God has now given me rest all around; there is no
enemy or crisis. [5] So I plan to build a temple for the name of Yahweh my
God, according to what the LORD promised my father David: 'I will put
your son on your throne in your place, and he will build the temple for My
name.'

[6†] "Therefore, command that cedars from Lebanon be cut down for me.
My servants will be with your servants, and I will pay your servants' wages
according to whatever you say, for you know that not a man among us
knows how to cut timber like the Sidonians."

[7] When Hiram heard Solomon's words, he greatly rejoiced and said,
"May the LORD be praised today! He has given David a wise son to be over
this great people! " [8] Then Hiram sent a reply to Solomon, saying, "I have
heard your message; I will do everything you want regarding the cedar and
cypress timber. [9] My servants will bring the logs down from Lebanon to the
sea, and I will make them into rafts to go by sea to the place you indicate. I
will break them apart there, and you can take them away. You then can meet
my needs by providing my household with food."

[10] So Hiram provided Solomon with all the cedar and cypress timber he
wanted, [11] and Solomon provided Hiram with 100,000 bushels [A] of wheat
as food for his household and 110,000 gallons of oil from crushed olives.
Solomon did this for Hiram year after year.

[12] The LORD gave Solomon wisdom, as He had promised him. There was
peace between Hiram and Solomon, and the two of them made a treaty.

Solomon's Work Force

[13]† Then King Solomon drafted forced laborers from all Israel; the labor
force numbered 30,000 men. [14]† He sent 10,000 to Lebanon each month in
shifts; one month they were in Lebanon, two months they were at home.
Adoniram was in charge of the forced labor. [15]† Solomon had 70,000
porters and 80,000 stonecutters in the mountains, [16] not including his
3,300 deputies in charge of the work. They ruled over the people doing the
work. [17] The king commanded them to quarry large, costly stones to lay the
foundation of the temple with dressed stones. [18] So Solomon's builders and
Hiram's builders, along with the Gebalites, quarried the stone and
prepared the timber and stone for the temple's construction.

1 KINGS

Building the Temple

6 [†]Solomon began to build the temple for the LORD in the four hundred
eightieth year after the Israelites came out of the land of Egypt, in the
fourth year of his reign over Israel, in the second month, in the month of
Ziv. 2 The temple that King Solomon built for the LORD was 90 feet [A] long,
30 feet [B] wide, and 45 feet [C] high. 3 The portico in front of the temple
sanctuary was 30 feet [D] long extending across the temple's width, and 15
feet deep [E] in front of the temple. 4 He also made windows with beveled
frames [F] for the temple.

5 He then built a chambered structure [G] along the temple wall, encircling
the walls of the temple, that is, the sanctuary and the inner sanctuary. And
he made side chambers [H] all around. 6 The lowest chamber was 7 1/2 feet [I]
wide, the middle was nine feet [J] wide, and the third was 10 1/2 feet [K] wide.
He also provided offset ledges for the temple all around the outside so that
nothing would be inserted into the temple walls. 7 The temple's construction
used finished stones cut at the quarry so that no hammer, chisel, or any iron
tool was heard in the temple while it was being built.

8 The door for the lowest side chamber was on the right side of the
temple. They went up a stairway [L] to the middle chamber, and from the
middle to the third. 9 When he finished building the temple, he paneled it
with boards and planks of cedar. 10 He built the chambers along the entire
temple, joined to the temple with cedar beams; each story was 7 1/2 feet [M]
high.

11 The word of the LORD came to Solomon: 12 "As for this temple you
are building — if you walk in My statutes, observe My ordinances, and
keep all My commands by walking in them, I will fulfill My promise to
you, which I made to your father David. 13 I will live among the Israelites
and not abandon My people Israel."

14[†] When Solomon finished building the temple, 15 he paneled the
interior temple walls with cedar boards; from the temple floor to the surface
of the ceiling he overlaid the interior with wood. He also overlaid the floor
with cypress boards. 16 Then he lined 30 feet [N] of the rear of the temple

with cedar boards from the floor to the surface of the ceiling, and he built
the interior as an inner sanctuary, the most holy place. 17 The temple, that
is, the sanctuary in front of the most holy place, [O] was 60 feet [P] long.
18† The cedar paneling inside the temple was carved with ornamental
gourds and flower blossoms. Everything was cedar; not a stone could be
seen.

19 He prepared the inner sanctuary inside the temple to put the ark of the
LORD's covenant there. 20 The interior of the sanctuary was 30 feet [Q] long,
30 feet [R] wide, and 30 feet [S] high; he overlaid it with pure gold. He also
overlaid the cedar altar. 21† Next, Solomon overlaid the interior of the
temple with pure gold, and he hung [T] gold chains across the front of the
inner sanctuary and overlaid it with gold. 22 So he added the gold overlay
to the entire temple until everything was completely finished, including the
entire altar that belongs to the inner sanctuary.

ARTICLE

Can Biblical Chronology Be Trusted? ⇒

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23 In the inner sanctuary he made two •cherubim 15 feet [U] high out of
olive wood. 24 One wing of the first cherub was 7 1/2 feet long, [V] and the
other wing was 7 1/2 feet long. The wingspan was 15 feet [W] from tip to tip.
25 The second cherub also was 15 feet; [X] both cherubim had the same size
and shape. 26 The first cherub's height was 15 feet [Y] and so was the second
cherub's. 27 Then he put the cherubim inside the inner temple. Since their
wings were spread out, the first one's wing touched one wall while the
second cherub's wing touched the other [Z] wall, and in the middle of the
temple their wings were touching wing to wing. 28 He also overlaid the
cherubim with gold.

29 He carved all the surrounding temple walls with carved
engravings — cherubim, palm trees and flower blossoms — in both the
inner and outer sanctuaries. 30 He overlaid the temple floor with gold in
both the inner and outer sanctuaries.

31 For the entrance of the inner sanctuary, he made olive wood doors.
The pillars of the doorposts were five-sided. [A] 32 The two doors were made
of olive wood. He carved cherubim, palm trees, and flower blossoms on
them and overlaid them with gold, hammering gold over the cherubim and
palm trees. 33 In the same way, he made four-sided [B] olive wood doorposts
for the sanctuary entrance. 34 The two doors were made of cypress wood;
the first door had two folding sides, and the second door had two folding
panels. 35 He carved cherubim, palm trees, and flower blossoms on them
and overlaid them with gold applied evenly over the carving. 36 He built the
inner courtyard with three rows of dressed stone and a row of trimmed
cedar beams.

37† The foundation of the LORD's temple was laid in Solomon's fourth
year in the month of Ziv. 38† In his eleventh year in the eighth month, in the
month of Bul, the temple was completed in every detail and according to
every specification. So he built it in seven years.

1 KINGS

Solomon's Palace Complex

7 †Solomon completed his entire palace complex after 13 years of
construction. 2† He built the House of the Forest of Lebanon. It was
150 feet [A] long, 75 feet [B] wide, and 45 feet [C] high on four rows of cedar
pillars, with cedar beams on top of the pillars. 3 It was paneled above with
cedar at the top of the chambers that rested on 45 pillars, 15 per row.
4 There were three rows of window frames, facing each other [D] in three
tiers. [E], 5 All the doors and doorposts had rectangular frames, the openings
facing each other [F] in three tiers. [G] 6 He made the hall of pillars 75 feet [H]
long and 45 feet [I] wide. A portico was in front of the pillars, and a canopy
with pillars [J] was in front of them. 7 He made the Hall of the Throne where
he would judge — the Hall of Judgment. It was paneled with cedar from
the floor to the rafters. 8 Solomon's own palace where he would live, in the
other courtyard behind the hall, was of similar construction. And he made a
house like this hall for Pharaoh's daughter, his wife. [K]

9 All of these buildings were of costly stones, cut to size and sawed with
saws on the inner and outer surfaces, from foundation to coping and from
the outside to the great courtyard. 10 The foundation was made of large,
costly stones 12 and 15 feet [L] long. 11 Above were also costly stones, cut to
size, as well as cedar wood. 12 Around the great courtyard, as well as the
inner courtyard of the LORD's temple and the portico of the temple, were
three rows of dressed stone and a row of trimmed cedar beams.

13† King Solomon had Hiram brought from Tyre. 14† He was a widow's
son from the tribe of Naphtali, and his father was a man of Tyre, a bronze
craftsman. Hiram had great skill, understanding, and knowledge to do
every kind of bronze work. So he came to King Solomon and carried out all
his work.

The Bronze Pillars

15 He cast two hollow bronze pillars: each 27 feet [M] high and 18 feet [N] in
circumference. 16 He also made two capitals of cast bronze to set on top of
the pillars; 7 1/2 feet [O] was the height of the first capital, and 7 1/2 feet [P] was
also the height of the second capital. 17 The capitals on top of the pillars had

gratings of latticework, wreaths [Q] made of chainwork — seven for the first capital and seven for the second.

[18] He made the pillars with two encircling rows of pomegranates on the
one grating to cover the capital on top; he did the same for the second
capital. [19] And the capitals on top of the pillars in the portico were shaped
like lilies, six feet [R] high. [20] The capitals on the two pillars were also
immediately above the rounded surface next to the grating, and 200
pomegranates were in rows encircling each [S] capital. [21†] He set up the
pillars at the portico of the sanctuary: he set up the right pillar and named it
Jachin; then he set up the left pillar and named it Boaz. [22] The tops of the
pillars were shaped like lilies. Then the work of the pillars was completed.

The Reservoir

[23†] He made the cast metal reservoir, [T], 15 feet [U] from brim to brim,
perfectly round. It was 7 1/2 feet [V] high and 45 feet [W] in circumference.
[24] Ornamental gourds encircled it below the brim, 10 every half yard, [X]
completely encircling the reservoir. The gourds were cast in two rows
when the reservoir was cast. [25] It stood on 12 oxen, three facing north,
three facing west, three facing south, and three facing east. The reservoir
was on top of them and all their hindquarters were toward the center. [26] The
reservoir was three inches [Y] thick, and its rim was fashioned like the brim
of a cup or of a lily blossom. It held 11,000 gallons. [Z]

The Bronze Water Carts

[27] Then he made 10 bronze water carts. [A], Each water cart was six feet [B]
long, six feet [C] wide, and 4 1/2 feet [D] high. [28] This was the design of the
carts: They had frames; the frames were between the cross-pieces, [29] and on
the frames between the cross-pieces were lions, oxen, and •cherubim. On
the cross-pieces there was a pedestal above, and below the lions and oxen
were wreaths of hanging [E] work. [30] Each cart had four bronze wheels with
bronze axles. Underneath the four corners of the basin were cast supports,
each next to a wreath. [31] And the water cart's opening inside the crown on

top was 18 inches [F] wide. The opening was round, made as a pedestal 27
inches [G] wide. On it were carvings, but their frames were square, not round.
32 There were four wheels under the frames, and the wheel axles were part
of the water cart; each wheel was 27 inches [H] tall. 33 The wheels' design
was similar to that of chariot wheels: their axles, rims, spokes, and hubs
were all of cast metal. 34 Four supports were at the four corners of each
water cart; each support was one piece with the water cart. 35 At the top of
the cart was a band nine inches [I] high encircling it; also, at the top of the
cart, its braces and its frames were one piece with it. 36 He engraved
cherubim, lions, and palm trees on the plates of its braces and on its
frames, wherever each had space, with encircling wreaths. 37 In this way he
made the 10 water carts using the same casting, dimensions, and shape for
all of them.

Bronze Basins and Other Utensils

38 Then he made 10 bronze basins — each basin holding 220 gallons [J]
and each was six feet [K] wide — one basin for each of the 10 water carts.
39† He set five water carts on the right side of the temple and five on the left
side. He put the reservoir near the right side of the temple toward the
southeast. 40 Then Hiram made the basins, the shovels, and the sprinkling
basins.

Completion of the Bronze Works

So Hiram finished all the work that he was doing for King Solomon on
the LORD's temple: 41 two pillars; bowls for the capitals that were on top of
the two pillars; the two gratings for covering both bowls of the capitals that
were on top of the pillars; 42 the 400 pomegranates for the two gratings
(two rows of pomegranates for each grating covering both capitals' bowls
on top of the pillars); 43 the 10 water carts; the 10 basins on the water
carts; 44† the reservoir; the 12 oxen underneath the reservoir; 45 and the
pots, shovels, and sprinkling basins. All the utensils that Hiram made for
King Solomon at the LORD's temple were made of burnished bronze.
46† The king had them cast in clay molds in the Jordan Valley between

Succoth and Zarethan. 47† Solomon left all the utensils unweighed because
there were so many; the weight of the bronze was not determined.

Completion of the Gold Furnishings

48† Solomon also made all the equipment in the LORD's temple: the gold
altar; the gold table that the •bread of the Presence was placed on; 49 the
pure gold lampstands in front of the inner sanctuary, five on the right and
five on the left; the gold flowers, lamps, and tongs; 50 the pure gold
ceremonial bowls, wick trimmers, sprinkling basins, ladles, L and firepans;
and the gold hinges for the doors of the inner temple (that is, the most holy
place) and for the doors of the temple sanctuary.

51 So all the work King Solomon did in the LORD's temple was
completed. Then Solomon brought in the consecrated things of his father
David — the silver, the gold, and the utensils — and put them in the
treasuries of the LORD's temple.

1 KINGS

Solomon's Dedication of the Temple

8 At that time Solomon assembled the elders of Israel, all the tribal
heads and the ancestral leaders of the Israelites before him at Jerusalem
in order to bring the ark of the LORD's covenant from the city of David, that
is •Zion. 2† So all the men of Israel were assembled in the presence of King
Solomon in the seventh month, the month of Ethanim, at the festival.

3 All the elders of Israel came, and the priests picked up the ark. 4 The
priests and the Levites brought the ark of the LORD, the tent of meeting, and
the holy utensils that were in the tent. 5 King Solomon and the entire
congregation of Israel, who had gathered around him and were with him in
front of the ark, were sacrificing sheep and cattle that could not be counted
or numbered, because there were so many. 6 The priests brought the ark of
the LORD's covenant to its place, into the inner sanctuary of the temple, to
the most holy place beneath the wings of the •cherubim. 7† For the
cherubim were spreading their wings over the place of the ark, so that the
cherubim covered the ark and its poles from above. 8† The poles were so
long that their ends were seen from the holy place in front of the inner
sanctuary, but they were not seen from outside the sanctuary; they are there
to this day. 9† Nothing was in the ark except the two stone tablets that
Moses had put there at Horeb, where the LORD made a covenant with the
Israelites when they came out of the land of Egypt.

10 When the priests came out of the holy place, the cloud filled the
LORD's temple, 11† and because of the cloud, the priests were not able to
continue ministering, for the glory of the LORD filled the temple.

12 Then Solomon said:

The LORD said that He would dwell in thick darkness.
13 I have indeed built an exalted temple for You,
a place for Your dwelling forever.

14 The king turned around and blessed the entire congregation of Israel
while they were standing. 15 He said:

May the LORD God of Israel be praised!

He spoke directly to my father David,
and He has fulfilled the promise by His power.
He said,
16 "Since the day I brought My people Israel out of Egypt,
I have not chosen a city to build a temple in
among any of the tribes of Israel,
so that My name would be there.
But I have chosen David to rule My people Israel."
17 It was in the desire of my father David
to build a temple for the name of •Yahweh, the God of Israel.
18 But the LORD said to my father David,
"Since it was your desire to build a temple for My name,
you have done well to have this desire.
19 Yet you are not the one to build it;
instead, your son, your own offspring,
will build it for My name."
20 The LORD has fulfilled what He promised.
I have taken the place of my father David,
and I sit on the throne of Israel, as the LORD promised.
I have built the temple for the name of Yahweh, the God of Israel.
21 I have provided a place there for the ark,
where the LORD's covenant is
that He made with our ancestors
when He brought them out of the land of Egypt.

Solomon's Prayer

22 Then Solomon stood before the altar of the LORD in front of the entire congregation of Israel and spread out his hands toward heaven. 23† He said:

LORD God of Israel,
there is no God like You
in heaven above or on earth below,
keeping the gracious covenant
with Your servants who walk before You
with their whole heart.

24 You have kept what You promised
to Your servant, my father David.
You spoke directly to him
and You fulfilled Your promise by Your power
as it is today.
25 Therefore, LORD God of Israel,
keep what You promised
to Your servant, my father David:
You will never fail to have a man
to sit before Me on the throne of Israel,
if only your sons guard their walk before Me
as you have walked before Me.
26 Now LORD God of Israel,
please confirm what You promised
to Your servant, my father David.
27 But will God indeed live on earth?
Even heaven, the highest heaven, cannot contain You,
much less this temple I have built.
28 Listen [A] to Your servant's prayer and his petition,
LORD my God,
so that You may hear the cry and the prayer
that Your servant prays before You today,
29 so that Your eyes may watch over this temple night and day,
toward the place where You said:
My name will be there,
and so that You may hear the prayer
that Your servant prays toward this place.
30 Hear the petition of Your servant
and Your people Israel,
which they pray toward this place.
May You hear in Your dwelling place in heaven.
May You hear and forgive.
31† When a man sins against his neighbor
and is forced to take an oath, [B],
and he comes to take an oath
before Your altar in this temple,

32[†] may You hear in heaven and act.
May You judge Your servants,
condemning the wicked man by bringing
what he has done on his own head
and providing justice for the righteous
by rewarding him according to his righteousness.
33[†] When Your people Israel are defeated before an enemy,
because they have sinned against You,
and they return to You and praise Your name,
and they pray and plead with You
for mercy in this temple,
34 may You hear in heaven
and forgive the sin of Your people Israel.
May You restore them to the land
You gave their ancestors.
35 When the skies are shut and there is no rain,
because they have sinned against You,
and they pray toward this place
and praise Your name,
and they turn from their sins
because You are afflicting them,
36 may You hear in heaven
and forgive the sin of Your servants
and Your people Israel,
so that You may teach them the good way
they should walk in.
May You send rain on Your land
that You gave Your people for an inheritance.
37 When there is famine on the earth,
when there is pestilence,
when there is blight, mildew, locust, or grasshopper,
when their enemy besieges them
in the region of their fortified cities, [C]
when there is any plague or illness,
38 whatever prayer or petition
anyone from Your people Israel might have —

each man knowing his own afflictions [D],
and spreading out his hands toward this temple —
39 may You hear in heaven, Your dwelling place,
and may You forgive, act, and repay the man,
according to all his ways, since You know his heart,
for You alone know every human heart,
40 so that they may •fear You
all the days they live on the land
You gave our ancestors.
41† Even for the foreigner who is not of Your people Israel
but has come from a distant land
because of Your name —
42† for they will hear of Your great name,
mighty hand, and outstretched arm,
and will come and pray toward this temple —
43 may You hear in heaven, Your dwelling place,
and do according to all the foreigner asks You for.
Then all the people on earth will know Your name,
to fear You as Your people Israel do
and know that this temple I have built
is called by Your name.
44 When Your people go out to fight against their enemies,
wherever You send them,
and they pray to Yahweh
in the direction of the city You have chosen
and the temple I have built for Your name,
45 may You hear their prayer and petition in heaven
and uphold their cause.
46 When they sin against You —
for there is no one who does not sin —
and You are angry with them
and hand them over to the enemy,
and their captors deport them to the enemy's country —
whether distant or nearby —
47 and when they come to their senses [E]
in the land where they were deported

and repent and petition You in their captors' land:
"We have sinned and done wrong;
we have been wicked,"
48 and when they return to You with their whole mind and heart
in the land of their enemies who took them captive,
and when they pray to You in the direction of their land
that You gave their ancestors,
the city You have chosen,
and the temple I have built for Your name,
49 may You hear in heaven, Your dwelling place,
their prayer and petition and uphold their cause.
50 May You forgive Your people
who sinned against You
and all their rebellions [F] against You,
and may You give them compassion
in the eyes of their captors,
so that they may be compassionate to them.
51† For they are Your people and Your inheritance;
You brought them out of Egypt,
out of the middle of an iron furnace.
52 May Your eyes be open to Your servant's petition
and to the petition of Your people Israel,
listening to them whenever they call to You.
53 For You, Lord God, have set them apart as Your inheritance
from all the people on earth,
as You spoke through Your servant Moses
when You brought their ancestors out of Egypt.

Solomon's Blessing

54 When Solomon finished praying this entire prayer and petition to the
Lord, he got up from kneeling before the altar of the Lord, with his hands
spread out toward heaven, 55 and he stood and blessed the whole
congregation of Israel with a loud voice: 56 "May the Lord be praised! He
has given rest to His people Israel according to all He has said. Not one of
all the good promises He made through His servant Moses has failed.

[57] May the LORD our God be with us as He was with our ancestors. May He
not abandon us or leave us [58] so that He causes us to be devoted [G] to Him,
to walk in all His ways, and to keep His commands, statutes, and
ordinances, which He commanded our ancestors. [59] May my words I have
made my petition with before the LORD be near the LORD our God day and
night, so that He may uphold His servant's cause and the cause of His
people Israel, as each day requires, [60] and so that all the peoples of the
earth may know that Yahweh is God. There is no other! [61] Let your heart
be completely devoted to the LORD our God to walk in His statutes and to
keep His commands, as it is today."

[62] The king and all Israel with him were offering sacrifices in the LORD's
presence. [63†] Solomon offered a sacrifice of •fellowship offerings to the
LORD: 22,000 cattle and 120,000 sheep. In this manner the king and all the
Israelites dedicated the LORD's temple.

[64†] On the same day, the king consecrated the middle of the courtyard that was in front of the LORD's temple because that was where he offered the •burnt offering, the •grain offering, and the fat of the fellowship offerings since the bronze altar before the LORD was too small to accommodate the burnt offerings, the grain offerings, and the fat of the fellowship offerings.

[65†] Solomon and all Israel with him — a great assembly, from the
entrance of Hamath [H], to the Brook of Egypt — observed the festival at
that time in the presence of the LORD our God, seven days, and seven more
days — 14 days. [66†] On the fifteenth day [I] he sent the people away. So they
blessed the king and went home to their tents rejoicing and with joyful
hearts for all the goodness that the LORD had done for His servant David and
for His people Israel.

1 KINGS

The LORD's Response

9 When Solomon finished building the temple of the LORD, the royal
palace, and all that Solomon desired to do, 2 the LORD appeared to
Solomon a second time just as He had appeared to him at Gibeon. 3 The
LORD said to him:

I have heard your prayer and petition you have made before Me. I have consecrated this temple you have built, to put My name there forever; My eyes and My heart will be there at all times.

4 As for you, if you walk before Me as your father David walked,
with a heart of integrity and in what is right, doing everything I
have commanded you, and if you keep My statutes and
ordinances, 5 I will establish your royal throne over Israel forever,
as I promised your father David: You will never fail to have a man
on the throne of Israel.

6 If you or your sons turn away from following Me and do not
keep My commands — My statutes that I have set before
you — and if you go and serve other gods and worship them, 7 I
will cut off Israel from the land I gave them, and I will reject [A]
the temple I have sanctified for My name. Israel will become an
object of scorn and ridicule among all the peoples. 8† Though this
temple is now exalted, everyone who passes by will be appalled
and will mock. [B] They will say: Why did the LORD do this to this
land and this temple? 9 Then they will say: Because they
abandoned the LORD their God who brought their ancestors out of
the land of Egypt. They clung to other gods and worshiped and
served them. Because of this, the LORD brought all this ruin on
them.

King Hiram's 20 Towns

10 At the end of 20 years during which Solomon had built the two houses,
the LORD's temple and the royal palace — 11 Hiram king of Tyre having
supplied him with cedar and cypress logs and gold for his every
wish — King Solomon gave Hiram 20 towns in the land of Galilee. 12 So
Hiram went out from Tyre to look over the towns that Solomon had given

him, but he was not pleased with them. [13†] So he said, “What are these towns you’ve given me, my brother? ” So he called them the Land of Cabul, as they are still called today. [14] Now Hiram had sent the king 9,000 pounds [C] of gold.

Solomon’s Forced Labor

[15†] This is the account of the forced labor that King Solomon had imposed to build the LORD’s temple, his own palace, the supporting terraces, the wall of Jerusalem, and Hazor, Megiddo, and Gezer.
[16] Pharaoh king of Egypt had attacked and captured Gezer. He then burned it down, killed the Canaanites who lived in the city, and gave it as a dowry to his daughter, Solomon’s wife. [17] Then Solomon rebuilt Gezer, Lower Beth-horon, [18] Baalath, Tamar in the Wilderness of Judah, [19] all the storage cities that belonged to Solomon, the chariot cities, the cavalry cities, and whatever Solomon desired to build in Jerusalem, Lebanon, or anywhere else in the land of his dominion.

[20] As for all the peoples who remained of the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites, who were not Israelites — [21†] their descendants who remained in the land after them, those whom the Israelites were unable to •completely destroy — Solomon imposed forced labor on them; it is this way until today. [22†] But Solomon did not consign the Israelites to slavery; they were soldiers, his servants, his commanders, his captains, and commanders of his chariots and his cavalry. [23] These were the deputies who were over Solomon’s work: 550 who ruled over the people doing the work.

Solomon’s Other Activities

[24] Pharaoh’s daughter moved from the city of David to the house that Solomon had built for her; he then built the terraces.

[25] Three times a year Solomon offered •burnt offerings and •fellowship offerings on the altar he had built for the LORD, and he burned incense with them in the LORD’s presence. So he completed the temple.

[26] King Solomon put together a fleet of ships at Ezion-geber, which is near Eloth on the shore of the •Red Sea in the land of Edom. [27] With the fleet, Hiram sent his servants, experienced seamen, along with Solomon's servants. [28] They went to Ophir and acquired gold there — 16 tons [D] — and delivered it to Solomon.

1 KINGS

The Queen of Sheba

10 The queen of Sheba heard about Solomon's fame connected with the
name of •Yahweh and came to test him with difficult questions. [2] She
came to Jerusalem with a very large entourage, with camels bearing spices,
gold in great abundance, and precious stones. She came to Solomon and
spoke to him about everything that was on her mind. [3] So Solomon
answered all her questions; nothing was too difficult for the king to explain
to her. [4] When the queen of Sheba observed all of Solomon's wisdom, the
palace he had built, [5] the food at his table, his servants' residence, his
attendants' service and their attire, his cupbearers, and the •burnt offerings
he offered at the LORD's temple, it took her breath away.

[6] She said to the king, "The report I heard in my own country about your
words and about your wisdom is true. [7] But I didn't believe the reports until
I came and saw with my own eyes. Indeed, I was not even told half. Your
wisdom and prosperity far exceed the report I heard. [8] How happy are your
men. How happy are these servants of yours, who always stand in your
presence hearing your wisdom. [9] May Yahweh your God be praised! He
delighted in you and put you on the throne of Israel, because of the LORD's
eternal love for Israel. He has made you king to carry out justice and
righteousness."

[10] Then she gave the king four and a half tons [A] of gold, a great quantity
of spices, and precious stones. Never again did such a quantity of spices
arrive as those the queen of Sheba gave to King Solomon.

[11†] In addition, Hiram's fleet that carried gold from Ophir brought from
Ophir a large quantity of almug wood and precious stones. [12] The king
made the almug wood into steps for the LORD's temple and the king's palace
and into lyres and harps for the singers. Never before had such almug wood
come, and the like has not been seen again even to this very day.

[13] King Solomon gave the queen of Sheba her every desire — whatever
she asked — besides what he had given her out of his royal bounty. Then
she, along with her servants, returned to her own country.

Solomon's Wealth

[14] The weight of gold that came to Solomon annually was 25 tons, [B]
[15] besides what came from merchants, traders' merchandise, and all the Arabian kings and governors of the land.

[16] King Solomon made 200 large shields of hammered gold; 15 pounds [C] of gold went into each shield.
[17] He made 300 small shields of hammered gold; about four pounds [D] of gold went into each shield. The king put them in the House of the Forest of Lebanon.

[18] The king also made a large ivory throne and overlaid it with fine gold.
[19] The throne had six steps; there was a rounded top at the back of the throne, armrests on either side of the seat, and two lions standing beside the
armrests. [20] Twelve lions were standing there on the six steps, one at each end. Nothing like it had ever been made in any other kingdom.

[21] All of King Solomon's drinking cups were gold, and all the utensils of the House of the Forest of Lebanon were pure gold. There was no silver,
since it was considered as nothing in Solomon's time, [22] for the king had ships of Tarshish at sea with Hiram's fleet, and once every three years the ships of Tarshish would arrive bearing gold, silver, ivory, apes, and peacocks. [E]

[23] King Solomon surpassed all the kings of the world in riches and in
wisdom. [24] The whole world wanted an audience with Solomon to hear the
wisdom that God had put in his heart. [25] Every man would bring his annual tribute: items [F] of silver and gold, clothing, weapons, [G] spices, and horses and mules.

[26†] Solomon accumulated 1,400 chariots and 12,000 horsemen and
stationed them in the chariot cities and with the king in Jerusalem. [27†] The king made silver as common in Jerusalem as stones, and he made cedar as
abundant as sycamore in the Judean foothills. [28†] Solomon's horses were imported from Egypt and Kue. The king's traders bought them from Kue at
the going price. [29] A chariot was imported from Egypt for 15 pounds [H] of silver, and a horse for about four pounds. [I] In the same way, they exported

them to all the kings of the Hittites and to the kings of Aram through their agents.

1 KINGS

Solomon’s Unfaithfulness to God

11 †King Solomon loved many foreign women in addition to Pharaoh's
daughter: Moabite, Ammonite, Edomite, Sidonian, and Hittite
women 2† from the nations that the LORD had told the Israelites about, "Do
not intermarry with them, and they must not intermarry with you, because
they will turn you away from Me to their gods." Solomon was deeply
attached to these women and loved them. 3 He had 700 wives who were
princesses and 300 concubines, and they turned his heart away from the
LORD.

4 When Solomon was old, his wives seduced him to follow other gods.
He was not completely devoted to •Yahweh his God, as his father David
had been. 5† Solomon followed •Ashtoreth, the goddess of the Sidonians,
and •Milcom, the detestable idol of the Ammonites. 6† Solomon did what
was evil in the LORD's sight, and unlike his father David, he did not
completely follow Yahweh.

7 At that time, Solomon built a •high place for Chemosh, the detestable
idol of Moab, and for Milcom, [A] the detestable idol of the Ammonites, on
the hill across from Jerusalem. 8 He did the same for all his foreign wives,
who were burning incense and offering sacrifices to their gods.

9 The LORD was angry with Solomon, because his heart had turned away
from Yahweh, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice. 10 He had
commanded him about this, so that he would not follow other gods, but
Solomon did not do what the LORD had commanded.

11† Then the LORD said to Solomon, "Since you have done this [B] and did
not keep My covenant and My statutes, which I commanded you, I will tear
the kingdom away from you and give it to your servant. 12 However, I will
not do it during your lifetime because of your father David; I will tear it out
of your son's hand. 13 Yet I will not tear the entire kingdom away from him.
I will give one tribe to your son because of my servant David and because
of Jerusalem that I chose."

Solomon's Enemies

[14] So the LORD raised up Hadad the Edomite as an enemy against
Solomon. He was of the royal family in Edom. [15] Earlier, when David was
in Edom, Joab, the commander of the army, had gone to bury the dead and
had struck down every male in Edom. [16] For Joab and all Israel had
remained there six months, until he had killed every male in Edom.
[17] Hadad fled to Egypt, along with some Edomites from his father's
servants. At the time Hadad was a small boy. [18] Hadad and his men set out
from Midian and went to Paran. They took men with them from Paran and
went to Egypt, to Pharaoh king of Egypt, who gave Hadad a house, ordered
that he be given food, and gave him land. [19] Pharaoh liked Hadad so much
that he gave him a wife, the sister of his own wife, Queen Tahpenes.
[20†] Tahpenes' sister gave birth to Hadad's son Genubath. Tahpenes herself
weaned him in Pharaoh's palace, and Genubath lived there along with
Pharaoh's sons.

[21] When Hadad heard in Egypt that David rested with his fathers and that
Joab, the commander of the army, was dead, Hadad said to Pharaoh, "Let
me leave, so I can go to my own country."

[22] But Pharaoh asked him, "What do you lack here with me for you to
want to go back to your own country? "

"Nothing," he replied, "but please let me leave."

[23] God raised up Rezon son of Eliada as an enemy against Solomon.
Rezon had fled from his master Hadadezer king of Zobah [24] and gathered
men to himself. He became captain of a raiding party when David killed the
Zobaites. He went to Damascus, lived there, and became king in
Damascus. [25†] Rezon was Israel's enemy throughout Solomon's reign,
adding to the trouble Hadad had caused. He ruled over Aram, but he
loathed Israel.

[26] Now Solomon's servant, Jeroboam son of Nebat, was an Ephraimite
from Zeredah. His widowed mother's name was Zeruah. Jeroboam rebelled
against Solomon, [27] and this is the reason he rebelled against the king:
Solomon had built the supporting terraces and repaired the opening in the

wall of the city of his father David. [28†] Now the man Jeroboam was
capable, and Solomon noticed the young man because he was getting things
done. So he appointed him over the entire labor force of the house of
Joseph.

[29] During that time, the prophet Ahijah the Shilonite met Jeroboam on
the road as Jeroboam came out of Jerusalem. Now Ahijah had wrapped
himself with a new cloak, and the two of them were alone in the open field.
[30†] Then Ahijah took hold of the new cloak he had on, tore it into 12
pieces, [31] and said to Jeroboam, "Take 10 pieces for yourself, for this is
what the LORD God of Israel says: 'I am about to tear the kingdom out of
Solomon's hand. I will give you 10 tribes, [32] but one tribe will remain his
because of my servant David and because of Jerusalem, the city I chose out
of all the tribes of Israel. [33] For they have abandoned Me; they have bowed
the knee to Ashtoreth, the goddess of the Sidonians, to Chemosh, the god of
Moab, and to Milcom, the god of the Ammonites. They have not walked in
My ways to do what is right in My eyes and to carry out My statutes and
My judgments as his father David did.

[34†] " 'However, I will not take the whole kingdom from his hand but will
let him be ruler all the days of his life because of My servant David, whom
I chose and who kept My commands and My statutes. [35] I will take 10
tribes of the kingdom from his son's hand and give them to you. [36] I will
give one tribe to his son, so that My servant David will always have a
lamp before Me in Jerusalem, the city I chose for Myself to put My name
there. [37] I will appoint you, and you will reign as king over all you want,
and you will be king over Israel.

[38] " 'After that, if you obey all I command you, walk in My ways, and do
what is right in My sight in order to keep My statutes and My commands as
My servant David did, I will be with you. I will build you a lasting dynasty
just as I built for David, and I will give you Israel. [39] I will humble David's
descendants, because of their unfaithfulness, but not forever.' "

[40] Therefore, Solomon tried to kill Jeroboam, but he fled to Egypt, to
Shishak king of Egypt, where he remained until Solomon's death.

Solomon's Death

41 The rest of the events of Solomon's reign, along with all his
accomplishments and his wisdom, are written in the Book of Solomon's
Events. 42 The length of Solomon's reign in Jerusalem over all Israel
totaled 40 years. 43 Solomon rested with his fathers and was buried in the
city of his father David. His son Rehoboam became king in his place.

1 KINGS

The Kingdom Divided

12 Then Rehoboam went to Shechem, for all Israel had gone to
Shechem to make him king. 2 When Jeroboam son of Nebat heard
about it, for he was still in Egypt where he had fled from King Solomon’s
presence, Jeroboam stayed in Egypt. 3 They summoned him, and
Jeroboam and the whole assembly of Israel came and spoke to Rehoboam:
4[†] “Your father made our yoke difficult. You, therefore, lighten your
father’s harsh service and the heavy yoke he put on us, and we will serve
you.”

5 Rehoboam replied, “Go home for three days and then return to me.” So
the people left. 6 Then King Rehoboam consulted with the elders who had
served his father Solomon when he was alive, asking, “How do you advise
me to respond to these people? ”

7 They replied, “Today if you will be a servant to these people and serve
them, and if you respond to them by speaking kind words to them, they will
be your servants forever.”

8 But he rejected the advice of the elders who had advised him and
consulted with the young men who had grown up with him and served him.
9 He asked them, “What message do you advise that we send back to these
people who said to me, ‘Lighten the yoke your father put on us’? ”

10 Then the young men who had grown up with him told him, “This is
what you should say to these people who said to you, ‘Your father made our
yoke heavy, but you, make it lighter on us! ’ This is what you should tell
them: ‘My little finger is thicker than my father’s loins! 11 Although my
father burdened you with a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke; my father
disciplined you with whips, but I will discipline you with barbed
whips.’ ” [A]

12 So Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam on the third day, as
the king had ordered: “Return to me on the third day.” 13 Then the king
answered the people harshly. He rejected the advice the elders had given
him 14 and spoke to them according to the young men’s advice: “My father

made your yoke heavy, but I will add to your yoke; my father disciplined you with whips, but I will discipline you with barbed whips." [B]

15 The king did not listen to the people, because this turn of events came from the LORD to carry out His word, which the LORD had spoken through Ahijah the Shilonite to Jeroboam son of Nebat.
16 When all Israel saw that the king had not listened to them, the people answered him:

What portion do we have in David?
We have no inheritance in the son of Jesse.
Israel, return to your tents;
David, now look after your own house!

So Israel went to their tents,
17 but Rehoboam reigned over the Israelites living in the cities of Judah.

18[†] Then King Rehoboam sent Adoram, who was in charge of forced labor, but all Israel stoned him to death. King Rehoboam managed to get into the chariot and flee to Jerusalem.
19 Israel is in rebellion against the house of David until today.

Rehoboam in Jerusalem

20 When all Israel heard that Jeroboam had come back, they summoned him to the assembly and made him king over all Israel. No one followed the house of David except the tribe of Judah alone.
21 When Rehoboam arrived in Jerusalem, he mobilized 180,000 choice warriors from the entire house of Judah and the tribe of Benjamin to fight against the house of Israel to restore the kingdom to Rehoboam son of Solomon.
22 But a revelation from God came to Shemaiah, the man of God:
23 "Say to Rehoboam son of Solomon, king of Judah, to the whole house of Judah and Benjamin, and to the rest of the people,
24 'This is what the LORD says: You are not to march up and fight against your brothers, the Israelites. Each of you must return home, for I have done this.' "

So they listened to what the LORD said and went back as He had told them.

Jeroboam's Idolatry

25 Jeroboam built Shechem in the hill country of Ephraim and lived
there. From there he went out and built Penuel. 26 Jeroboam said to
himself, "The way things are going now, the kingdom might return to the
house of David. 27 If these people regularly go to offer sacrifices in the
LORD's temple in Jerusalem, the heart of these people will return to their
lord, Rehoboam king of Judah. They will murder me and go back to the
king of Judah." 28† So the king sought advice.

Then he made two golden calves, and he said to the people, "Going to
Jerusalem is too difficult for you. Israel, here is your God [C] who brought
you out of the land of Egypt." 29† He set up one in Bethel, and put the
other in Dan. 30 This led to sin; the people walked in procession before one
of the calves all the way to Dan.

31 Jeroboam also built shrines on the •high places and set up priests from
every class of people who were not Levites. 32 Jeroboam made a festival in
the eighth month on the fifteenth day of the month, like the festival in
Judah. He offered sacrifices on the altar; he made this offering in Bethel to
sacrifice to the calves he had set up. He also stationed the priests in Bethel
for the high places he had set up. 33 He offered sacrifices on [D] the altar he
had set up in Bethel on the fifteenth day of the eighth month. He chose this
month on his own. He made a festival for the Israelites, offered sacrifices
on the altar, and burned incense.

1 KINGS

Judgment on Jeroboam

13 A man of God came from Judah to Bethel by a revelation from the
LORD while Jeroboam was standing beside the altar to burn incense.
2 The man of God cried out against the altar by a revelation from the LORD:
“Altar, altar, this is what the LORD says, ‘A son will be born to the house of
David, named Josiah, and he will sacrifice on you the priests of the •high
places who are burning incense on you. Human bones will be burned on
you.’ ” 3 He gave a sign that day. He said, “This is the sign that the LORD
has spoken: ‘The altar will now be ripped apart, and the ashes that are on it
will be poured out.’ ”

4 When the king heard the word that the man of God had cried out
against the altar at Bethel, Jeroboam stretched out his hand from the altar
and said, “Arrest him! ” But the hand he stretched out against him withered,
and he could not pull it back to himself. 5 The altar was ripped apart, and
the ashes poured from the altar, according to the sign that the man of God
had given by the word of the LORD.

6 Then the king responded to the man of God, “Plead for the favor of the
LORD your God and pray for me so that my hand may be restored to me.”
So the man of God pleaded for the favor of the LORD, and the king’s hand
was restored to him and became as it had been at first.

7 Then the king declared to the man of God, “Come home with me,
refresh yourself, and I’ll give you a reward.”

8 But the man of God replied, “If you were to give me half your house, I
still wouldn’t go with you, and I wouldn’t eat bread or drink water in this
place, 9 for this is what I was commanded by the word of the LORD: ‘You
must not eat bread or drink water or go back the way you came.’ ” 10 So he
went another way; he did not go back by the way he had come to Bethel.

The Old Prophet and the Man of God

11 Now a certain old prophet was living in Bethel. His son came and
told him all the deeds that the man of God had done that day in Bethel. His
sons also told their father the words that he had spoken to the king. 12 Then

their father said to them, “Which way did he go? ” His sons had seen the
way taken by the man of God who had come from Judah. 13 Then he said to
his sons, “Saddle the donkey for me.” So they saddled the donkey for him,
and he got on it. 14 He followed the man of God and found him sitting
under an oak tree. He asked him, “Are you the man of God who came from
Judah? ”

“I am,” he said.

15 Then he said to him, “Come home with me and eat bread.”

16 But he answered, “I cannot go back with you, eat bread, or drink water
with you in this place, 17 for a message came to me by the word of the
LORD: ‘You must not eat bread or drink water there or go back by the way
you came.’ ”

18† He said to him, “I am also a prophet like you. An angel spoke to me
by the word of the LORD: ‘Bring him back with you to your house so that he
may eat bread and drink water.’ ” The old prophet deceived him, 19 and the
man of God went back with him, ate bread in his house, and drank water.

20 While they were sitting at the table, the word of the LORD came to the
prophet who had brought him back, 21 and the prophet cried out to the man
of God who had come from Judah, “This is what the LORD says: ‘Because
you rebelled against the command of the LORD and did not keep the
command that the LORD your God commanded you — 22 but you went back
and ate bread and drank water in the place that He said to you, “Do not eat
bread and do not drink water” — your corpse will never reach the grave of
your fathers.’ ”

23 So after he had eaten bread and after he had drunk, the old prophet
saddled the donkey for the prophet he had brought back. 24 When he left, a
lion attacked [A] him along the way and killed him. His corpse was thrown
on the road, and the donkey was standing beside it; the lion was standing
beside the corpse too.

[25] There were men passing by who saw the corpse thrown on the road
and the lion standing beside it, and they went and spoke about it in the city
where the old prophet lived. [26] When the prophet who had brought him
back from his way heard about it, he said, “He is the man of God who
disobeyed the command of the LORD. The LORD has given him to the lion,
and it has mauled and killed him, according to the word of the LORD that He
spoke to him.”

[27] Then the old prophet instructed his sons, “Saddle the donkey for me.”
They saddled it, [28] and he went and found the corpse of the man of God
thrown on the road with the donkey and the lion standing beside the corpse.
The lion had not eaten the corpse or mauled the donkey. [29] So the prophet
lifted the corpse of the man of God and laid it on the donkey and brought it
back. The old prophet came into the city to mourn and bury him. [30†] Then
he laid the corpse in his own grave, and they mourned over him: “Oh, my
brother! ”

[31] After he had buried him, he said to his sons, “When I die, you must
bury me in the grave where the man of God is buried; lay my bones beside
his bones, [32] for the word that he cried out by a revelation from the LORD
against the altar in Bethel and against all the shrines of the high places in
the cities of Samaria is certain to happen.”

[33†] After all this Jeroboam did not repent of his evil way but again set up
priests for the high places from every class of people. He ordained whoever
so desired it, and they became priests of the high places. [34] This was the sin
that caused the house of Jeroboam to be wiped out and annihilated from the
face of the earth.

1 KINGS

Disaster on the House of Jeroboam

14 At that time Abijah son of Jeroboam became sick. [2] Jeroboam said to
his wife, “Go disguise yourself, so they won’t know that you’re
Jeroboam’s wife, and go to Shiloh. Ahijah the prophet is there; it was he
who told about me becoming king over this people. [3] Take with you 10
loaves of bread, some cakes, and a jar of honey, and go to him. He will tell
you what will happen to the boy.”

[4] Jeroboam’s wife did that: she went to Shiloh and arrived at Ahijah’s
house. Ahijah could not see; his gaze was fixed [A] due to his age. [5] But the
LORD had said to Ahijah, “Jeroboam’s wife is coming soon to ask you about
her son, for he is sick. You are to say such and such to her. When she
arrives, she will be disguised.”

[6] When Ahijah heard the sound of her feet entering the door, he said,
“Come in, wife of Jeroboam! Why are you disguised? I have bad news for
you. [7] Go tell Jeroboam, ‘This is what the LORD God of Israel says: I raised
you up from among the people, appointed you ruler over My people Israel,
[8] tore the kingdom away from the house of David, and gave it to you. But
you were not like My servant David, who kept My commands and followed
Me with all of his heart, doing only what is right in My eyes. [9] You behaved
more wickedly than all who were before you. In order to provoke Me, you
have proceeded to make for yourself other gods and cast images, but you
have flung Me behind your back. [10] Because of all this, I am about to bring
disaster on the house of Jeroboam:

I will eliminate all of Jeroboam’s males, [B]
both slave and free, [C] in Israel;
I will sweep away the house of Jeroboam
as one sweeps away dung until it is all gone!
[11] Anyone who belongs to Jeroboam and dies in the city,
the dogs will eat,
and anyone who dies in the field,
the birds of the sky will eat,
for the LORD has said it! ’

12 “As for you, get up and go to your house. When your feet enter the
city, the boy will die. 13 All Israel will mourn for him and bury him. He
alone out of Jeroboam’s house will be put in the family tomb, because out
of the house of Jeroboam the LORD God of Israel found something good
only in him. 14† The LORD will raise up for Himself a king over Israel, who
will eliminate the house of Jeroboam. This is the day, yes, [D] even today!
15 For the LORD will strike Israel and the people will shake as a reed shakes
in water. He will uproot Israel from this good soil that He gave to their
ancestors. He will scatter them beyond the Euphrates because they made
their •Asherah poles, provoking the LORD. 16 He will give up Israel because
of Jeroboam’s sins that he committed and caused Israel to commit.”

17 Then Jeroboam’s wife got up and left and went to Tirzah. As she was
crossing the threshold of the house, the boy died. 18 He was buried, and all
Israel mourned for him, according to the word of the LORD He had spoken
through His servant Ahijah the prophet.

19 As for the rest of the events of Jeroboam’s reign, how he waged war
and how he reigned, note that they are written in the Historical Record of
Israel’s Kings. 20 The length of Jeroboam’s reign was 22 years. He rested
with his fathers, and his son Nadab became king in his place.

Judah’s King Rehoboam

21 Now Rehoboam, Solomon’s son, reigned in Judah. Rehoboam was 41
years old when he became king; he reigned 17 years in Jerusalem, the city
where •Yahweh had chosen from all the tribes of Israel to put His name.
Rehoboam’s mother’s name was Naamah the Ammonite.

22† Judah did what was evil in the LORD’s eyes. They provoked Him to
jealous anger more than all that their ancestors had done with the sins they
committed. 23† They also built for themselves •high places, sacred pillars,
and Asherah poles on every high hill and under every green tree; 24 there
were even male cult prostitutes in the land. They imitated all the detestable
practices of the nations the LORD had dispossessed before the Israelites.

25 In the fifth year of King Rehoboam, Shishak king of Egypt went to
war against Jerusalem. 26 He seized the treasuries of the LORD's temple and
the treasuries of the royal palace. He took everything. He took all the gold
shields that Solomon had made. 27 King Rehoboam made bronze shields in
their place and committed them into the care of the captains of the royal
escorts [E] who guarded the entrance to the king's palace. 28 Whenever the
king entered the LORD's temple, the royal escorts would carry the shields,
then they would take them back to the royal escorts' armory.

29 The rest of the events of Rehoboam's reign, along with all his
accomplishments, are written about in the Historical Record of Judah's
Kings. 30[†] There was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam throughout
their reigns. 31 Rehoboam rested with his fathers and was buried with his
fathers in the city of David. His mother's name was Naamah the
Ammonite. His son Abijam became king in his place.

Judah's King Abijam

15 †In the eighteenth year of Israel’s King Jeroboam son of Nebat,
Abijam became king over Judah 2† and reigned three years in
Jerusalem. His mother’s name was Maacah daughter of Abishalom.

3 Abijam walked in all the sins his father before him had committed, and
he was not completely devoted to the LORD his God as his ancestor David
had been. 4 But because of David, the LORD his God gave him a lamp in
Jerusalem to raise up his son after him and to establish Jerusalem. 5 For
David did what was right in the LORD’s eyes, and he did not turn aside from
anything He had commanded him all the days of his life, except in the
matter of Uriah the Hittite.

6 There had been war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all the days of
Rehoboam’s life. 7 The rest of the events of Abijam’s reign, along with all
his accomplishments, are written in the Historical Record of Judah’s Kings.
There was also war between Abijam and Jeroboam. 8 Abijam rested with
his fathers and was buried in the city of David. His son Asa became king in
his place.

Judah’s King Asa

9† In the twentieth year of Israel’s King Jeroboam, Asa became king of
Judah 10† and reigned 41 years in Jerusalem. His grandmother’s [A] name was
Maacah daughter of Abishalom.

11† Asa did what was right in the LORD’s eyes, as his ancestor David had
done. 12 He banished the male cult prostitutes from the land and removed
all of the idols that his fathers had made. 13 He also removed his
grandmother [B] Maacah from being queen mother because she had made an
obscene image of •Asherah. Asa chopped down her obscene image and
burned it in the Kidron Valley. 14 The •high places were not taken away;
but Asa’s heart was completely devoted to the LORD his entire life. 15 He
brought his father’s consecrated gifts and his own consecrated gifts into the
LORD’s temple: silver, gold, and utensils.

16 There was war between Asa and Baasha king of Israel throughout their
reigns. 17† Israel’s King Baasha went to war against Judah. He built
Ramah in order to deny anyone access to Judah’s King Asa. 18 So Asa
withdrew all the silver and gold that remained in the treasuries of the
LORD’s temple and the treasuries of the royal palace and put it into the
hands of his servants. Then King Asa sent them to Ben-hadad son of
Tabrimmon son of Hezion king of Aram who lived in Damascus, saying,
19 “There is a treaty between me and you, between my father and your
father. Look, I have sent you a gift of silver and gold. Go and break your
treaty with Baasha king of Israel so that he will withdraw from me.”

20 Ben-hadad listened to King Asa and sent the commanders of his
armies against the cities of Israel. He attacked Ijon, Dan, Abel-beth-
maacah, all Chinnereth, and the whole land of Naphtali. 21 When Baasha
heard about it, he quit building Ramah and stayed in Tirzah. 22 Then King
Asa gave a command to everyone without exception in Judah, and they
carried away the stones of Ramah and the timbers Baasha had built it with.
Then King Asa built Geba of Benjamin and Mizpah with them.

23 The rest of all the events of Asa’s reign, along with all his might, all
his accomplishments, and the cities he built, are written in the Historical
Record of Judah’s Kings. But in his old age he developed a disease in his
feet. 24 Then Asa rested with his fathers and was buried in the city of his
ancestor David. His son Jehoshaphat became king in his place.

Israel’s King Nadab

25† Nadab son of Jeroboam became king over Israel in the second year of
Judah’s King Asa; he reigned over Israel two years. 26† Nadab did what was
evil in the LORD’s sight and followed the example of his father and the sin
he had caused Israel to commit.

27† Then Baasha son of Ahijah of the house of Issachar conspired against
Nadab, and Baasha struck him down at Gibbethon of the Philistines while
Nadab and all Israel were besieging Gibbethon. 28† In the third year of
Judah’s King Asa, Baasha killed Nadab and reigned in his place.

29† When Baasha became king, he struck down the entire house of
Jeroboam. He did not leave Jeroboam any survivors but C destroyed his
family according to the word of the LORD He had spoken through His
servant Ahijah the Shilonite. 30 This was because Jeroboam had
provoked D the LORD God of Israel by the sins he had committed and had
caused Israel to commit.

31 The rest of the events of Nadab's reign, along with all his
accomplishments, are written in the Historical Record of Israel's Kings.
32 There was war between Asa and Baasha king of Israel throughout their
reigns.

Israel's King Baasha

33† In the third year of Judah's King Asa, Baasha son of Ahijah became
king over all Israel and reigned in Tirzah 24 years. 34† He did what was evil
in the LORD's sight and followed the example of Jeroboam and the sin he
had caused Israel to commit.

1 KINGS

16 Now the word of the LORD came to Jehu son of Hanani against
Baasha: [2] “Because I raised you up from the dust and made you ruler
over My people Israel, but you have walked in the way of Jeroboam and
have caused My people Israel to sin, provoking Me with their sins, [3] take
note: I will sweep away Baasha and his house, and I will make your house
like the house of Jeroboam son of Nebat:

[4] Anyone who belongs to Baasha and dies in the city,
the dogs will eat,
and anyone who is his and dies in the field,
the birds of the sky will eat.”

[5] The rest of the events of Baasha’s reign, along with all his
accomplishments and might, are written in the Historical Record of Israel’s
Kings. [6] Baasha rested with his fathers and was buried in Tirzah. His son
Elah became king in his place. [7†] Through the prophet Jehu son of Hanani
the word of the LORD also came against Baasha and against his house
because of all the evil he had done in the LORD’s sight, provoking Him with
the work of his hands and being like the house of Jeroboam, and because
Baasha had struck down the house of Jeroboam.

Israel’s King Elah

[8†] In the twenty-sixth year of Judah’s King Asa, Elah son of Baasha
became king over Israel and reigned in Tirzah two years.

[9] His servant Zimri, commander of half his chariots, conspired against
him while Elah was in Tirzah getting drunk in the house of Arza, who was
in charge of the household at Tirzah. [10†] In the twenty-seventh year of
Judah’s King Asa, Zimri went in, struck Elah down, killing him. Then
Zimri became king in his place.

[11†] When he became king, as soon as he was seated on his throne, Zimri
struck down the entire house of Baasha. He did not leave a single male, [A],
including his kinsmen and his friends. [12] So Zimri destroyed the entire
house of Baasha, according to the word of the LORD He had spoken against

Baasha through Jehu the prophet. [13†] This happened because of all the sins
of Baasha and those of his son Elah, which they committed and caused
Israel to commit, provoking the LORD God of Israel with their worthless
idols.

[14] The rest of the events of Elah’s reign, along with all his
accomplishments, are written in the Historical Record of Israel’s Kings.

Israel’s King Zimri

[15†] In the twenty-seventh year of Judah’s King Asa, Zimri became king
for seven days in Tirzah. Now the troops were encamped against
Gibbethon of the Philistines. [16] When these troops heard that Zimri had not
only conspired but had also struck down the king, then all Israel made
Omri, the army commander, king over Israel that very day in the camp.
[17] Omri along with all Israel marched up from Gibbethon and besieged
Tirzah. [18] When Zimri saw that the city was captured, he entered the citadel
of the royal palace and burned it down over himself. He died [19] because of
the sin he committed by doing what was evil in the LORD’s sight and by
following the example of Jeroboam and the sin he caused Israel to commit.

[20] The rest of the events of Zimri’s reign, along with the conspiracy that
he instigated, are written in the Historical Record of Israel’s Kings. [21†] At
that time the people of Israel were divided: half the people followed Tibni
son of Ginath, to make him king, and half followed Omri. [22] However, the
people who followed Omri proved stronger than those who followed Tibni
son of Ginath. So Tibni died and Omri became king.

Israel’s King Omri

[23†] In the thirty-first year of Judah’s King Asa, Omri became king over
Israel and reigned 12 years. He reigned six years in Tirzah, [24†] then he
bought the hill of Samaria from Shemer for 150 pounds [B] of silver, and he
built up the hill. He named the city he built Samaria based on the name
Shemer, the owner of the hill.

[25†] Omri did what was evil in the LORD's sight; he did more evil than all
who were before him. [26] He followed the example of Jeroboam son of
Nebat and in his sins that he caused Israel to commit, provoking the LORD
God of Israel with their worthless idols. [27†] The rest of the events of Omri's
reign, along with his accomplishments and the might he exercised, are
written in the Historical Record of Israel's Kings. [28] Omri rested with his
fathers and was buried in Samaria. His son Ahab became king in his place.

Israel's King Ahab

[29†] Ahab son of Omri became king over Israel in the thirty-eighth year of
Judah's King Asa; Ahab son of Omri reigned over Israel in Samaria 22
years. [30†] But Ahab son of Omri did what was evil in the LORD's sight more
than all who were before him. [31] Then, as if following the sin of Jeroboam
son of Nebat were a trivial matter, he married Jezebel, the daughter of
Ethbaal king of the Sidonians, and then proceeded to serve •Baal and
worship him. [32] He set up an altar for Baal in the temple of Baal that he
had built in Samaria. [33] Ahab also made an •Asherah pole. Ahab did more
to provoke the LORD God of Israel than all the kings of Israel who were
before him.

[34†] During his reign, Hiel the Bethelite built Jericho. At the cost of
Abiram his firstborn, he laid its foundation, and at the cost of Segub his
youngest, he set up its gates, according to the word of the LORD He had
spoken through Joshua son of Nun.

1 KINGS

Elijah Announces Famine

17 †Now Elijah the Tishbite, from the Gilead settlers, said to Ahab, "As the LORD God of Israel lives, I stand before Him, and there will be no dew or rain during these years except by my command! "

2 Then a revelation from the LORD came to him: 3† "Leave here, turn eastward, and hide yourself at the •Wadi Cherith where it enters the Jordan.
4 You are to drink from the wadi. I have commanded the ravens to provide for you there."

5 So he did what the LORD commanded. Elijah left and lived by the Wadi Cherith where it enters the Jordan. 6 The ravens kept bringing him bread and meat in the morning and in the evening, and he drank from the wadi.
7 After a while, the wadi dried up because there had been no rain in the land.

Elijah and the Widow

8 Then the word of the LORD came to him: 9† "Get up, go to Zarephath that belongs to Sidon and stay there. Look, I have commanded a woman who is a widow to provide for you there." 10 So Elijah got up and went to Zarephath. When he arrived at the city gate, there was a widow woman gathering wood. Elijah called to her and said, "Please bring me a little water in a cup and let me drink." 11 As she went to get it, he called to her and said, "Please bring me a piece of bread in your hand."

12 But she said, "As the LORD your God lives, I don't have anything baked — only a handful of flour in the jar and a bit of oil in the jug. Just now, I am gathering a couple of sticks in order to go prepare it for myself and my son so we can eat it and die."

13 Then Elijah said to her, "Don't be afraid; go and do as you have said. But first make me a small loaf from it and bring it out to me. Afterward, you may make some for yourself and your son, 14 for this is what the LORD God of Israel says, 'The flour jar will not become empty and the oil jug will not run dry until the day the LORD sends rain on the surface of the land.'"

15 So she proceeded to do according to the word of Elijah. Then the
woman, Elijah, and her household ate for many days. 16 The flour jar did
not become empty, and the oil jug did not run dry, according to the word of
the LORD He had spoken through [A] Elijah.

The Widow's Son Raised

17 After this, the son of the woman who owned the house became ill. His
illness became very severe until no breath remained in him. 18† She said to
Elijah, "Man of God, what do we have in common? Have you come to
remind me of my •guilt and to kill my son? "

19 But Elijah said to her, "Give me your son." So he took him from her
arms, brought him up to the upper room where he was staying, and laid
him on his own bed. 20 Then he cried out to the LORD and said, "My LORD
God, have You also brought tragedy on the widow I am staying with by
killing her son? " 21 Then he stretched himself out over the boy three times.
He cried out to the LORD and said, "My LORD God, please let this boy's life
return to him! "

22 So the LORD listened to Elijah's voice, and the boy's life returned to
him, and he lived. 23 Then Elijah took the boy, brought him down from the
upper room into the house, and gave him to his mother. Elijah said, "Look,
your son is alive."

24 Then the woman said to Elijah, "Now I know you are a man of God
and the LORD's word from your mouth is true."

1 KINGS

Elijah's Message to Ahab

18 After a long time, the word of the LORD came to Elijah in the third
year: “Go and present yourself to Ahab. I will send rain on the
surface of the land.” 2 So Elijah went to present himself to Ahab.

The famine was severe in Samaria. 3 Ahab called for Obadiah, who was
in charge of the palace. Obadiah was a man who greatly •feared the LORD
4† and took 100 prophets and hid them, 50 men to a cave, and provided
them with food and water when Jezebel slaughtered the LORD’s prophets.
5† Ahab said to Obadiah, “Go throughout the land to every spring of water
and to every •wadi. Perhaps we’ll find grass so we can keep the horses and
mules alive and not have to destroy any cattle.” 6 They divided the land
between them in order to cover it. Ahab went one way by himself, and
Obadiah went the other way by himself.

7 While Obadiah was walking along the road, Elijah suddenly met him.
When Obadiah recognized him, he fell with his face to the ground and said,
“Is it you, my lord Elijah? ”

8 “It is I,” he replied. “Go tell your lord, ‘Elijah is here! ’ ”

9 But Obadiah said, “What sin have I committed, that you are handing
your servant over to Ahab to put me to death? 10 As the LORD your God
lives, there is no nation or kingdom where my lord has not sent someone to
search for you. When they said, ‘He is not here,’ he made that kingdom or
nation swear they had not found you.

11 “Now you say, ‘Go tell your lord, “Elijah is here! ” ’ 12 But when I
leave you, the Spirit of the LORD may carry you off to some place I don’t
know. Then when I go report to Ahab and he doesn’t find you, he will kill
me. But I, your servant, have feared the LORD from my youth. 13 Wasn’t it
reported to my lord what I did when Jezebel slaughtered the LORD’s
prophets? I hid 100 of the prophets of the LORD, 50 men to a cave, and I
provided them with food and water. 14 Now you say, ‘Go tell your lord,
“Elijah is here! ” ’ He will kill me! ”

[15]† Then Elijah said, "As the Lord of •Hosts lives, before whom I stand, today I will present myself to Ahab."

[16] Obadiah went to meet Ahab and told him. Then Ahab went to meet
Elijah. [17] When Ahab saw Elijah, Ahab said to him, "Is that you, you
destroyer of Israel? "

[18] He replied, "I have not destroyed Israel, but you and your father's
house have, because you have abandoned the Lord's commands and
followed the •Baals. [19] Now summon all Israel to meet me at Mount
Carmel, along with the 450 prophets of Baal and the 400 prophets of
•Asherah who eat at Jezebel's table."

Elijah at Mount Carmel

[20] So Ahab summoned all the Israelites and gathered the prophets at
Mount Carmel. [21]† Then Elijah approached all the people and said, "How
long will you hesitate between two opinions? If •Yahweh is God, follow
Him. But if Baal, follow him." But the people didn't answer him a word.

[22] Then Elijah said to the people, "I am the only remaining prophet of the
Lord, but Baal's prophets are 450 men. [23] Let two bulls be given to us.
They are to choose one bull for themselves, cut it in pieces, and place it on
the wood but not light the fire. I will prepare the other bull and place it on
the wood but not light the fire. [24] Then you call on the name of your god,
and I will call on the name of Yahweh. The God who answers with fire, He
is God."

All the people answered, "That sounds good."

[25] Then Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, "Since you are so numerous,
choose for yourselves one bull and prepare it first. Then call on the name of
your god but don't light the fire."

[26]† So they took the bull that he gave them, prepared it, and called on the
name of Baal from morning until noon, saying, "Baal, answer us! " But

there was no sound; no one answered. Then they danced, hobbling around
the altar they had made.

[27] At noon Elijah mocked them. He said, “Shout loudly, for he’s a god!
Maybe he’s thinking it over; maybe he has wandered away; [A] or maybe he’s
on the road. Perhaps he’s sleeping and will wake up! ” [28] They shouted
loudly, and cut themselves with knives and spears, according to their
custom, until blood gushed over them. [29] All afternoon they kept on raving
until the offering of the evening sacrifice, but there was no sound; no one
answered, no one paid attention.

[30] Then Elijah said to all the people, “Come near me.” So all the people
approached him. Then he repaired the Lord’s altar that had been torn
down: [31] Elijah took 12 stones — according to the number of the tribes of
the sons of Jacob, to whom the word of the Lord had come, saying, “Israel
will be your name” — [32] and he built an altar with the stones in the name
of Yahweh. Then he made a trench around the altar large enough to hold
about four gallons. [33†] Next, he arranged the wood, cut up the bull, and
placed it on the wood. He said, “Fill four water pots with water and pour it
on the offering to be burned and on the wood.” [34] Then he said, “A second
time! ” and they did it a second time. And then he said, “A third time! ” and
they did it a third time. [35] So the water ran all around the altar; he even
filled the trench with water.

[36] At the time for offering the evening sacrifice, Elijah the prophet
approached the altar and said, “Yahweh, God of Abraham, Isaac, and
Israel, today let it be known that You are God in Israel and I am Your
servant, and that at Your word I have done all these things. [37] Answer me,
Lord! Answer me so that this people will know that You, Yahweh, are God
and that You have turned their hearts back.”

[38] Then Yahweh’s fire fell and consumed the •burnt offering, the wood,
the stones, and the dust, and it licked up the water that was in the trench.
[39] When all the people saw it, they fell facedown and said, “Yahweh, He is
God! Yahweh, He is God! ”

[40]† Then Elijah ordered them, “Seize the prophets of Baal! Do not let
even one of them escape.” So they seized them, and Elijah brought them
down to the Wadi Kishon and slaughtered them there. [41] Elijah said to
Ahab, “Go up, eat and drink, for there is the sound of a rainstorm.”

[42] So Ahab went to eat and drink, but Elijah went up to the summit of
Carmel. He bowed down on the ground and put his face between his
knees. [43] Then he said to his servant, “Go up and look toward the sea.”

So he went up, looked, and said, “There’s nothing.”

Seven times Elijah said, “Go back.”

[44] On the seventh time, he reported, “There’s a cloud as small as a man’s
hand coming from the sea.”

Then Elijah said, “Go and tell Ahab, ‘Get your chariot ready and go
down so the rain doesn’t stop you.’ ”

[45] In a little while, the sky grew dark with clouds and wind, and there
was a downpour. So Ahab got in his chariot and went to Jezreel. [46] The
power of the LORD was on Elijah, and he tucked his mantle under his belt
and ran ahead of Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel.

1 KINGS

Elijah's Journey to Horeb

19 Ahab told Jezebel everything that Elijah had done and how he had
killed all the prophets with the sword. [2] So Jezebel sent a messenger
to Elijah, saying, “May the gods punish me and do so severely if I don’t
make your life like the life of one of them by this time tomorrow! ”

ARTICLE

What Does The Bible Teach About Angels? ⇒

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[3] Then Elijah became afraid and immediately ran for his life. When he
came to Beer-sheba that belonged to Judah, he left his servant there, [4] but
he went on a day’s journey into the wilderness. He sat down under a broom
tree and prayed that he might die. He said, “I have had enough! LORD, take
my life, for I’m no better than my fathers.” [5] Then he lay down and slept
under the broom tree.

Suddenly, an angel touched him. The angel told him, “Get up and eat.”
[6] Then he looked, and there at his head was a loaf of bread baked over hot
stones, and a jug of water. So he ate and drank and lay down again. [7] Then
the angel of the LORD returned for a second time and touched him. He said,
“Get up and eat, or the journey will be too much for you.” [8] So he got up,
ate, and drank. Then on the strength from that food, he walked 40 days and
40 nights to Horeb, the mountain of God. [9] He entered a cave there and
spent the night.

Elijah’s Encounter with the LORD

Then the word of the LORD came to him, and He said to him, “What are
you doing here, Elijah? ”

[10†] He replied, “I have been very zealous for the LORD God of •Hosts,
but the Israelites have abandoned Your covenant, torn down Your altars,
and killed Your prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and they are
looking for me to take my life.”

11 Then He said, “Go out and stand on the mountain in the LORD’s
presence.”

At that moment, the LORD passed by. A great and mighty wind was
tearing at the mountains and was shattering cliffs before the LORD, but the
LORD was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the
LORD was not in the earthquake. 12 After the earthquake there was a fire,
but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire there was a voice, a soft
whisper. 13 When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle and
went out and stood at the entrance of the cave.

Suddenly, a voice came to him and said, “What are you doing here,
Elijah? ”

14 “I have been very zealous for the LORD God of Hosts,” he replied, “but
the Israelites have abandoned Your covenant, torn down Your altars, and
killed Your prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and they’re looking for
me to take my life.”

15† Then the LORD said to him, “Go and return by the way you came to
the Wilderness of Damascus. When you arrive, you are to anoint Hazael as
king over Aram. 16 You are to anoint Jehu son of Nimshi as king over Israel
and Elisha son of Shaphat from Abel-meholah as prophet in your place.
17 Then Jehu will put to death whoever escapes the sword of Hazael, and
Elisha will put to death whoever escapes the sword of Jehu. 18 But I will
leave 7,000 in Israel — every knee that has not bowed to •Baal and every
mouth that has not kissed him.”

Elisha’s Appointment as Elijah’s Successor

19 Elijah left there and found Elisha son of Shaphat as he was plowing.
Twelve teams of oxen were in front of him, and he was with the twelfth
team. Elijah walked by him and threw his mantle over him. 20 Elisha left
the oxen, ran to follow Elijah, and said, “Please let me kiss my father and
mother, and then I will follow you.”

“Go on back,” he replied, “for what have I done to you? ”

21† So he turned back from following him, took the team of oxen, and slaughtered them. With the oxen’s wooden yoke and plow, he cooked the meat and gave it to the people, and they ate. Then he left, followed Elijah, and served him.

Victory over Ben-hadad

20

†Now Ben-hadad king of Aram assembled his entire army. Thirty-
two kings, along with horses and chariots, were with him. He
marched up, besieged Samaria, and fought against it. 2 He sent messengers
into the city to Ahab king of Israel and said to him, “This is what Ben-
hadad says: 3 ‘Your silver and your gold are mine! And your best wives and
children are mine as well! ’ ”

4 Then the king of Israel answered, “Just as you say, my lord the king: I
am yours, along with all that I have.”

5 The messengers then returned and said, “This is what Ben-hadad says:
‘I have sent messengers to you, saying: You are to give me your silver, your
gold, your wives, and your children. 6 But at this time tomorrow I will send
my servants to you, and they will search your palace and your servants’
houses. They will lay their hands on and take away whatever is precious to
you.’ ”

7 Then the king of Israel called for all the elders of the land and said,
“Think it over and you will see that this one is only looking for trouble, for
he demanded my wives, my children, my silver, and my gold, and I didn’t
turn him down.”

8 All the elders and all the people said to him, “Don’t listen or agree.”

9 So he said to Ben-hadad’s messengers, “Say to my lord the king,
‘Everything you demanded of your servant the first time, I will do, but this
thing I cannot do.’ ” So the messengers left and took word back to him.

10 Then Ben-hadad sent messengers to him and said, “May the gods
punish me and do so severely if Samaria’s dust amounts to a handful for
each of the people who follow me.”

11† The king of Israel answered, “Say this: ‘Don’t let the one who puts on
his armor boast like the one who takes it off.’ ”

[12†] When Ben-hadad heard this response, while he and the kings were drinking in the tents, he said to his servants, “Take your positions.” So they took their positions against the city.

[13] A prophet came to Ahab king of Israel and said, “This is what •Yahweh says: ‘Do you see this entire great army? Watch, I am handing it over to you today so that you may know that I am the LORD.’ ”

[14] Ahab asked, “By whom? ”

And the prophet said, “This is what the LORD says: ‘By the young men of the provincial leaders.’ ”

Then he asked, “Who is to start the battle? ”

He said, “You.”

[15] So Ahab counted the young men of the provincial leaders, and there
were 232. After them he counted all the Israelite troops: 7,000. [16] They
marched out at noon while Ben-hadad and the 32 kings who were helping
him were getting drunk in the tents. [17] The young men of the provincial
leaders marched out first. Then Ben-hadad sent out scouts, and they
reported to him, saying, “Men are marching out of Samaria.”

[18] So he said, “If they have marched out in peace, take them alive, and if they have marched out for battle, take them alive.”

[19] The young men of the provincial leaders and the army behind them
marched out from the city, [20] and each one struck down his opponent. So
the Arameans fled and Israel pursued them, but Ben-hadad king of Aram
escaped on a horse with the cavalry. [21] Then the king of Israel marched out
and attacked the cavalry and the chariots. He inflicted a great slaughter on
Aram.

[22†] The prophet approached the king of Israel and said to him, “Go and strengthen yourself, then consider what you should do, for in the spring the king of Aram will march against you.”

[23] Now the king of Aram's servants said to him, "Their gods are gods of the hill country. That's why they were stronger than we were. Instead, we should fight with them on the plain; then we will certainly be stronger than they will be. [24] Also do this: remove each king from his position and appoint captains in their place. [25] Raise another army for yourself like the army you lost — horse for horse, chariot for chariot — and let's fight with them on the plain; and we will certainly be stronger than they will be." The king listened to them and did so.

[26] In the spring, Ben-hadad mobilized the Arameans and went up to Aphek to battle Israel. [27] The Israelites mobilized, gathered supplies, and went to fight them. The Israelites camped in front of them like two little flocks of goats, while the Arameans filled the landscape.

[28] Then the man of God approached and said to the king of Israel, "This is what the LORD says: 'Because the Arameans have said: Yahweh is a god of the mountains and not a god of the valleys, I will hand over all this great army to you. Then you will know that I am the LORD.' "

[29] They camped opposite each other for seven days. On the seventh day, the battle took place, and the Israelites struck down the Arameans — 100,000 foot soldiers in one day. [30] The ones who remained fled into the city of Aphek, and the wall fell on those 27,000 remaining men.

Ben-hadad also fled and went into an inner room in the city. [31] His servants said to him, "Consider this: we have heard that the kings of the house of Israel are merciful kings. So let's put •sackcloth around our waists and ropes around our heads, and let's go out to the king of Israel. Perhaps he will spare your life."

[32] So they dressed with sackcloth around their waists and ropes around their heads, went to the king of Israel, and said, "Your servant Ben-hadad says, 'Please spare my life.' "

So he said, "Is he still alive? He is my brother."

33 Now the men were looking for a sign of hope, so they quickly picked
up on this and responded, “Yes, it is your brother Ben-hadad.”

Then he said, “Go and bring him.”

So Ben-hadad came out to him, and Ahab had him come up into the
chariot. 34 Then Ben-hadad said to him, “I restore to you the cities that my
father took from your father, and you may set up marketplaces for yourself
in Damascus, like my father set up in Samaria.”

Ahab responded, “On the basis of this treaty, I release you.” So he made
a treaty with him and released him.

Ahab Rebuked by the LORD

35 One of the sons of the prophets said to his fellow prophet by the word
of the LORD, “Strike me! ” But the man refused to strike him.

36 He told him, “Because you did not listen to the voice of the LORD,
mark my words: When you leave me, a lion will kill you.” When he left
him, a lion attacked and killed him.

37 The prophet found another man and said to him, “Strike me! ” So the
man struck him, inflicting a wound. 38 Then the prophet went and waited
for the king on the road. He disguised himself with a bandage over his
eyes. 39 As the king was passing by, he cried out to the king and said, “Your
servant marched out into the middle of the battle. Suddenly, a man turned
aside and brought someone to me and said, ‘Guard this man! If he is ever
missing, it will be your life in place of his life, or you will weigh out 75
pounds [A] of silver.’ 40 But while your servant was busy here and there, he
disappeared.”

The king of Israel said to him, “That will be your sentence; you yourself
have decided it.”

41 He quickly removed the bandage from his eyes. The king of Israel
recognized that he was one of the prophets. 42 The prophet said to him,

“This is what the LORD says: ‘Because you released from your hand the man
I had •set apart for destruction, it will be your life in place of his life and
your people in place of his people.’ ” 43 The king of Israel left for home
resentful and angry, and he entered Samaria.

1 KINGS

Ahab and Naboth’s Vineyard

21 Some time passed after these events. Naboth the Jezreelite had a
vineyard; it was in Jezreel next to the palace of Ahab king of
Samaria. 2 So Ahab spoke to Naboth, saying, “Give me your vineyard so I
can have it for a vegetable garden, since it is right next to my palace. I will
give you a better vineyard in its place, or if you prefer, I will give you its
value in silver.”

3 But Naboth said to Ahab, “I will never give my fathers’ inheritance to
you.”

4 So Ahab went to his palace resentful and angry, because of what
Naboth the Jezreelite had told him. He had said, “I will not give you my
fathers’ inheritance.” He lay down on his bed, turned his face away, and
didn’t eat any food.

5 Then his wife Jezebel came to him and said to him, “Why are you so
upset that you refuse to eat? ”

6 “Because I spoke to Naboth the Jezreelite,” he replied. “I told him:
Give me your vineyard for silver, or if you wish, I will give you a vineyard
in its place. But he said, ‘I won’t give you my vineyard! ’ ”

7 Then his wife Jezebel said to him, “Now, exercise your royal power
over Israel. Get up, eat some food, and be happy. For I will give you the
vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite.” 8 So she wrote letters in Ahab’s name
and sealed them with his seal. She sent the letters to the elders and nobles
who lived with Naboth in his city. 9 In the letters, she wrote:

> Proclaim a fast and seat Naboth at the head of the people.
> 10† Then seat two •wicked men opposite him and have them
> testify against him, saying, “You have cursed God and the king! ”
> Then take him out and stone him to death.

11 The men of his city, the elders and nobles who lived in his city, did as
Jezebel had commanded them, as was written in the letters she had sent
them. 12 They proclaimed a fast and seated Naboth at the head of the

people. 13 The two wicked men came in and sat opposite him. Then the
wicked men testified against Naboth in the presence of the people, saying,
“Naboth has cursed God and the king! ” So they took him outside the city
and stoned him to death with stones. 14 Then they sent word to Jezebel,
“Naboth has been stoned to death.”

15 When Jezebel heard that Naboth had been stoned to death, she said to
Ahab, “Get up and take possession of the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite
who refused to give it to you for silver, since Naboth isn’t alive, but dead.”
16 When Ahab heard that Naboth was dead, he got up to go down to the
vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite to take possession of it.

The LORD’s Judgment on Ahab

17 Then the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite: 18 “Get up and
go to meet Ahab king of Israel, who is in Samaria. You’ll find him in
Naboth’s vineyard, where he has gone to take possession of it. 19 Tell him,
‘This is what the LORD says: Have you murdered and also taken
possession? ’ Then tell him, ‘This is what the LORD says: In the place where
the dogs licked Naboth’s blood, the dogs will also lick your blood! ’ ”

20† Ahab said to Elijah, “So, you have caught me, my enemy.”

He replied, “I have caught you because you devoted yourself to do what
is evil in the LORD’s sight. 21† This is what the LORD says: ‘I am about to
bring disaster on you and will sweep away your descendants:

I will eliminate all of Ahab’s males, [A]
both slave and free, in Israel;

22 I will make your house like the house of Jeroboam son of Nebat and like
the house of Baasha son of Ahijah, because you have provoked My anger
and caused Israel to sin. 23 The LORD also speaks of Jezebel: The dogs will
eat Jezebel in the plot of land at Jezreel:

24 He who belongs to Ahab and dies in the city, the dogs will eat,

and he who dies in the field, the birds of the sky will eat.' "

[25]† Still, there was no one like Ahab, who devoted himself to do what
was evil in the LORD's sight, because his wife Jezebel incited him. [26] He
committed the most detestable acts by going after idols as the Amorites
had, whom the LORD had dispossessed before the Israelites.

[27] When Ahab heard these words, he tore his clothes, put •sackcloth over
his body, and fasted. He lay down in sackcloth and walked around
subdued. [28] Then the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite:
[29] "Have you seen how Ahab has humbled himself before Me? I will not
bring the disaster during his lifetime, because he has humbled himself
before Me. I will bring the disaster on his house during his son's lifetime."

1 KINGS

Jehoshaphat's Alliance with Ahab

22 There was a lull of three years without war between Aram and Israel.
2 However, in the third year, Jehoshaphat king of Judah went to visit
the king of Israel. 3 The king of Israel had said to his servants, “Don’t you
know that Ramoth-gilead is ours, but we have failed to take it from the
hand of the king of Aram? ” 4† So he asked Jehoshaphat, “Will you go with
me to fight Ramoth-gilead? ”

Jehoshaphat replied to the king of Israel, “I am as you are, my people as
your people, my horses as your horses.” 5 But Jehoshaphat said to the king
of Israel, “First, please ask what the LORD’s will is.”

6 So the king of Israel gathered the prophets, about 400 men, and asked
them, “Should I go against Ramoth-gilead for war or should I refrain? ”

They replied, “March up, and the Lord will hand it over to the king.”

7 But Jehoshaphat asked, “Isn’t there a prophet of •Yahweh here
anymore? Let’s ask him.”

8 The king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, “There is still one man who can
ask Yahweh, but I hate him because he never prophesies good about me,
but only disaster. He is Micaiah son of Imlah.”

“The king shouldn’t say that! ” Jehoshaphat replied.

9 So the king of Israel called an officer and said, “Hurry and get Micaiah
son of Imlah! ”

10 Now the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat king of Judah, clothed in
royal attire, were each sitting on his own throne. They were on the threshing
floor at the entrance to Samaria’s •gate, and all the prophets were
prophesying in front of them. 11 Then Zedekiah son of Chenaanah made
iron horns and said, “This is what the LORD says: ‘You will gore the
Arameans with these until they are finished off.’ ” 12 And all the prophets
were prophesying the same: “March up to Ramoth-gilead and succeed, for
the LORD will hand it over to the king.”

Micaiah's Message of Defeat

13 The messenger who went to call Micaiah instructed him, "Look, the words of the prophets are unanimously favorable for the king. So let your words be like theirs, and speak favorably."

14 But Micaiah said, "As the LORD lives, I will say whatever the LORD says to me."

15 So he went to the king, and the king asked him, "Micaiah, should we go to Ramoth-gilead for war, or should we refrain? "

Micaiah told him, "March up and succeed. Yahweh will hand it over to the king."

16 But the king said to him, "How many times must I make you swear not to tell me anything but the truth in the name of Yahweh? "

17 So Micaiah said:

I saw all Israel scattered on the hills
like sheep without a shepherd.
And the LORD said,
"They have no master;
let everyone return home in peace."

18 So the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "Didn't I tell you he never prophesies good about me, but only disaster? "

19 Then Micaiah said, "Therefore, hear the word of the LORD: I saw the
LORD sitting on His throne, and the whole heavenly •host was standing by
Him at His right hand and at His left hand. 20 And the LORD said, 'Who will
entice Ahab to march up and fall at Ramoth-gilead? ' So one was saying
this and another was saying that.

21† "Then a spirit came forward, stood before the LORD, and said, 'I will entice him.'

22† "The LORD asked him, 'How? '

"He said, 'I will go and become a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.'

"Then He said, 'You will certainly entice him and prevail. Go and do that.'

23† "You see, the LORD has put a lying spirit into the mouth of all these prophets of yours, and the LORD has pronounced disaster against you."

24 Then Zedekiah son of Chenaanah came up, hit Micaiah in the face, and demanded, "Did [A] the Spirit of the LORD leave me to speak to you? "

25 Micaiah replied, "You will soon see when you go to hide yourself in an inner chamber on that day."

26 Then the king of Israel ordered, "Take Micaiah and return him to
Amon, the governor of the city, and to Joash, the king's son,
27 and say, 'This is what the king says: Put this guy in prison and feed him only bread and water [B] until I come back safely.' "

28† But Micaiah said, "If you ever return safely, the LORD has not spoken through me." Then he said, "Listen, all you people! "

Ahab's Death

29 Then the king of Israel and Judah's King Jehoshaphat went up to
Ramoth-gilead.
30 But the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "I will disguise myself and go into battle, but you wear your royal attire." So the king of Israel disguised himself and went into battle.

31 Now the king of Aram had ordered his 32 chariot commanders, "Do not fight with anyone at all except the king of Israel."

32 When the chariot commanders saw Jehoshaphat, they shouted, "He must be the king of Israel! " So they turned to fight against him, but

Jehoshaphat cried out. [33] When the chariot commanders saw that he was not
the king of Israel, they turned back from pursuing him.

[34]† But a man drew his bow without taking special aim and struck the
king of Israel through the joints of his armor. So he said to his charioteer,
"Turn around and take me out of the battle, for I am badly wounded! "
[35] The battle raged throughout that day, and the king was propped up in his
chariot facing the Arameans. He died that evening, and blood from his
wound flowed into the bottom of the chariot. [36] Then the cry rang out in the
army as the sun set, declaring:

Each man to his own city,
and each man to his own land!

[37] So the king died and was brought to Samaria. They buried the king in
Samaria. [38] Then someone washed the chariot at the pool of Samaria. The
dogs licked up his blood, and the prostitutes bathed in it, according to the
word of the LORD that He had spoken.

[39] The rest of the events of Ahab's reign, along with all his
accomplishments, including the ivory palace he built, and all the cities he
built, are written in the Historical Record of Israel's Kings. [40] Ahab rested
with his fathers, and his son Ahaziah became king in his place.

Judah's King Jehoshaphat

[41]† Jehoshaphat son of Asa became king over Judah in the fourth year of
Israel's King Ahab. [42]† Jehoshaphat was 35 years old when he became king;
he reigned 25 years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Azubah daughter
of Shilhi. [43]† He walked in all the ways of his father Asa; he did not turn
away from them but did what was right in the LORD's sight. However, the
•high places were not taken away; the people still sacrificed and burned
incense on the high places. [44] Jehoshaphat also made peace with the king
of Israel.

45 The rest of the events of Jehoshaphat's reign, along with the might he
exercised and how he waged war, are written in the Historical Record of
Judah's Kings. 46 He removed from the land the rest of the male cult
prostitutes who were left from the days of his father Asa. 47 There was no
king in Edom; a deputy served as king. 48† Jehoshaphat made ships of
Tarshish to go to Ophir for gold, but they did not go because the ships
were wrecked at Ezion-geber. 49 At that time, Ahaziah son of Ahab said to
Jehoshaphat, "Let my servants go with your servants in the ships," but
Jehoshaphat was not willing. 50 Jehoshaphat rested with his fathers and was
buried with them in the city of his ancestor David. His son Jehoram
became king in his place.

Israel's King Ahaziah

51† Ahaziah son of Ahab became king over Israel in Samaria in the
seventeenth year of Judah's King Jehoshaphat and reigned over Israel two
years. 52† He did what was evil in the LORD's sight. He walked in the way
of his father, in the way of his mother, and in the way of Jeroboam son of
Nebat, who had caused Israel to sin. 53 He served •Baal and worshiped
him. He provoked the LORD God of Israel just as his father had done.

2 KINGS

Introduction to 2 Kings

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2 KINGS

Ahaziah’s Sickness and Death

1 After the death of Ahab, Moab rebelled against Israel. [2†] Ahaziah had
fallen through the latticed window of his upper room in Samaria and
was injured. So he sent messengers instructing them: "Go inquire of Baal-
zebub, the god of Ekron, if I will recover from this injury."

[3] But the angel of the LORD said to Elijah the Tishbite, "Go and meet the
messengers of the king of Samaria and ask them, 'Is it because there is no
God in Israel that you are going to inquire of Baal-zebub, the god of
Ekron? ' [4] Therefore, this is what the LORD says: 'You will not get up from
your sickbed — you will certainly die.' " Then Elijah left.

[5†] The messengers returned to the king, who asked them, "Why have you
come back? "

[6] They replied, "A man came to meet us and said, 'Go back to the king
who sent you and declare to him: This is what the LORD says: Is it because
there is no God in Israel that you're sending these men to inquire of Baal-
zebub, the god of Ekron? Therefore, you will not get up from your
sickbed — you will certainly die.' "

[7] The king asked them, "What sort of man came up to meet you and
spoke those words to you? "

[8] They replied, "A hairy man with a leather belt around his waist."

He said, "It's Elijah the Tishbite."

[9] So King Ahaziah sent a captain of 50 with his 50 men to Elijah. When
the captain went up to him, he was sitting on top of the hill. He announced,
"Man of God, the king declares, 'Come down! ' "

[10] Elijah responded to the captain of the 50, "If I am a man of God, may
fire come down from heaven and consume you and your 50 men." Then fire
came down from heaven and consumed him and his 50 men.

[11] So the king sent another captain of 50 with his 50 men to Elijah. He
took in the situation [A] and announced, "Man of God, this is what the king

says: 'Come down immediately! ' "

[12] Elijah responded, "If I am a man of God, may fire come down from heaven and consume you and your 50 men." So a divine fire [B] came down from heaven and consumed him and his 50 men.

[13] Then the king sent a third captain of 50 with his 50 men. The third captain of 50 went up and fell on his knees in front of Elijah and begged him, "Man of God, please let my life and the lives of these 50 servants of
yours be precious in your sight. [14] Already fire has come down from
heaven and consumed the first two captains of 50 with their fifties, but this time let my life be precious in your sight."

[15] The angel of the LORD said to Elijah, "Go down with him. Don't be afraid of him." So he got up and went down with him to the king.

[16†] Then Elijah said to King Ahaziah, "This is what the LORD says: 'Because you have sent messengers to inquire of Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron — is it because there is no God in Israel for you to inquire of His will? You will not get up from your sickbed — you will certainly die.' "

[17†] Ahaziah died according to the word of the LORD that Elijah had spoken. Since he had no son, Joram [C] became king in his place. This happened in the second year of Judah's King Jehoram son of Jehoshaphat.
[18] The rest of the events of Ahaziah's reign, along with his
accomplishments, are written in the Historical Record of Israel's Kings.

2 KINGS

Elijah in the Whirlwind

2 †The time had come for the LORD to take Elijah up to heaven in a
whirlwind. Elijah and Elisha were traveling from Gilgal,
2 and Elijah
said to Elisha, “Stay here; the LORD is sending me on to Bethel.”

But Elisha replied, “As the LORD lives and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.” So they went down to Bethel.

3 Then the sons of the prophets who were at Bethel came out to Elisha and said, “Do you know that the LORD will take your master away from you today? ”

He said, “Yes, I know. Be quiet.”

4 Elijah said to him, “Elisha, stay here; the LORD is sending me to Jericho.”

But Elisha said, “As the LORD lives and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.” So they went to Jericho.

5† Then the sons of the prophets who were in Jericho came up to Elisha and said, “Do you know that the LORD will take your master away from you today? ”

He said, “Yes, I know. Be quiet.”

6 Elijah said to him, “Stay here; the LORD is sending me to the Jordan.”

But Elisha said, “As the LORD lives and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.” So the two of them went on.

7 Fifty men from the sons of the prophets came and stood facing them
from a distance while the two of them stood by the Jordan.
8 Elijah took his
mantle, rolled it up, and struck the waters, which parted to the right and
left. Then the two of them crossed over on dry ground.
9† After they had
crossed over, Elijah said to Elisha, “Tell me what I can do for you before I
am taken from you.”

So Elisha answered, “Please, let me inherit two shares of your spirit.”

10 Elijah replied, “You have asked for something difficult. If you see me
being taken from you, you will have it. If not, you won’t.”

11 As they continued walking and talking, a chariot of fire with horses of
fire suddenly appeared and separated the two of them. Then Elijah went up
into heaven in the whirlwind. 12† As Elisha watched, he kept crying out,
“My father, my father, the chariots and horsemen of Israel! ” Then he never
saw Elijah again. He took hold of his own clothes and tore them into two
pieces.

Elisha Succeeds Elijah

13 Elisha picked up the mantle that had fallen off Elijah and went back
and stood on the bank of the Jordan. 14 Then he took the mantle Elijah had
dropped and struck the waters. “Where is the LORD God of Elijah? ” he
asked. He struck the waters himself, and they parted to the right and the left,
and Elisha crossed over.

15 When the sons of the prophets from Jericho who were facing him saw
him, they said, “The spirit of Elijah rests on Elisha.” They came to meet
him and bowed down to the ground in front of him.

16 Then the sons of the prophets said to Elisha, “Since there are 50 strong
men here with your servants, please let them go and search for your master.
Maybe the Spirit of the LORD has carried him away and put him on one of
the mountains or into one of the valleys.”

He answered, “Don’t send them.”

17 However, they urged him to the point of embarrassment, so he said,
“Send them.” They sent 50 men, who looked for three days but did not find
him. 18 When they returned to him in Jericho where he was staying, he said
to them, “Didn’t I tell you not to go? ”

[19] Then the men of the city said to Elisha, “Even though our lord can see
that the city’s location is good, the water is bad and the land unfruitful.”

[20] He replied, “Bring me a new bowl and put salt in it.”

After they had brought him one, [21†] Elisha went out to the spring of
water, threw salt in it, and said, “This is what the LORD says: ‘I have healed
this water. No longer will death or unfruitfulness result from it.’ ”
[22] Therefore, the water remains healthy to this very day according to the
word that Elisha spoke.

[23†] From there Elisha went up to Bethel. As he was walking up the path,
some small boys came out of the city and harassed him, chanting, “Go up,
baldy! Go up, baldy! ” [24†] He turned around, looked at them, and cursed
them in the name of the LORD. Then two female bears came out of the
woods and mauled 42 of the children. [25] From there Elisha went to Mount
Carmel, and then he returned to Samaria.

2 KINGS

Israel's King Joram

3 [†]Joram son of Ahab became king over Israel in Samaria during the
eighteenth year of Judah’s King Jehoshaphat and reigned 12 years.
2[†] He did what was evil in the LORD’s sight, but not like his father and
mother, for he removed the sacred pillar of •Baal his father had made.
3 Nevertheless, Joram clung to the sins that Jeroboam son of Nebat had
caused Israel to commit. He did not turn away from them.

Moab’s Rebellion against Israel

4 King Mesha of Moab was a sheep breeder. He used to pay the king of
Israel 100,000 lambs and the wool of 100,000 rams,
5 but when Ahab died,
the king of Moab rebelled against the king of Israel.
6 So King Joram
marched out from Samaria at that time and mobilized all Israel.
7 Then he
sent a message to King Jehoshaphat of Judah: “The king of Moab has
rebelled against me. Will you go with me to fight against Moab? ”

Jehoshaphat said, “I will go. I am as you are, my people as your people,
my horses as your horses.”
8[†] Then he asked, “Which route should we
take? ”

Joram replied, “The route of the Wilderness of Edom.”

9 So the king of Israel, the king of Judah, and the king of Edom set out.
After they had traveled their indirect route for seven days, they had no
water for the army or their animals.

10 Then the king of Israel said, “Oh no, the LORD has summoned three
kings, only to hand them over to Moab.”

11 But Jehoshaphat said, “Isn’t there a prophet of the LORD here? Let’s
inquire of •Yahweh through him.”

One of the servants of the king of Israel answered, “Elisha son of
Shaphat, who used to pour water on Elijah’s hands, is here.”

[12] Jehoshaphat affirmed, “The LORD’s words are with him.” So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat and the king of Edom went to him.

[13] However, Elisha said to King Joram of Israel, “We have nothing in common. Go to the prophets of your father and your mother! ”

But the king of Israel replied, “No, because it is the LORD who has summoned these three kings to hand them over to Moab.”

[14] Elisha responded, “As the LORD of •Hosts lives, I stand before Him. If I did not have respect for King Jehoshaphat of Judah, I would not look at you; I wouldn’t take notice of you. [15†] Now, bring me a musician.”

While the musician played, the LORD’s hand came on Elisha. [16] Then he said, “This is what the LORD says: ‘Dig ditch after ditch in this •wadi.’
[17] For the LORD says, ‘You will not see wind or rain, but the wadi will be filled with water, and you will drink — you and your cattle and your animals.’ [18] This is easy in the LORD’s sight. He will also hand Moab over to you. [19] Then you must attack every fortified city and every choice city. You must cut down every good tree and stop up every spring of water. You must ruin every good piece of land with stones.”

[20] About the time for the •grain offering the next morning, water suddenly came from the direction of Edom and filled the land.

[21] All Moab had heard that the kings had come up to fight against them. So all who could bear arms, from the youngest to the oldest, were summoned and took their stand at the border. [22†] When they got up early in the morning, the sun was shining on the water, and the Moabites saw that the water across from them was red like blood. [23] “This is blood! ” they exclaimed. “The kings have clashed swords and killed each other. So, to the spoil, Moab! ”

[24] However, when the Moabites came to Israel’s camp, the Israelites attacked them, and they fled from them. So Israel went into the land and struck down the Moabites. [25] They destroyed the cities, and each of them

threw stones to cover every good piece of land. They stopped up every spring of water and cut down every good tree. In the end, only the buildings of Kir-hareseth were left. Then men with slings surrounded the city and attacked it.

26 When the king of Moab saw that the battle was too fierce for him, he took 700 swordsmen with him to try to break through to the king of Edom, but they could not do it. 27† So he took his firstborn son, who was to become king in his place, and offered him as a •burnt offering on the city wall. Great wrath was on the Israelites, and they withdrew from him and returned to their land.

2 KINGS

The Widow’s Oil Multiplied

4 One of the wives of the sons of the prophets cried out to Elisha, “Your
servant, my husband, has died. You know that your servant •feared the
LORD. Now the creditor is coming to take my two children as his slaves.”

2 Elisha asked her, “What can I do for you? Tell me, what do you have in
the house? ”

She said, “Your servant has nothing in the house except a jar of oil.”

3 Then he said, “Go and borrow empty containers from everyone — from
all your neighbors. Do not get just a few. 4 Then go in and shut the door
behind you and your sons, and pour oil into all these containers. Set the full
ones to one side.” 5 So she left.

After she had shut the door behind her and her sons, they kept bringing
her containers, and she kept pouring. 6 When they were full, she said to her
son, “Bring me another container.”

But he replied, “There aren’t any more.” Then the oil stopped.

7 She went and told the man of God, and he said, “Go sell the oil and pay
your debt; you and your sons can live on the rest.”

The Shunammite Woman’s Hospitality

8 One day Elisha went to Shunem. A prominent woman who lived there
persuaded him to eat some food. So whenever he passed by, he stopped
there to eat. 9 Then she said to her husband, “I know that the one who often
passes by here is a holy man of God, 10 so let’s make a small room upstairs
and put a bed, a table, a chair, and a lamp there for him. Whenever he
comes, he can stay there.”

The Shunammite Woman’s Son

11 One day he came there and stopped and went to the room upstairs to
lie down. 12† He ordered his attendant Gehazi, “Call this Shunammite
woman.” So he called her and she stood before him.

[13] Then he said to Gehazi, "Say to her, 'Look, you've gone to all this trouble for us. What can we do for you? Can we speak on your behalf to the king or to the commander of the army? ' "

She answered, "I am living among my own people."

[14] So he asked, "Then what should be done for her? "

Gehazi answered, "Well, she has no son, and her husband is old."

[15] "Call her," Elisha said. So Gehazi called her, and she stood in the
doorway. [16] Elisha said, "At this time next year you will have a son in your
arms."

Then she said, "No, my lord. Man of God, do not deceive your servant."

[17] The woman conceived and gave birth to a son at the same time the following year, as Elisha had promised her.

The Shunammite's Son Raised

[18] The child grew and one day went out to his father and the harvesters.
[19] Suddenly he complained to his father, "My head! My head! "

His father told his servant, "Carry him to his mother." [20] So he picked
him up and took him to his mother. The child sat on her lap until noon and
then died. [21] Then she went up and laid him on the bed of the man of God,
shut him in, and left.

[22] She summoned her husband and said, "Please send me one of the servants and one of the donkeys, so I can hurry to the man of God and then come back."

[23] But he said, "Why go to him today? It's not a New Moon or a Sabbath."

She replied, "Everything is all right."

24 Then she saddled the donkey and said to her servant, “Hurry, don’t
slow the pace for me unless I tell you.” 25 So she set out and went to the
man of God at Mount Carmel.

When the man of God saw her at a distance, he said to his attendant
Gehazi, “Look, there’s the Shunammite woman. 26 Run out to meet her
and ask, ‘Are you all right? Is your husband all right? Is your son all
right? ’ ”

And she answered, “Everything’s all right.”

27 When she came up to the man of God at the mountain, she clung to his
feet. Gehazi came to push her away, but the man of God said, “Leave her
alone — she is in severe anguish, and the Lord has hidden it from me. He
hasn’t told me.”

28 Then she said, “Did I ask my lord for a son? Didn’t I say, ‘Do not
deceive me? ’ ”

29 So Elisha said to Gehazi, “Tuck your mantle under your belt, take my
staff with you, and go. If you meet anyone, don’t stop to greet him, and if a
man greets you, don’t answer him. Then place my staff on the boy’s face.”

30 The boy’s mother said to Elisha, “As the Lord lives and as you
yourself live, I will not leave you.” So he got up and followed her.

31 Gehazi went ahead of them and placed the staff on the boy’s face, but
there was no sound or sign of life, so he went back to meet Elisha and told
him, “The boy didn’t wake up.”

32 When Elisha got to the house, he discovered the boy lying dead on his
bed. 33 So he went in, closed the door behind the two of them, and prayed
to the Lord. 34 Then he went up and lay on the boy: he put mouth to
mouth, eye to eye, hand to hand. While he bent down over him, the boy’s
flesh became warm. 35 Elisha got up, went into the house, and paced back

and forth. Then he went up and bent down over him again. The boy sneezed seven times and opened his eyes.

36 Elisha called Gehazi and said, “Call the Shunammite woman.” He
called her and she came. Then Elisha said, “Pick up your son.” 37 She came,
fell at his feet, and bowed to the ground; she picked up her son and left.

The Deadly Stew

38[†] When Elisha returned to Gilgal, there was a famine in the land. The sons of the prophets were sitting at his feet. [A] He said to his attendant, “Put on the large pot and make stew for the sons of the prophets.”

39[†] One went out to the field to gather herbs and found a wild vine from which he gathered as many wild gourds as his garment would hold. Then he came back and cut them up into the pot of stew, but they were unaware of what they were.

40 They served some for the men to eat, but when they ate the stew they cried out, “There’s death in the pot, man of God! ” And they were unable to eat it.

41 Then Elisha said, “Get some meal.” He threw it into the pot and said, “Serve it for the people to eat.” And there was nothing bad in the pot.

The Multiplied Bread

42[†] A man from Baal-shalishah came to the man of God with his sack full of 20 loaves of barley bread from the first bread of the harvest. Elisha said, “Give it to the people to eat.”

43 But Elisha’s attendant asked, “What? Am I to set 20 loaves before 100 men? ”

“Give it to the people to eat,” Elisha said, “for this is what the LORD says:
‘They will eat, and they will have some left over.’ ” 44 So he gave it to
them, and as the LORD had promised, they ate and had some left over.

2 KINGS

Naaman's Disease Healed

5 [†]Naaman, commander of the army for the king of Aram, was a great
man in his master's sight [A] and highly regarded because through him,
the LORD had given victory to Aram. The man was a brave warrior, but he
had a skin disease.

2 Aram had gone on raids and brought back from the land of Israel a
young girl who served Naaman's wife. 3 She said to her mistress, "If only
my master would go to [B] the prophet who is in Samaria, he would cure him
of his skin disease."

4 So Naaman went and told his master what the girl from the land of
Israel had said. 5 Therefore, the king of Aram said, "Go and I will send a
letter with you to the king of Israel."

So he went and took with him 750 pounds [C] of silver, 150 pounds [D] of
gold, and 10 changes of clothes. 6 He brought the letter to the king of
Israel, and it read:

> When this letter comes to you, note that I have sent you my
> servant Naaman for you to cure him of his skin disease.

7[†] When the king of Israel read the letter, he tore his clothes and asked,
"Am I God, killing and giving life that this man expects me to cure a man
of his skin disease? Think it over and you will see that he is only picking a
fight with [E] me."

8 When Elisha the man of God heard that the king of Israel tore his
clothes, he sent a message to the king, "Why have you torn your clothes?
Have him come to me, and he will know there is a prophet in Israel." 9 So
Naaman came with his horses and chariots and stood at the door of Elisha's
house.

10[†] Then Elisha sent him a messenger, who said, "Go wash seven times
in the Jordan and your flesh will be restored and you will be •clean."

[11] But Naaman got angry and left, saying, “I was telling myself: He will surely come out, stand and call on the name of •Yahweh his God, and will wave his hand over the spot and cure the skin disease. [12†] Aren’t Abana and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? Could I not wash in them and be clean? ” So he turned and left in a rage.

[13] But his servants approached and said to him, “My father, if the prophet had told you to do some great thing, would you not have done it? How much more should you do it when he tells you, ‘Wash and be clean’? ”
[14] So Naaman went down and dipped himself in the Jordan seven times, according to the command of the man of God. Then his skin was restored and became like the skin of a small boy, and he was clean.

[15] Then Naaman and his whole company went back to the man of God, stood before him, and declared, “I know there’s no God in the whole world except in Israel. Therefore, please accept a gift from your servant.”

[16] But Elisha said, “As the Lord lives, I stand before Him. I will not accept it.” Naaman urged him to accept it, but he refused.

[17] Naaman responded, “If not, please let your servant be given as much soil as a pair of mules can carry, for your servant will no longer offer a •burnt offering or a sacrifice to any other god but Yahweh. [18] However, in a
particular matter may the Lord pardon your servant: When my master, the king of Aram, goes into the temple of Rimmon to worship and I, as his right-hand man, [F] bow in the temple of Rimmon — when I bow in the temple of Rimmon, may the Lord pardon your servant in this matter.”

[19] So he said to him, “Go in peace.”

Gehazi’s Greed Punished

After Naaman had traveled a short distance from Elisha, [20] Gehazi, the
attendant of Elisha the man of God, thought: My master has let this Aramean Naaman off lightly by not accepting from him what he brought. As the Lord lives, I will run after him and get something from him.

[21] So Gehazi pursued Naaman. When Naaman saw someone running
after him, he got down from the chariot to meet him and asked, “Is
everything all right? ”

[22] Gehazi said, “It’s all right. My master has sent me to say, ‘I have just
now discovered that two young men from the sons of the prophets have
come to me from the hill country of Ephraim. Please give them 75 pounds [G]
of silver and two changes of clothes.’ ”

[23] But Naaman insisted, “Please, accept 150 pounds.” [H] He urged Gehazi
and then packed 150 pounds [I] of silver in two bags with two changes of
clothes. Naaman gave them to two of his young men who carried them
ahead of Gehazi. [24] When Gehazi came to the hill, [J] he took the gifts from
them and stored them in the house. Then he dismissed the men, and they
left.

[25] Gehazi came and stood by his master. “Where did you go, Gehazi? ”
Elisha asked him.

“Your servant didn’t go anywhere,” he replied.

[26] But Elisha questioned him, “Wasn’t my spirit there [K] when the man
got down from his chariot to meet you? Is it a time to accept money and
clothes, olive orchards and vineyards, sheep and oxen, and male and female
slaves? [27] Therefore, Naaman’s skin disease will cling to you and your
descendants forever.” So Gehazi went out from his presence
diseased — white as snow.

2 KINGS

The Floating Ax Head

6 The sons of the prophets said to Elisha, “Please notice that the place where we live under your supervision [A] is too small for us. 2 Please let us go to the Jordan where we can each get a log and can build ourselves a place to live there.”

“Go,” he said.

3 Then one said, “Please come with your servants.”

“I’ll come,” he answered.

4 So he went with them, and when they came to the Jordan, they cut down trees. 5 As one of them was cutting down a tree, the iron ax head fell into the water, and he cried out, “Oh, my master, it was borrowed! ”

6 Then the man of God asked, “Where did it fall? ”

When he showed him the place, the man of God cut a stick, threw it there, and made the iron float. 7 Then he said, “Pick it up.” So he reached out and took it.

The Aramean War

8[†] When the king of Aram was waging war against Israel, he conferred with his servants, “My camp will be at such and such a place.”

9 But the man of God sent word to the king of Israel: “Be careful passing by this place, for the Arameans are going down there.” 10 Consequently, the king of Israel sent word to the place the man of God had told him about. The man of God repeatedly [B] warned the king, so the king would be on his guard.

11 The king of Aram was enraged because of this matter, and he called his servants and demanded of them, “Tell me, which one of us is for the king of Israel? ”

[12] One of his servants said, “No one, my lord the king. Elisha, the prophet in Israel, tells the king of Israel even the words you speak in your bedroom.”

[13†] So the king said, “Go and see where he is, so I can send men to capture him.”

When he was told, “Elisha is in Dothan,” [14†] he sent horses, chariots, and a massive army there. They went by night and surrounded the city.

[15] When the servant of the man of God got up early and went out, he discovered an army with horses and chariots surrounding the city. So he asked Elisha, “Oh, my master, what are we to do? ”

[16] Elisha said, “Don’t be afraid, for those who are with us outnumber those who are with them.”

[17†] Then Elisha prayed, “LORD, please open his eyes and let him see.” So the LORD opened the servant’s eyes. He looked and saw that the mountain was covered with horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.

[18] When the Arameans came against him, Elisha prayed to the LORD, “Please strike this nation with blindness.” So He struck them with
blindness, according to Elisha’s word. [19] Then Elisha said to them, “This is
not the way, and this is not the city. Follow me, and I will take you to the
man you’re looking for.” And he led them to Samaria. [20] When they
entered Samaria, Elisha said, “LORD, open these men’s eyes and let them see.” So the LORD opened their eyes. They looked and discovered they were in Samaria.

[21] When the king of Israel saw them, he said to Elisha, “My father, should I kill them? I will kill them.”

[22] Elisha replied, “Don’t kill them. Do you kill those you have captured with your sword or your bow? Set food and water in front of them so they can eat and drink and go to their master.”

23 So he prepared a great feast for them. When they had eaten and drunk, he sent them away, and they went to their master. The Aramean raiders did not come into Israel's land again.

24† Some time later, King Ben-hadad of Aram brought all his military units together and marched up to besiege Samaria. 25† So there was a great famine in Samaria, and they continued the siege against it until a donkey's head sold for 80 silver •shekels, and a cup[C] of dove's dung[D] sold for five silver shekels.

26† As the king of Israel was passing by on the wall, a woman cried out to him, "My lord the king, help! "

27 He answered, "If the Lord doesn't help you, where can I get help for you? From the threshing floor or the winepress? " 28 Then the king asked her, "What's the matter? "

She said, "This woman said to me, 'Give up your son, and we will eat him today. Then we will eat my son tomorrow.' 29 So we boiled my son and ate him, and I said to her the next day, 'Give up your son, and we will eat him,' but she has hidden her son."

30 When the king heard the woman's words, he tore his clothes. Then, as he was passing by on the wall, the people saw that there was •sackcloth under his clothes next to his skin. 31 He announced, "May God punish me and do so severely if the head of Elisha son of Shaphat remains on his shoulders today."

32 Elisha was sitting in his house, and the elders were sitting with him. The king sent a man ahead of him, but before the messenger got to him, Elisha said to the elders, "Do you see how this murderer has sent someone to cut off my head? Look, when the messenger comes, shut the door to keep him out. Isn't the sound of his master's feet behind him? "

33† While Elisha was still speaking with them, the messenger came down to him. Then he said, "This disaster is from the Lord. Why should I wait for

the LORD any longer? ”

2 KINGS

Aram Defeated

7

†Elisha replied, "Hear the word of the LORD! This is what the LORD says: 'About this time tomorrow at the gate of Samaria, six quarts [A] of fine meal will sell for a •shekel and 12 quarts [B] of barley will sell for a shekel.' "

2† Then the captain, the king's right-hand man, responded to the man of God, "Look, even if the LORD were to make windows in heaven, could this really happen? "

Elisha announced, "You will in fact see it with your own eyes, but you won't eat any of it."

3 Four men with a skin disease were at the entrance to the gate. They
said to each other, "Why just sit here until we die? 4 If we say, 'Let's go into
the city,' we will die there because the famine is in the city, but if we sit here, we will also die. So now, come on. Let's go to the Arameans' camp. If they let us live, we will live; if they kill us, we will die."

5 So the diseased men got up at twilight to go to the Arameans' camp. When they came to the camp's edge, they discovered that there was not a
single man there, 6 for the Lord had caused the Aramean camp to hear the
sound of chariots, horses, and a great army. The Arameans had said to each other, "The king of Israel must have hired the kings of the Hittites and the
kings of Egypt to attack us." 7 So they had gotten up and fled at twilight,
abandoning their tents, horses, and donkeys. The camp was intact, and they had fled for their lives.

8 When these men came to the edge of the camp, they went into a tent to eat and drink. Then they picked up the silver, gold, and clothing and went off and hid them. They came back and entered another tent, picked things
up, and hid them. 9 Then they said to each other, "We're not doing what is
right. Today is a day of good news. If we are silent and wait until morning light, our sin will catch up with us. Let's go tell the king's household."

10 The diseased men went and called to the city's gatekeepers and told them, "We went to the Aramean camp and no one was there — no human

sounds. There was nothing but tethered horses and donkeys, and the tents
were intact.” 11 The gatekeepers called out, and the news was reported to
the king’s household.

12 So the king got up in the night and said to his servants, “Let me tell
you what the Arameans have done to us. They know we are starving, so
they have left the camp to hide in the open country, thinking, ‘When they
come out of the city, we will take them alive and go into the city.’ ”

13 But one of his servants responded, “Please, let messengers take five of
the horses that are left in the city. Their fate is like the entire Israelite
community who will die, so let’s send them and see.”

14 The messengers took two chariots with horses, and the king sent them
after the Aramean army, saying, “Go and see.” 15 So they followed them as
far as the Jordan. They saw that the whole way was littered with clothes and
equipment the Arameans had thrown off in their haste. The messengers
returned and told the king. 16 Then the people went out and plundered the
Aramean camp.

It was then that six quarts [C] of fine meal sold for a shekel and 12
quarts [D] of barley sold for a shekel, according to the word of the Lord.
17 The king had appointed the captain, his right-hand man, to be in charge
of the gate, but the people trampled him in the gateway. He died, just as the
man of God had predicted when the king came to him. 18 When the man of
God had said to the king, “About this time tomorrow 12 quarts [E] of barley
will sell for a shekel and six quarts [F] of fine meal will sell for a shekel at
the gate of Samaria,” 19 this captain had answered the man of God, “Look,
even if the Lord were to make windows in heaven, could this really
happen? ” Elisha had said, “You will in fact see it with your own eyes, but
you won’t eat any of it.” 20 This is what happened to him: the people
trampled him in the gateway, and he died.

2 KINGS

The Shunammite's Land Restored

8 Elisha said to the woman whose son he had restored to life, "Get ready, you and your household, and go and live as a foreigner wherever you can. For the LORD has announced a seven-year famine, and it has already come to the land."

2 So the woman got ready and did what the man of God said. She and her
household lived as foreigners in the land of the Philistines for seven years.
3† When the woman returned from the land of the Philistines at the end of
seven years, she went to appeal to the king for her house and field.

4† The king had been speaking to Gehazi, the attendant of the man of God, saying, "Tell me all the great things Elisha has done."

5 While he was telling the king how Elisha restored the dead son to life, the woman whose son he had restored to life came to appeal to the king for her house and field. So Gehazi said, "My lord the king, this is the woman and this is the son Elisha restored to life."

6 When the king asked the woman, she told him the story. So the king appointed a court official for her, saying, "Restore all that was hers, along with all the income from the field from the day she left the country until now."

Aram's King Hazael

7† Elisha came to Damascus while Ben-hadad king of Aram was sick,
and the king was told, "The man of God has come here." 8 So the king said
to Hazael, "Take a gift with you and go meet the man of God. Inquire of
the LORD through him, 'Will I recover from this sickness? ' "

9† Hazael went to meet Elisha, taking with him a gift: 40 camel-loads of all kinds of goods from Damascus. When he came and stood before him, he said, "Your son, Ben-hadad king of Aram, has sent me to ask you, 'Will I recover from this sickness? ' "

10† Elisha told him, "Go say to him, 'You are sure to recover.' But the
LORD has shown me that he is sure to die." 11† Then Elisha stared steadily at

him until Hazael was ashamed.

The man of God wept, 12† and Hazael asked, “Why is my lord
weeping? ”

He replied, “Because I know the evil you will do to the people of Israel.
You will set their fortresses on fire. You will kill their young men with the
sword. You will dash their little ones to pieces. You will rip open their
pregnant women.”

13† Hazael said, “How could your servant, a mere dog, do this monstrous
thing? ”

Elisha answered, “The Lord has shown me that you will be king over
Aram.”

14 Hazael left Elisha and went to his master, who asked him, “What did
Elisha say to you? ”

He responded, “He told me you are sure to recover.” 15† The next day
Hazael took a heavy cloth, dipped it in water, and spread it over the king’s
face. Ben-hadad died, and Hazael reigned instead of him.

Judah’s King Jehoram

16† In the fifth year of Israel’s King Joram son of Ahab, Jehoram son of
Jehoshaphat became king of Judah, replacing his father. [A], 17† He was 32
years old when he became king and reigned eight years in Jerusalem.
18† He walked in the way of the kings of Israel, as the house of Ahab had
done, for Ahab’s daughter was his wife. He did what was evil in the Lord’s
sight. 19† The Lord was unwilling to destroy Judah because of His servant
David, since He had promised to give a lamp to David and his sons
forever.

20† During Jehoram’s reign, Edom rebelled against Judah’s control and
appointed their own king. 21 So Jehoram crossed over to Zair with all his
chariots. Then at night he set out to attack the Edomites who had

surrounded him and the chariot commanders, but his troops fled to their
tents. 22† So Edom is still in rebellion against Judah's control today.
Libnah also rebelled at that time.

23 The rest of the events of Jehoram's reign, along with all his
accomplishments, are written in the Historical Record of Judah's Kings.
24 Jehoram rested with his fathers and was buried with his fathers in the city
of David, and his son Ahaziah became king in his place.

Judah's King Ahaziah

25† In the twelfth year of Israel's King Joram son of Ahab, Ahaziah son
of Jehoram became king of Judah. 26† Ahaziah was 22 years old when he
became king and reigned one year in Jerusalem. His mother's name was
Athaliah, granddaughter of Israel's King Omri. 27† He walked in the way of
the house of Ahab and did what was evil in the LORD's sight like the house
of Ahab, for he was a son-in-law to Ahab's family.

28 Ahaziah went with Joram son of Ahab to fight against Hazael king of
Aram in Ramoth-gilead, and the Arameans wounded Joram. 29 So King
Joram returned to Jezreel to recover from the wounds that the Arameans
had inflicted on him in Ramoth-gilead [B] when he fought against Aram's
King Hazael. Then Judah's King Ahaziah son of Jehoram went down to
Jezreel to visit Joram son of Ahab since Joram was ill.

2 KINGS

Jehu Anointed as Israel's King

9 [†]The prophet Elisha called one of the sons of the prophets and said,
“Tuck your mantle under your belt, take this flask of oil with you, and
go to Ramoth-gilead. [2†] When you get there, look for Jehu son of
Jehoshaphat, son of Nimshi. Go in, get him away from his colleagues, and
take him to an inner room. [3†] Then, take the flask of oil, pour it on his head,
and say, ‘This is what the LORD says: “I anoint you king over Israel.” ’
Open the door and escape. Don’t wait.” [4] So the young prophet went to
Ramoth-gilead.

[5†] When he arrived, the army commanders were sitting there, so he said,
“I have a message for you, commander.”

Jehu asked, “For which one of us? ”

He answered, “For you, commander.”

[6] So Jehu got up and went into the house. The young prophet poured the
oil on his head and said, “This is what the LORD God of Israel says: ‘I anoint
you king over the LORD’s people, Israel. [7] You are to strike down the house
of your master Ahab so that I may avenge the blood shed by the hand of
Jezebel — the blood of My servants the prophets and of all the servants of
the LORD. [8] The whole house of Ahab will perish, and I will eliminate all of
Ahab’s males, [A] both slave and free, in Israel. [9] I will make the house of
Ahab like the house of Jeroboam son of Nebat and like the house of Baasha
son of Ahijah. [10] The dogs will eat Jezebel in the plot of land at
Jezreel — no one will bury her.’ ” Then the young prophet opened the door
and escaped.

[11] When Jehu came out to his master’s servants, they asked, “Is
everything all right? Why did this crazy person come to you? ”

Then he said to them, “You know the sort and their ranting.”

[12] But they replied, “That’s a lie! Tell us! ”

So Jehu said, "He talked to me about this and that and said, 'This is what the LORD says: I anoint you king over Israel.' "

13 Each man quickly took his garment and put it under Jehu on the bare steps. [B] They blew the ram's horn and proclaimed, "Jehu is king! "

14 Then Jehu son of Jehoshaphat, son of Nimshi, conspired against Joram. Joram and all Israel had been at Ramoth-gilead on guard against
Hazael king of Aram. 15 But King Joram had returned to Jezreel to recover
from the wounds that the Arameans had inflicted on him when he fought against Aram's King Hazael. Jehu said, "If you commanders wish to make me king, then don't let anyone escape from the city to go tell about it in Jezreel."

Jehu Kills Joram and Ahaziah

16 Jehu got into his chariot and went to Jezreel since Joram was laid up
there and Ahaziah king of Judah had gone down to visit Joram. 17 Now the
watchman was standing on the tower in Jezreel. He saw Jehu's troops approaching and shouted, "I see troops! "

Joram responded, "Choose a rider and send him to meet them and have him ask, 'Do you come in peace? ' "

18 So a horseman went to meet Jehu and said, "This is what the king asks: 'Do you come in peace? ' "

Jehu replied, "What do you have to do with peace? [C] Fall in behind me."

The watchman reported, "The messenger reached them but hasn't started back."

19 So he sent out a second horseman, who went to them and said, "This is what the king asks: 'Do you come in peace? ' "

Jehu answered, "What do you have to do with peace? [D] Fall in behind me."

[20] Again the watchman reported, “He reached them but hasn’t started back. Also, the driving is like that of Jehu son of Nimshi — he drives like a madman.”

[21] “Harness! ” Joram shouted, and they harnessed his chariot. Then Joram king of Israel and Ahaziah king of Judah set out, each in his own chariot, and met Jehu at the plot of land of Naboth the Jezreelite. [22†] When Joram saw Jehu he asked, “Do you come in peace, Jehu? ”

He answered, “What peace can there be as long as there is so much prostitution and witchcraft from your mother Jezebel? ”

[23] Joram turned around and fled, shouting to Ahaziah, “It’s treachery, Ahaziah! ”

[24] Then Jehu drew his bow and shot Joram between the shoulders. The arrow went through his heart, and he slumped down in his chariot. [25] Jehu said to Bidkar his aide, “Pick him up and throw him on the plot of ground belonging to Naboth the Jezreelite. For remember when you and I were riding side by side behind his father Ahab, and the LORD uttered this •oracle against him: [26] ‘As surely as I saw the blood of Naboth and the blood of his sons yesterday’ — this is the LORD’s declaration — ‘so will I repay you on this plot of land’ — this is the LORD’s declaration. So now, according to the word of the LORD, pick him up and throw him on the plot of land.”

[27] When King Ahaziah of Judah saw what was happening, he fled up the road toward Beth-haggan. Jehu pursued him, shouting, “Shoot him too! ” So they shot him in his chariot at Gur Pass near Ibleam, but he fled to Megiddo and died there. [28] Then his servants carried him to Jerusalem in a chariot and buried him in his fathers’ tomb in the city of David. [29†] It was in the eleventh year of Joram son of Ahab that Ahaziah had become king over Judah.

Jehu Kills Jezebel

30 When Jehu came to Jezreel, Jezebel heard about it, so she painted her
eyes, adorned her head, and looked down from the window. 31† As Jehu
entered the gate, she said, "Do you come in peace, Zimri, killer of your
master? "

32 He looked up toward the window and said, "Who is on my side?
Who? " Two or three eunuchs looked down at him, 33 and he said, "Throw
her down! " So they threw her down, and some of her blood splattered on
the wall and on the horses, and Jehu rode over her.

34 Then he went in, ate and drank, and said, "Take care of this cursed
woman and bury her, since she's a king's daughter." 35 But when they went
out to bury her, they did not find anything but her skull, her feet, and the
palms of her hands. 36† So they went back and told him, and he said, "This
fulfills the LORD's word that He spoke through His servant Elijah the
Tishbite: 'In the plot of land at Jezreel, the dogs will eat Jezebel's flesh.
37 Jezebel's corpse will be like manure on the surface of the field in the plot
of land at Jezreel so that no one will be able to say: This is Jezebel.' "

2 KINGS

Jehu Kills the House of Ahab

10 Since Ahab had 70 sons in Samaria, Jehu wrote letters and sent them
to Samaria to the rulers of Jezreel, to the elders, and to the guardians
of Ahab's sons, saying:

> [2] When this letter arrives, since your master's sons are with you
> and you have chariots, horses, a fortified city, and weaponry,
> [3] select the most qualified [A] of your master's sons, set him on his
> father's throne, and fight for your master's house.

[4] However, they were terrified and reasoned, "Look, two kings couldn't
stand against him; how can we? "

[5] So the overseer of the palace, the overseer of the city, the elders, and the
guardians sent a message to Jehu: "We are your servants, and we will do
whatever you tell us. We will not make anyone king. Do whatever you think
is right." [B]

[6] Then Jehu wrote them a second letter, saying:

> If you are on my side, and if you will obey me, bring me the heads
> of your master's sons at this time tomorrow at Jezreel.

All 70 of the king's sons were being cared for by the city's prominent
men. [7] When the letter came to them, they took the king's sons and
slaughtered all 70, put their heads in baskets, and sent them to Jehu at
Jezreel. [8] When the messenger came and told him, "They have brought the
heads of the king's sons," the king said, "Pile them in two heaps at the
entrance of the gate until morning."

[9] The next morning when he went out and stood at the gate, he said to all
the people, "You are innocent. It was I who conspired against my master
and killed him. But who struck down all these? [10] Know, then, that not a
word the LORD spoke against the house of Ahab will fail, for the LORD has
done what He promised through His servant Elijah." [11†] So Jehu killed all
who remained of the house of Ahab in Jezreel — all his great men, close
friends, and priests — leaving him no survivors.

[12] Then he set out and went on his way to Samaria. On the way, while he was at Beth-eked of the Shepherds, [13] Jehu met the relatives of Ahaziah king of Judah and asked, "Who are you? "

They answered, "We're Ahaziah's relatives. We've come down to greet the king's sons and the queen mother's sons."

[14] Then Jehu ordered, "Take them alive." So they took them alive and then slaughtered them at the pit of Beth-eked — 42 men. He didn't spare any of them.

[15] When he left there, he found Jehonadab son of Rechab coming to meet him. He greeted him and then asked, "Is your heart one with mine? " [C]

"It is," Jehonadab replied.

Jehu said, "If it is, give me your hand."

So he gave him his hand, and Jehu pulled him up into the chariot with him. [16] Then he said, "Come with me and see my zeal for the LORD! " So he let him ride with him in his chariot. [17] When Jehu came to Samaria, he struck down all who remained from the house of Ahab in Samaria until he had annihilated his house, according to the word of the LORD spoken to Elijah.

Jehu Kills the Baal Worshipers

[18] Then Jehu brought all the people together and said to them, "Ahab served •Baal a little, but Jehu will serve him a lot. [19] Now, therefore, summon to me all the prophets of Baal, all his servants, and all his priests. None must be missing, for I have a great sacrifice for Baal. Whoever is missing will not live." However, Jehu was acting deceptively in order to destroy the servants of Baal. [20] Jehu commanded, "Consecrate a solemn assembly for Baal." So they called one.

[21] Then Jehu sent messengers throughout all Israel, and all the servants of Baal came; there was not a man left who did not come. They entered the

temple of Baal, and it was filled from one end to the other. 22 Then he said
to the custodian of the wardrobe, “Bring out the garments for all the
servants of Baal.” So he brought out their garments.

23 Then Jehu and Jehonadab son of Rechab entered the temple of Baal,
and Jehu said to the servants of Baal, “Look carefully to see that there are
no servants of the LORD here among you — only servants of Baal.” 24 Then
they went in to offer sacrifices and •burnt offerings.

Now Jehu had stationed 80 men outside, and he warned them, “Whoever
allows any of the men I am delivering into your hands to escape will forfeit
his life for theirs.” 25 When he finished offering the burnt offering, Jehu
said to the guards and officers, “Go in and kill them. Don’t let anyone out.”
So they struck them down with the sword. Then the guards and officers
threw the bodies out and went into the inner room of the temple of Baal.
26 They brought out the pillars of the temple of Baal and burned them 27 and
tore down the pillar of Baal. Then they tore down the temple of Baal and
made it a latrine — which it is to this day.

Evaluation of Jehu’s Reign

28 Jehu eliminated Baal worship from Israel, 29 but he did not turn away
from the sins that Jeroboam son of Nebat had caused Israel to
commit — worshiping the gold calves that were in Bethel and Dan.
30 Nevertheless, the LORD said to Jehu, “Because you have done well in
carrying out what is right in My sight and have done to the house of Ahab
all that was in My heart, four generations of your sons will sit on the throne
of Israel.”

31† Yet Jehu was not careful to follow the instruction of the LORD God of
Israel with all his heart. He did not turn from the sins that Jeroboam had
caused Israel to commit.

32 In those days the LORD began to reduce the size of Israel. Hazael
defeated the Israelites throughout their territory: 33† from the Jordan
eastward, all the land of Gilead — the Gadites, the Reubenites, and the

Manassites — from Aroer which is by the Arnon Valley through Gilead to
Bashan. [D]

[34] Now the rest of the events of Jehu's reign, along with all his
accomplishments and all his might, are written in the Historical Record of
Israel's Kings. [35] Jehu rested with his fathers and was buried in Samaria.
His son Jehoahaz became king in his place. [36†] The length of Jehu's reign
over Israel in Samaria was 28 years.

2 KINGS

Athaliah Usurps the Throne

11 [†]When Athaliah, Ahaziah's mother, saw that her son was dead, she
proceeded to annihilate all the royal heirs. [2†] Jehosheba, who was
King Jehoram's daughter and Ahaziah's sister, secretly rescued Joash son
of Ahaziah from the king's sons who were being killed and put him and the
one who nursed him in a bedroom. So he was hidden from Athaliah and
was not killed. [3] Joash was in hiding with Jehosheba in the LORD's temple
six years while Athaliah ruled over the land.

Athaliah Overthrown

[4†] Then in the seventh year, Jehoiada sent messengers and brought in
the commanders of hundreds, the Carites, and the guards. He had them
come to him in the LORD's temple, where he made a covenant with them
and put them under oath. He showed them the king's son [5] and commanded
them, "This is what you are to do: a third of you who come on duty on the
Sabbath are to provide protection for the king's palace. [6†] A third are to be
at the Sur gate and a third at the gate behind the guards. You are to take
turns providing protection for the palace. [A]

[7] "Your two divisions that go off duty on the Sabbath are to provide
protection for the LORD's temple. [8] You must completely surround the king
with weapons in hand. Anyone who approaches the ranks is to be put to
death. You must be with the king in all his daily tasks." [B]

[9] So the commanders of hundreds did everything Jehoiada the priest
commanded. They each brought their men — those coming on duty on the
Sabbath and those going off duty — and went to Jehoiada the priest. [10] The
priest gave to the commanders of hundreds King David's spears and
shields that were in the LORD's temple. [11] Then the guards stood with their
weapons in hand surrounding the king — from the right side of the temple
to the left side, by the altar and by the temple.

[12] He brought out the king's son, put the crown on him, gave him the
•testimony, [C] and made him king. They anointed him and clapped their
hands and cried, "Long live the king! "

[13] When Athaliah heard the noise from the guard and the crowd, she
went out to the people at the LORD's temple. [14] As she looked, there was the
king standing by the pillar according to the custom. The commanders and
the trumpeters were by the king, and all the people of the land were
rejoicing and blowing trumpets. Athaliah tore her clothes and screamed
"Treason! Treason! "

[15] Then Jehoiada the priest ordered the commanders of hundreds in
charge of the army, "Take her out between the ranks, and put to death by the
sword anyone who follows her," for the priest had said, "She is not to be
put to death in the LORD's temple." [16] So they arrested her, and she went
through the horse entrance to the king's palace, where she was put to
death.

Jehoiada's Reforms

[17] Then Jehoiada made a covenant between the LORD, the king, and the
people that they would be the LORD's people and another covenant between
the king and the people. [18†] So all the people of the land went to the temple
of •Baal and tore it down. They broke its altars and images into pieces, and
they killed Mattan, the priest of Baal, at the altars.

Then Jehoiada the priest appointed guards for the LORD's temple. [19†] He
took the commanders of hundreds, the Carites, the guards, and all the
people of the land, and they brought the king from the LORD's temple. They
entered the king's palace by way of the guards' gate. Then Joash sat on the
throne of the kings. [20†] All the people of the land rejoiced, and the city was
quiet, for they had put Athaliah to death by the sword in the king's palace.

Judah's King Joash

[21] Joash was seven years old when he became king.

2 KINGS

12 [†] In the seventh year of Jehu, Joash became king and reigned 40 years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Zibiah, who was from Beer-sheba. [2†] Throughout the time Jehoiada the priest instructed him, Joash did what was right in the LORD's sight. [3] Yet the •high places were not taken away; the people continued sacrificing and burning incense on the high places.

Repairing the Temple

[4] Then Joash said to the priests, "All the dedicated money brought to the LORD's temple, census money, money from vows, and all money voluntarily given for the LORD's temple, [5] each priest is to take from his assessor [A] and repair whatever damage to the temple is found." [B]

[6] But by the twenty-third year of the reign of King Joash, the priests had not repaired the damage [C] to the temple. [7] So King Joash called Jehoiada the priest and the other priests and said, "Why haven't you repaired the temple's damage? Since you haven't, don't take any money from your assessors; instead, hand it over for the repair of the temple." [8] So the priests agreed they would not take money from the people and they would not repair the temple's damage.

[9] Then Jehoiada the priest took a chest, bored a hole in its lid, and set it beside the altar on the right side as one enters the LORD's temple; in it the priests who guarded the threshold put all the money brought into the LORD's temple. [10] Whenever they saw there was a large amount of money in the chest, the king's secretary and the high priest would go to the LORD's temple and count the money found there and tie it up in bags. [11] Then they would put the counted money into the hands of those doing the work — those who oversaw the LORD's temple. They in turn would pay it out to those working on the LORD's temple — the carpenters, the builders, [12] the masons, and the stonecutters — and would use it to buy timber and quarried stone to repair the damage to the LORD's temple and for all spending for temple repairs.

[13] However, no silver bowls, wick trimmers, sprinkling basins, trumpets, or any articles of gold or silver were made for the LORD's temple from the money brought into the temple. [14] Instead, it was given to those doing the work, and they repaired the LORD's temple with it. [15] No accounting was required from the men who received the money to pay those doing the work, since they worked with integrity. [16] The money from the •restitution offering and the •sin offering was not brought to the LORD's temple since it belonged to the priests.

Aramean Invasion of Judah

[17] At that time Hazael king of Aram marched up and fought against Gath and captured it. Then he planned to attack Jerusalem. [18] So King Joash of Judah took all the consecrated items that his ancestors — Judah's kings Jehoshaphat, Jehoram, and Ahaziah — had consecrated, along with his own consecrated items and all the gold found in the treasuries of the LORD's temple and in the king's palace, and he sent them to Hazael king of Aram. Then Hazael withdrew from Jerusalem.

Joash Assassinated

[19] The rest of the events of Joash's reign, along with all his accomplishments, are written in the Historical Record of Judah's Kings.
[20]† Joash's servants conspired against him and killed him at Beth-millo on the road that goes down to Silla. [21]† His servants Jozabad son of Shimeath and Jehozabad son of Shomer struck him down, and he died. Then they buried him with his fathers in the city of David, and his son Amaziah became king in his place.

2 KINGS

Israel's King Jehoahaz

13 [†]In the twenty-third year of Judah's King Joash son of Ahaziah,
Jehoahaz son of Jehu became king over Israel in Samaria and reigned
17 years. 2 He did what was evil in the LORD's sight and followed the sins
that Jeroboam son of Nebat had caused Israel to commit; he did not turn
away from them. 3 So the LORD's anger burned against Israel, and He
surrendered them to the power of Hazael king of Aram and his son Ben-
hadad during their reigns.

4 Then Jehoahaz sought the LORD's favor, and the LORD heard him, for He
saw the oppression the king of Aram inflicted on Israel. 5[†] Therefore, the
LORD gave Israel a deliverer, and they escaped from the power of the
Arameans. Then the people of Israel dwelt in their tents as before, 6 but they
didn't turn away from the sins that the house of Jeroboam had caused Israel
to commit. Jehoahaz walked in them, and the •Asherah pole also remained
standing in Samaria. 7 Jehoahaz did not have an army left, except for 50
horsemen, 10 chariots, and 10,000 foot soldiers, because the king of Aram
had destroyed them, making them like dust at threshing.

8 The rest of the events of Jehoahaz's reign, along with all his
accomplishments and his might, are written in the Historical Record of
Israel's Kings. 9 Jehoahaz rested with his fathers, and he was buried in
Samaria. His son Jehoash [A] became king in his place.

Israel's King Jehoash

10[†] In the thirty-seventh year of Judah's King Joash, Jehoash son of
Jehoahaz became king over Israel in Samaria and reigned 16 years. 11 He
did what was evil in the LORD's sight. He did not turn away from all the sins
that Jeroboam son of Nebat had caused Israel to commit, but he walked in
them.

12 The rest of the events of Jehoash's reign, along with all his
accomplishments and the power he had to wage war against Judah's King
Amaziah, are written in the Historical Record of Israel's Kings. 13 Jehoash
rested with his fathers, and Jeroboam sat on his throne. Jehoash was buried
in Samaria with the kings of Israel.

Elisha's Death

[14]† When Elisha became sick with the illness that he died from, Jehoash king of Israel went down and wept over him and said, "My father, my father, the chariots and horsemen of Israel! "

[15] Elisha responded, "Take a bow and arrows." So he got a bow and
arrows. [16] Then Elisha said to the king of Israel, "Put your hand on the bow." So the king put his hand on it, and Elisha put his hands on the king's
hands. [17] Elisha said, "Open the east window." So he opened it. Elisha said, "Shoot! " So he shot. Then Elisha said, "The LORD's arrow of victory, yes, the arrow of victory over Aram. You are to strike down the Arameans in Aphek until you have put an end to them."

[18] Then Elisha said, "Take the arrows! " So he took them. Then Elisha said to the king of Israel, "Strike the ground! " So he struck the ground
three times and stopped. [19] The man of God was angry with him and said, "You should have struck the ground five or six times. Then you would have struck down Aram until you had put an end to them, but now you will only
strike down Aram three times." [20] Then Elisha died and was buried.

Now Moabite raiders used to come into the land in the spring of the year.
[21] Once, as the Israelites were burying a man, suddenly they saw a raiding party, so they threw the man into Elisha's tomb. When he touched Elisha's bones, the man revived and stood up!

God's Mercy on Israel

[22] Hazael king of Aram oppressed Israel throughout the reign of
Jehoahaz, [23] but the LORD was gracious to them, had compassion on them, and turned toward them because of His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He was not willing to destroy them. Even now He has not banished them from His presence.

[24] King Hazael of Aram died, and his son Ben-hadad became king in his
place. [25] Then Jehoash son of Jehoahaz took back from Ben-hadad son of

Hazael the cities that Hazael had taken in war from Jehoash's father Jehoahaz. Jehoash defeated Ben-hadad three times and recovered the cities of Israel.

2 KINGS

Judah's King Amaziah

14 [†]In the second year of Israel’s King Jehoash [A], son of Jehoahaz, [B]
Amaziah son of Joash became king of Judah. 2[†] He was 25 years old
when he became king and reigned 29 years in Jerusalem. His mother’s
name was Jehoaddan and was from Jerusalem. 3[†] He did what was right in
the LORD’s sight, but not like his ancestor David. He did everything his
father Joash had done. 4 Yet the •high places were not taken away, and the
people continued sacrificing and burning incense on the high places.

5 As soon as the kingdom was firmly in his grasp, Amaziah killed his
servants who had murdered his father the king. 6 However, he did not put
the children of the murderers to death, as it is written in the book of the law
of Moses where the LORD commanded, “Fathers must not be put to death
because of children, and children must not be put to death because of
fathers; instead, each one will be put to death for his own sin.”

7[†] Amaziah killed 10,000 Edomites in the Valley of Salt. He took Sela in
battle and called it Joktheel, which is its name to this very day. 8 Amaziah
then sent messengers to Jehoash son of Jehoahaz, son of Jehu, king of
Israel, saying, “Come, let us meet face to face.”

9 King Jehoash of Israel sent word to Amaziah king of Judah, saying,
“The thistle that was in Lebanon once sent a message to the cedar that was
in Lebanon, saying, ‘Give your daughter to my son as a wife.’ Then a wild
animal that was in Lebanon passed by and trampled the thistle. 10 You have
indeed defeated Edom, and you have become overconfident. Enjoy your
glory and stay at home. Why should you stir up such trouble that you
fall — you and Judah with you? ”

11 But Amaziah would not listen, so King Jehoash of Israel advanced. He
and King Amaziah of Judah faced off at Beth-shemesh that belongs to
Judah. 12 Judah was routed before Israel, and everyone fled to his own tent.
13 King Jehoash of Israel captured Judah’s King Amaziah son of Joash, [C]
son of Ahaziah, at Beth-shemesh. Then Jehoash went to Jerusalem and
broke down 200 yards [D] of Jerusalem’s wall from the Ephraim Gate to the
Corner Gate. 14 He took all the gold and silver, all the articles found in the

LORD's temple and in the treasuries of the king's palace, and some
hostages. Then he returned to Samaria.

Jehoash's Death

[15] The rest of the events of Jehoash's reign, along with his
accomplishments, his might, and how he waged war against Amaziah king
of Judah, are written in the Historical Record of Israel's Kings. [16] Jehoash
rested with his fathers, and he was buried in Samaria with the kings of
Israel. His son Jeroboam became king in his place.

Amaziah's Death

[17] Judah's King Amaziah son of Joash lived 15 years after the death of
Israel's King Jehoash son of Jehoahaz. [18] The rest of the events of
Amaziah's reign are written in the Historical Record of Judah's Kings. [19] A
conspiracy was formed against him in Jerusalem, and he fled to Lachish.
However, men were sent after him to Lachish, and they put him to death
there. [20] They carried him back on horses, and he was buried in Jerusalem
with his fathers in the city of David.

[21] Then all the people of Judah took Azariah, who was 16 years old, and
made him king in place of his father Amaziah. [22] He rebuilt Elath and
restored it to Judah after Amaziah the king rested with his fathers.

Israel's King Jeroboam

[23†] In the fifteenth year of Judah's King Amaziah son of Joash,
Jeroboam son of Jehoash [E] became king of Israel in Samaria and reigned
41 years. [24] He did what was evil in the LORD's sight. He did not turn away
from all the sins Jeroboam son of Nebat had caused Israel to commit.

[25†] He restored Israel's border from Lebo-hamath as far as the Sea of the
•Arabah, according to the word the LORD, the God of Israel, had spoken
through His servant, the prophet Jonah son of Amittai from Gath-hepher.
[26] For the LORD saw that the affliction of Israel was very bitter. There was

no one to help Israel, neither bond nor free. [27] However, the LORD had not said He would blot out the name of Israel under heaven, so He delivered them by the hand of Jeroboam son of Jehoash. [F]

[28] The rest of the events of Jeroboam's reign — along with all his accomplishments, the power he had to wage war, and how he recovered for Israel Damascus and Hamath, which had belonged to Judah [G] — are written in the Historical Record of Israel's Kings. [29] Jeroboam rested with his fathers, the kings of Israel. His son Zechariah became king in his place.

2 KINGS

Judah’s King Azariah

15 †In the twenty-seventh year of Israel’s King Jeroboam, Azariah son
of Amaziah became king of Judah. 2† He was 16 years old when he
became king and reigned 52 years in Jerusalem. His mother’s name was
Jecoliah, who was from Jerusalem. 3 Azariah did what was right in the
LORD’s sight just as his father Amaziah had done. 4 Yet the •high places
were not taken away; the people continued sacrificing and burning incense
on the high places.

5† The LORD afflicted the king, and he had a serious skin disease until the
day of his death. He lived in a separate house, [A] while Jotham, the king’s
son, was over the household governing the people of the land.

6 The rest of the events of Azariah’s reign, along with all his
accomplishments, are written in the Historical Record of Judah’s Kings.
7 Azariah rested with his fathers and was buried with his fathers in the city
of David. His son Jotham became king in his place.

Israel’s King Zechariah

8† In the thirty-eighth year of Judah’s King Azariah, Zechariah son of
Jeroboam became king over Israel in Samaria for six months. 9 He did what
was evil in the LORD’s sight as his fathers had done. He did not turn away
from the sins Jeroboam son of Nebat had caused Israel to commit.

10 Shallum son of Jabesh conspired against Zechariah. He struck him
down publicly, killed him, and became king in his place. 11 As for the rest
of the events of Zechariah’s reign, they are written in the Historical Record
of Israel’s Kings. 12 The word of the LORD that He spoke to Jehu was,
“Four generations of your sons will sit on the throne of Israel,” and it was
so.

Israel’s King Shallum

13† In the thirty-ninth year of Judah’s King Uzziah, Shallum son of
Jabesh became king; he reigned in Samaria a full month. 14 Then Menahem
son of Gadi came up from Tirzah to Samaria and struck down Shallum son

of Jabesh there. He killed him and became king in his place. 15 As for the
rest of the events of Shallum's reign, along with the conspiracy that he
formed, they are written in the Historical Record of Israel's Kings.

Israel's King Menahem

16 At that time, starting from Tirzah, Menahem attacked Tiphsah, all who
were in it, and its territory. Because they wouldn't surrender, he attacked it
and ripped open all the pregnant women.

17† In the thirty-ninth year of Judah's King Azariah, Menahem son of
Gadi became king over Israel and reigned 10 years in Samaria. 18 He did
what was evil in the LORD's sight. Throughout his reign, he did not turn
away from the sins Jeroboam son of Nebat had caused Israel to commit.

19† Pul king of Assyria invaded the land, so Menahem gave Pul 75,000
pounds [B] of silver so that Pul would support him to strengthen his grip on
the kingdom. 20 Then Menahem exacted 20 ounces [C] of silver from each of
the wealthy men of Israel to give to the king of Assyria. So the king of
Assyria withdrew and did not stay there in the land.

21 The rest of the events of Menahem's reign, along with all his
accomplishments, are written in the Historical Record of Israel's Kings.
22 Menahem rested with his fathers, and his son Pekahiah became king in
his place.

Israel's King Pekahiah

23† In the fiftieth year of Judah's King Azariah, Pekahiah son of
Menahem became king over Israel in Samaria and reigned two years. 24 He
did what was evil in the LORD's sight and did not turn away from the sins
Jeroboam son of Nebat had caused Israel to commit.

25† Then his officer, Pekah son of Remaliah, conspired against him and
struck him down in Samaria at the citadel of the king's palace — as well as

Argob and Arieh. [D] There were 50 Gileadite men with Pekah. He killed
Pekahiah and became king in his place.

26 As for the rest of the events of Pekahiah's reign, along with all his
accomplishments, they are written in the Historical Record of Israel's
Kings.

Israel's King Pekah

27† In the fifty-second year of Judah's King Azariah, Pekah son of
Remaliah became king over Israel in Samaria and reigned 20 years. 28 He
did what was evil in the LORD's sight. He did not turn away from the sins
Jeroboam son of Nebat had caused Israel to commit.

29† In the days of Pekah king of Israel, Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria
came and captured Ijon, Abel-beth-maacah, Janoah, Kedesh, Hazor,
Gilead, and Galilee — all the land of Naphtali — and deported the people
to Assyria.

30† Then Hoshea son of Elah organized a conspiracy against Pekah son
of Remaliah. He attacked him, killed him, and became king in his place in
the twentieth year of Jotham son of Uzziah.

31 As for the rest of the events of Pekah's reign, along with all his
accomplishments, they are written in the Historical Record of Israel's
Kings.

Judah's King Jotham

32† In the second year of Israel's King Pekah son of Remaliah, Jotham
son of Uzziah became king of Judah. 33† He was 25 years old when he
became king and reigned 16 years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was
Jerusha daughter of Zadok. 34 He did what was right in the LORD's sight just
as his father Uzziah had done. 35† Yet the high places were not taken away;
the people continued sacrificing and burning incense on the high places.

Jotham built the Upper Gate of the LORD's temple. [36] The rest of the
events of Jotham's reign, along with all his accomplishments, they are
written in the Historical Record of Judah's Kings. [37†] In those days the
LORD began sending Rezin king of Aram and Pekah son of Remaliah
against Judah. [38] Jotham rested with his fathers and was buried with his
fathers in the city of his ancestor David. His son Ahaz became king in his
place.

2 KINGS

Judah's King Ahaz

16 †In the seventeenth year of Pekah son of Remaliah, Ahaz son of
Jotham became king of Judah. 2† Ahaz was 20 years old when he
became king and reigned 16 years in Jerusalem. He did not do what was
right in the sight of the LORD his God like his ancestor David 3† but walked
in the way of the kings of Israel. He even made his son pass through the
fire, imitating the detestable practices of the nations the LORD had
dispossessed before the Israelites. 4† He sacrificed and burned incense on
the •high places, on the hills, and under every green tree.

5† Then Aram's King Rezin and Israel's King Pekah son of Remaliah
came to wage war against Jerusalem. They besieged Ahaz but were not able
to conquer him. 6 At that time Rezin king of Aram recovered Elath for
Aram and expelled the Judahites from Elath. Then the Arameans came to
Elath, and they live there until today.

7† So Ahaz sent messengers to Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria, saying,
"I am your servant and your son. March up and save me from the power of
the king of Aram and of the king of Israel, who are rising up against me."
8 Ahaz also took the silver and gold found in the LORD's temple and in the
treasuries of the king's palace and sent them to the king of Assyria as a gift.
9† So the king of Assyria listened to him and marched up to Damascus and
captured it. He deported its people to Kir but put Rezin to death.

Ahaz's Idolatry

10† King Ahaz went to Damascus to meet Tiglath-pileser king of
Assyria. When he saw the altar that was in Damascus, King Ahaz sent a
model of the altar and complete plans for its construction to Uriah the
priest. 11 Uriah built the altar according to all the instructions King Ahaz
sent from Damascus. Therefore, by the time King Ahaz came back from
Damascus, Uriah the priest had completed it. 12† When the king came back
from Damascus, he saw the altar. Then he approached the altar and
ascended it. 13 He offered his •burnt offering and his •grain offering,
poured out his drink offering, and sprinkled the blood of his •fellowship
offerings on the altar. 14 He took the bronze altar that was before the LORD

in front of the temple between his altar and the LORD's temple, and put it on the north side of his altar.

[15] Then King Ahaz commanded Uriah the priest, "Offer on the great altar the morning burnt offering, the evening grain offering, and the king's burnt offering and his grain offering. Also offer the burnt offering of all the people of the land, their grain offering, and their drink offerings. Sprinkle on the altar all the blood of the burnt offering and all the blood of sacrifice.
The bronze altar will be for me to seek guidance." [A] [16] Uriah the priest did
everything King Ahaz commanded.

[17] Then King Ahaz cut off the frames of the water carts [B], and removed the bronze basin from each of them. He took the reservoir [C] from the
bronze oxen that were under it and put it on a stone pavement. [18†] To satisfy
the king of Assyria, he removed from the LORD's temple the Sabbath canopy they had built in the palace, and he closed the outer entrance for the king.

Ahaz's Death

[19] The rest of the events of Ahaz's reign, along with his accomplishments, are written in the Historical Record of Judah's Kings.
[20] Ahaz rested with his fathers and was buried with his fathers in the city of
David, and his son Hezekiah became king in his place.

2 KINGS

Israel’s King Hoshea

17 [†]In the twelfth year of Judah's King Ahaz, Hoshea son of Elah
became king over Israel in Samaria and reigned nine years. 2 He did
what was evil in the LORD's sight, but not like the kings of Israel who
preceded him.

3 Shalmaneser king of Assyria attacked him, and Hoshea became his
vassal and paid him tribute money. 4[†] But the king of Assyria discovered
Hoshea's conspiracy. He had sent envoys to So king of Egypt and had not
paid tribute money to the king of Assyria as in previous years. [A] Therefore
the king of Assyria arrested him and put him in prison. 5 Then the king of
Assyria invaded the whole land, marched up to Samaria, and besieged it for
three years.

The Fall of Samaria

6 In the ninth year of Hoshea, the king of Assyria captured Samaria. He
deported the Israelites to Assyria and settled them in Halah and by the
Habor, Gozan's river, and in the cities of the Medes.

Why Israel Fell

7[†] This disaster happened because the people of Israel had sinned against
the LORD their God who had brought them out of the land of Egypt from the
power of Pharaoh king of Egypt and because they had worshiped [B] other
gods. 8 They had lived according to the customs of the nations that the
LORD had dispossessed before the Israelites and the customs the kings of
Israel had introduced. 9 The Israelites secretly did what was not right [C]
against the LORD their God. They built •high places in all their towns from
watchtower to fortified city. 10 They set up for themselves sacred pillars
and •Asherah poles on every high hill and under every green tree. 11 They
burned incense on all the high places just like those nations that the LORD
had driven out before them. They did evil things, provoking the LORD.
12 They served idols, although the LORD had told them, "You must not do
this." 13 Still, the LORD warned Israel and Judah through every prophet and
every seer, saying, "Turn from your evil ways and keep My commands and

statutes according to all the law I commanded your ancestors and sent to you through My servants the prophets."

ARTICLE
Aren't All Religions Basically The Same? ⇒

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[14] But they would not listen. Instead they became obstinate like [D] their
ancestors who did not believe the LORD their God. [15] They rejected His
statutes and His covenant He had made with their ancestors and the decrees He had given them. They pursued worthless idols and became worthless themselves, following the surrounding nations the LORD had commanded them not to imitate.

[16] They abandoned all the commands of the LORD their God. They made cast images for themselves, two calves, and an Asherah pole. They
worshiped the whole heavenly •host and served •Baal. [17] They made their
sons and daughters pass through the fire and practiced •divination and interpreted omens. They devoted themselves to do what was evil in the LORD's sight and provoked Him.

[18] Therefore, the LORD was very angry with Israel, and He removed them
from His presence. Only the tribe of Judah remained. [19] Even Judah did
not keep the commands of the LORD their God but lived according to the
customs Israel had introduced. [20] So the LORD rejected all the descendants
of Israel, afflicted them, and handed them over to plunderers until He had banished them from His presence.

Summary of Israel's History

[21] When the LORD tore Israel from the house of David, Israel made Jeroboam son of Nebat king. Then Jeroboam led Israel away from
following the LORD and caused them to commit great sin. [22] The Israelites
persisted in all the sins that Jeroboam committed and did not turn away

from them. 23 Finally, the LORD removed Israel from His presence just as He had declared through all His servants the prophets. So Israel has been exiled to Assyria from their homeland until today.

Foreign Refugees in Israel

24 Then the king of Assyria brought people from Babylon, Cuthah, Avva, Hamath, and Sepharvaim and settled them in place of the Israelites in the cities of Samaria. The settlers took possession of Samaria and lived in its cities. 25 When they first lived there, they did not •fear •Yahweh. So the LORD sent lions among them, which killed some of them. 26 The settlers spoke to the king of Assyria, saying, “The nations that you have deported and placed in the cities of Samaria do not know the requirements of the God of the land. Therefore He has sent lions among them that are killing them because the people don’t know the requirements of the God of the land.”

27 Then the king of Assyria issued a command: “Send back one of the priests you deported. Have him go and live there so he can teach them the requirements of the God of the land.” 28 So one of the priests they had deported came and lived in Bethel, and he began to teach them how they should fear Yahweh.

29 But the people of each nation were still making their own gods in the cities where they lived and putting them in the shrines of the high places that the people of Samaria had made. 30 The men of Babylon made Succoth-benoth, the men of Cuth made Nergal, the men of Hamath made Ashima, 31 the Avvites made Nibhaz and Tartak, and the Sepharvites burned their children in the fire to Adrammelech and Anammelech, the gods of the Sepharvaim. 32 They feared the LORD, but they also appointed from their number priests to serve them in the shrines of the high places. 33 They feared the LORD, but they also worshiped their own gods according to the custom of the nations where they had been deported from.

34 They are still practicing the former customs to this day. None of them fear the LORD or observe their statutes and ordinances, the law and commandments the LORD commanded the descendants of Jacob. He had

renamed him Israel. [35] The LORD made a covenant with them and
commanded them, "Do not fear other gods; do not bow down to them; do
not serve them; do not sacrifice to them. [36] Instead fear the LORD, who
brought you from the land of Egypt with great power and an outstretched
arm. You are to bow down to Him, and you are to sacrifice to Him. [37] You
are to be careful always to observe the statutes, the ordinances, the law, and
the commandments He wrote for you; do not fear other gods. [38] Do not
forget the covenant that I have made with you. Do not fear other gods,
[39] but fear the LORD your God, and He will deliver you from the hand of all
your enemies."

[40] However, they would not listen but continued practicing their former
customs. [41]† These nations feared the LORD but also served their idols. Their
children and grandchildren continue doing as their fathers did until today.

2 KINGS

Judah's King Hezekiah

18 †In the third year of Israel's King Hoshea son of Elah, Hezekiah son
of Ahaz became king of Judah. 2† He was 25 years old when he
became king and reigned 29 years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was
Abi daughter of Zechariah. 3† He did what was right in the LORD's sight
just as his ancestor David had done. 4† He removed the •high places,
shattered the sacred pillars, and cut down the •Asherah poles. He broke
into pieces the bronze snake that Moses made, for the Israelites burned
incense to it up to that time. He called it Nehushtan.

5 Hezekiah trusted in the LORD God of Israel; not one of the kings of
Judah was like him, either before him or after him. 6 He remained faithful
to •Yahweh and did not turn from following Him but kept the commands
the LORD had commanded Moses.

7 The LORD was with him, and wherever he went he prospered. He
rebelled against the king of Assyria and did not serve him. 8 He defeated
the Philistines as far as Gaza and its borders, from watchtower to fortified
city.

Review of Israel's Fall

9 In the fourth year of King Hezekiah, which was the seventh year of
Israel's King Hoshea son of Elah, Shalmaneser king of Assyria marched
against Samaria and besieged it. 10† The Assyrians captured it at the end of
three years. In the sixth year of Hezekiah, which was the ninth year of
Israel's King Hoshea, Samaria was captured. 11 The king of Assyria
deported the Israelites to Assyria and put them in Halah and by the Habor,
Gozan's river, and in the cities of the Medes, 12 because they did not listen
to the voice of the LORD their God but violated His covenant — all He had
commanded Moses the servant of the LORD. They did not listen, and they
did not obey.

Sennacherib's Invasion

13† In the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah, Sennacherib king of Assyria
attacked all the fortified cities of Judah and captured them. 14 So Hezekiah

king of Judah sent word to the king of Assyria at Lachish, saying, "I have
done wrong; withdraw from me. Whatever you demand from me, I will
pay." The king of Assyria demanded 11 tons [A] of silver and one ton [B] of
gold from King Hezekiah of Judah. 15 So Hezekiah gave him all the silver
found in the LORD's temple and in the treasuries of the king's palace.

16 At that time Hezekiah stripped the gold from the doors of the LORD's
sanctuary and from the doorposts he had overlaid and gave it to the king of
Assyria.

17† Then the king of Assyria sent the Tartan, the Rab-saris, and the
•Rabshakeh, along with a massive army, from Lachish to King Hezekiah at
Jerusalem. They advanced and came to Jerusalem, and they took their
position by the aqueduct of the upper pool, which is by the highway to the
Fuller's Field. 18 Then they called for the king, but Eliakim son of Hilkiah,
who was in charge of the palace, Shebnah the court secretary, and Joah son
of Asaph, the court historian, came out to them.

The Rabshakeh's Speech

19 Then the Rabshakeh said to them, "Tell Hezekiah this is what the
great king, the king of Assyria, says: 'What are you relying on? [C] 20 You
think mere words are strategy and strength for war. What are you now
relying on so that you have rebelled against me? 21 Look, you are now
trusting in Egypt, that splintered reed of a staff that will enter and pierce
the hand of anyone who leans on it. This is how Pharaoh king of Egypt is
to all who trust in him. 22 Suppose you say to me: We trust in the LORD our
God. Isn't He the One whose high places and altars Hezekiah has removed,
saying to Judah and to Jerusalem: You must worship at this altar in
Jerusalem? '

23 "So now make a bargain with my master the king of Assyria. I'll give
you 2,000 horses if you're able to supply riders for them! 24 How then can
you drive back a single officer among the least of my master's servants and
trust in Egypt for chariots and for horsemen? 25 Have I attacked this place

to destroy it without the LORD's approval? The LORD said to me, 'Attack
this land and destroy it.' "

[26]† Then Eliakim son of Hilkiah, Shebnah, and Joah said to the
Rabshakeh, "Please speak to your servants in Aramaic, since we
understand it. Don't speak with us in Hebrew [D] within earshot of the people
on the wall."

[27] But the Rabshakeh said to them, "Has my master sent me only to your
master and to you to speak these words? Hasn't he also sent me to the men
who sit on the wall, destined with you to eat their own excrement and drink
their own urine? "

[28] The Rabshakeh stood and called out loudly in Hebrew. [E] Then he
spoke: "Hear the word of the great king, the king of Assyria. [29] This is what
the king says: 'Don't let Hezekiah deceive you; he can't deliver you from
my hand. [30] Don't let Hezekiah persuade you to trust in the LORD by
saying: Certainly the LORD will deliver us! This city will not be handed over
to the king of Assyria.'

[31] "Don't listen to Hezekiah, for this is what the king of Assyria says:
'Make peace [F] with me and surrender to me. Then every one of you may eat
from his own vine and his own fig tree, and every one may drink water
from his own cistern [32] until I come and take you away to a land like your
own land — a land of grain and new wine, a land of bread and vineyards, a
land of olive trees and honey — so that you may live and not die. But
don't listen to Hezekiah when he misleads you, saying: The LORD will
deliver us. [33] Has any of the gods of the nations ever delivered his land
from the power of the king of Assyria? [34] Where are the gods of Hamath
and Arpad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivvah? Have
they delivered Samaria from my hand? [35] Who among all the gods of the
lands has delivered his land from my power? So will the LORD deliver
Jerusalem? ' "

[36] But the people kept silent; they didn't say anything, for the king's
command was, "Don't answer him." [37] Then Eliakim son of Hilkiah, who

was in charge of the palace, Shebna the court secretary, and Joah son of Asaph, the court historian, came to Hezekiah with their clothes torn and reported to him the words of the Rabshakeh.

2 KINGS

Hezekiah Seeks Isaiah's Counsel

19 When King Hezekiah heard their report, he tore his clothes, covered
himself with •sackcloth, and went into the LORD's temple. [2] Then he
sent Eliakim, who was in charge of the palace, Shebna the court secretary,
and the leading priests, who were wearing sackcloth, to the prophet Isaiah
son of Amoz. [3] They said to him, "This is what Hezekiah says: 'Today is a
day of distress, rebuke, and disgrace, for children have come to the point of
birth, but there is no strength to deliver them. [4] Perhaps •Yahweh your
God will hear all the words of the •Rabshakeh, whom his master the king
of Assyria sent to mock the living God, and will rebuke him for the words
that Yahweh your God has heard. Therefore, offer a prayer for the surviving
remnant.' "

[5] So the servants of King Hezekiah went to Isaiah, [6] who said to them,
"Tell your master this, 'The LORD says: Don't be afraid because of the
words you have heard, that the king of Assyria's attendants have
blasphemed Me with. [7] I am about to put a spirit in him, and he will hear a
rumor and return to his own land where I will cause him to fall by the
sword.' "

Sennacherib's Departing Threat

[8] When the Rabshakeh heard that the king of Assyria had left Lachish,
he returned and found him fighting against Libnah. [9] The king had heard
this about Tirhakah king of •Cush: "Look, he has set out to fight against
you." So he again sent messengers to Hezekiah, saying, [10] "Say this to
Hezekiah king of Judah: 'Don't let your God, whom you trust, deceive you
by promising that Jerusalem will not be handed over to the king of Assyria.
[11] Look, you have heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all the
countries: they •completely destroyed them. Will you be rescued? [12] Did the
gods of the nations that my predecessors destroyed rescue them — nations
such as Gozan, Haran, Rezeph, and the Edenites in Telassar? [13] Where is
the king of Hamath, the king of Arpad, the king of the city of Sepharvaim,
Hena, or Ivvah? ' "

Hezekiah's Prayer

[14] Hezekiah took the letter from the hand of the messengers, read it,
then went up to the LORD's temple, and spread it out before the LORD.
[15] Then Hezekiah prayed before the LORD:

LORD God of Israel who is enthroned above the •cherubim, You
are God — You alone — of all the kingdoms of the earth. You
made the heavens and the earth. [16] Listen closely, LORD, and hear;
open Your eyes, LORD, and see. Hear the words that Sennacherib
has sent to mock the living God. [17] LORD, it is true that the kings
of Assyria have devastated the nations and their lands. [18] They
have thrown their gods into the fire, for they were not gods but
made by human hands — wood and stone. So they have
destroyed them. [19] Now, LORD our God, please save us from his
hand so that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that You are
the LORD God — You alone.

God's Answer through Isaiah

[20] Then Isaiah son of Amoz sent a message to Hezekiah: "The LORD, the
God of Israel says: 'I have heard your prayer to Me about Sennacherib king
of Assyria.' [21] This is the word the LORD has spoken against him:

Virgin Daughter •Zion
despises you and scorns you:
Daughter Jerusalem
shakes her head behind your back. [A],
[22] Who is it you mocked and blasphemed?
Against whom have you raised your voice
and lifted your eyes in pride?
Against the Holy One of Israel!
[23] You have mocked the Lord through [B] your messengers.
You have said:

With my many chariots
I have gone up to the heights of the mountains,
to the far recesses of Lebanon.
I cut down its tallest cedars,

its choice cypress trees.
I came to its farthest outpost,
its densest forest.
24† I dug wells,
and I drank foreign waters.
I dried up all the streams of Egypt
with the soles of my feet.

25 Have you not heard?
I designed it long ago;
I planned it in days gone by.
I have now brought it to pass,
and you have crushed fortified cities
into piles of rubble.
26 Their inhabitants have become powerless,
dismayed, and ashamed.
They are plants of the field,
tender grass,
grass on the rooftops,
blasted by the east wind.

27 But I know your sitting down,
your going out and your coming in,
and your raging against Me.
28† Because your raging against Me
and your arrogance have reached My ears,
I will put My hook in your nose
and My bit in your mouth;
I will make you go back
the way you came.

29 "This will be the sign for you: This year you will eat what grows on
its own, and in the second year what grows from that. But in the third year
sow and reap, plant vineyards and eat their fruit. 30 The surviving remnant
of the house of Israel will again take root downward and bear fruit upward.
31 For a remnant will go out from Jerusalem and survivors, from Mount
Zion. The zeal of the LORD of •Hosts will accomplish this.

32 Therefore, this is what the LORD says about the king of Assyria:
He will not enter this city
or shoot an arrow there
or come before it with a shield
or build up an assault ramp against it.
33 He will go back
on the road that he came
and he will not enter this city.

This is the LORD's declaration.

34 I will defend this city and rescue it
for My sake and for the sake of My servant David."

Defeat and Death of Sennacherib

35 That night the angel of the LORD went out and struck down 185,000 in
the camp of the Assyrians. When the people got up the next
morning — there were all the dead bodies! 36 So Sennacherib king of
Assyria broke camp and left. He returned home and lived in Nineveh.

37 One day, while he was worshiping in the temple of his god Nisroch,
his sons Adrammelech and Sharezer struck him down with the sword and
escaped to the land of Ararat. Then his son Esar-haddon became king in
his place.

2 KINGS

Hezekiah's Illness and Recovery

20 [†]In those days Hezekiah became terminally ill. The prophet Isaiah
son of Amoz came and said to him, “This is what the LORD says: ‘Put
your affairs in order, [A] for you are about to die; you will not recover.’ ”

2 Then Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and prayed to the LORD,
3 “Please LORD, remember how I have walked before You faithfully and
wholeheartedly and have done what pleases You.” [B] And Hezekiah wept
bitterly.

4 Isaiah had not yet gone out of the inner courtyard when the word of the
LORD came to him: 5 “Go back and tell Hezekiah, the leader of My people,
‘This is what the LORD God of your ancestor David says: I have heard your
prayer; I have seen your tears. Look, I will heal you. On the third day from
now you will go up to the LORD’s temple. 6 I will add 15 years to your life. I
will deliver you and this city from the hand of the king of Assyria. I will
defend this city for My sake and for the sake of My servant David.’ ”

7 Then Isaiah said, “Bring a lump of pressed figs.” So they brought it and
applied it to his infected skin, and he recovered.

8 Hezekiah had asked Isaiah, “What is the sign that the LORD will heal
me and that I will go up to the LORD’s temple on the third day? ”

9[†] Isaiah said, “This is the sign to you from the LORD that He will do
what He has promised: Should the shadow go ahead 10 steps or go back 10
steps? ”

10 Then Hezekiah answered, “It’s easy for the shadow to lengthen 10
steps. No, let the shadow go back 10 steps.” 11 So Isaiah the prophet called
out to the LORD, and He brought the shadow [C] back the 10 steps it had
descended on Ahaz’s stairway.

Hezekiah’s Folly

12[†] At that time Merodach-baladan son of Baladan, king of Babylon,
sent letters and a gift to Hezekiah since he heard that he had been sick.

13 Hezekiah gave them a hearing and showed them his whole treasure
house — the silver, the gold, the spices, and the precious oil — and his
armory, and everything that was found in his treasuries. There was nothing
in his palace and in all his realm that Hezekiah did not show them.

14 Then the prophet Isaiah came to King Hezekiah and asked him,
"Where did these men come from and what did they say to you? "

Hezekiah replied, "They came from a distant country, from Babylon."

15 Isaiah asked, "What have they seen in your palace? "

Hezekiah answered, "They have seen everything in my palace. There
isn't anything in my treasuries that I didn't show them."

16 Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, "Hear the word of the Lord: 17 'The
time will certainly come when everything in your palace and all that your
fathers have stored up until this day will be carried off to Babylon; nothing
will be left,' says the Lord. 18 'Some of your descendants who come from
you will be taken away, and they will become eunuchs [D] in the palace of
the king of Babylon.' "

19 Then Hezekiah said to Isaiah, "The word of the Lord that you have
spoken is good," for he thought: Why not, if there will be peace and
security during my lifetime?

Hezekiah's Death

20 The rest of the events of Hezekiah's reign, along with all his might and
how he made the pool and the tunnel and brought water into the city, are
written in the Historical Record of Judah's Kings. 21 Hezekiah rested with
his fathers, and his son Manasseh became king in his place.

2 KINGS

Judah's King Manasseh

21 †Manasseh was 12 years old when he became king and reigned 55
years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Hephzibah. 2 He did what
was evil in the LORD's sight, imitating the detestable practices of the
nations that the LORD had dispossessed before the Israelites. 3† He rebuilt
the •high places that his father Hezekiah had destroyed and reestablished
the altars for •Baal. He made an •Asherah, as King Ahab of Israel had
done; he also worshiped the whole heavenly •host and served them. 4 He
built altars in the LORD's temple, where the LORD had said, "Jerusalem is
where I will put My name." 5† He built altars to the whole heavenly host in
both courtyards of the LORD's temple. 6† He made his son pass through the
fire, practiced witchcraft and •divination, and consulted mediums and
spiritists. He did a great amount of evil in the LORD's sight, provoking
Him.

7 Manasseh set up the carved image of Asherah, which he made, in the
temple that the LORD had spoken about to David and his son Solomon, "I
will establish My name forever in this temple and in Jerusalem, which I
have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel. 8 I will never again cause the feet
of the Israelites to wander from the land I gave to their ancestors if only
they will be careful to do all I have commanded them — the whole law that
My servant Moses commanded them." 9 But they did not listen; Manasseh
caused them to stray so that they did greater evil than the nations the LORD
had destroyed before the Israelites.

10 The LORD spoke through His servants the prophets, saying, 11 "Since
Manasseh king of Judah has committed all these detestable
things — greater evil than the Amorites who preceded him had
done — and by means of his idols has also caused Judah to sin, 12 this is
what the LORD God of Israel says: 'I am about to bring such disaster on
Jerusalem and Judah that everyone who hears about it will shudder. 13† I
will stretch over Jerusalem the measuring line used on Samaria and the
mason's level used on the house of Ahab, and I will wipe Jerusalem •clean
as one wipes a bowl — wiping it and turning it upside down. 14 I will
abandon the remnant of My inheritance and hand them over to their
enemies. They will become plunder and spoil to all their enemies,

15 because they have done what is evil in My sight and have provoked Me
from the day their ancestors came out of Egypt until today.' "

16[†] Manasseh also shed so much innocent blood that he filled Jerusalem
with it from one end to another. This was in addition to his sin that he
caused Judah to commit. Consequently, they did what was evil in the
LORD's sight.

Manasseh's Death

17[†] The rest of the events of Manasseh's reign, along with all his
accomplishments and the sin that he committed, are written in the Historical
Record of Judah's Kings. 18 Manasseh rested with his fathers and was
buried in the garden of his own house, the garden of Uzza. His son Amon
became king in his place.

Judah's King Amon

19[†] Amon was 22 years old when he became king and reigned two years
in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Meshullemeth daughter of Haruz; she
was from Jotbah. 20 He did what was evil in the LORD's sight as his father
Manasseh had done. 21 He walked in all the ways his father had walked; he
served the idols his father had served, and he worshiped them. 22 He
abandoned the LORD God of his ancestors and did not walk in the way of
the LORD.

23 Amon's servants conspired against the king and killed him in his own
house. 24 Then the common people [A] executed all those who had conspired
against King Amon and made his son Josiah king in his place.

25 The rest of the events of Amon's reign, along with his
accomplishments, are written in the Historical Record of Judah's Kings.
26 He was buried in his tomb in the garden of Uzza, and his son Josiah
became king in his place.

2 KINGS

Judah's King Josiah

22 †Josiah was eight years old when he became king and reigned 31
years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Jedidah the daughter of
Adaiah; she was from Bozkath. 2† He did what was right in the LORD's
sight and walked in all the ways of his ancestor David; he did not turn to
the right or the left.

Josiah Repairs the Temple

3 In the eighteenth year of King Josiah, the king sent the court secretary
Shaphan son of Azaliah, son of Meshullam, to the LORD's temple, saying,
4 "Go up to Hilkiah the high priest so that he may total up the money
brought into the LORD's temple — the money the doorkeepers have
collected from the people. 5 It is to be put into the hands of those doing the
work — those who oversee the LORD's temple. They in turn are to give it to
the workmen in the LORD's temple to repair the damage. 6 They are to give
it to the carpenters, builders, and masons to buy timber and quarried stone
to repair the temple. 7 But no accounting is to be required from them for
the money put into their hands since they work with integrity."

The Book of the Law Found

[8†] Hilkiah the high priest told Shaphan the court secretary, "I have found
the book of the law in the LORD's temple," and he gave the book to
Shaphan, who read it.

[9] Then Shaphan the court secretary went to the king and reported, [A]
"Your servants have emptied out the money that was found in the temple
and have put it into the hand of those doing the work — those who oversee
the LORD's temple." [10] Then Shaphan the court secretary told the king,
"Hilkiah the priest has given me a book," and Shaphan read it in the
presence of the king.

[11] When the king heard the words of the book of the law, he tore his
clothes. [12] Then he commanded Hilkiah the priest, Ahikam son of
Shaphan, Achbor son of Micaiah, Shaphan the court secretary, and the
king's servant Asaiah: [13] "Go and inquire of the LORD for me, the people,
and all Judah about the instruction in this book that has been found. For
great is the LORD's wrath that is kindled against us because our ancestors
have not obeyed the words of this book in order to do everything written
about us."

Huldah's Prophecy of Judgment

[14] So Hilkiah the priest, Ahikam, Achbor, Shaphan, and Asaiah went to
the prophetess Huldah, wife of Shallum son of Tikvah, son of Harhas,
keeper of the wardrobe. She lived in Jerusalem in the Second District. They
spoke with her.

[15] She said to them, "This is what the LORD God of Israel says, 'Say to
the man who sent you to Me: [16] This is what the LORD says: I am about to
bring disaster on this place and on its inhabitants, fulfilling all the words of
the book that the king of Judah has read, [17] because they have abandoned
Me and burned incense to other gods in order to provoke Me with all the
work of their hands. My wrath will be kindled against this place, and it will
not be quenched. [18] Say this to the king of Judah who sent you to inquire of

the LORD: This is what the LORD God of Israel says: As for the words that
you heard, [19] because your heart was tender and you humbled yourself
before the LORD when you heard what I spoke against this place and against
its inhabitants, that they would become a desolation and a curse, and
because you have torn your clothes and wept before Me, I Myself have
heard you — this is the LORD's declaration — [20†] therefore, I will indeed
gather you to your fathers, and you will be gathered to your grave in peace.
Your eyes will not see all the disaster that I am bringing on this place.' "

Then they reported [B] to the king.

2 KINGS

Covenant Renewal

23 So the king sent messengers, and they gathered all the elders of
Jerusalem and Judah to him. 2 Then the king went to the LORD's
temple with all the men of Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, as
well as the priests and the prophets — all the people from the youngest to
the oldest. As they listened, he read all the words of the book of the
covenant that had been found in the LORD's temple. 3 Next, the king stood
by the pillar [A], and made a covenant in the presence of the LORD to follow
the LORD and to keep His commands, His decrees, and His statutes with all
his mind and with all his heart, and to carry out the words of this covenant
that were written in this book; all the people agreed to [B] the covenant.

Josiah's Reforms

4 Then the king commanded Hilkiah the high priest and the priests of the
second rank and the doorkeepers to bring out of the LORD's temple all the
articles made for •Baal, •Asherah, and the whole heavenly •host. He burned
them outside Jerusalem in the fields of the Kidron and carried their ashes to
Bethel. 5 Then he did away with the idolatrous priests the kings of Judah
had appointed to burn incense at the •high places in the cities of Judah and
in the areas surrounding Jerusalem. They had burned incense to Baal, and to
the sun, moon, constellations, and the whole heavenly host. 6 He brought
out the Asherah pole from the LORD's temple to the Kidron Valley outside
Jerusalem. He burned it at the Kidron Valley, beat it to dust, and threw its
dust on the graves of the common people. [C], 7† He also tore down the
houses of the male cult prostitutes that were in the LORD's temple, in which
the women were weaving tapestries [D] for Asherah.

8† Then Josiah brought all the priests from the cities of Judah, and he
defiled the high places from Geba to Beer-sheba, where the priests had
burned incense. He tore down the high places of the gates at the entrance of
the gate of Joshua the governor of the city (on the left at the city gate).
9† The priests of the high places, however, did not come up to the altar of
the LORD in Jerusalem; instead, they ate unleavened bread with their fellow
priests.

10 He defiled •Topheth, which is in the Valley of Hinnom, so that no one
could make his son or daughter pass through the fire to •Molech. 11 He did
away with the horses that the kings of Judah had dedicated to the sun. They
had been at the entrance of the LORD's temple in the precincts by the
chamber of Nathan-melech the court official, and he burned up the chariots
of the sun.

12† The king tore down the altars that were on the roof — Ahaz's upper
chamber that the kings of Judah had made — and the altars that Manasseh
had made in the two courtyards of the LORD's temple. Then he smashed
them there and threw their dust into the Kidron Valley. 13† The king also
defiled the high places that were across from Jerusalem, to the south of the
Mount of Destruction, which King Solomon of Israel had built for
•Ashtoreth, the detestable idol of the Sidonians; for Chemosh, the detestable
idol of Moab; and for •Milcom, the abomination of the Ammonites. 14 He
broke the sacred pillars into pieces, cut down the Asherah poles, then
filled their places with human bones.

15† He even tore down the altar at Bethel and the high place that
Jeroboam son of Nebat, who caused Israel to sin, had made. Then he burned
the high place, crushed it to dust, and burned the Asherah. 16 As Josiah
turned, he saw the tombs there on the mountain. He sent someone to take
the bones out of the tombs, and he burned them on the altar. He defiled it
according to the word of the LORD proclaimed by the man of God who
proclaimed these things. 17 Then he said, "What is this monument I see? "

The men of the city told him, "It is the tomb of the man of God who
came from Judah and proclaimed these things that you have done to the
altar at Bethel."

18 So he said, "Let him rest. Don't let anyone disturb his bones." So they
left his bones undisturbed with the bones of the prophet who came from
Samaria.

19† Josiah also removed all the shrines of the high places that were in the
cities of Samaria, which the kings of Israel had made to provoke the LORD.

Josiah did the same things to them that he had done at Bethel. [20] He
slaughtered on the altars all the priests of the high places who were there,
and he burned human bones on the altars. Then he returned to Jerusalem.

Passover Observed

[21] The king commanded all the people, "Keep the •Passover of the LORD
your God as written in the book of the covenant." [22] No such Passover had
ever been kept from the time of the judges who judged Israel through the
entire time of the kings of Israel and Judah. [23] But in the eighteenth year of
King Josiah, this Passover was observed to the LORD in Jerusalem.

Further Zeal for the LORD

[24] In addition, Josiah removed the mediums, the spiritists, household
idols, images, and all the detestable things that were seen in the land of
Judah and in Jerusalem. He did this in order to carry out the words of the
law that were written in the book that Hilkiah the priest found in the LORD's
temple. [25†] Before him there was no king like him who turned to the LORD
with all his mind and with all his heart and with all his strength according
to all the law of Moses, and no one like him arose after him.

[26] In spite of all that, the LORD did not turn from the fury of His great
burning anger, which burned against Judah because of all that Manasseh
had provoked Him with. [27] For the LORD had said, "I will also remove
Judah from My sight just as I have removed Israel. I will reject this city
Jerusalem, that I have chosen, and the temple about which I said, 'My name
will be there.' "

Josiah's Death

[28] The rest of the events of Josiah's reign, along with all his
accomplishments, are written in the Historical Record of Judah's Kings.
[29†] During his reign, Pharaoh Neco king of Egypt marched up to help the
king of Assyria at the Euphrates River. King Josiah went to confront him,
and at Megiddo when Neco saw him he killed him. [30] From Megiddo his

servants carried his dead body in a chariot, brought him into Jerusalem, and buried him in his own tomb. Then the common people [E] took Jehoahaz son of Josiah, anointed him, and made him king in place of his father.

Judah's King Jehoahaz

31† Jehoahaz was 23 years old when he became king and reigned three months in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Hamutal daughter of Jeremiah, from Libnah. 32 He did what was evil in the LORD's sight just as his ancestors had done. 33 Pharaoh Neco imprisoned him at Riblah in the land of Hamath to keep him from reigning in Jerusalem, and he imposed on the land a fine of 7,500 pounds [F] of silver and 75 pounds [G] of gold.

Judah's King Jehoiakim

34 Then Pharaoh Neco made Eliakim son of Josiah king in place of his father Josiah and changed Eliakim's name to Jehoiakim. But Neco took Jehoahaz and went to Egypt, and he died there. 35 So Jehoiakim gave the silver and the gold to Pharaoh, but at Pharaoh's command he taxed the land to give the money. He exacted the silver and the gold from the common people, [H] each man according to his assessment, to give it to Pharaoh Neco.

36† Jehoiakim was 25 years old when he became king and reigned 11 years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Zebidah daughter of Pedaiah, from Rumah. 37 He did what was evil in the LORD's sight just as his ancestors had done.

2 KINGS

Jehoiakim's Rebellion and Death

24 During Jehoiakim’s reign, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon
attacked. Jehoiakim became his vassal for three years, and then he
turned and rebelled against him. [2] The LORD sent Chaldean, Aramean,
Moabite, and Ammonite raiders against Jehoiakim. He sent them against
Judah to destroy it, according to the word of the LORD He had spoken
through His servants the prophets. [3] Indeed, this happened to Judah at the
LORD’s command to remove them from His sight. It was because of the sins
of Manasseh, according to all he had done, [4] and also because of all the
innocent blood he had shed. He had filled Jerusalem with innocent blood,
and the LORD would not forgive.

[5] The rest of the events of Jehoiakim’s reign, along with all his
accomplishments, are written in the Historical Record of Judah’s Kings.
[6] Jehoiakim rested with his fathers, and his son Jehoiachin became king in
his place.

[7] Now the king of Egypt did not march out of his land again, for the king
of Babylon took everything that belonged to the king of Egypt, from the
Brook of Egypt to the Euphrates River.

Judah’s King Jehoiachin

[8†] Jehoiachin was 18 years old when he became king and reigned three
months in Jerusalem. His mother’s name was Nehushta daughter of
Elnathan, from Jerusalem. [9] He did what was evil in the LORD’s sight as his
father had done.

Deportations to Babylon

[10] At that time the servants of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon
marched up to Jerusalem, and the city came under siege. [11] Then King
Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon came to the city while his servants were
besieging it. [12†] Jehoiachin king of Judah, along with his mother, his
servants, his commanders, and his officials, surrendered to the king of
Babylon.

So the king of Babylon took him captive in the eighth year of his reign.
[13] He also carried off from there all the treasures of the LORD's temple and
the treasures of the king's palace, and he cut into pieces all the gold articles
that Solomon king of Israel had made for the LORD's sanctuary, just as God
had predicted. [14] Then he deported all Jerusalem and all the commanders
and all the fighting men, 10,000 captives, and all the craftsmen and
metalsmiths. Except for the poorest people of the land, no one remained.

[15] Nebuchadnezzar deported Jehoiachin to Babylon. Also, he took the
king's mother, the king's wives, his officials, and the leading men of the
land into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon. [16] The king of Babylon also
brought captive into Babylon all 7,000 fighting men and 1,000 craftsmen
and metalsmiths — all strong and fit for war. [17] Then the king of Babylon
made Mattaniah, Jehoiachin's [A] uncle, king in his place and changed his
name to Zedekiah.

Judah's King Zedekiah

[18†] Zedekiah was 21 years old when he became king and reigned 11
years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Hamutal daughter of Jeremiah,
from Libnah. [19] Zedekiah did what was evil in the LORD's sight just as
Jehoiakim had done. [20] Because of the LORD's anger, it came to the point
in Jerusalem and Judah that He finally banished them from His presence.
Then, Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon.

2 KINGS

Nebuchadnezzar’s Siege of Jerusalem

25 In the ninth year of Zedekiah's reign, on the tenth day of the tenth
month, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon advanced against Jerusalem
with his entire army. They laid siege to the city and built a siege wall
against it all around. 2 The city was under siege until King Zedekiah's
eleventh year.

3† By the ninth day of the fourth month the famine was so severe in the
city that the people of the land had no food. 4 Then the city was broken
into, and all the warriors fled by night by way of the gate between the two
walls near the king's garden, even though the Chaldeans surrounded the
city. As the king made his way along the route to the •Arabah, 5 the
Chaldean army pursued him and overtook him in the plains of Jericho.
Zedekiah's entire army was scattered from him. 6 The Chaldeans seized the
king and brought him up to the king of Babylon at Riblah, and they
passed sentence on him. 7 They slaughtered Zedekiah's sons before his
eyes. Finally, the king of Babylon blinded Zedekiah, bound him in bronze
chains, and took him to Babylon.

Jerusalem Destroyed

8† On the seventh day of the fifth month, which was the nineteenth year
of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, Nebuzaradan, the commander of the
guards, a servant of the king of Babylon, entered Jerusalem. 9 He burned
the LORD's temple, the king's palace, and all the houses of Jerusalem; he
burned down all the great houses. 10 The whole Chaldean army with the
commander of the guards tore down the walls surrounding Jerusalem.
11 Nebuzaradan, the commander of the guards, deported the rest of the
people who were left in the city, the deserters who had defected to the king
of Babylon, and the rest of the population. 12 But the commander of the
guards left some of the poorest of the land to be vinedressers and farmers.

13 Now the Chaldeans broke into pieces the bronze pillars of the LORD's
temple, the water carts, and the bronze reservoir, which were in the LORD's
temple, and carried the bronze to Babylon. 14 They also took the pots, the
shovels, the wick trimmers, the dishes, and all the bronze articles used in

temple service. [15] The commander of the guards took away the firepans
and the sprinkling basins — whatever was gold or silver.

[16] As for the two pillars, the one reservoir, and the water carts that
Solomon had made for the LORD's temple, the weight of the bronze of all
these articles was beyond measure. [17] One pillar was 27 feet [A] tall and had
a bronze capital on top of it. The capital, encircled by a grating and
pomegranates of bronze, stood five feet [B] high. The second pillar was the
same, with its own grating.

[18] The commander of the guards also took away Seraiah the chief priest,
Zephaniah the priest of the second rank, and the three doorkeepers. [19] He
took a court official who had been appointed over the warriors from the
city; five trusted royal aides [C], found in the city; the secretary of the
commander of the army, who enlisted the people of the land for military
duty; and 60 men from the common people [D] who were found within the
city. [20] Nebuzaradan, the commander of the guards, took them and brought
them to the king of Babylon at Riblah. [21] The king of Babylon put them to
death at Riblah in the land of Hamath. So Judah went into exile from its
land.

Gedaliah Made Governor

[22†] Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon appointed Gedaliah son of Ahikam,
son of Shaphan, over the rest of the people he left in the land of Judah.
[23] When all the commanders of the armies — they and their men — heard
that the king of Babylon had appointed Gedaliah, they came to Gedaliah at
Mizpah. The commanders included Ishmael son of Nethaniah, Johanan son
of Kareah, Seraiah son of Tanhumeth the Netophathite, and Jaazaniah son
of the Maacathite — they and their men. [24] Gedaliah swore an oath to them
and their men, assuring them, "Don't be afraid of the servants of the
Chaldeans. Live in the land and serve the king of Babylon, and it will go
well for you."

[25] In the seventh month, however, Ishmael son of Nethaniah, son of
Elishama, of the royal family, came with 10 men and struck down Gedaliah,

and he died. Also, they killed the Judeans and the Chaldeans who were with
him at Mizpah. [26] Then all the people, from the youngest to the oldest, and
the commanders of the army, left and went to Egypt, for they were afraid of
the Chaldeans.

Jehoiachin Pardoned

[27†] On the twenty-seventh day of the twelfth month of the thirty-seventh
year of the exile of Judah's King Jehoiachin, in the year Evil-merodach
became king of Babylon, he pardoned King Jehoiachin of Judah and
released him from prison. [28] He spoke kindly to him and set his throne
over the thrones of the kings who were with him in Babylon. [29] So
Jehoiachin changed his prison clothes, and he dined regularly in the
presence of the king of Babylon for the rest of his life. [30†] As for his
allowance, a regular allowance was given to him by the king, a portion for
each day, for the rest of his life.

1 CHRONICLES

Introduction to 1 Chronicles

1 CHRONICLES

From Adam to Abraham

1 †Adam, Seth, Enosh,
[2] Kenan, Mahalalel, Jared,
[3] Enoch, Methuselah, Lamech,
[4] Noah, Noah's sons:
Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

[5] Japheth's sons: Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech, and
Tiras.
[6] Gomer's sons: Ashkenaz, Riphath, and Togarmah.
[7†] Javan's sons: Elishah, Tarshish, Kittim, and Rodanim.

[8†] Ham's sons: Cush, Mizraim, Put, and Canaan.
[9] Cush's sons: Seba, Havilah, Sabta, Raama, and Sabteca.
Raama's sons: Sheba and Dedan.
[10†] Cush fathered Nimrod, who was the first to become a great warrior on
earth.
[11†] Mizraim fathered Ludim, Anamim, Lehabim, Naphtuhim,
[12†] Pathrusim, Casluhim (the Philistines came from them), and
Caphtorim.
[13] Canaan fathered Sidon as his firstborn, then Heth, [14] the Jebusites,
Amorites, Girgashites, [15] Hivites, Arkites, Sinites, [16] Arvadites,
Zemarites, and Hamathites.

[17†] Shem's sons: Elam, Asshur, Arpachshad, Lud, Aram, Uz, Hul,
Gether, and Meshech.
[18] Arpachshad fathered Shelah, and Shelah fathered Eber. [19] Two sons
were born to Eber. One of them was named Peleg because the earth was
divided during his lifetime, and the name of his brother was Joktan.
[20] Joktan fathered Almodad, Sheleph, Hazarmaveth, Jerah, [21] Hadoram,
Uzal, Diklah, [22] Ebal, Abimael, Sheba, [23] Ophir, Havilah, and Jobab. All
of these were Joktan's sons.

[24†] Shem, Arpachshad, Shelah,
[25] Eber, Peleg, Reu,

[26] Serug, Nahor, Terah,
[27] and Abram (that is, Abraham).

Abraham's Descendants

[28] Abraham's sons: Isaac and Ishmael.

[29]† These are their family records: Nebaioth, Ishmael's firstborn, Kedar,
Adbeel, Mibsam, [30] Mishma, Dumah, Massa, Hadad, Tema, [31] Jetur,
Naphish, and Kedemah.
These were Ishmael's sons.

[32] The sons born to Keturah, Abraham's concubine: Zimran, Jokshan,
Medan, Midian, Ishbak, and Shuah.
Jokshan's sons: Sheba and Dedan.
[33] Midian's sons: Ephah, Epher, Hanoch, Abida, and Eldaah.
All of these were Keturah's sons.

[34]† Abraham fathered Isaac.
Isaac's sons: Esau and Israel.
[35]† Esau's sons: Eliphaz, Reuel, Jeush, Jalam, and Korah.
[36] Eliphaz's sons: Teman, Omar, Zephi, Gatam, and Kenaz; and by
Timna, Amalek.
[37] Reuel's sons: Nahath, Zerah, Shammah, and Mizzah.

The Edomites

[38]† Seir's sons: Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon, Anah, Dishon, Ezer, and Dishan.
[39] Lotan's sons: Hori and Homam. Timna was Lotan's sister.
[40] Shobal's sons: Alian, Manahath, Ebal, Shephi, and Onam.
Zibeon's sons: Aiah and Anah.
[41] Anah's son: Dishon.
Dishon's sons: Hamran, Eshban, Ithran, and Cheran.

[42] Ezer's sons: Bilhan, Zaavan, and Jaakan.
Dishan's sons: Uz and Aran.

[43†] These were the kings who ruled in the land of Edom before any king
ruled over the Israelites: Bela son of Beor. Bela's town was named
Dinhabah. [44] When Bela died, Jobab son of Zerah from Bozrah ruled in his
place. [45] When Jobab died, Husham from the land of the Temanites ruled in
his place. [46] When Husham died, Hadad son of Bedad, who defeated
Midian in the country of Moab, ruled in his place. Hadad's town was named
Avith. [47] When Hadad died, Samlah from Masrekah ruled in his place.
[48] When Samlah died, Shaul from Rehoboth on the Euphrates River ruled in
his place. [49] When Shaul died, Baal-hanan son of Achbor ruled in his place.
[50] When Baal-hanan died, Hadad ruled in his place. Hadad's city was
named Pai, and his wife's name was Mehetabel daughter of Matred,
daughter of Me-zahab. [51†] Then Hadad died.

Edom's chiefs: Timna, Alvah, Jetheth, [52] Oholibamah, Elah, Pinon,
[53] Kenaz, Teman, Mibzar, [54] Magdiel, and Iram.
These were Edom's chiefs.

1 CHRONICLES

Israel’s Sons

2 †These were Israel's sons:
Reuben, Simeon, Levi,
Judah, Issachar, Zebulun,
2 Dan, Joseph, Benjamin,
Naphtali, Gad, and Asher.

Judah's Descendants

3† Judah's sons: Er, Onan, and Shelah. These three were born to
him by Bath-shua the Canaanite woman. Er, Judah's firstborn,
was evil in the LORD's sight, so He put him to death. 4 Judah's
daughter-in-law Tamar bore Perez and Zerah to him. Judah had
five sons in all.

5 Perez's sons: Hezron and Hamul.
6† Zerah's sons: Zimri, Ethan, Heman, Calcol, and Dara — five in all.
7 Carmi's son: Achar, who brought trouble on Israel when he was
unfaithful by taking the things •set apart for destruction.
8 Ethan's son: Azariah.
9† Hezron's sons, who were born to him: Jerahmeel, Ram, and Chelubai.

10† Ram fathered Amminadab, and Amminadab fathered Nahshon, a
leader of Judah's descendants.
11 Nahshon fathered Salma, and Salma fathered Boaz.
12 Boaz fathered Obed, and Obed fathered Jesse.
13 Jesse fathered Eliab, his firstborn; Abinadab was born second, Shimea
third, 14 Nethanel fourth, Raddai fifth, 15† Ozem sixth, and David
seventh. 16 Their sisters were Zeruiah and Abigail. Zeruiah's three sons:
Abishai, Joab, and Asahel. 17 Amasa's mother was Abigail, and his father
was Jether the Ishmaelite.

18† Caleb son of Hezron had children by his wife Azubah and by
Jerioth. These were Azubah's sons: Jesher, Shobab, and Ardon.
19 When Azubah died, Caleb married Ephrath, and she bore Hur
to him. 20† Hur fathered Uri, and Uri fathered Bezalel. 21† After

this, Hezron slept with the daughter of Machir the father of
Gilead. Hezron had married her when he was 60 years old, and
she bore Segub to him. 22 Segub fathered Jair, who possessed 23
towns in the land of Gilead. 23 But Geshur and Aram captured [A]
Jair's Villages [B] along with Kenath and its villages — 60 towns.
All these were the sons of Machir father of Gilead. 24 After
Hezron's death in Caleb-ephrathah, his wife Abijah bore Ashhur
to him. He was the father of Tekoa.

25 The sons of Jerahmeel, Hezron's firstborn: Ram, his firstborn, Bunah,
Oren, Ozem, and Ahijah. 26 Jerahmeel had another wife named Atarah,
who was the mother of Onam.
27 The sons of Ram, Jerahmeel's firstborn: Maaz, Jamin, and Eker.
28 Onam's sons: Shammai and Jada.
Shammai's sons: Nadab and Abishur. 29 Abishur's wife was named
Abihail, who bore Ahban and Molid to him.
30 Nadab's sons: Seled and Appaim. Seled died without children.
31 Appaim's son: Ishi.
Ishi's son: Sheshan.
Sheshan's descendant: Ahlai.
32 The sons of Jada, brother of Shammai: Jether and Jonathan. Jether died
without children.
33 Jonathan's sons: Peleth and Zaza. These were the descendants of
Jerahmeel.
34 Sheshan had no sons, only daughters, but he did have an Egyptian
servant whose name was Jarha. 35 Sheshan gave his daughter in marriage
to his servant Jarha, and she bore Attai to him.

36 Attai fathered Nathan, and Nathan fathered Zabad.
37 Zabad fathered Ephlal, and Ephlal fathered Obed.
38 Obed fathered Jehu, and Jehu fathered Azariah.
39 Azariah fathered Helez, and Helez fathered Elasah.

40 Elasah fathered Sismai, and Sismai fathered Shallum.
41 Shallum fathered Jekamiah, and Jekamiah fathered Elishama.

42† The sons of Caleb brother of Jerahmeel: Mesha, his firstborn, fathered
Ziph, and Mareshah, his second son, C fathered Hebron.
43 Hebron's sons: Korah, Tappuah, Rekem, and Shema.
44 Shema fathered Raham, who fathered Jorkeam, and Rekem fathered
Shammai.
45 Shammai's son was Maon, and Maon fathered Beth-zur.
46 Caleb's concubine Ephah was the mother of Haran, Moza, and Gazez.
Haran fathered Gazez.
47 Jahdai's sons: Regem, Jotham, Geshan, Pelet, Ephah, and Shaaph.
48 Caleb's concubine Maacah was the mother of Sheber and Tirhanah.
49† She was also the mother of Shaaph, Madmannah's father, and of
Sheva, the father of Machbenah and Gibea. Caleb's daughter was Achsah.
50† These were Caleb's descendants.

The sons of Hur, Ephrathah's firstborn:
Shobal fathered Kiriath-jearim;
51 Salma fathered Bethlehem,
and Hareph fathered Beth-gader.

52† These were the descendants of Shobal the father of Kiriath-
jearim: Haroeh, half of the Manahathites, D 53 and the families of
Kiriath-jearim — the Ithrites, Puthites, Shumathites, and
Mishraites. The Zorathites and Eshtaolites descended from these.

54† Salma's sons: Bethlehem, the Netophathites, Atroth-beth-joab,
and half of the Manahathites, the Zorites, 55† and the families of
scribes who lived in Jabez — the Tirathites, Shimeathites, and
Sucathites. These are the Kenites who came from Hammath, the
father of Rechab's family.

1 CHRONICLES

David's Descendants

3 †These were David's sons who were born to him in Hebron:
Amnon was the firstborn, by Ahinoam of Jezreel;
Daniel was born second, by Abigail of Carmel;
2† Absalom son of Maacah, daughter of King Talmai of Geshur, was third;
Adonijah son of Haggith was fourth;
3 Shephatiah, by Abital, was fifth;
and Ithream, by David's wife Eglah, was sixth.
4 Six sons were born to David in Hebron, where he ruled seven years and six months, and he ruled in Jerusalem 33 years.
5† These sons were born to him in Jerusalem:
Shimea, Shobab, Nathan, and Solomon. These four were born to him by Bath-shua daughter of Ammiel.
6 David's other sons: Ibhar, Elishua, [A] Eliphelet, 7 Nogah, Nepheg,
Japhia, 8 Elishama, Eliada, and Eliphelet — nine sons.
9 These were all David's sons, with their sister Tamar, in addition to the sons by his concubines.

Judah's Kings

10 Solomon's son was Rehoboam;
his son was Abijah, his son Asa,
his son Jehoshaphat, 11† his son Jehoram, [B],
his son Ahaziah, his son Joash,
12† his son Amaziah, his son Azariah,
his son Jotham, 13 his son Ahaz,
his son Hezekiah, his son Manasseh,
14 his son Amon, and his son Josiah.
15† Josiah's sons:
Johanan was the firstborn, Jehoiakim second,
Zedekiah third, and Shallum fourth.
16† Jehoiakim's sons:
his sons Jeconiah and Zedekiah.

David's Line After the Exile

[17]† The sons of Jeconiah the captive:
his sons Shealtiel, [18] Malchiram, Pedaiah, Shenazzar, Jekamiah,
Hoshama, and Nedabiah.
[19]† Pedaiah’s sons: Zerubbabel and Shimei.
Zerubbabel’s sons: Meshullam and Hananiah, with their sister Shelomith;
[20] and five others — Hashubah, Ohel, Berechiah, Hasadiah, and Jushab-hesed.
[21] Hananiah’s descendants: Pelatiah, Jeshaiah, and the sons of Rephaiah,
Arnan, Obadiah, and Shecaniah.
[22] The son of Shecaniah: Shemaiah.
Shemaiah’s sons: Hattush, Igal, Bariah, Neariah, and Shaphat — six.
[23] Neariah’s sons: Elioenai, Hizkiah, and Azrikam — three.
[24]† Elioenai’s sons: Hodaviah, Eliashib, Pelaiah, Akkub, Johanan,
Delaiah, and Anani — seven.

1 CHRONICLES

Judah’s Descendants

4 Judah's sons: Perez, Hezron, Carmi, Hur, and Shobal.
2† Reaiah son of Shobal fathered Jahath, and Jahath fathered Ahumai and Lahad.
These were the families of the Zorathites.
3 These were Etam's sons: Jezreel, Ishma, and Idbash, and their sister was named Hazzelelponi.
4† Penuel fathered Gedor, and Ezer fathered Hushah.
These were the sons of Hur, Ephrathah's firstborn and the father of Bethlehem:
5 Ashhur fathered Tekoa and had two wives, Helah and Naarah.
6† Naarah bore Ahuzzam, Hepher, Temeni, and Haahashtari to him. These were Naarah's sons.
7 Helah's sons: Zereth, Zohar, and Ethnan.
8 Koz fathered Anub,
Zobebah, [A] and the families of Aharhel son of Harum.

9† Jabez was more honorable than his brothers. His mother named him Jabez and said, "I gave birth to him in pain."

10† Jabez called out to the God of Israel: "If only You would bless me, extend my border, let Your hand be with me, and keep me from harm, so that I will not cause any pain." And God granted his request.

11 Chelub brother of Shuhah fathered Mehir, who was the father of
Eshton.
12† Eshton fathered Beth-rapha, Paseah, and Tehinnah the father of Irnahash. These were the men of Recah.
13 Kenaz's sons: Othniel and Seraiah.
Othniel's sons: Hathath and Meonothai.
14† Meonothai fathered Ophrah,
and Seraiah fathered Joab, the ancestor of those in the Valley of Craftsmen, [C] for they were craftsmen.
15† The sons of Caleb son of Jephunneh: Iru, Elah, and Naam.
Elah's son: Kenaz.
16 Jehallelel's sons: Ziph, Ziphah, Tiria, and Asarel.
17 Ezrah's sons: Jether, Mered, Epher, and Jalon. Mered's wife Bithiah

gave birth to Miriam, Shammai, and Ishbah the father of Eshtemoa.
18 These were the sons of Pharaoh’s daughter Bithiah; Mered had married
her. His Judean wife gave birth to Jered the father of Gedor, Heber the
father of Soco, and Jekuthiel the father of Zanoah. 19 The sons of
Hodiah’s wife, the sister of Naham: the father of Keilah the Garmite and
the father of Eshtemoa the Maacathite.
20 Shimon’s sons: Amnon, Rinnah, Ben-hanan, and Tilon.
Ishi’s sons: Zoheth and Ben-zoheth.

21[†] The sons of Shelah son of Judah: Er the father of Lecah,
Laadah the father of Mareshah, the families of the guild [D] of linen
workers at Beth-ashbea, 22[†] Jokim, the men of Cozeba; and Joash
and Saraph, who married Moabites [E] and returned to Lehem.
These names are from ancient records. 23 They were the potters
and residents of Netaim and Gederah. They lived there in the
service of the king.

Simeon’s Descendants

24 Simeon’s sons: Nemuel, Jamin, Jarib, Zerah, and Shaul;
25 Shaul’s sons: his son Shallum, his son Mibsam, and his son Mishma.
26 Mishma’s sons: his son Hammuel, his son Zaccur, and his son Shimei.

27[†] Shimei had 16 sons and six daughters, but his brothers did not
have many children, so their whole family did not become as
numerous as the Judeans. 28 They lived in Beer-sheba, Moladah,
Hazar-shual, 29 Bilhah, Ezem, Tolad, 30 Bethuel, Hormah, Ziklag,
31 Beth-marcaboth, Hazar-susim, Beth-biri, and Shaaraim. These
were their cities until David became king. 32 Their villages were
Etam, Ain, Rimmon, Tochen, and Ashan — five cities, 33 and all
their surrounding villages as far as Baal. These were their
settlements, and they kept a genealogical record for themselves.

34 Meshobab, Jamlech, Joshah son of Amaziah,

[35] Joel, Jehu son of Joshibiah, son of Seraiah, son of Asiel,
[36] Elioenai, Jaakobah, Jeshohaiah, Asaiah, Adiel, Jesimiel, Benaiah,
[37] and Ziza son of Shiphi, son of Allon, son of Jedaiah, son of Shimri, son of Shemaiah —

> [38] these mentioned by name were leaders in their families. Their ancestral houses increased greatly.
> [39]† They went to the entrance of Gedor, to the east side of the valley to seek pasture for their flocks.
> [40] They found rich, good pasture, and the land was broad, peaceful, and quiet, for some Hamites had lived there previously.

[41]† These who were recorded by name came in the days of King Hezekiah of Judah, attacked the Hamites' tents and the Meunites who were found there, and •set them apart for destruction, as they are today. Then they settled in their place because there was pasture for their flocks.
[42]† Now 500 men from these sons of Simeon went with Pelatiah, Neariah, Rephaiah, and Uzziel, the sons of Ishi, as their leaders to Mount Seir.
[43]† They struck down the remnant of the Amalekites who had escaped, and they still live there today.

1 CHRONICLES

Reuben’s Descendants

5 †These were the sons of Reuben the firstborn of Israel. He was the firstborn, but his birthright was given to the sons of Joseph son of Israel, because Reuben defiled his father's bed. He is not listed in the genealogy according to birthright.
2† Although Judah became strong among his brothers and a ruler came from him, the birthright was given to Joseph.

3 The sons of Reuben, Israel's firstborn:
Hanoch, Pallu, Hezron, and Carmi.
4 Joel's sons: his son Shemaiah,
his son Gog, his son Shimei,
5 his son Micah, his son Reaiah,
his son Baal, 6† and his son Beerah.

Beerah was a leader of the Reubenites, and Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria took him into exile.
7† His relatives by their families as they are recorded in their genealogy:

Jeiel the chief, Zechariah,
8† and Bela son of Azaz,
son of Shema, son of Joel.

They settled in Aroer as far as Nebo and Baal-meon.
9 They also settled in the east as far as the edge of the desert that extends to the Euphrates River, because their herds had increased in the land of Gilead.
10† During Saul's reign they waged war against the Hagrites, who were defeated by their power. And they lived in their tents throughout the region east of Gilead.

Gad's Descendants

11 The sons of Gad lived next to them in the land of Bashan as far as Salecah:
12 Joel the chief, Shapham the second in command, Janai, and Shaphat in Bashan.

[13] Their relatives according to their ancestral houses: Michael,
Meshullam, Sheba, Jorai, Jacan, Zia, and Eber — seven.
[14†] These were the sons of Abihail son of Huri,
son of Jaroah, son of Gilead,
son of Michael, son of Jeshishai,
son of Jahdo, son of Buz.
[15] Ahi son of Abdiel, son of Guni, was head of their ancestral houses.
[16†] They lived in Gilead, in Bashan and its towns, and throughout the
pasturelands of Sharon. [17†] All of them were registered in the
genealogies during the reigns of Judah's King Jotham and Israel's King
Jeroboam.

[18†] The sons of Reuben and Gad and half the tribe of Manasseh had
44,760 warriors who could serve in the army — men who carried shield
and sword, drew the bow, and were trained for war. [19] They waged war
against the Hagrites, Jetur, Naphish, and Nodab. [20†] They received help
against these enemies because they cried out to God in battle, and the
Hagrites and all their allies were handed over to them. He granted their
request because they trusted in Him. [21] They captured the Hagrites'
livestock — 50,000 of their camels, 250,000 sheep, and 2,000
donkeys — as well as 100,000 people. [22] Many of the Hagrites were killed
because it was God's battle. And they lived there in the Hagrites' place
until the exile.

Half the Tribe of Manasseh

[23] The sons of half the tribe of Manasseh settled in the land from Bashan
to Baal-hermon (that is, Senir or Mount Hermon); they were numerous.
[24] These were the heads of their ancestral houses: Epher, Ishi, Eliel, Azriel,
Jeremiah, Hodaviah, and Jahdiel. They were brave warriors, famous men,
and heads of their ancestral houses. [25†] But they were unfaithful to the God
of their ancestors. They prostituted themselves with the gods of the
nations [A] God had destroyed before them. [26†] So the God of Israel put it
into the mind of Pul (that is, Tiglath-pileser) king of Assyria to take the

Reubenites, Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh into exile. He took them to Halah, Habor, Hara, and Gozan's river, where they are until today.

1 CHRONICLES

Chapter 6 *The Levites*

1 Levi's sons: Gershom, Kohath, and Merari.
2† Kohath's sons: Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel.
3 Amram's children: Aaron, Moses, and Miriam.
Aaron's sons: Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar.
4 Eleazar fathered Phinehas;
Phinehas fathered Abishua;
5 Abishua fathered Bukki;
Bukki fathered Uzzi;
6 Uzzi fathered Zerahiah;
Zerahiah fathered Meraioth;
7 Meraioth fathered Amariah;
Amariah fathered Ahitub;
8 Ahitub fathered Zadok;
Zadok fathered Ahimaaz;
9 Ahimaaz fathered Azariah;
Azariah fathered Johanan;
10 Johanan fathered Azariah, who served as priest in the temple that
Solomon built in Jerusalem;
11 Azariah fathered Amariah;
Amariah fathered Ahitub;
12 Ahitub fathered Zadok;
Zadok fathered Shallum;
13 Shallum fathered Hilkiah;
Hilkiah fathered Azariah;
14 Azariah fathered Seraiah;
and Seraiah fathered Jehozadak.
15 Jehozadak went into exile when the LORD sent Judah and Jerusalem
into exile at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar.

16† Levi's sons: Gershom, Kohath, and Merari.
17 These are the names of Gershom's sons: Libni and Shimei.
18 Kohath's sons: Amram, Izhar, Hebron and Uzziel.

[19] Merari’s sons: Mahli and Mushi.
These are the Levites’ families according to their fathers:
[20] Of Gershom: his son Libni,
his son Jahath, his son Zimmah,
[21] his son Joah, his son Iddo,
his son Zerah, and his son Jeatherai.
[22] Kohath’s sons: his son Amminadab,
his son Korah, his son Assir,
[23] his son Elkanah, his son Ebiasaph,
his son Assir, [24] his son Tahath,
his son Uriel, his son Uzziah,
and his son Shaul.
[25†] Elkanah’s sons: Amasai and Ahimoth,
[26] his son Elkanah, his son Zophai,
his son Nahath, [27] his son Eliab,
his son Jeroham, and his son Elkanah.
[28†] Samuel’s sons: his firstborn Joel,
and his second son Abijah.
[29] Merari’s sons: Mahli, his son Libni,
his son Shimei, his son Uzzah,
[30] his son Shimea, his son Haggiah,
and his son Asaiah.

The Musicians

[31†] These are the men David put in charge of the music in the LORD’s
temple after the ark came to rest there. [32] They ministered with song in
front of the tabernacle, the tent of meeting, until Solomon built the LORD’s
temple in Jerusalem, and they performed their task according to the
regulations given to them. [33] These are the men who served with their sons.

From the Kohathites: Heman the singer,
son of Joel, son of Samuel,
[34] son of Elkanah, son of Jeroham,

son of Eliel, son of Toah,
35 son of Zuph, son of Elkanah,
son of Mahath, son of Amasai,
36 son of Elkanah, son of Joel,
son of Azariah, son of Zephaniah,
37 son of Tahath, son of Assir,
son of Ebiasaph, son of Korah,
38 son of Izhar, son of Kohath,
son of Levi, son of Israel.

39 Heman's relative was •Asaph, who stood at his right hand:
Asaph son of Berechiah, son of Shimea,
40 son of Michael, son of Baaseiah,
son of Malchijah, 41 son of Ethni,
son of Zerah, son of Adaiah,
42 son of Ethan, son of Zimmah,
son of Shimei, 43 son of Jahath,
son of Gershom, son of Levi.

44 On the left, their relatives were Merari's sons:
Ethan son of Kishi, son of Abdi,
son of Malluch, 45 son of Hashabiah,
son of Amaziah, son of Hilkiah,
46 son of Amzi, son of Bani,
son of Shemer, 47 son of Mahli,
son of Mushi, son of Merari,
son of Levi.

Aaron's Descendants

48 Their relatives, the Levites, were assigned to all the service of the
tabernacle, God's temple. 49 But Aaron and his sons did all the work of the
most holy place. They presented the offerings on the altar of •burnt
offerings and on the altar of incense to make atonement for Israel
according to all that Moses the servant of God had commanded.

[50]† These are Aaron's sons: his son Eleazar,
his son Phinehas, his son Abishua,
[51] his son Bukki, his son Uzzi,
his son Zerahiah, [52] his son Meraioth,
his son Amariah, his son Ahitub,
[53] his son Zadok, and his son Ahimaaz.

The Settlements of the Levites

[54] These were the places assigned to Aaron's sons from the Kohathite
family for their settlements in their territory, because the first lot was for
them. [55] They were given Hebron in the land of Judah and its surrounding
pasturelands, [56] but the fields and villages around the city were given to
Caleb son of Jephunneh. [57] Aaron's sons were given:

> Hebron (a city of refuge), Libnah and its pasturelands, Jattir,
> Eshtemoa and its pasturelands, [58] Hilen and its pasturelands,
> Debir and its pasturelands, [59] Ashan and its pasturelands, and
> Beth-shemesh and its pasturelands. [60] From the tribe of Benjamin
> they were given Geba and its pasturelands, Alemeth and its
> pasturelands, and Anathoth and its pasturelands. They had 13
> towns in all among their families.

[61] To the rest of the Kohathites, 10 towns from half the tribe of Manasseh
were assigned by lot.

[62] The Gershomites were assigned 13 towns from the tribes of Issachar,
Asher, Naphtali, and Manasseh in Bashan according to their families.

[63] The Merarites were assigned by lot 12 towns from the tribes of
Reuben, Gad, and Zebulun according to their families. [64] So the Israelites
gave these towns and their pasturelands to the Levites. [65] They assigned by
lot the towns named above from the tribes of the Judahites, Simeonites, and
Benjaminites.

[66]† Some of the families of the Kohathites were given towns from the
tribe of Ephraim for their territory:

[67] Shechem (a city of refuge) with its pasturelands in the hill
country of Ephraim, Gezer and its pasturelands, [68] Jokmeam and
its pasturelands, Beth-horon and its pasturelands, [69] Aijalon and
its pasturelands, and Gath-rimmon and its pasturelands. [70] From
half the tribe of Manasseh, Aner and its pasturelands, and Bileam
and its pasturelands were given to the rest of the families of the
Kohathites.

[71] The Gershomites received:

Golan in Bashan and its pasturelands, and Ashtaroth and its
pasturelands from the families of half the tribe of Manasseh.
[72] From the tribe of Issachar they received Kedesh and its
pasturelands, Daberath and its pasturelands, [73] Ramoth and its
pasturelands, and Anem and its pasturelands. [74] From the tribe of
Asher they received Mashal and its pasturelands, Abdon and its
pasturelands, [75] Hukok and its pasturelands, and Rehob and its
pasturelands. [76] From the tribe of Naphtali they received Kedesh
in Galilee and its pasturelands, Hammon and its pasturelands, and
Kiriathaim and its pasturelands.

[77] The rest of the Merarites received:

From the tribe of Zebulun they received Rimmono and its
pasturelands and Tabor and its pasturelands. [78] From the tribe of
Reuben across the Jordan at Jericho, to the east of the Jordan, they
received Bezer in the desert and its pasturelands, Jahzah and its
pasturelands, [79] Kedemoth and its pasturelands, and Mephaath
and its pasturelands. [80] From the tribe of Gad they received
Ramoth in Gilead and its pasturelands, Mahanaim and its
pasturelands, [81] Heshbon and its pasturelands, and Jazer and its
pasturelands.

Issachar’s Descendants

7 †Issachar's sons: Tola, Puah, Jashub, and Shimron — four.
2† Tola's sons: Uzzi, Rephaiah, Jeriel, Jahmai, Ibsam, and Shemuel,
the heads of their ancestral houses. During David's reign, 22,600
descendants of Tola were recorded as warriors in their genealogies.
3 Uzzi's son: Izrahiah.
Izrahiah's sons: Michael, Obadiah, Joel, Isshiah. All five of them were
chiefs. 4 Along with them, they had 36,000 troops for battle according to
the genealogical records of their ancestral houses, for they had many
wives and children. 5 Their tribesmen who were warriors belonging to all
the families of Issachar totaled 87,000 in their genealogies.

Benjamin's Descendants

6† Three of Benjamin's sons: Bela, Becher, and Jediael.
7† Bela's sons: Ezbon, Uzzi, Uzziel, Jerimoth, and Iri — five. They were
warriors and heads of their ancestral houses; 22,034 were listed in their
genealogies.
8 Becher's sons: Zemirah, Joash, Eliezer, Elioenai, Omri, Jeremoth,
Abijah, Anathoth, and Alemeth; all these were Becher's sons. 9 Their
genealogies were recorded according to the heads of their ancestral
houses — 20,200 warriors.
10 Jediael's son: Bilhan.
Bilhan's sons: Jeush, Benjamin, Ehud, Chenaanah, Zethan, Tarshish, and
Ahishahar. 11 All these sons of Jediael listed by heads of families were
warriors; there were 17,200 who could serve in the army. 12 Shuppim and
Huppim were sons of Ir, and the Hushim were the sons of Aher.

Naphtali's Descendants

13† Naphtali's sons: Jahziel, Guni, Jezer, and Shallum — Bilhah's sons.

Manasseh's Descendants

[14†] Manasseh's sons through his Aramean concubine: Asriel and Machir
the father of Gilead. [15] Machir took wives from Huppim and Shuppim.
The name of his sister was Maacah. Another descendant was named
Zelophehad, but he had only daughters.
[16] Machir's wife Maacah gave birth to a son, and she named him Peresh.
His brother was named Sheresh, and his sons were Ulam and Rekem.
[17] Ulam's son: Bedan. These were the sons of Gilead son of Machir, son
of Manasseh. [18] His sister Hammolecheth gave birth to Ishhod, Abiezer,
and Mahlah.
[19] Shemida's sons: Ahian, Shechem, Likhi, and Aniam.

Ephraim's Descendants

[20] Ephraim's sons: Shuthelah, and his son Bered,
his son Tahath, his son Eleadah,
his son Tahath, [21] his son Zabad,
his son Shuthelah, also Ezer, and Elead.

The men of Gath, born in the land, killed them because they went down
to raid their cattle. [22] Their father Ephraim mourned a long time, and his
relatives [A] came to comfort him. [23] He slept with his wife, and she
conceived and gave birth to a son. So he named him Beriah, because
there had been misfortune in his home. [24] His daughter was Sheerah,
who built Lower and Upper Beth-horon and Uzzen-sheerah,

[25] his son Rephah, his son Resheph,
his son Telah, his son Tahan,
[26] his son Ladan, his son Ammihud,
his son Elishama, [27] his son Nun,
and his son Joshua.

[28] Their holdings and settlements were Bethel and its villages;
Naaran to the east, Gezer and its villages to the west, and
Shechem and its villages as far as Ayyah and its villages, [29] and

along the borders of the sons of Manasseh, Beth-shean and its villages, Taanach and its villages, Megiddo and its villages, and Dor and its villages. The sons of Joseph son of Israel lived in these towns.

Asher's Descendants

30 Asher's sons: Imnah, Ishvah, Ishvi, and Beriah, with their sister Serah.
31 Beriah's sons: Heber, and Malchiel, who fathered Birzaith.
32 Heber fathered Japhlet, Shomer, and Hotham, with their sister Shua.
33 Japhlet's sons: Pasach, Bimhal, and Ashvath. These were Japhlet's sons.
34 Shemer's sons: Ahi, Rohgah, Hubbah, and Aram.
35 His brother Helem's sons: Zophah, Imna, Shelesh, and Amal.
36 Zophah's sons: Suah, Harnepher, Shual, Beri, Imrah,
37 Bezer, Hod, Shamma, Shilshah, Ithran, and Beera.
38 Jether's sons: Jephunneh, Pispa, and Ara.
39 Ulla's sons: Arah, Hanniel, and Rizia.
40 All these were Asher's sons. They were the heads of their ancestral houses, chosen men, warriors, and chiefs among the leaders. The number of men listed in their genealogies for military service was 26,000.

1 CHRONICLES

Benjamin's Descendants

8 †Benjamin fathered Bela, his firstborn; Ashbel was born second,
Aharah third, 2 Nohah fourth, and Rapha fifth.
3 Bela’s sons: Addar, Gera, Abihud, 4 Abishua, Naaman, Ahoah, 5 Gera,
Shephuphan, and Huram.
6 These were Ehud’s sons, who were the heads of the families living in
Geba and who were deported to Manahath: 7 Naaman, Ahijah, and Gera.
Gera deported them and was the father of Uzza and Ahihud.
8† Shaharaim had sons in the country of Moab after he had divorced his
wives Hushim and Baara. 9† His sons by his wife Hodesh: Jobab, Zibia,
Mesha, Malcam, 10 Jeuz, Sachia, and Mirmah. These were his sons, heads
of families. 11 He also had sons by Hushim: Abitub and Elpaal.
12 Elpaal’s sons: Eber, Misham, and Shemed who built Ono and Lod and
its villages, 13 Beriah and Shema, who were the heads of families of
Aijalon’s residents and who drove out the residents of Gath, 14 Ahio,
Shashak, and Jeremoth.
15 Zebadiah, Arad, Eder, 16 Michael, Ishpah, and Joha were Beriah’s sons.
17 Zebadiah, Meshullam, Hizki, Heber, 18 Ishmerai, Izliah, and Jobab
were Elpaal’s sons.
19 Jakim, Zichri, Zabdi, 20 Elienai, Zillethai, Eliel, 21 Adaiah, Beraiah,
and Shimrath were Shimei’s sons.
22 Ishpan, Eber, Eliel, 23 Abdon, Zichri, Hanan, 24 Hananiah, Elam,
Anthothijah, 25 Iphdeiah, and Penuel were Shashak’s sons.
26 Shamsherai, Shehariah, Athaliah, 27 Jaareshiah, Elijah, and Zichri were
Jeroham’s sons.
28† These were heads of families, chiefs according to their genealogies,
and lived in Jerusalem.

29† Jeiel fathered Gibeon and lived in Gibeon. His wife’s name was
Maacah. 30 Abdon was his firstborn son, then Zur, Kish, Baal, Nadab,
31 Gedor, Ahio, Zecher, 32 and Mikloth who fathered Shimeah. These also
lived opposite their relatives in Jerusalem, with their other relatives.
33† Ner fathered Kish, Kish fathered Saul, and Saul fathered Jonathan,
Malchishua, Abinadab, and Esh-baal.

34 Jonathan's son was Merib-baal, and Merib-baal fathered Micah.
35 Micah's sons: Pithon, Melech, Tarea, and Ahaz.
36 Ahaz fathered Jehoaddah, Jehoaddah fathered Alemeth, Azmaveth, and
Zimri, and Zimri fathered Moza.
37 Moza fathered Binea. His son was Raphah, his son Elasah, and his son
Azel.
38 Azel had six sons, and these were their names: Azrikam, Bocheru,
Ishmael, Sheariah, Obadiah, and Hanan. All these were Azel's sons.
39 His brother Eshek's sons: Ulam was his firstborn, Jeush second, and
Eliphelet third.
40 Ulam's sons were warriors and archers. [A] They had many sons and
grandsons — 150 of them.
All these were among Benjamin's sons.

1 CHRONICLES

After the Exile

9 [†]All Israel was registered in the genealogies that are written in the Book of the Kings of Israel. But Judah was exiled to Babylon because of their unfaithfulness.
2[†] The first to live in their towns on their own property again were Israelites, priests, Levites, and temple servants.

3 These people from the descendants of Judah, Benjamin, Ephraim, and Manasseh settled in Jerusalem:
4 Uthai son of Ammihud, son of Omri, son of Imri, son of Bani, a descendant [A] of Perez son of Judah;
5 from the Shilonites:
Asaiah the firstborn and his sons;
6 and from the sons of Zerah:
Jeuel and 690 of their relatives.

7 The Benjaminites: Sallu son of Meshullam, son of Hodaviah, son of Hassenuah;
8 Ibneiah son of Jeroham;
Elah son of Uzzi, son of Michri;
Meshullam son of Shephatiah, son of Reuel, son of Ibnijah;
9 and 956 of their relatives according to their genealogical records. All these men were heads of their ancestral houses.

10 The priests: Jedaiah; Jehoiarib; Jachin;
11 Azariah son of Hilkiah, son of Meshullam, son of Zadok, son of Meraioth, son of Ahitub, the chief official of God's temple;
12 Adaiah son of Jeroham, son of Pashhur, son of Malchijah;
Maasai son of Adiel, son of Jahzerah, son of Meshullam, son of Meshillemith, son of Immer;
13 and 1,760 of their relatives, the heads of households. They were capable men employed in the ministry of God's temple.

14 The Levites: Shemaiah son of Hasshub, son of Azrikam, son of Hashabiah of the Merarites;
15 Bakbakkar, Heresh, Galal, and Mattaniah, son of Mica, son of Zichri,

son of •Asaph;
[16] Obadiah son of Shemaiah, son of Galal, son of Jeduthun;
and Berechiah son of Asa, son of Elkanah who lived in the villages of the Netophathites.

[17] The gatekeepers: Shallum, Akkub, Talmon, Ahiman, and their relatives.
Shallum was their chief; [18] he was previously stationed at the King's Gate
on the east side. These were the gatekeepers from the camp of the Levites.
[19] Shallum son of Kore, son of Ebiasaph, son of Korah and his relatives
from his ancestral household, the Korahites, were assigned to guard the
thresholds of the tent. Their ancestors had been assigned to the LORD's
camp as guardians of the entrance. [20†] In earlier times Phinehas son of
Eleazar had been their leader, and the LORD was with him. [21] Zechariah
son of Meshelemiah was the gatekeeper at the entrance to the tent of meeting.

[22] The total number of those chosen to be gatekeepers at the thresholds
was 212. They were registered by genealogy in their villages. David and
Samuel the seer had appointed them to their trusted positions. [23] So they
and their sons were assigned to the gates of the LORD's temple, which had
been the tent-temple. [24] The gatekeepers were on the four sides: east, west,
north, and south. [25] Their relatives came from their villages at fixed times
to be with them seven days, [26†] but the four chief gatekeepers, who were
Levites, were entrusted with the rooms and the treasuries of God's temple.
[27] They spent the night in the vicinity of God's temple, because they had
guard duty and were in charge of opening it every morning.

[28] Some of them were in charge of the utensils used in worship. They
would count them when they brought them in and when they took them out.
[29] Others were put in charge of the furnishings and all the utensils of the
sanctuary, as well as the fine flour, wine, oil, incense, and spices. [30] Some
of the priests' sons mixed the spices. [31] A Levite called Mattithiah, the
firstborn of Shallum the Korahite, was entrusted with baking the bread. [B]

32 Some of the Kohathites' relatives were responsible for preparing the
rows of the •bread of the Presence every Sabbath.

33 The singers, the heads of the Levite families, stayed in the temple
chambers and were exempt from other tasks because they were on duty day
and night. 34 These were the heads of the Levite families, chiefs according
to their genealogies, and lived in Jerusalem.

Saul's Family

35† Jeiel fathered Gibeon and lived in Gibeon. His wife's name was
Maacah. 36 Abdon was his firstborn son, then Zur, Kish, Baal, Ner,
Nadab, 37 Gedor, Ahio, Zechariah, and Mikloth. 38 Mikloth fathered
Shimeam. These also lived opposite their relatives in Jerusalem with their
other relatives.

39† Ner fathered Kish, Kish fathered Saul, and Saul fathered Jonathan,
Malchishua, Abinadab, and Esh-baal.

40 Jonathan's son was Merib-baal, and Merib-baal fathered Micah.

41 Micah's sons: Pithon, Melech, Tahrea, and Ahaz.

42 Ahaz fathered Jarah;
Jarah fathered Alemeth, Azmaveth, and Zimri;
Zimri fathered Moza.

43 Moza fathered Binea.
His son was Rephaiah, his son Elasah, and his son Azel.

44 Azel had six sons, and these were their names: Azrikam, Bocheru,
Ishmael, Sheariah, Obadiah, and Hanan. These were Azel's sons.

1 CHRONICLES

The Deaths of Saul and His Sons

10 †The Philistines fought against Israel, and Israel's men fled from
them and were killed on Mount Gilboa. 2 The Philistines pursued Saul
and his sons and killed Saul's sons Jonathan, Abinadab, and Malchishua.
3 When the battle intensified against Saul, the archers found him and
severely wounded him. 4† Then Saul said to his armor-bearer, "Draw your
sword and run me through with it, or these uncircumcised men will come
and torture me! " But his armor-bearer wouldn't do it because he was
terrified. Then Saul took his sword and fell on it. 5 When his armor-bearer
saw that Saul was dead, he also fell on his own sword and died. 6† So Saul
and his three sons died — his whole house died together.

7 When all the men of Israel in the valley saw that the army had fled and
that Saul and his sons were dead, they abandoned their cities and fled. So
the Philistines came and settled in them.

8 The next day when the Philistines came to strip the slain, they found
Saul and his sons dead on Mount Gilboa. 9 They stripped Saul, cut off his
head, took his armor, and sent messengers throughout the land of the
Philistines to spread the good news to their idols and their people. 10 Then
they put his armor in the temple of their gods and hung his skull in the
temple of Dagon.

11 When all Jabesh-gilead heard of everything the Philistines had done to
Saul, 12 all their brave men set out and retrieved the body of Saul and the
bodies of his sons and brought them to Jabesh. They buried their bones
under the oak [A] in Jabesh and fasted seven days.

13† Saul died for his unfaithfulness to the LORD because he did not keep
the LORD's word. He even consulted a medium for guidance, 14 but he did
not inquire of the LORD. So the LORD put him to death and turned the
kingdom over to David son of Jesse.

1 CHRONICLES

David’s Anointing as King

11 [†]All Israel came together to David at Hebron and said, “Here we are,
your own flesh and blood. [A] 2 Even when Saul was king, you led us
out to battle and brought us back. The LORD your God also said to you, ‘You
will shepherd My people Israel and be ruler over My people Israel.’ ”

3 So all the elders of Israel came to the king at Hebron. David made a
covenant with them at Hebron in the LORD’s presence, and they anointed
David king over Israel, in keeping with the LORD’s word through Samuel.

David’s Capture of Jerusalem

4[†] David and all Israel marched to Jerusalem (that is, Jebus); the
Jebusites who inhabited the land were there. 5 The inhabitants of Jebus said
to David, “You will never get in here.” Yet David did capture the stronghold
of •Zion, that is, the city of David.

6 David said, “Whoever is the first to kill a Jebusite will become chief
commander.” Joab son of Zeruiah went up first, so he became the chief.

7[†] Then David took up residence in the stronghold; therefore, it was
called the city of David. 8[†] He built up the city all the way around, from the
supporting terraces to the surrounding parts, and Joab restored the rest of
the city. 9[†] David steadily grew more powerful, and the LORD of •Hosts was
with him.

Exploits of David’s Warriors

10[†] The following were the chiefs of David’s warriors who, together with
all Israel, strongly supported him in his reign to make him king according to
the LORD’s word about Israel. 11 This is the list of David’s warriors:

Jashobeam son of Hachmoni was chief of the Thirty; he wielded his
spear against 300 and killed them at one time.

12[†] After him, Eleazar son of Dodo the Ahohite was one of the three
warriors. 13 He was with David at Pas-dammim when the Philistines had

gathered there for battle. There was a portion of a field full of barley, where
the troops had fled from the Philistines. 14 But Eleazar and David [B] took
their stand in the middle of the field and defended it. They killed the
Philistines, and the LORD gave them a great victory.

15† Three of the 30 chief men went down to David, to the rock at the cave
of Adullam, while the Philistine army was encamped in the Valley of
Rephaim. 16 At that time David was in the stronghold, and a Philistine
garrison was at Bethlehem. 17 David was extremely thirsty [C] and said, "If
only someone would bring me water to drink from the well at the city gate
of Bethlehem! " 18 So the Three broke through the Philistine camp and
drew water from the well at the gate of Bethlehem. They brought it back to
David, but he refused to drink it. Instead, he poured it out to the LORD.
19† David said, "I would never do such a thing in the presence of God! How
can I drink the blood of these men who risked their lives? " For they
brought it at the risk of their lives. So he would not drink it. Such were the
exploits of the three warriors.

20 Abishai, Joab's brother, was the leader of the Three. He raised his
spear against 300 men and killed them, gaining a reputation among the
Three. 21† He was more honored than the Three and became their
commander even though he did not become one of the Three.

22 Benaiah son of Jehoiada was the son of a brave man [D] from Kabzeel,
a man of many exploits. Benaiah killed two sons of Ariel of Moab, [E] and he
went down into a pit on a snowy day and killed a lion. 23 He also killed an
Egyptian who was seven and a half feet tall. [F] Even though the Egyptian
had a spear in his hand like a weaver's beam, Benaiah went down to him
with a club, snatched the spear out of the Egyptian's hand, and then killed
him with his own spear. 24 These were the exploits of Benaiah son of
Jehoiada, who had a reputation among the three warriors. 25 He was the
most honored of the Thirty, but he did not become one of the Three. David
put him in charge of his bodyguard.

26 The fighting men were:

Joab’s brother Asahel,
Elhanan son of Dodo of Bethlehem,
27 Shammoth the Harorite,
Helez the Pelonite,
28 Ira son of Ikkesh the Tekoite,
Abiezer the Anathothite,
29 Sibbecai the Hushathite,
Ilai the Ahohite,
30 Maharai the Netophathite,
Heled son of Baanah the Netophathite,
31 Ithai son of Ribai from Gibeah of the Benjaminites,
Benaiah the Pirathonite,
32 Hurai from the •wadis of Gaash,
Abiel the Arbathite,
33 Azmaveth the Baharumite,
Eliahba the Shaalbonite,
34 the sons of Hashem the Gizonite,
Jonathan son of Shagee the Hararite,
35 Ahiam son of Sachar the Hararite,
Eliphal son of Ur,
36 Hepher the Mecherathite,
Ahijah the Pelonite,
37 Hezro the Carmelite,
Naarai son of Ezbai,
38 Joel the brother of Nathan,
Mibhar son of Hagri,
39 Zelek the Ammonite,
Naharai the Beerothite, the armor-bearer for Joab son of Zeruiah,
40 Ira the Ithrite,
Gareb the Ithrite,
41 Uriah the Hittite,
Zabad son of Ahlai,
42† Adina son of Shiza the Reubenite, chief of the Reubenites, and 30
with him,

43 Hanan son of Maacah,
Joshaphat the Mithnite,
44 Uzzia the Ashterathite,
Shama and Jeiel the sons of Hotham the Aroerite,
45 Jediael son of Shimri and his brother Joha the Tizite,
46 Eliel the Mahavite,
Jeribai and Joshaviah, the sons of Elnaam,
Ithmah the Moabite,
47 Eliel, Obed, and Jaasiel the Mezobaite.

1 CHRONICLES

David's First Supporters

12 †The following were the men who came to David at Ziklag while he
was still banned from the presence of Saul son of Kish. They were
among the warriors who helped him in battle.
2 They were archers who
could use either the right or left hand, both to sling stones and shoot arrows
from a bow. They were Saul's relatives from Benjamin:

3† Their chief was Ahiezer son of Shemaah the Gibeathite.
Then there was his brother Joash;
Jeziel and Pelet sons of Azmaveth;
Beracah, Jehu the Anathothite;
4 Ishmaiah the Gibeonite, a warrior among the Thirty and a leader over
the Thirty;
Jeremiah, Jahaziel, Johanan, Jozabad the Gederathite;
5 Eluzai, Jerimoth, Bealiah, Shemariah, Shephatiah the Haruphite;
6 Elkanah, Isshiah, Azarel, Joezer, and Jashobeam, the Korahites;
7 and Joelah and Zebadiah, the sons of Jeroham from Gedor.

8 Some Gadites defected to David at his stronghold in the desert. They
were fighting men, trained for battle, expert with shield and spear. Their
faces were like the faces of lions, and they were as swift as gazelles on the
mountains.

9 Ezer was the chief, Obadiah second, Eliab third,
10 Mishmannah fourth, Jeremiah fifth,
11 Attai sixth, Eliel seventh,
12 Johanan eighth, Elzabad ninth,
13 Jeremiah tenth, and Machbannai eleventh.

14 These Gadites were army commanders; the least of them was a match for
a hundred, and the greatest of them for a thousand.
15† These are the men
who crossed the Jordan in the first month when it was overflowing all its
banks, and put to flight all those in the valleys to the east and to the west.

[16]† Other Benjaminites and men from Judah also went to David at the
stronghold. [17] David went out to meet them and said to them, “If you have
come in peace to help me, my heart will be united with you, but if you have
come to betray me to my enemies even though my hands have done no
wrong, may the God of our ancestors look on it and judge.”

[18]† Then the Spirit took control of [A] Amasai, chief of the Thirty, and he
said:

We are yours, David,
we are with you, son of Jesse!
Peace, peace to you,
and peace to him who helps you,
for your God helps you.

So David received them and made them leaders of his troops.

[19] Some Manassites defected to David when he went with the Philistines
to fight against Saul. However, they did not help the Philistines because the
Philistine rulers sent David away after a discussion. They said, “It will be
our heads if he defects to his master Saul.” [20]† When David went to Ziklag,
some men from Manasseh defected to him: Adnah, Jozabad, Jediael,
Michael, Jozabad, Elihu, and Zillethai, chiefs of thousands in Manasseh.
[21] They helped David against the raiders, for they were all brave warriors
and commanders in the army. [22]† At that time, men came day after day to
help David until there was a great army, like an army of God. [B]

David’s Soldiers in Hebron

[23]† The numbers of the armed troops who came to David at Hebron to
turn Saul’s kingdom over to him, according to the LORD’s word, were as
follows:

[24]† From the Judahites: 6,800 armed troops bearing shields and spears.
[25] From the Simeonites: 7,100 brave warriors ready for war.

26 From the Levites: 4,600 27 in addition to Jehoiada, leader of the house
of Aaron, with 3,700 men; 28 and Zadok, a young brave warrior, with 22
commanders from his own ancestral house.
29 From the Benjaminites, the relatives of Saul: 3,000 (up to that time the
majority of the Benjaminites maintained their allegiance to the house
of Saul).
30 From the Ephraimites: 20,800 brave warriors who were famous men in
their ancestral houses.
31 From half the tribe of Manasseh: 18,000 designated by name to come
and make David king.
32 From the Issacharites, who understood the times and knew what Israel
should do: 200 chiefs with all their relatives under their command.
33 From Zebulun: 50,000 who could serve in the army, trained for battle
with all kinds of weapons of war, with one purpose to help David.
34 From Naphtali: 1,000 commanders accompanied by 37,000 men with
shield and spear.
35 From the Danites: 28,600 trained for battle.
36 From Asher: 40,000 who could serve in the army, trained for battle.
37† From across the Jordan — from the Reubenites, Gadites, and half the
tribe of Manasseh: 120,000 men equipped with all the military weapons
of war.

38 All these warriors, lined up in battle formation, came to Hebron fully
determined to make David king over all Israel. All the rest of Israel was
also of one mind to make David king. 39 They spent three days there eating
and drinking with David, for their relatives had provided for them. 40 In
addition, their neighbors from as far away as Issachar, Zebulun, and
Naphtali came and brought food on donkeys, camels, mules, and
oxen — abundant provisions of flour, fig cakes, raisins, wine and oil, oxen,
and sheep. Indeed, there was joy in Israel.

1 CHRONICLES

David and the Ark

13 [†]David consulted with all his leaders, the commanders of hundreds
and of thousands. 2[†] Then he said to the whole assembly of Israel, “If
it seems good to you, and if this is from the LORD our God, let us spread out
and send the message to the rest of our relatives in all the districts of Israel,
including the priests and Levites in their cities with pasturelands, that they
should gather together with us. 3[†] Then let us bring back the ark of our God,
for we did not inquire of Him in Saul’s days.” 4 Since the proposal seemed
right to all the people, the whole assembly agreed to do it.

5 So David assembled all Israel, from the Shihor of Egypt to the entrance
of Hamath, [A], to bring the ark of God from Kiriath-jearim. 6[†] David and
all Israel went to Baalah (that is, Kiriath-jearim that belongs to Judah) to
take the ark of God from there, which is called by the name of the LORD
who dwells between the •cherubim. 7 At Abinadab’s house they set the ark
of God on a new cart. Uzzah and Ahio [B] were guiding the cart.

8 David and all Israel were celebrating with all their might before God
with songs and with lyres, harps, tambourines, cymbals, and trumpets.
9 When they came to Chidon’s threshing floor, Uzzah reached out to hold
the ark because the oxen had stumbled. 10 Then the LORD’s anger burned
against Uzzah, and He struck him dead because he had reached out to the
ark. So he died there in the presence of God.

11[†] David was angry because of the LORD’s outburst against Uzzah, so he
named that place Outburst Against Uzzah, [C] as it is still named today.
12 David feared God that day and said, “How can I ever bring the ark of
God to me? ” 13[†] So David did not move the ark of God home [D] to the city
of David; instead, he took it to the house of Obed-edom the Gittite. 14 The
ark of God remained with Obed-edom’s family in his house for three
months, and the LORD blessed his family and all that he had.

1 CHRONICLES

God's Blessing on David

14 King Hiram of Tyre sent envoys to David, along with cedar logs,
stonemasons, and carpenters to build a palace for him. 2 Then David
knew that the LORD had established him as king over Israel and that his
kingdom had been exalted for the sake of His people Israel.

3 David took more wives in Jerusalem, and he became the father of more
sons and daughters. 4 These are the names of the children born to him in
Jerusalem: Shammua, Shobab, Nathan, Solomon, 5 Ibhar, Elishua, Elpelet,
6 Nogah, Nepheg, Japhia, 7 Elishama, Beeliada, and Eliphelet.

8† When the Philistines heard that David had been anointed king over all
Israel, they all went in search of David; when David heard of this, he went
out to face them. 9 Now the Philistines had come and raided in the Valley of
Rephaim, 10† so David inquired of God, "Should I go to war against the
Philistines? Will You hand them over to me? "

The LORD replied, "Go, and I will hand them over to you."

11 So the Israelites went up to Baal-perazim, and David defeated the
Philistines there. Then David said, "Like a bursting flood, God has used me
to burst out against my enemies." Therefore, they named that place the Lord
Bursts Out. [A] 12† The Philistines abandoned their idols there, and David
ordered that they be burned in the fire.

13 Once again the Philistines raided in the valley. 14 So David again
inquired of God, and God answered him, "Do not pursue them directly.
Circle around them and attack them opposite the balsam trees. 15† When
you hear the sound of marching in the tops of the balsam trees, then march
out to battle, for God will have marched out ahead of you to attack the
camp of the Philistines." 16 So David did exactly as God commanded him,
and they struck down the Philistine army from Gibeon to Gezer. 17 Then
David's fame spread throughout the lands, and the LORD caused all the
nations to be terrified of him.

1 CHRONICLES

The Ark Comes to Jerusalem

15 David built houses for himself in the city of David, and he prepared a
place for the ark of God and pitched a tent for it. 2† Then David said,
"No one but the Levites may carry the ark of God, because the Lord has
chosen them to carry the ark of the Lord and to minister before Him
forever."

3 David assembled all Israel at Jerusalem to bring the ark of the Lord to
the place he had prepared for it. 4 Then he gathered together the
descendants of Aaron and the Levites:

5 From the Kohathites, Uriel the leader and 120 of his relatives; 6 from
the Merarites, Asaiah the leader and 220 of his relatives; 7 from the
Gershomites, Joel the leader and 130 of his relatives; 8 from the
Elizaphanites, Shemaiah the leader and 200 of his relatives; 9 from the
Hebronites, Eliel the leader and 80 of his relatives; 10 from the Uzzielites,
Amminadab the leader and 112 of his relatives.

11 David summoned the priests Zadok and Abiathar and the Levites
Uriel, Asaiah, Joel, Shemaiah, Eliel, and Amminadab. 12 He said to them,
"You are the heads of the Levite families. You and your relatives must
consecrate yourselves so that you may bring the ark of the Lord God of
Israel to the place I have prepared for it. 13 For the Lord our God burst out
in anger against us because you Levites were not with us the first time, for
we didn't inquire of Him about the proper procedures." 14 So the priests
and the Levites consecrated themselves to bring up the ark of the Lord God
of Israel. 15† Then the Levites carried the ark of God the way Moses had
commanded according to the word of the Lord: on their shoulders with the
poles.

16 Then David told the leaders of the Levites to appoint their relatives as
singers and to have them raise their voices with joy accompanied by
musical instruments — harps, lyres, and cymbals. 17† So the Levites
appointed Heman son of Joel; from his relatives, Asaph son of Berechiah;
and from their relatives the Merarites, Ethan son of Kushaiah. 18 With them
were their relatives second in rank: Zechariah, Jaaziel, Shemiramoth,

Jehiel, Unni, Eliab, Benaiah, Maaseiah, Mattithiah, Eliphelehu, Mikneiah,
and the gatekeepers Obed-edom and Jeiel. [19] The singers Heman, Asaph,
and Ethan were to sound the bronze cymbals; [20] Zechariah, Aziel,
Shemiramoth, Jehiel, Unni, Eliab, Maaseiah, and Benaiah were to play
harps according to *Alamoth* ; [21] and Mattithiah, Eliphelehu, Mikneiah,
Obed-edom, Jeiel, and Azaziah were to lead the music with lyres according
to the •*Sheminith*. [22] Chenaniah, the leader of the Levites in music, was to
direct the music because he was skillful. [23] Berechiah and Elkanah were to
be gatekeepers for the ark. [24] The priests, Shebaniah, Joshaphat, Nethanel,
Amasai, Zechariah, Benaiah, and Eliezer, were to blow trumpets before the
ark of God. Obed-edom and Jehiah were also to be gatekeepers for the ark.

[25] David, the elders of Israel, and the commanders of thousands went
with rejoicing to bring the ark of the covenant of the LORD from the house
of Obed-edom. [26] While the Levites were carrying the ark of the covenant
of the LORD, with God's help, they sacrificed seven bulls and seven rams.

[27] Now David was dressed in a robe of fine linen, as were all the Levites
who were carrying the ark, as well as the singers and Chenaniah, the music
leader of the singers. David also wore a linen •ephod. [28†] So all Israel
brought up the ark of the covenant of the LORD with shouts, the sound of the
ram's horn, trumpets, and cymbals, and the playing of harps and lyres.
[29†] As the ark of the covenant of the LORD was entering the city of David,
Saul's daughter Michal looked down from the window and saw King David
dancing [A] and celebrating, and she despised him in her heart.

1 CHRONICLES

16

They brought the ark of God and placed it inside the tent David had
pitched for it. Then they offered •burnt offerings and •fellowship
offerings in God's presence. 2 When David had finished offering the burnt
offerings and the fellowship offerings, he blessed the people in the name of
•Yahweh. 3 Then he distributed to each and every Israelite, both men and
women, a loaf of bread, a date cake, and a raisin cake.

4 David appointed some of the Levites to be ministers before the ark of
the LORD, to celebrate the LORD God of Israel, and to give thanks and praise
to Him. 5 •Asaph was the chief and Zechariah was second to him. Jeiel,
Shemiramoth, Jehiel, Mattithiah, Eliab, Benaiah, Obed-edom, and Jeiel
played the harps and lyres, while Asaph sounded the cymbals 6 and the
priests Benaiah and Jahaziel blew the trumpets regularly before the ark of
the covenant of God.

David's Psalm of Thanksgiving

7 On that day David decreed for the first time that thanks be given to the
LORD by Asaph and his relatives:

8 Give thanks to Yahweh; call on His name;
proclaim His deeds among the peoples.
9 Sing to Him; sing praise to Him;
tell about all His wonderful works!
10 Honor His holy name;
let the hearts of those who seek Yahweh rejoice.
11 Search for the LORD and for His strength;
seek His face always.
12 Remember the wonderful works He has done,
His wonders, and the judgments He has pronounced, [A]
13 you offspring of Israel His servant,
Jacob's descendants — His chosen ones.

14† He is the LORD our God;
His judgments govern the whole earth.
15 Remember His covenant forever —

the promise He ordained for a thousand generations,
16 the covenant He made with Abraham,
swore [B] to Isaac,
17 and confirmed to Jacob as a decree,
and to Israel as an everlasting covenant:
18 “I will give the land of Canaan to you
as your inherited portion.”

19 When they were few in number,
very few indeed, and temporary residents in Canaan
20 wandering from nation to nation
and from one kingdom to another,
21 He allowed no one to oppress them;
He rebuked kings on their behalf:
22 “Do not touch My anointed ones
or harm My prophets.”

23 Sing to the Lord, all the earth.
Proclaim His salvation from day to day.
24 Declare His glory among the nations,
His wonderful works among all peoples.

25 For the Lord is great and highly praised;
He is feared above all gods.
26 For all the gods of the peoples are idols,
but the Lord made the heavens.
27 Splendor and majesty are before Him;
strength and joy are in His place.
28 Ascribe to the Lord, families of the peoples,
ascribe to the Lord glory and strength.
29 Ascribe to Yahweh the glory of His name;
bring an offering and come before Him.
Worship the Lord in the splendor of His holiness;
30 tremble before Him, all the earth.

The world is firmly established;
it cannot be shaken.

31 Let the heavens be glad and the earth rejoice,
and let them say among the nations, "The LORD is King! "
32 Let the sea and everything in it resound;
let the fields and all that is in them exult.
33 Then the trees of the forest will shout for joy before the LORD,
for He is coming to judge the earth.

34 Give thanks to the LORD, for He is good;
His faithful love endures forever.
35† And say: "Save us, God of our salvation;
gather us and rescue us from the nations
so that we may give thanks to Your holy name
and rejoice in Your praise.
36 May Yahweh, the God of Israel, be praised
from everlasting to everlasting."

Then all the people said, "•Amen" and "Praise the LORD."

37 So David left Asaph and his relatives there before the ark of the LORD's
covenant to minister regularly before the ark according to the daily
requirements. 38 He assigned Obed-edom and his 68 relatives. Obed-edom
son of Jeduthun and Hosah were to be gatekeepers. 39† David left Zadok
the priest and his fellow priests before the tabernacle of the LORD at the
•high place in Gibeon 40 to offer burnt offerings regularly, morning and
evening, to the LORD on the altar of burnt offerings and to do everything
that was written in the law of the LORD, which He had commanded Israel to
keep. 41 With them were Heman, Jeduthun, and the rest who were chosen
and designated by name to give thanks to the LORD — for His faithful love
endures forever. 42 Heman and Jeduthun had with them trumpets and
cymbals to play and musical instruments of God. Jeduthun's sons were at
the gate.

43 Then all the people left for their homes, and David returned home to
bless his household.

1 CHRONICLES

The LORD's Covenant with David

17 †When David had settled into his palace, he said to Nathan the
prophet, "Look! I am living in a cedar house while the ark of the
LORD's covenant is under tent curtains."

2 So Nathan told David, "Do all that is on your heart, for God is with
you."

3 But that night the word of God came to Nathan: 4 "Go to David My
servant and say, 'This is what the LORD says: You are not the one to build
Me a house to dwell in. 5 From the time I brought Israel out of Egypt until
today I have not lived in a house; instead, I have moved from tent to tent
and from tabernacle to tabernacle. 6† In all My travels throughout Israel,
have I ever spoken a word to even one of the judges of Israel, whom I
commanded to shepherd My people, asking: Why haven't you built Me a
house of cedar? '

7† "Now this is what you will say to My servant David: 'This is what the
LORD of •Hosts says: I took you from the pasture and from following the
sheep to be ruler over My people Israel. 8 I have been with you wherever
you have gone, and I have destroyed all your enemies before you. I will
make a name for you like that of the greatest in the land. 9 I will establish a
place for My people Israel and plant them, so that they may live there and
not be disturbed again. Evildoers will not continue to oppress them as they
formerly have 10 ever since the day I ordered judges to be over My people
Israel. I will also subdue all your enemies.

" 'Furthermore, I declare to you that the LORD Himself will build a house
for you. 11 When your time comes to be with your fathers, I will raise up
after you your descendant, who is one of your own sons, and I will establish
his kingdom. 12† He will build a house for Me, and I will establish his
throne forever. 13 I will be a father to him, and he will be a son to Me. I
will not take away My faithful love from him as I took it from the one who
was before you. 14† I will appoint him over My house and My kingdom
forever, and his throne will be established forever.' "

15 Nathan reported all these words and this entire vision to David.

David's Prayer of Thanksgiving

[16] Then King David went in, sat in the LORD's presence, and said,

Who am I, LORD God, and what is my house that You have
brought me this far? [17] This was a little thing to You, [A] God, for
You have spoken about Your servant's house in the distant future.
You regard me as a man of distinction, [B] LORD God. [18] What more
can David say to You for honoring Your servant? You know Your
servant. [19] LORD, You have done all this greatness, making known
all these great promises because of Your servant and according to
Your will. [20] LORD, there is no one like You, and there is no God
besides You, as all we have heard confirms. [21] And who is like
Your people Israel? God, You came to one nation on earth to
redeem a people for Yourself, to make a name for Yourself
through great and awesome works by driving out nations before
Your people You redeemed from Egypt. [22] You made Your people
Israel Your own people forever, and You, LORD, have become
their God.

[23] Now, LORD, let the word that You have spoken concerning Your
servant and his house be confirmed forever, and do as You have
promised. [24] Let Your name be confirmed and magnified forever
in the saying, "•Yahweh of Hosts, the God of Israel, is God over
Israel." May the house of Your servant David be established
before You. [25] Since You, my God, have revealed to [C] Your
servant that You will build him a house, Your servant has found
courage to pray in Your presence. [26] Yahweh, You indeed are God,
and You have promised this good thing to Your servant. [27] So
now, You have been pleased to bless Your servant's house that it
may continue before You forever. For You, LORD, have blessed it,
and it is blessed forever.

1 CHRONICLES

David's Military Campaigns

18 [†]After this, David defeated the Philistines, subdued them, and took
Gath and its villages from Philistine control. 2 He also defeated the
Moabites, and they became David's subjects and brought tribute.

3 David also defeated King Hadadezer of Zobah at Hamath when he went
to establish his control at the Euphrates River. 4 David captured 1,000
chariots, 7,000 horsemen, and 20,000 foot soldiers from him, hamstrung all
the horses, and kept 100 chariots. [A]

5 When the Arameans of Damascus came to assist King Hadadezer of
Zobah, David struck down 22,000 Aramean men. 6[†] Then he placed
garrisons in Aram of Damascus, and the Arameans became David's
subjects and brought tribute. The LORD made David victorious wherever he
went.

7 David took the gold shields carried by Hadadezer's officers and brought
them to Jerusalem. 8 From Tibhath and Cun, Hadadezer's cities, David also
took huge quantities of bronze, from which Solomon made the bronze
reservoir, the pillars, and the bronze articles.

9 When King Tou of Hamath heard that David had defeated the entire
army of King Hadadezer of Zobah, 10 he sent his son Hadoram to King
David to greet him and to congratulate him because David had fought
against Hadadezer and defeated him, for Tou and Hadadezer had fought
many wars. Hadoram brought all kinds of gold, silver, and bronze items.
11[†] King David also dedicated these to the LORD, along with the silver and
gold he had carried off from all the nations — from Edom, Moab, the
Ammonites, the Philistines, and the Amalekites.

12[†] Abishai son of Zeruiah struck down 18,000 Edomites in the Valley of
Salt. 13 He put garrisons in Edom, and all the Edomites were subject to
David. The LORD made David victorious wherever he went.

14 So David reigned over all Israel, administering justice and
righteousness for all his people.

15 Joab son of Zeruiah was over the army;
Jehoshaphat son of Ahilud was court historian;
16 Zadok son of Ahitub
and Ahimelech son of Abiathar were priests;
Shavsha was court secretary;
17† Benaiah son of Jehoiada was over
the Cherethites and the Pelethites;
and David's sons were the chief officials at the king's side.

1 CHRONICLES

War with the Ammonites

19 Some time later, King Nahash of the Ammonites died, and his son
became king in his place. 2 Then David said, “I’ll show kindness to
Hanun son of Nahash, because his father showed kindness to me.”

So David sent messengers to console him concerning his father.
However, when David’s emissaries arrived in the land of the Ammonites to
console him, 3 the Ammonite leaders said to Hanun, “Just because David
has sent men with condolences for you, do you really believe he’s showing
respect for your father? Instead, hasn’t David sent his emissaries in order to
scout out, overthrow, and spy on the land? ” 4 So Hanun took David’s
emissaries, shaved them, cut their clothes in half at the hips, and sent them
away.

5 It was reported to David about his men, so he sent messengers to meet
them, since the men were deeply humiliated. The king said, “Stay in Jericho
until your beards grow back; then return.”

6 When the Ammonites realized they had made themselves repulsive to
David, Hanun and the Ammonites sent 38 tons [A] of silver to hire chariots
and horsemen from Aram-naharaim, Aram-maacah, and Zobah. 7[†] They
hired 32,000 chariots and the king of Maacah with his army, who came and
camped near Medeba. The Ammonites also came together from their cities
for the battle.

8 David heard about this and sent Joab and the entire army of warriors.
9 The Ammonites marched out and lined up in battle formation at the
entrance of the city while the kings who had come were in the field by
themselves. 10 When Joab saw that there was a battle line in front of him
and another behind him, he chose some men out of all the elite troops [B] of
Israel and lined up in battle formation to engage the Arameans. 11 He placed
the rest of the forces under the command of his brother Abishai, and they
lined up in battle formation to engage the Ammonites.

12 “If the Arameans are too strong for me,” Joab said, “then you’ll be my
help. However, if the Ammonites are too strong for you, I’ll help you. 13 Be

strong! We must prove ourselves strong for our people and for the cities of our God. May the LORD's will be done." [C]

[14] Joab and the people with him approached the Arameans for battle, and
they fled before him. [15] When the Ammonites saw that the Arameans had
fled, they likewise fled before Joab's brother Abishai and entered the city.
Then Joab went to Jerusalem.

[16] When the Arameans realized that they had been defeated by Israel, they sent messengers to summon the Arameans who were across the Euphrates. They were led by Shophach, the commander of Hadadezer's army.

[17] When this was reported to David, he gathered all Israel and crossed the
Jordan. He came up to the Arameans and lined up in battle formation
against them. When David lined up to engage them in battle, they fought
against him. [18] But the Arameans fled before Israel, and David killed 7,000
of their charioteers and 40,000 foot soldiers. He also killed Shophach,
commander of the army. [19] When Hadadezer's subjects saw that they had
been defeated by Israel, they made peace with David and became his
subjects. After this, the Arameans were never willing to help the
Ammonites again.

1 CHRONICLES

Capture of the City of Rabbah

20 †In the spring [A] when kings march out to war, Joab led the army and
destroyed the Ammonites' land. He came to Rabbah and besieged it,
but David remained in Jerusalem. Joab attacked Rabbah and demolished it.
2 Then David took the crown from the head of their king, , and it was
placed on David's head. He found that the crown weighed 75 pounds [B] of
gold, and there was a precious stone in it. In addition, David took away a
large quantity of plunder from the city. 3 He brought out the people who
were in it and put them to work with saws, iron picks, and axes. David did
the same to all the Ammonite cities. Then he and all his troops returned to
Jerusalem.

The Philistine Giants

4 After this, a war broke out with the Philistines at Gezer. At that time
Sibbecai the Hushathite killed Sippai, a descendant of the giants, [C] and the
Philistines were subdued.

5 Once again there was a battle with the Philistines, and Elhanan son of
Jair killed Lahmi the brother of Goliath the Gittite. The shaft of his spear
was like a weaver's beam.

6 There was still another battle at Gath where there was a man of
extraordinary stature with six fingers on each hand and six toes on each
foot — 24 in all. He, too, was descended from the giant. [D] 7 When he
taunted Israel, Jonathan son of David's brother Shimei killed him.

8† These were the descendants of the giant [E] in Gath killed by David and
his soldiers.

1 CHRONICLES

David's Military Census

21 †Satan [A] stood up against Israel and incited David to count the people of Israel. 2 So David said to Joab and the commanders of the troops, “Go and count Israel from Beer-sheba to Dan and bring a report to me so I can know their number.”

3 Joab replied, “May the LORD multiply the number of His people a hundred times over! My lord the king, aren’t they all my lord’s servants? Why does my lord want to do this? Why should he bring •guilt on Israel? ”

4 Yet the king’s order prevailed over Joab. So Joab left and traveled throughout Israel and then returned to Jerusalem. 5† Joab gave the total troop registration to David. In all Israel there were 1,100,000 swordsmen and in Judah itself 470,000 swordsmen. 6 But he did not include Levi and Benjamin in the count because the king’s command was detestable to him. 7 This command was also evil in God’s sight, so He afflicted Israel.

8† David said to God, “I have sinned greatly because I have done this thing. Now, please take away Your servant’s guilt, for I’ve been very foolish.”

David’s Punishment

9 Then the LORD instructed Gad, David’s seer, 10 “Go and say to David, ‘This is what the LORD says: I am offering you three choices. Choose one of them for yourself, and I will do it to you.’ ”

11 So Gad went to David and said to him, “This is what the LORD says: ‘Take your choice: 12 three years of famine, or three months of devastation by your foes with the sword of your enemy overtaking you, or three days of the sword of the LORD — a plague on the land, the angel of the LORD bringing destruction to the whole territory of Israel.’ Now decide what answer I should take back to the One who sent me.”

13 David answered Gad, “I’m in anguish. Please, let me fall into the LORD’s hands because His mercies are very great, but don’t let me fall into human hands.”

[14] So the LORD sent a plague on Israel, and 70,000 Israelite men died.
[15] Then God sent an angel to Jerusalem to destroy it, but when the angel
was about to destroy the city, [B] the LORD looked, relented concerning the destruction, and said to the angel who was destroying the people, "Enough, withdraw your hand now! " The angel of the LORD was then standing at the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite.

[16] When David looked up and saw the angel of the LORD standing between earth and heaven, with his drawn sword in his hand stretched out over Jerusalem, David and the elders, clothed in •sackcloth, fell down with
their faces to the ground. [17] David said to God, "Wasn't I the one who gave
the order to count the people? I am the one who has sinned and acted very wickedly. But these sheep, what have they done? My LORD God, please let Your hand be against me and against my father's family, but don't let the plague be against Your people."

David's Altar

[18†] So the angel of the LORD ordered Gad to tell David to go and set up
an altar to the LORD on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite. [19] David
went up at Gad's command spoken in the name of the LORD.

[20] Ornan was threshing wheat when he turned and saw the angel. His four
sons, who were with him, hid themselves. [21] David came to Ornan, and
when Ornan looked and saw David, he left the threshing floor and bowed to David with his face to the ground.

[22] Then David said to Ornan, "Give me this threshing-floor plot so that I may build an altar to the LORD on it. Give it to me for the full price, so the plague on the people may be stopped."

[23] Ornan said to David, "Take it! My lord the king may do whatever he
wants. [C] See, I give the oxen for the •burnt offerings, the threshing sledges for the wood, and the wheat for the •grain offering — I give it all."

[24] King David answered Ornan, “No, I insist on paying the full price, for I will not take for the LORD what belongs to you or offer burnt offerings that cost me nothing.”

[25] So David gave Ornan 15 pounds of gold [D] for the plot. [26] He built an altar to the LORD there and offered burnt offerings and •fellowship offerings. He called on the LORD, and He answered him with fire from heaven on the altar of burnt offering.

[27] Then the LORD spoke to the angel, and he put his sword back into its sheath. [28] At that time, David offered sacrifices there when he saw that the LORD answered him at the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite. [29] The tabernacle of the LORD, which Moses made in the desert, and the altar of burnt offering were at the •high place in Gibeon, [30] but David could not go before it to inquire of God, because he was terrified of the sword of the LORD’s angel.

1 CHRONICLES

22 † Then David said, "This is the house of the LORD God, and this is the
altar of •burnt offering for Israel."

David's Preparations for the Temple

2† So David gave orders to gather the foreigners that were in the land of
Israel, and he appointed stonecutters to cut finished stones for building
God's house. 3† David supplied a great deal of iron to make the nails for
the doors of the gateways and for the fittings, together with an
immeasurable quantity of bronze, 4 and innumerable cedar logs because the
Sidonians and Tyrians had brought a large quantity of cedar logs to David.
5 David said, "My son Solomon is young and inexperienced, and the house
that is to be built for the LORD must be exceedingly great and famous and
glorious in all the lands. Therefore, I must make provision for it." So David
made lavish preparations for it before his death.

6 Then he summoned his son Solomon and instructed him to build a
house for the LORD God of Israel. 7 "My son," David said to Solomon, "It
was in my heart to build a house for the name of •Yahweh my God, 8 but
the word of the LORD came to me: 'You have shed much blood and waged
great wars. You are not to build a house for My name because you have
shed so much blood on the ground before Me. 9 But a son will be born to
you; he will be a man of rest. I will give him rest from all his surrounding
enemies, for his name will be Solomon, and I will give peace and quiet to
Israel during his reign. 10 He is the one who will build a house for My
name. He will be My son, and I will be his father. I will establish the throne
of his kingdom over Israel forever.'

11 "Now, my son, may the LORD be with you, and may you succeed in
building the house of the LORD your God, as He said about you. 12 Above
all, may the LORD give you insight and understanding when He puts you in
charge of Israel so that you may keep the law of the LORD your God.
13† Then you will succeed if you carefully follow the statutes and
ordinances the LORD commanded Moses for Israel. Be strong and
courageous. Don't be afraid or discouraged.

14 “Notice I have taken great pains to provide for the house of the
LORD — 3,775 tons of gold, 37,750 tons of silver, [A] and bronze and iron
that can’t be weighed because there is so much of it. I have also provided
timber and stone, but you will need to add more to them. 15 You also have
many workers: stonecutters, masons, carpenters, and people skilled in every
kind of work 16 in gold, silver, bronze, and iron — beyond number. Now
begin the work, and may the LORD be with you.”

17 Then David ordered all the leaders of Israel to help his son Solomon:
18 “The LORD your God is with you, isn’t He? And hasn’t He given you rest
on every side? For He has handed the land’s inhabitants over to me, and the
land has been subdued before the LORD and His people. 19 Now determine
in your mind and heart to seek the LORD your God. Get started building the
LORD God’s sanctuary so that you may bring the ark of the LORD’s covenant
and the holy articles of God to the temple that is to be built for the name of
Yahweh.”

1 CHRONICLES

The Divisions of the Levites

23 [†]When David was old and full of days, he installed his son Solomon
as king over Israel. [2] Then he gathered all the leaders of Israel, the
priests, and the Levites. [3†] The Levites 30 years old or more were counted;
the total number of men was 38,000 by headcount. [4†] "Of these," David
said, "24,000 are to be in charge of the work on the LORD's temple, 6,000
are to be officers and judges, [5] 4,000 are to be gatekeepers, and 4,000 are to
praise the LORD with the instruments that I have made for worship."

[6] Then David divided them into divisions according to Levi's sons:
Gershom, [A] Kohath, and Merari.

[7] The Gershonites: Ladan and Shimei.
[8] Ladan's sons: Jehiel was the first, then Zetham, and Joel — three.
[9] Shimei's sons: Shelomoth, Haziel, and Haran — three. Those were the
heads of the families of Ladan.
[10] Shimei's sons: Jahath, Zizah, Jeush, and Beriah. Those were Shimei's
sons — four. [11] Jahath was the first and Zizah was the second; however,
Jeush and Beriah did not have many sons, so they became an ancestral
house and received a single assignment.
[12] Kohath's sons: Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel — four.
[13] Amram's sons: Aaron and Moses.

Aaron, along with his descendants, was set apart forever to consecrate the
most holy things, to burn incense in the presence of •Yahweh, to minister to
Him, and to pronounce blessings in His name forever. [14] As for Moses the
man of God, his sons were named among the tribe of Levi.

[15] Moses' sons: Gershom and Eliezer.
[16] Gershom's sons: Shebuel was first.
[17] Eliezer's sons were Rehabiah, first; Eliezer did not have any other
sons, but Rehabiah's sons were very numerous.
[18] Izhar's sons: Shelomith was first.
[19] Hebron's sons: Jeriah was first, Amariah second, Jahaziel third, and

Jekameam fourth.
[20] Uzziel's sons: Micah was first, and Isshiah second.
[21] Merari's sons: Mahli and Mushi.
Mahli's sons: Eleazar and Kish.
[22] Eleazar died having no sons, only daughters. Their cousins, the sons of
Kish, married them.
[23] Mushi's sons: Mahli, Eder, and Jeremoth — three.

[24] These were the sons of Levi by their ancestral houses — the heads of
families, according to their registration by name in the headcount — 20
years old or more, who worked in the service of the LORD's temple. [25] For
David said, "The LORD God of Israel has given rest to His people, and He
has come to stay in Jerusalem forever. [26] Also, the Levites no longer need to
carry the tabernacle or any of the equipment for its service" — [27] for
according to the last words of David, the Levites 20 years old or more were
to be counted — [28] "but their duty will be to assist the sons of Aaron with
the service of the LORD's temple, being responsible for the courts and the
chambers, the purification of all the holy things, and the work of the service
of God's temple — [29] as well as the rows of the •bread of the Presence, the
fine flour for the •grain offering, the wafers of unleavened bread, the
baking, [B], the mixing, and all measurements of volume and length.
[30] They are also to stand every morning to give thanks and praise to the
LORD, and likewise in the evening. [31] Whenever •burnt offerings are offered
to the LORD on the Sabbaths, New Moons, and appointed festivals, they are
to do so regularly in the LORD's presence according to the number
prescribed for them. [32] They are to carry out their responsibilities for the
tent of meeting, for the holy place, and for their relatives, the sons of
Aaron, in the service of the LORD's temple."

1 CHRONICLES

The Divisions of the Priests

24 The divisions of the descendants of Aaron were as follows: Aaron's sons were Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar. 2 But Nadab and Abihu died before their father, and they had no sons, so Eleazar and Ithamar served as priests. 3 Together with Zadok from the sons of Eleazar and Ahimelech from the sons of Ithamar, David divided them according to the assigned duties of their service. 4 Since more leaders were found among Eleazar's descendants than Ithamar's, they were divided accordingly: 16 heads of ancestral houses were from Eleazar's descendants, and eight heads of ancestral houses were from Ithamar's. 5 They were assigned by lot, for there were officers of the sanctuary and officers of God among both Eleazar's and Ithamar's descendants.

6 The secretary, Shemaiah son of Nethanel, a Levite, recorded them in the presence of the king and the officers, Zadok the priest, Ahimelech son of Abiathar, and the heads of families of the priests and the Levites. One ancestral house was taken for Eleazar, and then one for Ithamar.

7 The first lot fell to Jehoiarib, the second to Jedaiah,
8 the third to Harim, the fourth to Seorim,
9 the fifth to Malchijah, the sixth to Mijamin,
10† the seventh to Hakkoz, the eighth to Abijah,
11 the ninth to Jeshua, the tenth to Shecaniah,
12 the eleventh to Eliashib, the twelfth to Jakim,
13 the thirteenth to Huppah, the fourteenth to Jeshebeab,
14 the fifteenth to Bilgah, the sixteenth to Immer,
15 the seventeenth to Hezir, the eighteenth to Happizzez,
16 the nineteenth to Pethahiah, the twentieth to Jehezkel,
17 the twenty-first to Jachin, the twenty-second to Gamul,
18 the twenty-third to Delaiah, and the twenty-fourth to Maaziah.

19 These had their assigned duties for service when they entered the LORD's temple, according to their regulations, which they received from their ancestor Aaron, as the LORD God of Israel had commanded him.

The Rest of the Levites

[20] As for the rest of Levi's sons:
from Amram's sons: Shubael;
from Shubael's sons: Jehdeiah.
[21] From Rehabiah:
from Rehabiah's sons: Isshiah was the first.
[22] From the Izharites: Shelomoth;
from Shelomoth's sons: Jahath.
[23] Hebron's sons:
Jeriah the first, Amariah the second,
Jahaziel the third, and Jekameam the fourth.
[24] From Uzziel's sons: Micah;
from Micah's sons: Shamir.
[25] Micah's brother: Isshiah;
from Isshiah's sons: Zechariah.
[26] Merari's sons: Mahli and Mushi,
and from his sons, Jaaziah his son. [A]
[27] Merari's sons, by his son Jaaziah: [B]
Shoham, Zaccur, and Ibri.
[28] From Mahli: Eleazar, who had no sons.
[29] From Kish, from Kish's sons: Jerahmeel.
[30] Mushi's sons: Mahli, Eder, and Jerimoth.

Those were the sons of the Levites according to their ancestral houses.
[31] They also cast lots the same way as their relatives the sons of Aaron did
in the presence of King David, Zadok, Ahimelech, and the heads of the
families of the priests and Levites — the family heads and their younger
brothers alike.

1 CHRONICLES

The Levitical Musicians

25 [†]David and the officers of the army also set apart some of the sons of
•Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun, who were to prophesy accompanied
by lyres, harps, and cymbals. This is the list of the men who performed
their service:

2 From Asaph's sons:
Zaccur, Joseph, Nethaniah, and Asarelah, sons of Asaph, under Asaph's
authority, who prophesied under the authority of the king.
3 From Jeduthun: Jeduthun's sons:
Gedaliah, Zeri, Jeshaiah, Shimei, Hashabiah, and
Mattithiah — six — under the authority of their father Jeduthun,
prophesying to the accompaniment of lyres, giving thanks and praise to
the LORD.
4 From Heman: Heman's sons:
Bukkiah, Mattaniah, Uzziel, Shebuel, Jerimoth, Hananiah, Hanani,
Eliathah, Giddalti, Romamti-ezer, Joshbekashah, Mallothi, Hothir, and
Mahazioth. 5 All these sons of Heman, the king's seer, were given by the
promises of God to exalt him, [A] for God had given Heman fourteen sons
and three daughters.

6 All these men were under their own fathers' authority for the music in
the LORD's temple, with cymbals, harps, and lyres for the service of God's
temple. Asaph, Jeduthun, and Heman were under the king's authority.
7[†] They numbered 288 together with their relatives who were all trained and
skillful in music for the LORD. 8 They cast lots for their duties, young and
old alike, teacher as well as pupil.

9 The first lot for Asaph fell to Joseph, his sons, and his brothers —	12
to Gedaliah the second: him, his brothers, and his sons —	12
10 the third to Zaccur, his sons, and his brothers —	12
11 the fourth to Izri, [B] his sons, and his brothers —	12

12 the fifth to Nethaniah, his sons, and his brothers — 12

13 the sixth to Bukkiah, his sons, and his brothers — 12

14 the seventh to Jesarelah, his sons, and his brothers — 12

15 the eighth to Jeshaiah, his sons, and his brothers — 12

16 the ninth to Mattaniah, his sons, and his brothers — 12

17 the tenth to Shimei, his sons, and his brothers — 12

18 the eleventh to Azarel, his sons, and his brothers — 12

19 the twelfth to Hashabiah, his sons, and his brothers — 12

20 the thirteenth to Shubael, his sons, and his brothers — 12

21 the fourteenth to Mattithiah, his sons, and his brothers — 12

22 the fifteenth to Jeremoth, his sons, and his brothers — 12

23 the sixteenth to Hananiah, his sons, and his brothers — 12

24 the seventeenth to Joshbekashah, his sons, and his brothers — 12

25 the eighteenth to Hanani, his sons, and his brothers — 12

26 the nineteenth to Mallothi, his sons, and his brothers — 12

27 the twentieth to Eliathah, his sons, and his brothers — 12

28 the twenty-first to Hothir, his sons, and his brothers — 12

29 the twenty-second to Giddalti, his sons, and his brothers — 12

30 the twenty-third to Mahazioth, his sons, and his brothers — 12

31 and the twenty-fourth to Romamti-ezer, his sons, and his brothers — 12.

1 CHRONICLES

The Levitical Gatekeepers

26 †The following were the divisions of the gatekeepers:

From the Korahites: Meshelemiah son of Kore, one of the sons of
•Asaph.
2 Meshelemiah had sons:
Zechariah the firstborn, Jediael the second,
Zebadiah the third, Jathniel the fourth,
3 Elam the fifth, Jehohanan the sixth,
and Eliehoenai the seventh.
4† Obed-edom also had sons:
Shemaiah the firstborn, Jehozabad the second,
Joah the third, Sachar the fourth,
Nethanel the fifth, 5 Ammiel the sixth,
Issachar the seventh, and Peullethai the eighth,
for God blessed him.
6 Also, to his son Shemaiah were born sons who ruled over their ancestral houses because they were strong, capable men.
7 Shemaiah's sons: Othni, Rephael, Obed, and Elzabad; his brothers Elihu
and Semachiah were also capable men. 8 All of these were among the
sons of Obed-edom with their sons and brothers; they were capable men
with strength for the work — 62 from Obed-edom.
9 Meshelemiah also had sons and brothers who were capable men — 18.
10 Hosah, from the Merarites, also had sons: Shimri the first (although he
was not the firstborn, his father had appointed him as the first), 11 Hilkiah
the second, Tebaliah the third, and Zechariah the fourth. The sons and
brothers of Hosah were 13 in all.

12 These divisions of the gatekeepers, under their leading men, had duties
for ministering in the Lord's temple, just as their brothers did. 13 They cast
lots for each gate according to their ancestral houses, young and old alike.

14 The lot for the east gate fell to Shelemiah. They also cast lots for his
son Zechariah, an insightful counselor, and his lot came out for the north
gate. 15 Obed-edom's was the south gate, and his sons' lot was for the

storehouses; [16†] it was the west gate and the gate of Shallecheth on the
ascending highway for Shuppim and Hosah.

There were guards stationed at every watch. [17] There were six Levites
each day on the east, four each day on the north, four each day on the
south, and two pair at the storehouses. [18] As for the court on the west, there
were four at the highway and two at the court. [19] Those were the divisions
of the gatekeepers from the sons of the Korahites and Merarites.

The Levitical Treasurers and Other Officials

[20] From the Levites, Ahijah was in charge of the treasuries of God's
temple and the treasuries of what had been dedicated. [21] From the sons of
Ladan, who were the sons of the Gershonites through Ladan and were the
heads of families belonging to Ladan the Gershonite: Jehieli. [22] The sons of
Jehieli, Zetham and his brother Joel, were in charge of the treasuries of the
LORD's temple.

[23] From the Amramites, the Izharites, the Hebronites, and the Uzzielites:
[24] Shebuel, a descendant of Moses' son Gershom, was the officer in charge
of the treasuries. [25] His relative through Eliezer: his son Rehabiah, his son
Jeshaiah, his son Joram, his son Zichri, and his son Shelomith. [A] [26] This
Shelomith [B] and his brothers were in charge of all the treasuries of what had
been dedicated by King David, by the heads of families who were the
commanders of thousands and of hundreds, and by the army commanders.
[27] They dedicated part of the plunder from their battles for the repair of the
LORD's temple. [28] All that Samuel the seer, Saul son of Kish, Abner son of
Ner, and Joab son of Zeruiah had dedicated, along with everything else that
had been dedicated, were in the care of Shelomith [C] and his brothers.

[29] From the Izrahites: Chenaniah and his sons had the outside duties as
officers and judges over Israel. [30] From the Hebronites: Hashabiah and his
relatives, 1,700 capable men, had assigned duties in Israel west of the
Jordan for all the work of the LORD and for the service of the king. [31] From
the Hebronites: Jerijah was the head of the Hebronites, according to the

genealogical records of his ancestors. A search was made in the fortieth year of David's reign and strong, capable men were found among them at Jazer in Gilead. [32] There were among Jerijah's relatives, 2,700 capable men who were heads of families. King David appointed them over the Reubenites, the Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh as overseers in every matter relating to God and the king.

David's Secular Officials

27 This is the list of the Israelites, the heads of families, the commanders of thousands and the commanders of hundreds, and their officers who served the king in every matter to do with the divisions that were on rotated military duty each month throughout [A] the year. There were 24,000 in each division:

2 Jashobeam son of Zabdiel was in charge of the first division, for the
first month; 24,000 were in his division. 3 He was a descendant of Perez
and chief of all the army commanders for the first month.
4 Dodai the Ahohite was in charge of the division for the second month,
and Mikloth was the leader; 24,000 were in his division.
5 The third army commander, as chief for the third month, was Benaiah
son of Jehoiada the priest; 24,000 were in his division. 6 This Benaiah
was a mighty man among the Thirty and over the Thirty, and his son
Ammizabad was in charge of his division.
7 The fourth commander, for the fourth month, was Joab's brother
Asahel, and his son Zebadiah was commander after him; 24,000 were in
his division.
8 The fifth, for the fifth month, was the commander Shamhuth the
Izrahite; 24,000 were in his division.
9 The sixth, for the sixth month, was Ira son of Ikkesh the Tekoite; 24,000
were in his division.
10 The seventh, for the seventh month, was Helez the Pelonite from the
sons of Ephraim; 24,000 were in his division.
11 The eighth, for the eighth month, was Sibbecai the Hushathite, a
Zerahite; 24,000 were in his division.
12 The ninth, for the ninth month, was Abiezer the Anathothite, a
Benjaminite; 24,000 were in his division.
13 The tenth, for the tenth month, was Maharai the Netophathite, a
Zerahite; 24,000 were in his division.
14 The eleventh, for the eleventh month, was Benaiah the Pirathonite
from the sons of Ephraim; 24,000 were in his division.
15 The twelfth, for the twelfth month, was Heldai the Netophathite, of
Othniel's family; [B] 24,000 were in his division.

[16] The following were in charge of the tribes of Israel:
For the Reubenites, Eliezer son of Zichri was the chief official;
for the Simeonites, Shephatiah son of Maacah;
[17] for the Levites, Hashabiah son of Kemuel; for Aaron, Zadok;
[18] for Judah, Elihu, one of David's brothers; for Issachar, Omri son of Michael;
[19] for Zebulun, Ishmaiah son of Obadiah;
for Naphtali, Jerimoth son of Azriel;
[20] for the Ephraimites, Hoshea son of Azaziah;
for half the tribe of Manasseh, Joel son of Pedaiah;
[21] for half the tribe of Manasseh in Gilead, Iddo son of Zechariah;
for Benjamin, Jaasiel son of Abner;
[22] for Dan, Azarel son of Jeroham.
Those were the leaders of the tribes of Israel.

[23] David didn't count the men aged 20 or under, for the LORD had said He
would make Israel as numerous as the stars of heaven. [24†] Joab son of
Zeruiah began to count them, but he didn't complete it. There was wrath
against Israel because of this census, and the number was not entered in the
Historical Record of King David.

[25†] Azmaveth son of Adiel was in charge of the king's storehouses.
Jonathan son of Uzziah was in charge of the storehouses in the country, in the cities, in the villages, and in the fortresses.
[26] Ezri son of Chelub was in charge of those who worked in the fields tilling the soil.
[27] Shimei the Ramathite was in charge of the vineyards.
Zabdi the Shiphmite was in charge of the produce of the vineyards for the wine cellars.
[28] Baal-hanan the Gederite was in charge of the olive and sycamore trees in the Judean foothills. [C]
Joash was in charge of the stores of olive oil.
[29] Shitrai the Sharonite was in charge of the herds that grazed in Sharon,

while
Shaphat son of Adlai was in charge of the herds in the valleys.
30 Obil the Ishmaelite was in charge of the camels.
Jehdeiah the Meronothite was in charge of the donkeys.
31 Jaziz the Hagrite was in charge of the flocks.
All these were officials in charge of King David's property.

32 David's uncle Jonathan was a counselor; he was a man of
understanding and a scribe. Jehiel son of Hachmoni attended [D] the king's
sons. 33[†] Ahithophel was the king's counselor. Hushai the Archite was the
king's friend. 34 After Ahithophel came Jehoiada son of Benaiah, then
Abiathar. Joab was the commander of the king's army.

1 CHRONICLES

David Commissions Solomon to Build the Temple

28 †David assembled all the leaders of Israel in Jerusalem: the leaders of
the tribes, the leaders of the divisions in the king's service, the
commanders of thousands and the commanders of hundreds, and the
officials in charge of all the property and cattle of the king and his sons,
along with the court officials, the fighting men, and all the brave warriors.
2† Then King David rose to his feet and said, "Listen to me, my brothers
and my people. It was in my heart to build a house as a resting place for the
ark of the LORD's covenant and as a footstool for our God. I had made
preparations to build, 3† but God said to me, 'You are not to build a house
for My name because you are a man of war and have shed blood.'

ARTICLE
Does The Existence of the Mind Provide Evidence for God? ⇒

4† "Yet the LORD God of Israel chose me out of all my father's household
to be king over Israel forever. For He chose Judah as leader, and from the
house of Judah, my father's household, and from my father's sons, He was
pleased to make me king over all Israel. 5 And out of all my sons — for the
LORD has given me many sons — He has chosen my son Solomon to sit on
the throne of the LORD's kingdom over Israel. 6 He said to me, 'Your son
Solomon is the one who is to build My house and My courts, for I have
chosen him to be My son, and I will be his father. 7† I will establish his
kingdom forever if he perseveres in keeping My commands and My
ordinances as he is today.'

8 "So now in the sight of all Israel, the assembly of the LORD, and in the
hearing of our God, observe and follow all the commands of the LORD your
God so that you may possess this good land and leave it as an inheritance to
your descendants forever.

9 "As for you, Solomon my son, know the God of your father, and serve
Him with a whole heart and a willing mind, for the LORD searches every
heart and understands the intention of every thought. If you seek Him, He

will be found by you, but if you forsake Him, He will reject you forever.
[10] Realize now that the LORD has chosen you to build a house for the
sanctuary. Be strong, and do it."

[11] Then David gave his son Solomon the plans for the portico of the
temple and its buildings, treasuries, upper rooms, inner rooms, and a room
for the •mercy seat. [12†] The plans contained everything he had in mind [A],
for the courts of the LORD's house, all the surrounding chambers, the
treasuries of God's house, and the treasuries for what is dedicated. [13] Also
included were plans for the divisions of the priests and the Levites; all the
work of service in the LORD's house; all the articles of service of the LORD's
house; [14] the weight of gold for all the articles for every kind of service; the
weight of all the silver articles for every kind of service; [15] the weight of the
gold lampstands and their gold lamps, including the weight of each
lampstand and its lamps; the weight of each silver lampstand and its lamps,
according to the service of each lampstand; [16] the weight of gold for each
table for the rows of the •bread of the Presence and the silver for the silver
tables; [17] the pure gold for the forks, sprinkling basins, and pitchers; the
weight of each gold dish; the weight of each silver bowl; [18] the weight of
refined gold for the altar of incense; and the plans for the chariot of [B], the
gold •cherubim that spread out their wings and cover the ark of the LORD's
covenant.

[19†] David concluded, "By the LORD's hand on me, He enabled me to
understand everything in writing, all the details of the plan." [C]

[20] Then David said to his son Solomon, "Be strong and courageous, and
do the work. Don't be afraid or discouraged, for the LORD God, my God, is
with you. He won't leave you or forsake you until all the work for the
service of the LORD's house is finished. [21] Here are the divisions of the
priests and the Levites for all the service of God's house. Every willing
man of any skill will be at your disposal for the work, and the leaders and
all the people are at your every command."

Contributions for Building the Temple

29 Then King David said to all the assembly, “My son Solomon — God
has chosen him alone — is young and inexperienced. The task is
great because the temple will not be for man but for the LORD God. [2] So to
the best of my ability I’ve made provision for the house of my God: gold
for the gold articles, silver for the silver, bronze for the bronze, iron for the
iron, and wood for the wood, as well as onyx, stones for mounting, [A]
antimony, stones of various colors, all kinds of precious stones, and a great
quantity of marble. [3] Moreover, because of my delight in the house of my
God, I now give my personal treasures of gold and silver for the house of
my God over and above all that I’ve provided for the holy house: [4] 100
tons [B], of gold (gold of Ophir) and 250 tons [C] of refined silver for
overlaying the walls of the buildings, [5] the gold for the gold work and the
silver for the silver, for all the work to be done by the craftsmen. Now who
will volunteer to consecrate himself to the LORD today? ”

[6†] Then the leaders of the households, the leaders of the tribes of Israel,
the commanders of thousands and of hundreds, and the officials in charge
of the king’s work gave willingly. [7†] For the service of God’s house they
gave 185 tons [D] of gold and 10,000 gold coins, [E], 375 tons [F] of silver, 675
tons [G] of bronze, and 4,000 tons [H] of iron. [8] Whoever had precious stones
gave them to the treasury of the LORD’s house under the care of Jehiel the
Gershonite. [9] Then the people rejoiced because of their leaders’ willingness
to give, for they had given to the LORD with a whole heart. King David also
rejoiced greatly.

David’s Prayer

[10†] Then David praised the LORD in the sight of all the assembly. David
said,

> May You be praised, LORD God of our father Israel, from eternity
> to eternity. [11] Yours, LORD, is the greatness and the power and the
> glory and the splendor and the majesty, for everything in the
> heavens and on earth belongs to You. Yours, LORD, is the
> kingdom, and You are exalted as head over all. [12] Riches and

honor come from You, and You are the ruler of everything. Power
and might are in Your hand, and it is in Your hand to make great
and to give strength to all. [13] Now therefore, our God, we give
You thanks and praise Your glorious name.

[14] But who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able
to give as generously as this? For everything comes from You,
and we have given You only what comes from Your own hand. [I]
[15] For we live before You as foreigners and temporary residents in
Your presence as were all our ancestors. Our days on earth are
like a shadow, without hope. [16] •Yahweh our God, all this wealth
that we've provided for building You a house for Your holy name
comes from Your hand; everything belongs to You. [17] I know, my
God, that You test the heart and that You are pleased with what is
right. I have willingly given all these things with an upright heart,
and now I have seen Your people who are present [J] here giving
joyfully and [K] willingly to You. [18] LORD God of Abraham, Isaac,
and Israel, our ancestors, keep this desire forever in the thoughts
of the hearts of Your people, and confirm their hearts toward You.
[19] Give my son Solomon a whole heart to keep and to carry out all
Your commands, Your decrees, and Your statutes, and to build
the temple for which I have made provision.

[20] Then David said to the whole assembly, "Praise the LORD your God."
So the whole assembly praised the LORD God of their ancestors. They
bowed down and paid homage to the LORD and the king.

[21] The following day they offered sacrifices to the LORD and •burnt
offerings to the LORD: 1,000 bulls, 1,000 rams, and 1,000 lambs, along with
their •drink offerings, and sacrifices in abundance for all Israel. [22†] They
ate and drank with great joy in the LORD's presence that day.

The Enthronement of Solomon

Then, for a second time, they made David's son Solomon king; they
anointed him as the LORD's ruler, and Zadok as the priest. [23] Solomon sat

on the LORD's throne as king in place of his father David. He prospered, and
all Israel obeyed him. [24] All the leaders and the mighty men, and all of
King David's sons as well, pledged their allegiance to King Solomon.
[25] The LORD highly exalted Solomon in the sight of all Israel and bestowed
on him such royal majesty as had not been bestowed on any king over Israel
before him.

A Summary of David's Life

[26] David son of Jesse was king over all Israel. [27] The length of his reign
over Israel was 40 years; he reigned in Hebron for seven years and in
Jerusalem for 33. [28] He died at a ripe old age, full of days, riches, and
honor, and his son Solomon became king in his place. [29†] As for the events
of King David's reign, from beginning to end, note that they are written in
the Events of Samuel the Seer, the Events of Nathan the Prophet, and the
Events of Gad the Seer, [30] along with all his reign, his might, and the
incidents that affected him and Israel and all the kingdoms of the
surrounding lands.

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Solomon's Request for Wisdom

1 †Solomon son of David strengthened his hold on his kingdom. The
LORD his God was with him and highly exalted him. 2† Then Solomon
spoke to all Israel, to the commanders of thousands and of hundreds, to the
judges, and to every leader in all Israel — the heads of the families.
3 Solomon and the whole assembly with him went to the •high place that
was in Gibeon because God's tent of meeting, which the LORD's servant
Moses had made in the wilderness, was there. 4† Now David had brought
the ark of God from Kiriath-jearim to the place he had set up for it, because
he had pitched a tent for it in Jerusalem, 5† but he put the bronze altar,
which Bezalel son of Uri, son of Hur, had made, in front of the LORD's
tabernacle. Solomon and the assembly inquired of Him A there. 6 Solomon
offered sacrifices there in the LORD's presence on the bronze altar at the tent
of meeting; he offered 1,000 •burnt offerings on it.

7† That night God appeared to Solomon and said to him: "Ask. What
should I give you? "

8 And Solomon said to God: "You have shown great and faithful love to
my father David, and You have made me king in his place. 9 LORD God, let
Your promise to my father David now come true. For You have made me
king over a people as numerous as the dust of the earth. 10 Now grant me
wisdom and knowledge so that I may lead these people, for who can judge
this great people of Yours? "

11† God said to Solomon, "Since this was in your heart, and you have not
requested riches, wealth, or glory, or for the life of those who hate you, and
you have not even requested long life, but you have requested for yourself
wisdom and knowledge that you may judge My people over whom I have
made you king, 12 wisdom and knowledge are given to you. I will also give
you riches, wealth, and glory, unlike what was given to the kings who were
before you, or will be given to those after you." 13† So Solomon went to
Jerusalem from the high place that was in Gibeon in front of the tent of
meeting, and he reigned over Israel.

Solomon's Horses and Wealth

[14]† Solomon accumulated 1,400 chariots and 12,000 horsemen, which
he stationed in the chariot cities and with the king in Jerusalem. [15]† The
king made silver and gold as common in Jerusalem as stones, and he made
cedar as abundant as sycamore in the Judean foothills. [16]† Solomon's horses
came from Egypt and Kue. The king's traders would get them from Kue at
the going price. [17]† A chariot could be imported from Egypt for 15 pounds [B]
of silver and a horse for about four pounds. [C] In the same way, they
exported them to all the kings of the Hittites and to the kings of Aram
through their agents.

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Chapter 2 *Solomon's Letter to Hiram*

[1]Solomon decided to build a temple for the name of •Yahweh and a royal
palace for himself, [2] so he assigned 70,000 men as porters, 80,000 men as
stonecutters in the mountains, and 3,600 as supervisors over them.

[3] Then Solomon sent word to King Hiram of Tyre:

Do for me what you did for my father David. You sent him cedars
to build him a house to live in. [4] Now I am building a temple for
the name of Yahweh my God in order to dedicate it to Him for
burning fragrant incense before Him, for displaying the rows of
the •bread of the Presence continuously, and for sacrificing •burnt
offerings for the morning and the evening, the Sabbaths and the
New Moons, and the appointed festivals of the LORD our God.
This is ordained for Israel forever. [5] The temple that I am building
will be great, for our God is greater than any of the gods. [6†] But
who is able to build a temple for Him, since even heaven and the
highest heaven cannot contain Him? Who am I then that I should
build a temple for Him except as a place to burn incense before
Him? [7†] Therefore, send me a craftsman who is skilled in
engraving to work with gold, silver, bronze, and iron, and with
purple, crimson, and blue yarn. He will work with the craftsmen
who are with me in Judah and Jerusalem, appointed by my father
David. [8] Also, send me cedar, cypress, and algum logs from
Lebanon, for I know that your servants know how to cut the trees
of Lebanon. Note that my servants will be with your servants [9] to
prepare logs for me in abundance because the temple I am
building will be great and wonderful. [10†] I will give your servants,
the woodcutters who cut the trees, 100,000 bushels [A] of wheat
flour, 100,000 bushels [B] of barley, 110,000 gallons [C] of wine, and
110,000 gallons [D] of oil.

Hiram's Reply

11 Then King Hiram of Tyre wrote a letter [E] and sent it to Solomon:

> Because the LORD loves His people, He set you over them as
> king.

12 Hiram also said:

> May the LORD God of Israel, who made the heavens and the
> earth, be praised! He gave King David a wise son with insight
> and understanding, who will build a temple for the LORD and a
> royal palace for himself. 13 I have now sent Huram-abi, [F] a
> skillful man who has understanding. 14 He is the son of a woman
> from the daughters of Dan. His father is a man of Tyre. He knows
> how to work with gold, silver, bronze, iron, stone, and wood, with
> purple, blue, crimson yarn, and fine linen. He knows how to do all
> kinds of engraving and to execute any design that may be given
> him. I have sent him to be with your craftsmen and the craftsmen
> of my lord, your father David. 15 Now, let my lord send the wheat,
> barley, oil, and wine to his servants as promised. 16 We will cut
> logs from Lebanon, as many as you need, and bring them to you
> as rafts by sea to Joppa. You can then take them up to Jerusalem.

Solomon's Work Force

17[†] Solomon took a census of all the foreign men in the land of Israel,
after the census that his father David had conducted, and the total was
153,600. 18 Solomon made 70,000 of them porters, 80,000 stonecutters in
the mountains, and 3,600 supervisors to make the people work.

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Building the Temple

3 Then Solomon began to build the LORD's temple in Jerusalem on Mount
Moriah where the LORD had appeared to his father David, at the site
David had prepared on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite. 2 He
began to build on the second day of the second month in the fourth year of
his reign. 3† These are Solomon's foundations for building God's temple:
the length [A] was 90 feet, [B] and the width 30 feet. [C] 4 The portico, which was
across the front extending across the width of the temple, was 30 feet [D]
wide; its height was 30 feet; he overlaid its inner surface with pure gold.
5 The larger room [F] he paneled with cypress wood, overlaid with fine gold,
and decorated with palm trees and chains. 6 He adorned the temple with
precious stones for beauty, and the gold was the gold of Parvaim. 7 He
overlaid the temple — the beams, the thresholds, its walls and
doors — with gold, and he carved •cherubim on the walls.

The Most Holy Place

8 Then he made the most holy place; its length corresponded to the width
of the temple, 30 feet, [G] and its width was 30 feet. [H], He overlaid it with
45,000 pounds [I] of fine gold. 9 The weight of the nails was 20 ounces [J] of
gold, and he overlaid the ceiling with gold.

10 He made two cherubim of sculptured work, for the most holy place,
and he overlaid them with gold. 11 The overall length of the wings of the
cherubim was 30 feet: [K] the wing of one was 7 1/2 feet, [L] touching the wall
of the room; its other wing was 7 1/2 feet, [M] touching the wing of the other
cherub. 12 The wing of the other cherub was 7 1/2 feet, [N] touching the wall
of the room; its other wing was 7 1/2 feet, [O] reaching the wing of the other
cherub. 13 The wingspan of these cherubim was 30 feet. [P] They stood on
their feet and faced the larger room. [Q]

14 He made the veil of blue, purple, and crimson yarn and fine linen, and
he wove cherubim into it.

The Bronze Pillars

[15] In front of the temple he made two pillars, each 27 feet high. The
capital on top of each was 7 1/2 feet [S] high. [16] He had made chainwork in
the inner sanctuary and also put it on top of the pillars. He made 100
pomegranates and fastened them into the chainwork. [17] Then he set up the
pillars in front of the sanctuary, one on the right and one on the left. He
named the one on the right Jachin and the one on the left Boaz.

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The Altar, Reservoir, and Basins

4 [†]He made a bronze altar 30 feet [A] long, 30 feet [B] wide, and 15 feet [C]
high.

[2†] Then he made the cast metal reservoir, 15 feet [D] from brim to brim,
perfectly round. It was 7 1/2 feet [E] high and 45 feet [F] in circumference.
[3] The likeness of oxen was below it, completely encircling it, 10 every half
yard, [G] completely surrounding the reservoir. The oxen were cast in two
rows when the reservoir was cast. [4] It stood on 12 oxen, three facing north,
three facing west, three facing south, and three facing east. The reservoir
was on top of them and all their hindquarters were toward the center. [5] The
reservoir was three inches [H] thick, and its rim was fashioned like the brim
of a cup or a lily blossom. It could hold 11,000 gallons.

[6] He made 10 basins for washing and he put five on the right and five on
the left. The parts of the •burnt offering were rinsed in them, but the
reservoir was used by the priests for washing.

The Lampstands, Tables, and Courts

[7†] He made the 10 gold lampstands according to their specifications and
put them in the sanctuary, five on the right and five on the left. [8] He made
10 tables and placed them in the sanctuary, five on the right and five on the
left. He also made 100 gold bowls.

[9†] He made the courtyard of the priests and the large court, and doors for
the court. He overlaid the doors with bronze. [10] He put the reservoir on the
right side, toward the southeast. [11] Then Huram made the pots, the
shovels, and the bowls.

Completion of the Bronze Furnishings

So Huram finished doing the work that he was doing for King Solomon
in God's temple: [12] two pillars; the bowls and the capitals on top of the two
pillars; the two gratings for covering both bowls of the capitals that were on
top of the pillars; [13] the 400 pomegranates for the two gratings (two rows of
pomegranates for each grating covering both capitals' bowls on top of the

pillars). 14 He also made the water carts [I] and the basins on the water carts.
15 The one reservoir and the 12 oxen underneath it, 16 the pots, the shovels,
the forks, and all their utensils — Huram-abi [J] made them for King
Solomon for the LORD's temple. All these were made of polished bronze.
17 The king had them cast in clay molds in the Jordan Valley between
Succoth and Zeredah. 18 Solomon made all these utensils in such great
abundance that the weight of the bronze was not determined.

Completion of the Gold Furnishings

19† Solomon also made all the equipment in God's temple: the gold altar;
the tables on which to put the •bread of the Presence; 20 the lampstands and
their lamps of pure gold to burn in front of the inner sanctuary according to
specifications; 21 the flowers, lamps, and gold tongs — of purest gold;
22 the wick trimmers, sprinkling basins, ladles, [K] and firepans — of purest
gold; and the entryway to the temple, its inner doors to the most holy place,
and the doors of the temple sanctuary — of gold.

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5 So all the work Solomon did for the LORD’s temple was completed. Then
Solomon brought the consecrated things of his father David — the
silver, the gold, and all the utensils — and put them in the treasuries of
God’s temple.

Preparations for the Temple Dedication

2† At that time Solomon assembled at Jerusalem the elders of
Israel — all the tribal heads, the ancestral chiefs of the Israelites — in order
to bring the ark of the covenant of the LORD up from the city of David, that
is, •Zion. 3 So all the men of Israel were assembled in the king’s presence at
the festival; this was in the seventh month.

4† All the elders of Israel came, and the Levites picked up the ark. 5 They
brought up the ark, the tent of meeting, and the holy utensils that were in
the tent. The priests and the Levites brought them up. 6 King Solomon and
the entire congregation of Israel who had gathered around him were in front
of the ark sacrificing sheep and cattle that could not be counted or
numbered because there were so many. 7 The priests brought the ark of the
LORD’s covenant to its place, into the inner sanctuary of the temple, to the
most holy place, beneath the wings of the •cherubim. 8 And the cherubim
spread their wings over the place of the ark so that the cherubim formed a
cover above the ark and its poles. 9† The poles were so long that their ends
were seen from the holy place in front of the inner sanctuary, but they were
not seen from outside; they are there to this very day. 10 Nothing was in the
ark except the two tablets that Moses had put in it at Horeb, where the
LORD had made a covenant with the Israelites when they came out of Egypt.

11 Now all the priests who were present had consecrated themselves
regardless of their divisions. When the priests came out of the holy place,
12 the Levitical singers dressed in fine linen and carrying cymbals, harps,
and lyres were standing east of the altar, and with them were 120 priests
blowing trumpets. The Levitical singers were descendants of •Asaph,
Heman, and Jeduthun and their sons and relatives. 13 The trumpeters and
singers joined together to praise and thank the LORD with one voice. They

raised their voices, accompanied by trumpets, cymbals, and musical instruments, in praise to the LORD:

For He is good;
His faithful love endures forever.

The temple, the LORD's temple, was filled with a cloud.
14† And because of
the cloud, the priests were not able to continue ministering, for the glory of
the LORD filled God's temple.

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Solomon's Dedication of the Temple

6 Then Solomon said:

The LORD said He would dwell in thick darkness,
2 but I have built an exalted temple for You,
a place for Your residence forever.

3 Then the king turned and blessed the entire congregation of Israel while
they were standing. 4 He said:

May the LORD God of Israel be praised!
He spoke directly to my father David,
and He has fulfilled the promise
by His power.
He said,
5 "Since the day I brought My people Israel
out of the land of Egypt,
I have not chosen a city to build a temple in
among any of the tribes of Israel,
so that My name would be there,
and I have not chosen a man
to be ruler over My people Israel.
6† But I have chosen Jerusalem
so that My name will be there,
and I have chosen David
to be over My people Israel."
7 Now it was in the heart of my father David
to build a temple for the name of •Yahweh, the God of Israel.
8 However, Yahweh said to my father David,
"Since it was your desire to build a temple for My name,
you have done well to have this desire.
9 Yet, you are not the one to build the temple,
but your son, your own offspring,
will build the temple for My name."
10 So Yahweh has fulfilled what He promised.
I have taken the place of my father David
and I sit on the throne of Israel, as Yahweh promised.

I have built the temple for the name of Yahweh, the God of Israel.
[11] I have put the ark there,
where Yahweh's covenant is
that He made with the Israelites.

Solomon's Prayer

[12] Then Solomon stood before the altar of the LORD in front of the entire
congregation of Israel and spread out his hands. [13] For Solomon had made a
bronze platform 7 1/2 feet [A] long, 7 1/2 feet [B] wide, and 4 1/2 feet [C] high and
put it in the court. He stood on it, knelt down in front of the entire
congregation of Israel, and spread out his hands toward heaven. [14] He said:

LORD God of Israel,
there is no God like You
in heaven or on earth,
keeping His gracious covenant
with Your servants who walk before You
with their whole heart.
[15] You have kept what You promised
to Your servant, my father David.
You spoke directly to him,
and You fulfilled Your promise by Your power,
as it is today.
[16] Therefore, LORD God of Israel,
keep what You promised
to Your servant, my father David:
"You will never fail to have a man
to sit before Me on the throne of Israel,
if only your sons guard their way to walk in My Law
as you have walked before Me."
[17] Now, LORD God of Israel, please confirm
what You promised to Your servant David.
[18] But will God indeed live on earth with man?
Even heaven, the highest heaven, cannot contain You,
much less this temple I have built.

[19] Listen [D] to Your servant's prayer and his petition,
LORD my God,
so that You may hear the cry and the prayer
that Your servant prays before You,
[20] so that Your eyes watch over this temple
day and night,
toward the place where You said
You would put Your name;
and so that You may hear the prayer
Your servant prays toward this place.
[21] Hear the petitions of Your servant
and Your people Israel,
which they pray toward this place.
May You hear in Your dwelling place in heaven.
May You hear and forgive.
[22] If a man sins against his neighbor
and is forced to take an oath [E]
and he comes to take an oath
before Your altar in this temple,
[23] may You hear in heaven and act.
May You judge Your servants,
condemning the wicked man by bringing
what he has done on his own head
and providing justice for the righteous
by rewarding him according to his righteousness.
[24†] If Your people Israel are defeated before an enemy,
because they have sinned against You,
and they return to You and praise Your name,
and they pray and plead for mercy
before You in this temple,
[25] may You hear in heaven
and forgive the sin of Your people Israel.
May You restore them to the land
You gave them and their ancestors.
[26] When the skies are shut and there is no rain
because they have sinned against You,

and they pray toward this place
and praise Your name,
and they turn from their sins
because You are afflicting them,
27 may You hear in heaven
and forgive the sin of Your servants
and Your people Israel,
so that You may teach them the good way
they should walk in.
May You send rain on Your land
that You gave Your people for an inheritance.
28† When there is famine on the earth,
when there is pestilence,
when there is blight, mildew, locust, or grasshopper,
when their enemies besiege them
in the region of their fortified cities, [F],
when there is any plague or illness,
29 whatever prayer or petition
anyone from your people Israel might have —
each man knowing his own affliction [G] and suffering,
and spreading out his hands toward this temple —
30† may You hear in heaven, Your dwelling place,
and may You forgive and repay the man
according to all his ways, since You know his heart,
for You alone know the human heart,
31 so that they may •fear You
and walk in Your ways
all the days they live on the land
You gave our ancestors.
32 Even for the foreigner who is not of Your people Israel
but has come from a distant land
because of Your great name
and Your mighty hand and outstretched arm:
when he comes and prays toward this temple,
33 may You hear in heaven in Your dwelling place,
and do all the foreigner asks You.

Then all the peoples of the earth will know Your name,
to fear You as Your people Israel do
and know that this temple I have built
is called by Your name.
34 When Your people go out to fight against their enemies,
wherever You send them,
and they pray to You
in the direction of this city You have chosen
and the temple that I have built for Your name,
35 may You hear their prayer and petition in heaven
and uphold their cause.
36 When they sin against You —
for there is no one who does not sin —
and You are angry with them
and hand them over to the enemy,
and their captors deport them
to a distant or nearby country,
37 and when they come to their senses
in the land where they were deported
and repent and petition You in their captors' land,
saying: "We have sinned and done wrong;
we have been wicked,"
38 and when they return to You with their whole mind and heart
in the land of their captivity where they were taken captive,
and when they pray in the direction of their land
that You gave their ancestors,
and the city You have chosen,
and toward the temple I have built for Your name,
39 may You hear their prayer and petitions in heaven,
Your dwelling place,
and uphold their cause. [H]
May You forgive Your people
who sinned against You.
40 Now, my God,
please let Your eyes be open
and Your ears attentive

to the prayer of this place.
41 Now therefore:

Arise, LORD God, come to Your resting place,
You and Your powerful ark.
May Your priests, LORD God, be clothed with salvation,
and may Your godly people rejoice in goodness.
42† LORD God, do not reject Your anointed one;
remember the loyalty of Your servant David.

2 CHRONICLES

The Dedication Ceremonies

7 When Solomon finished praying, fire descended from heaven and
consumed the •burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of the
LORD filled the temple. [2] The priests were not able to enter the LORD's
temple because the glory of the LORD filled the temple of the LORD. [3] All the
Israelites were watching when the fire descended and the glory of the LORD
came on the temple. They bowed down on the pavement with their faces to
the ground. They worshiped and praised the LORD:

For He is good,
for His faithful love endures forever.

[4] The king and all the people were offering sacrifices in the LORD's
presence. [5†] King Solomon offered a sacrifice of 22,000 cattle and 120,000
sheep. In this manner the king and all the people dedicated God's temple.
[6] The priests and the Levites were standing at their stations. The Levites had
the musical instruments of the LORD, which King David had made to praise
the LORD — "for His faithful love endures forever" — when he offered
praise with them. Across from the Levites, the priests were blowing
trumpets, and all the people were standing. [7] Since the bronze altar that
Solomon had made could not accommodate the burnt offering, the •grain
offering, and the fat of the •fellowship offerings, Solomon first consecrated
the middle of the courtyard that was in front of the LORD's temple and then
offered the burnt offerings and the fat of the fellowship offerings there.

[8†] So Solomon and all Israel with him — a very great assembly, from the
entrance to Hamath [A] to the Brook of Egypt — observed the festival at that
time for seven days. [9†] On the eighth day they held a sacred assembly, for
the dedication of the altar lasted seven days and the festival seven days.
[10] On the twenty-third day of the seventh month he sent the people away to
their tents, rejoicing and with happy hearts for the goodness the LORD had
done for David, for Solomon, and for His people Israel.

[11] So Solomon finished the LORD's temple and the royal palace.
Everything that had entered Solomon's heart to do for the LORD's temple
and for his own palace succeeded.

The LORD's Response

[12]† Then the LORD appeared to Solomon at night and said to him:

I have heard your prayer and have chosen this place for Myself as
a temple of sacrifice. [13] If I close the sky so there is no rain, or if
I command the grasshopper to consume the land, or if I send
pestilence on My people, [14] and My people who are called by My
name humble themselves, pray and seek My face, and turn from
their evil ways, then I will hear from heaven, forgive their sin, and
heal their land. [15] My eyes will now be open and My ears
attentive to prayer from this place. [16] And I have now chosen and
consecrated this temple so that My name may be there forever;
My eyes and My heart will be there at all times.

[17] As for you, if you walk before Me as your father David walked,
doing everything I have commanded you, and if you keep My
statutes and ordinances, [18]† I will establish your royal throne, as I
promised your father David: You will never fail to have a man
ruling in Israel.

[19]† However, if you turn away and abandon My statutes and My
commands that I have set before you and if you go and serve other
gods and worship them, [20] then I will uproot Israel from the soil
that I gave them, and this temple that I have sanctified for My
name I will banish from My presence; I will make it an object of
scorn and ridicule among all the peoples. [21] As for this temple,
which was exalted, everyone who passes by will be appalled and
will say: Why did the LORD do this to this land and this temple?
[22] Then they will say: Because they abandoned the LORD God of
their ancestors who brought them out of the land of Egypt. They
clung to other gods and worshiped and served them. Because of
this, He brought all this ruin on them.

2 CHRONICLES

Solomon’s Later Building Projects

8 At the end of 20 years during which Solomon had built the LORD's
temple and his own palace — [2†] Solomon had rebuilt the cities Hiram
gave him and settled Israelites there — [3†] Solomon went to Hamath-zobah
and seized it. [4] He built Tadmor in the wilderness along with all the storage
cities that he built in Hamath. [5] He built Upper Beth-horon and Lower Beth-
horon — fortified cities with walls, gates, and bars — [6] Baalath, all the
storage cities that belonged to Solomon, all the chariot cities, the cavalry
cities, and everything Solomon desired to build in Jerusalem, Lebanon, or
anywhere else in the land of his dominion.

[7] As for all the peoples who remained of the Hittites, Amorites,
Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites, who were not from Israel — [8] their
descendants who remained in the land after them, those the Israelites had
not completely destroyed — Solomon imposed forced labor on them; it is
this way today. [9] But Solomon did not consign the Israelites to be slaves for
his work; they were soldiers, commanders of his captains, and commanders
of his chariots and his cavalry. [10] These were King Solomon's deputies: 250
who ruled over the people.

[11†] Solomon brought the daughter of Pharaoh from the city of David to
the house he had built for her, for he said, "My wife must not live in the
house of David king of Israel because the places the ark of the LORD has
come into are holy."

Public Worship Established at the Temple

[12] At that time Solomon offered •burnt offerings to the LORD on the
LORD's altar he had made in front of the portico. [13] He followed the daily
requirement for offerings according to the commandment of Moses for
Sabbaths, New Moons, and the three annual appointed festivals: the
Festival of Unleavened Bread, the Festival of Weeks, and the Festival of
Booths. [14] According to the ordinances of his father David, he appointed
the divisions of the priests over their service, of the Levites over their
responsibilities to offer praise and to minister before the priests following
the daily requirement, and of the gatekeepers by their divisions with
respect to each gate, for this had been the command of David, the man of

God. [15] They did not turn aside from the king's command regarding the
priests and the Levites concerning any matter or concerning the treasuries.
[16] All of Solomon's work was carried out from the day the foundation was
laid for the LORD's temple until it was finished. So the LORD's temple was
completed.

Solomon's Fleet

[17] At that time Solomon went to Ezion-geber and to Eloth on the
seashore in the land of Edom. [18†] So Hiram [A] sent ships to him by his
servants along with crews of experienced seamen. They went with
Solomon's servants to Ophir, took from there 17 tons [B] of gold, and
delivered it to King Solomon.

2 CHRONICLES

The Queen of Sheba

9 [†]The queen of Sheba heard of Solomon's fame, so she came to test
Solomon with difficult questions at Jerusalem with a very large
entourage, with camels bearing spices, gold in abundance, and precious
stones. She came to Solomon and spoke with him about everything that was
on her mind. 2 So Solomon answered all her questions; nothing was too
difficult for Solomon to explain to her. 3 When the queen of Sheba observed
Solomon's wisdom, the palace he had built, 4 the food at his table, his
servants' residence, his attendants' service and their attire, his cupbearers
and their attire, and the •burnt offerings he offered at the LORD's temple, it
took her breath away.

5 She said to the king, "The report I heard in my own country about your
words and about your wisdom is true. 6 But I didn't believe their reports
until I came and saw with my own eyes. Indeed, I was not even told half of
your great wisdom! You far exceed the report I heard. 7 How happy are
your men. How happy are these servants of yours, who always stand in
your presence hearing your wisdom. 8 May the LORD your God be praised!
He delighted in you and put you on His throne as king for the LORD your
God. Because Your God loved Israel enough to establish them forever, He
has set you over them as king to carry out justice and righteousness."

9 Then she gave the king four and a half tons [A] of gold, a great quantity
of spices, and precious stones. There never were such spices as those the
queen of Sheba gave to King Solomon. 10 In addition, Hiram's servants and
Solomon's servants who brought gold from Ophir also brought algum
wood and precious stones. 11 The king made the algum wood into walkways
for the LORD's temple and for the king's palace and into lyres and harps for
the singers. Never before had anything like them been seen in the land of
Judah.

12 King Solomon gave the queen of Sheba her every desire, whatever she
asked — far more than she had brought the king. Then she, along with her
servants, returned to her own country.

Solomon's Wealth

[13] The weight of gold that came to Solomon annually was 25 tons, [B]
[14] besides what was brought by the merchants and traders. All the Arabian kings and governors of the land also brought gold and silver to Solomon.

[15†] King Solomon made 200 large shields of hammered gold; 15
pounds [C] of hammered gold went into each shield. [16] He made 300 small
shields of hammered gold; about eight pounds [D] of gold went into each shield. The king put them in the House of the Forest of Lebanon.

[17] The king also made a large ivory throne and overlaid it with pure gold.
[18] The throne had six steps; there was a footstool covered in gold for the throne, armrests on either side of the seat, and two lions standing beside the
armrests. [19] Twelve lions were standing there on the six steps, one at each end. Nothing like it had ever been made in any other kingdom.

[20] All of King Solomon's drinking cups were gold, and all the utensils of the House of the Forest of Lebanon were pure gold. There was no silver,
since it was considered as nothing in Solomon's time, [21†] for the king's
ships kept going to Tarshish with Hiram's servants, and once every three years the ships of Tarshish would arrive bearing gold, silver, ivory, apes, and peacocks. [E]

[22] King Solomon surpassed all the kings of the world in riches and
wisdom. [23] All the kings of the world wanted an audience with Solomon to
hear the wisdom God had put in his heart. [24] Each of them would bring his
own gift — items [F] of silver and gold, clothing, weapons, spices, and horses and mules — as an annual tribute.

[25] Solomon had 4,000 stalls for horses and chariots, and 12,000 horsemen. He stationed them in the chariot cities and with the king in
Jerusalem. [26] He ruled over all the kings from the Euphrates River to the
land of the Philistines and as far as the border of Egypt. [27] The king made
silver as common in Jerusalem as stones, and he made cedar as abundant as
sycamore in the Judean foothills. [28] They were bringing horses for Solomon
from Egypt and from all the countries.

Solomon's Death

[29]† The remaining events of Solomon's reign, from beginning to end, are
written in the Events of Nathan the Prophet, the Prophecy of Ahijah the
Shilonite, and the Visions of Iddo the Seer concerning Jeroboam son of
Nebat. [30] Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel for 40 years.
[31]† Solomon rested with his fathers and was buried in the city of his father
David. His son Rehoboam became king in his place.

2 CHRONICLES

The Kingdom Divided

10 Then Rehoboam went to Shechem, for all Israel had gone to
Shechem to make him king. [2] When Jeroboam son of Nebat heard
about it — for he was in Egypt where he had fled from King Solomon's
presence — Jeroboam returned from Egypt. [3†] So they summoned him.
Then Jeroboam and all Israel came and spoke to Rehoboam: [4] "Your father
made our yoke difficult. Therefore, lighten your father's harsh service and
the heavy yoke he put on us, and we will serve you."

[5] Rehoboam replied, "Return to me in three days." So the people left.

[6] Then King Rehoboam consulted with the elders who had served his
father Solomon when he was alive, asking, "How do you advise me to
respond to these people? "

[7] They replied, "If you will be kind to these people and please them by
speaking kind words to them, they will be your servants forever."

[8] But he rejected the advice of the elders who had advised him, and he
consulted with the young men who had grown up with him, the ones
serving him. [9] He asked them, "What message do you advise we send back
to these people who said to me, 'Lighten the yoke your father put on us'? "

[10] Then the young men who had grown up with him told him, "This is
what you should say to the people who said to you, 'Your father made our
yoke heavy, but you, make it lighter on us! ' This is what you should say to
them: 'My little finger is thicker than my father's loins. [A] [11] Now therefore,
my father burdened you with a heavy yoke, but I will add to your yoke; my
father disciplined you with whips, but I, with barbed whips.' " [B]

[12] So Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam on the third day,
just as the king had ordered, saying, "Return to me on the third day."
[13] Then the king answered them harshly. King Rehoboam rejected the
elders' advice [14] and spoke to them according to the young men's advice,
saying, "My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add to it; my father
disciplined you with whips, but I, with barbed whips." [C]

[15] The king did not listen to the people because the turn of events came
from God, in order that the LORD might carry out His word that He had
spoken through Ahijah the Shilonite to Jeroboam son of Nebat.

[16†] When all Israel saw that the king had not listened to them, the people
answered the king:

What portion do we have in David?
We have no inheritance in the son of Jesse.
Israel, each man to your tent;
David, look after your own house now!

So all Israel went to their tents. [17] But as for the Israelites living in the cities
of Judah, Rehoboam reigned over them.

[18†] Then King Rehoboam sent Hadoram, who was in charge of the
forced labor, but the Israelites stoned him to death. However, King
Rehoboam managed to get into his chariot to flee to Jerusalem. [19] Israel is
in rebellion against the house of David until today.

2 CHRONICLES

Rehoboam in Jerusalem

11 When Rehoboam arrived in Jerusalem, he mobilized the house of
Judah and Benjamin — 180,000 choice warriors — to fight against
Israel to restore the reign to Rehoboam. 2 But the word of the LORD came to
Shemaiah, the man of God: 3 “Say to Rehoboam son of Solomon, king of
Judah, to all Israel in Judah and Benjamin, and to the rest of the people:
4 ‘This is what the LORD says: You are not to march up and fight against
your brothers. Each of you must return home, for this incident has come
from Me.’ ”

So they listened to what the LORD said and turned back from going
against Jeroboam.

Judah’s King Rehoboam

5† Rehoboam stayed in Jerusalem, and he fortified cities [A], in Judah.
6 He built up Bethlehem, Etam, Tekoa, 7 Beth-zur, Soco, Adullam, 8† Gath,
Mareshah, Ziph, 9 Adoraim, Lachish, Azekah, 10 Zorah, Aijalon, and
Hebron, which are fortified cities in Judah and in Benjamin. 11 He
strengthened their fortifications and put leaders in them with supplies of
food, oil, and wine. 12 He also put large shields and spears in each and
every city to make them very strong. So Judah and Benjamin were his.

13† The priests and Levites from all their regions throughout Israel took
their stand with Rehoboam, 14† for the Levites left their pasturelands and
their possessions and went to Judah and Jerusalem, because Jeroboam and
his sons refused to let them serve as priests of •Yahweh. 15 Jeroboam
appointed his own priests for the •high places, the goat-demons, and the
golden calves he had made. 16 Those from every tribe of Israel who had
determined in their hearts to seek Yahweh their God followed the Levites to
Jerusalem to sacrifice to Yahweh, the God of their ancestors. 17† So they
strengthened the kingdom of Judah and supported Rehoboam son of
Solomon for three years, because they walked in the way of David and
Solomon for three years.

[18][†] Rehoboam married Mahalath, daughter of David's son Jerimoth and of Abihail daughter of Jesse's son Eliab. [19] She bore sons to him: Jeush, Shemariah, and Zaham. [20] After her, he married Maacah daughter [B], of Absalom. She bore Abijah, Attai, Ziza, and Shelomith to him. [21] Rehoboam loved Maacah daughter [C] of Absalom more than all his wives and concubines. He acquired 18 wives and 60 concubines and was the father of 28 sons and 60 daughters.

[22][†] Rehoboam appointed Abijah son of Maacah as chief, leader among his brothers, intending to make him king. [23] Rehoboam also showed discernment by dispersing some of his sons to all the regions of Judah and Benjamin and to all the fortified cities. He gave them plenty of provisions and sought many wives for them.

2 CHRONICLES

Shishak's Invasion

12 [†]When Rehoboam had established his sovereignty and royal power,
he abandoned the law of the LORD — he and all Israel with him.
2 Because they were unfaithful to the LORD, in the fifth year of King
Rehoboam, Shishak king of Egypt went to war against Jerusalem 3[†] with
1,200 chariots, 60,000 cavalrymen, and countless people who came with
him from Egypt — Libyans, Sukkiim, and Cushites. 4[†] He captured the
fortified cities of Judah and came as far as Jerusalem.

5 Then Shemaiah the prophet went to Rehoboam and the leaders of
Judah who were gathered at Jerusalem because of Shishak. He said to them:
"This is what the LORD says: 'You have abandoned Me; therefore, I have
abandoned you into the hand of Shishak.' "

6 So the leaders of Israel and the king humbled themselves and said,
"•Yahweh is righteous."

7 When the LORD saw that they had humbled themselves, the LORD's
message came to Shemaiah: "They have humbled themselves; I will not
destroy them but will grant them a little deliverance. My wrath will not be
poured out on Jerusalem through Shishak. 8 However, they will become his
servants so that they may recognize the difference between serving Me and
serving the kingdoms of other lands."

9 So King Shishak of Egypt went to war against Jerusalem. He seized
the treasuries of the LORD's temple and the treasuries of the royal palace. He
took everything. He took the gold shields that Solomon had made. 10 King
Rehoboam made bronze shields in their place and committed them into the
care of the captains of the royal escorts [A] who guarded the entrance to the
king's palace. 11 Whenever the king entered the LORD's temple, the royal
escorts would carry the shields and take them back to the royal escorts'
armory. 12[†] When Rehoboam humbled himself, the LORD's anger turned
away from him, and He did not destroy him completely. Besides that,
conditions were good in Judah.

Rehoboam's Last Days

13 King Rehoboam established his royal power in Jerusalem. Rehoboam
was 41 years old when he became king and reigned 17 years in Jerusalem,
the city the LORD had chosen from all the tribes of Israel to put His name.
Rehoboam's mother's name was Naamah the Ammonite. 14 Rehoboam did
what was evil, because he did not determine in his heart to seek the LORD.

15 The events of Rehoboam's reign, from beginning to end, are written in
the Events of Shemaiah the Prophet and of Iddo the Seer concerning
genealogies. There was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam throughout
their reigns. 16† Rehoboam rested with his fathers and was buried in the city
of David. His son Abijah became king in his place.

2 CHRONICLES

Judah’s King Abijah

13 In the eighteenth year of Israel's King Jeroboam, Abijah became
king over Judah [2] and reigned three years in Jerusalem. His mother's
name was Micaiah daughter of Uriel; she was from Gibeah.

There was war between Abijah and Jeroboam. [3†] Abijah set his army of
warriors in order with 400,000 choice men. Jeroboam arranged his mighty
army of 800,000 choice men in battle formation against him. [4†] Then
Abijah stood on Mount Zemaraim, which is in the hill country of Ephraim,
and said, "Jeroboam and all Israel, hear me. [5] Don't you know that the LORD
God of Israel gave the kingship over Israel to David and his descendants
forever by a covenant of salt? [6] But Jeroboam son of Nebat, a servant of
Solomon son of David, rose up and rebelled against his lord. [7] Then
worthless and •wicked men gathered around him to resist Rehoboam son of
Solomon when Rehoboam was young, inexperienced, and unable to assert
himself against them.

[8] "And now you are saying you can assert yourselves against the LORD's
kingdom, which is in the hand of one of David's sons. You are a vast
number and have with you the golden calves that Jeroboam made for you as
gods. [A], [9] Didn't you banish the priests of •Yahweh, the descendants of
Aaron and the Levites, and make your own priests like the peoples of other
lands do? Whoever comes to ordain himself with a young bull and seven
rams may become a priest of what are not gods.

[10] "But as for us, Yahweh is our God. We have not abandoned Him; the
priests ministering to the LORD are descendants of Aaron, and the Levites
serve at their tasks. [11] They offer a •burnt offering and fragrant incense to
the LORD every morning and every evening, and they set the rows of the
•bread of the Presence on the ceremonially •clean table. They light the
lamps of the gold lampstand every evening. We are carrying out the
requirements of Yahweh our God, while you have abandoned Him.
[12] Look, God and His priests are with us at our head. The trumpets are
ready to sound the charge against you. Israelites, don't fight against the
LORD God of your ancestors, for you will not succeed."

[13] Now Jeroboam had sent an ambush around to advance from behind
them. So they were in front of Judah, and the ambush was behind them.
[14] Judah turned and discovered that the battle was in front of them and
behind them, so they cried out to the LORD. Then the priests blew the
trumpets, [15] and the men of Judah raised the battle cry. When the men of
Judah raised the battle cry, God routed Jeroboam and all Israel before
Abijah and Judah. [16] So the Israelites fled before Judah, and God handed
them over to them. [17] Then Abijah and his people struck them with a
mighty blow, and 500,000 choice men of Israel were killed. [18†] The
Israelites were subdued at that time. The Judahites succeeded because they
depended on the LORD, the God of their ancestors.

[19] Abijah pursued Jeroboam and captured some cities from him: Bethel
and its villages, Jeshanah and its villages, and Ephron and its villages.
[20] Jeroboam no longer retained his power [B] during Abijah's reign;
ultimately, the LORD struck him and he died.

[21] However, Abijah grew strong, acquired 14 wives, and fathered 22 sons
and 16 daughters. [22] The rest of the events of Abijah's reign, along with his
ways and his sayings, are written in the Writing of the Prophet Iddo.

2 CHRONICLES

14 † Abijah rested with his fathers and was buried in the city of David.
His son Asa became king in his place. During his reign the land
experienced peace for 10 years.

Judah's King Asa

2† Asa did what was good and right in the sight of the LORD his God.
3 He removed the pagan altars and the •high places. He shattered their
sacred pillars and chopped down their •Asherah poles. 4† He told the
people of Judah to seek the LORD God of their ancestors and to carry out the
instruction and the commands. 5 He also removed the high places and the
incense altars from all the cities of Judah, and the kingdom experienced
peace under him.

6 Because the land experienced peace, Asa built fortified cities in Judah.
No one made war with him in those days because the LORD gave him rest.
7 So he said to the people of Judah, "Let's build these cities and surround
them with walls and towers, with doors and bars. The land is still ours
because we sought the LORD our God. We sought Him and He gave us rest
on every side." So they built and succeeded.

The Cushite Invasion

8 Asa had an army of 300,000 from Judah bearing large shields and
spears, and 280,000 from Benjamin bearing regular shields and drawing
the bow. All these were brave warriors. 9† Then Zerah the •Cushite came
against them with an army of one million men and 300 chariots. They came
as far as Mareshah. 10 So Asa marched out against him and lined up in
battle formation in the Valley of Zephathah at Mareshah.

11 Then Asa cried out to the LORD his God: "LORD, there is no one
besides You to help the mighty and those without strength. Help us, LORD
our God, for we depend on You, and in Your name we have come against
this large army. •Yahweh, You are our God. Do not let a mere mortal hinder
You."

[12] So the LORD routed the Cushites before Asa and before Judah, and the
Cushites fled. [13] Then Asa and the people who were with him pursued them
as far as Gerar. The Cushites fell until they had no survivors, for they were
crushed before Yahweh and His army. So the people of Judah carried off a
great supply of loot. [14] Then they attacked all the cities around Gerar
because the terror of the LORD was on them. They also plundered all the
cities, since there was a great deal of plunder in them. [15†] They also
attacked the tents of the herdsmen and captured many sheep and camels.
Then they returned to Jerusalem.

2 CHRONICLES

Revival Under Asa

15 The Spirit of God came on Azariah son of Oded. 2 So he went out to
meet Asa and said to him, “Asa and all Judah and Benjamin, hear me.
The Lord is with you when you are with Him. If you seek Him, He will be
found by you, but if you abandon Him, He will abandon you. 3† For many
years Israel has been without the true God, without a teaching priest, and
without instruction, 4 but when they turned to the Lord God of Israel in
their distress and sought Him, He was found by them. 5 In those times there
was no peace for those who went about their daily activities because the
residents of the lands had many conflicts. 6 Nation was crushed by nation
and city by city, for God troubled them with every possible distress. 7 But as
for you, be strong; don’t be discouraged, [A] for your work has a reward.”

8 When Asa heard these words and the prophecy of Azariah son of Oded
the prophet, he took courage and removed the detestable idols from the
whole land of Judah and Benjamin and from the cities he had captured in
the hill country of Ephraim. He renovated the altar of the Lord that was in
front of the portico of the Lord’s temple. 9† Then he gathered all Judah and
Benjamin, as well as those from the tribes of Ephraim, Manasseh, and
Simeon who had settled among them, for they had defected to him from
Israel in great numbers when they saw that •Yahweh his God was with him.

10 They were gathered in Jerusalem in the third month of the fifteenth
year of Asa’s reign. 11 At that time they sacrificed to the Lord 700 cattle
and 7,000 sheep from all the plunder they had brought. 12 Then they
entered into a covenant to seek the Lord God of their ancestors with all
their mind and all their heart. 13 Whoever would not seek the Lord God of
Israel would be put to death, young or old, [B] man or woman. 14 They took
an oath to the Lord in a loud voice, with shouting, with trumpets, and with
rams’ horns. 15 All Judah rejoiced over the oath, for they had sworn it with
all their mind. They had sought Him with all their heart, and He was found
by them. So the Lord gave them rest on every side.

16† King Asa also removed Maacah, his grandmother, [C], from being
queen mother because she had made an obscene image of •Asherah. Asa
chopped down her obscene image, then crushed it and burned it in the

Kidron Valley. [17][†] The •high places were not taken away from Israel;
nevertheless, Asa was wholehearted his entire life. [D] [18] He brought his
father's consecrated gifts and his own consecrated gifts into God's temple:
silver, gold, and utensils.

[19] There was no war until the thirty-fifth year of Asa's reign.

2 CHRONICLES

Asa's Treaty with Aram

16 †In the thirty-sixth year of Asa, Israel's King Baasha went to war against Judah. He built Ramah in order to deny access to anyone — going or coming — to Judah's King Asa. 2 So Asa brought out the silver and gold from the treasuries of the LORD's temple and the royal palace and sent it to Aram's King Ben-hadad, who lived in Damascus, saying, 3 "There's a treaty between me and you, between my father and your father. Look, I have sent you silver and gold. Go break your treaty with Israel's King Baasha so that he will withdraw from me."

4 Ben-hadad listened to King Asa and sent the commanders of his armies to the cities of Israel. They attacked Ijon, Dan, Abel-maim, [A] and all the storage cities of Naphtali. 5 When Baasha heard about it, he quit building Ramah and stopped his work. 6 Then King Asa brought all Judah, and they carried away the stones of Ramah and the timbers Baasha had built it with. Then he built Geba and Mizpah with them.

Hanani's Rebuke of Asa

7 At that time, Hanani the seer came to King Asa of Judah and said to him, "Because you depended on the king of Aram and have not depended on the LORD your God, the army of the king of Aram has escaped from your hand. 8 Were not the •Cushites and Libyans a vast army with many chariots and horsemen? When you depended on •Yahweh, He handed them over to you. 9† For the eyes of Yahweh roam throughout the earth to show Himself strong for those whose hearts are completely His. You have been foolish in this matter. Therefore, you will have wars from now on." 10 Asa was angry with the seer and put him in prison [B] because of his anger over this. And Asa mistreated some of the people at that time.

Asa's Death

11† Note that the events of Asa's reign, from beginning to end, are written in the Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel. 12 In the thirty-ninth year of his reign, Asa developed a disease in his feet, and his disease became increasingly severe. Yet even in his disease he didn't seek the LORD

but only the physicians. 13 Asa died in the forty-first year of his reign and
rested with his fathers. 14† He was buried in his own tomb that he had made
for himself in the city of David. They laid him out in a coffin that was full
of spices and various mixtures of prepared ointments; then they made a
great fire in his honor.

2 CHRONICLES

Judah's King Jehoshaphat

17 †His son Jehoshaphat became king in his place and strengthened
himself against Israel. 2 He stationed troops in every fortified city of
Judah and set garrisons in the land of Judah and in the cities of Ephraim
that his father Asa had captured.

3 Now the LORD was with Jehoshaphat because he walked in the former
ways of his father David. He did not seek the •Baals 4 but sought the God
of his father and walked by His commands, not according to the practices of
Israel. 5 So the LORD established the kingdom in his hand. Then all Judah
brought him tribute, and he had riches and honor in abundance. 6 His mind
rejoiced in the LORD's ways, and he again removed the •high places and
•Asherah poles from Judah.

Jehoshaphat's Educational Plan

7† In the third year of his reign, Jehoshaphat sent his officials — Ben-
hail, Obadiah, Zechariah, Nethanel, and Micaiah — to teach in the cities of
Judah. 8 The Levites with them were Shemaiah, Nethaniah, Zebadiah,
Asahel, Shemiramoth, Jehonathan, Adonijah, Tobijah, and Tob-adonijah;
the priests, Elishama and Jehoram, were with these Levites. 9† They taught
throughout Judah, having the book of the LORD's instruction with them.
They went throughout the towns of Judah and taught the people.

10 The terror of the LORD was on all the kingdoms of the lands that
surrounded Judah, so they didn't fight against Jehoshaphat. 11 Some of the
Philistines also brought gifts and silver as tribute to Jehoshaphat, and the
Arabs brought him flocks: 7,700 rams and 7,700 male goats.

Jehoshaphat's Military Might

12 Jehoshaphat grew stronger and stronger. He built fortresses and
storage cities in Judah 13 and carried out great works in the towns of Judah.
He had fighting men, brave warriors, in Jerusalem. 14 These are their
numbers according to their ancestral families. For Judah, the commanders
of thousands:

Adnah the commander and 300,000 brave warriors with him;
15 next to him, Jehohanan the commander and 280,000 with him;
16 next to him, Amasiah son of Zichri, the volunteer of the LORD, and 200,000 brave warriors with him;
17 from Benjamin, Eliada, a brave warrior, and 200,000 with him armed with bow and shield;
18 next to him, Jehozabad and 180,000 with him equipped for war.

19 These were the ones who served the king, besides those he stationed in the fortified cities throughout all Judah.

2 CHRONICLES

Jehoshaphat's Alliance with Ahab

18 Now Jehoshaphat had riches and honor in abundance, and he made
an alliance with Ahab through marriage. [A], [2†] Then after some years,
he went down to visit Ahab in Samaria. Ahab sacrificed many sheep and
cattle for him and for the people who were with him. Then he persuaded
him to march up to Ramoth-gilead, [3†] for Israel's King Ahab asked Judah's
King Jehoshaphat, "Will you go with me to Ramoth-gilead? "

He replied to him, "I am as you are, my people as your people; we will
be with you in the battle." [4] But Jehoshaphat said to the king of Israel,
"First, please ask what the LORD's will is."

[5] So the king of Israel gathered the prophets, 400 men, and asked them,
"Should we go to Ramoth-gilead for war or should I refrain? "

They replied, "March up, and God will hand it over to the king."

[6] But Jehoshaphat asked, "Isn't there a prophet of •Yahweh here
anymore? Let's ask him."

[7] The king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "There is still one man who can
ask Yahweh, but I hate him because he never prophesies good about me, but
only disaster. He is Micaiah son of Imlah."

"The king shouldn't say that," Jehoshaphat replied.

[8] So the king of Israel called an officer and said, "Hurry and get Micaiah
son of Imlah! "

[9] Now the king of Israel and King Jehoshaphat of Judah, clothed in royal
attire, were each sitting on his own throne. They were sitting on the
threshing floor at the entrance to Samaria's •gate, and all the prophets were
prophesying in front of them. [10] Then Zedekiah son of Chenaanah made
iron horns and said, "This is what the LORD says: 'You will gore the
Arameans with these until they are finished off.' " [11] And all the prophets
were prophesying the same, saying, "March up to Ramoth-gilead and
succeed, for the LORD will hand it over to the king."

Micaiah's Message of Defeat

[12] The messenger who went to call Micaiah instructed him, "Look, the words of the prophets are unanimously favorable for the king. So let your words be like theirs, and speak favorably."

[13] But Micaiah said, "As the LORD lives, I will say whatever my God says."

[14] So he went to the king, and the king asked him, "Micaiah, should we go to Ramoth-gilead for war, or should I refrain? "

Micaiah said, "March up and succeed, for they will be handed over to you."

[15] But the king said to him, "How many times must I make you swear not to tell me anything but the truth in the name of Yahweh? "

[16] So Micaiah said:

I saw all Israel scattered on the hills
like sheep without a shepherd.
And the LORD said,
"They have no master;
let each return home in peace."

[17] So the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "Didn't I tell you he never prophesies good about me, but only disaster? "

[18] Then Micaiah said, "Therefore, hear the word of the LORD. I saw the
LORD sitting on His throne, and the whole heavenly •host was standing at
His right hand and at His left hand. [19] And the LORD said, 'Who will entice
Ahab king of Israel to march up and fall at Ramoth-gilead? ' So one was
saying this and another was saying that.

[20]† "Then a spirit came forward, stood before the LORD, and said, 'I will entice him.'

“The LORD asked him, ‘How? ’

21† “So he said, ‘I will go and become a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.’

“Then He said, ‘You will entice him and also prevail. Go and do that.’

22† “Now, you see, the LORD has put a lying spirit into the mouth of these prophets of yours, and the LORD has pronounced disaster against you.”

23 Then Zedekiah son of Chenaanah came up, hit Micaiah in the face, and demanded, “Which way did the spirit from the LORD leave me to speak to you? ”

24 Micaiah replied, “You will soon see when you go to hide yourself in an inner chamber on that day.”

25 Then the king of Israel ordered, “Take Micaiah and return him to
Amon, the governor of the city, and to Joash, the king’s son, 26 and say,
‘This is what the king says: Put this guy in prison and feed him only bread and water [B] until I come back safely.’ ”

27† But Micaiah said, “If you ever return safely, the LORD has not spoken through me.” Then he said, “Listen, all you people! ”

Ahab’s Death

28 Then the king of Israel and Judah’s King Jehoshaphat went up to
Ramoth-gilead. 29 But the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, “I will
disguise myself and go into battle, but you wear your royal attire.” So the king of Israel disguised himself, and they went into battle.

30 Now the king of Aram had ordered his chariot commanders, “Do not fight with anyone, small or great, except the king of Israel.”

31 When the chariot commanders saw Jehoshaphat, they shouted, “He must be the king of Israel! ” So they turned to attack him, but Jehoshaphat

cried out and the LORD helped him. God drew them away from him.
[32] When the chariot commanders saw that he was not the king of Israel,
they turned back from pursuing him.

[33]† But a man drew his bow without taking special aim and struck the
king of Israel through the joints of his armor. So he said to the charioteer,
“Turn around and take me out of the battle, for I am badly wounded! ”
[34] The battle raged throughout that day, and the king of Israel propped
himself up in his chariot facing the Arameans until evening. Then he died at
sunset.

2 CHRONICLES

Jehu's Rebuke of Jehoshaphat

19 Jehoshaphat king of Judah returned to his home in Jerusalem in peace.
2 Then Jehu son of Hanani the seer went out to confront him [A] and
said to King Jehoshaphat, “Do you help the wicked and love those who hate
the LORD? Because of this, the LORD’s wrath is on you. 3 However, some
good is found in you, for you have removed the •Asherah poles from the
land and have decided to seek God.”

Jehoshaphat’s Reforms

4 Jehoshaphat lived in Jerusalem, and once again he went out among the
people from Beer-sheba to the hill country of Ephraim and brought them
back to •Yahweh, the God of their ancestors. 5 He appointed judges in all
the fortified cities of the land of Judah, city by city. 6 Then he said to the
judges, “Consider what you are doing, for you do not judge for man, but for
the LORD, who is with you in the matter of judgment. 7 And now, may the
terror of the LORD be on you. Watch what you do, for there is no injustice or
partiality or taking bribes with the LORD our God.”

8† Jehoshaphat also appointed in Jerusalem some of the Levites and
priests and some of the heads of the Israelite families for deciding the
LORD’s will and for settling disputes of the residents of Jerusalem. 9 He
commanded them, saying, “In the •fear of the LORD, with integrity, and with
a whole heart, you are to do the following: 10 for every dispute that comes
to you from your brothers who dwell in their cities — whether it regards
differences of bloodguilt, law, commandment, statutes, or
judgments — you are to warn them, so they will not incur •guilt before the
LORD and wrath will not come on you and your brothers. Do this, and you
will not incur guilt.

11 “Note that Amariah, the chief priest, is over you in all matters related
to the LORD, and Zebadiah son of Ishmael, the ruler of the house of Judah,
in all matters related to the king, and the Levites are officers in your
presence. Be strong; may the LORD be with those who do what is good.”

2 CHRONICLES

War against Eastern Enemies

20 [†]After this, the Moabites and Ammonites, together with some of the
Meunites, came to fight against Jehoshaphat. 2 People came and told
Jehoshaphat, "A vast number from beyond the Dead Sea and from Edom
has come to fight against you; they are already in Hazazon-tamar" (that is,
En-gedi). 3 Jehoshaphat was afraid, and he resolved to seek the LORD. Then
he proclaimed a fast for all Judah, 4 who gathered to seek the LORD. They
even came from all the cities of Judah to seek Him.

Jehoshaphat's Prayer

5 Then Jehoshaphat stood in the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem in the
LORD's temple before the new courtyard. 6 He said:

> •Yahweh, the God of our ancestors, are You not the God who is in heaven, and do You not rule over all the kingdoms of the nations? Power and might are in Your hand, and no one can stand
> against You. 7 Are You not our God who drove out the inhabitants of this land before Your people Israel and who gave it forever to
> the descendants of Abraham Your friend? 8 They have lived in
> the land and have built You a sanctuary in it for Your name and
> have said, 9 "If disaster comes on us — sword or judgment, pestilence or famine — we will stand before this temple and before You, for Your name is in this temple. We will cry out to You because of our distress, and You will hear and deliver."
>
> 10 Now here are the Ammonites, Moabites, and the inhabitants of Mount Seir. You did not let Israel invade them when Israel came out of the land of Egypt, but Israel turned away from them and did
> not destroy them. 11 Look how they repay us by coming to drive us out of Your possession that You gave us as an inheritance.
> 12 Our God, will You not judge them? For we are powerless before this vast number that comes to fight against us. We do not know what to do, but we look to You. [A]

God's Answer

[13] All Judah was standing before the LORD with their infants, their wives,
and their children. [14] In the middle of the congregation, the Spirit of the
LORD came on Jahaziel (son of Zechariah, son of Benaiah, son of Jeiel, son
of Mattaniah, a Levite from •Asaph's descendants), [15] and he said, "Listen
carefully, all Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem, and King
Jehoshaphat. This is what the LORD says: 'Do not be afraid or discouraged
because of this vast number, for the battle is not yours, but God's.
[16] Tomorrow, go down against them. You will see them coming up the
Ascent of Ziz, and you will find them at the end of the valley facing the
Wilderness of Jeruel. [17] You do not have to fight this battle. Position
yourselves, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD. He is with you,
Judah and Jerusalem. Do not be afraid or discouraged. Tomorrow, go out to
face them, for Yahweh is with you.' "

ARTICLE

Don't Christian Missionaries Impose Their Culture on Others? ⇒

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[18] Then Jehoshaphat bowed with his face to the ground, and all Judah and
the inhabitants of Jerusalem fell down before the LORD to worship Him.
[19] Then the Levites from the sons of the Kohathites and the Korahites stood
up to praise the LORD God of Israel shouting with a loud voice.

Victory and Plunder

[20] In the morning they got up early and went out to the wilderness of
Tekoa. As they were about to go out, Jehoshaphat stood and said, "Hear me,
Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem. Believe in Yahweh your God, and
you will be established; believe in His prophets, and you will succeed."
[21] Then he consulted with the people and appointed some to sing for the
LORD and some to praise the splendor of His holiness. When they went out
in front of the armed forces, they kept singing: [B]

Give thanks to the LORD,

for His faithful love endures forever.

[22] The moment they began their shouts and praises, the LORD set an
ambush against the Ammonites, Moabites, and the inhabitants of Mount
Seir who came to fight against Judah, and they were defeated. [23] The
Ammonites and Moabites turned against the inhabitants of Mount Seir and
•completely annihilated them. When they had finished with the inhabitants
of Seir, they helped destroy each other.

[24] When Judah came to a place overlooking the wilderness, they looked
for the large army, but there were only corpses lying on the ground; nobody
had escaped. [25] Then Jehoshaphat and his people went to gather the plunder.
They found among them an abundance of goods on the bodies and
valuable items. So they stripped them until nobody could carry any more.
They were gathering the plunder for three days because there was so much.
[26] They assembled in the Valley of Beracah on the fourth day, for there
they praised the LORD. Therefore, that place is still called the Valley of
Beracah today.

[27] Then all the men of Judah and Jerusalem turned back with Jehoshaphat
their leader, returning joyfully to Jerusalem, for the LORD enabled them to
rejoice over their enemies. [28] So they came into Jerusalem to the LORD's
temple with harps, lyres, and trumpets.

[29] The terror of God was on all the kingdoms of the lands when they
heard that Yahweh had fought against the enemies of Israel. [30] Then
Jehoshaphat's kingdom was quiet, for his God gave him rest on every side.

Summary of Jehoshaphat's Reign

[31†] Jehoshaphat became king over Judah. He was 35 years old when he
became king and reigned 25 years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was
Azubah daughter of Shilhi. [32] He walked in the way of Asa his father; he
did not turn away from it but did what was right in the LORD's sight.
[33] However, the •high places were not taken away; the people had not yet
set their hearts on the God of their ancestors.

[34]† The rest of the events of Jehoshaphat's reign from beginning to end are written in the Events of Jehu son of Hanani, which is recorded in the Book of Israel's Kings.

Jehoshaphat's Fleet of Ships

[35] After this, Judah's King Jehoshaphat made an alliance with Israel's
King Ahaziah, who was •guilty of wrongdoing. [36] Jehoshaphat formed an
alliance with him to make ships to go to Tarshish, and they made the ships
in Ezion-geber. [37] Then Eliezer son of Dodavahu of Mareshah prophesied
against Jehoshaphat, saying, "Because you formed an alliance with
Ahaziah, the LORD has broken up what you have made." So the ships were
wrecked and were not able to go to Tarshish.

2 CHRONICLES

Jehoram Becomes King Over Judah

21 Jehoshaphat rested with his fathers and was buried with his fathers in
the city of David. His son Jehoram became king in his place. 2† He
had brothers, sons of Jehoshaphat: Azariah, Jehiel, Zechariah, Azariah,
Michael, and Shephatiah; all these were the sons of Jehoshaphat, king of
Judah. 3 Their father had given them many gifts of silver, gold, and
valuable things, along with fortified cities in Judah, but he gave the
kingdom to Jehoram because he was the firstborn. 4 When Jehoram had
established himself over his father's kingdom, he strengthened his position
by killing with the sword all his brothers as well as some of the princes of
Israel.

Judah's King Jehoram

5† Jehoram was 32 years old when he became king and reigned eight
years in Jerusalem. 6† He walked in the way of the kings of Israel, as the
house of Ahab had done, for Ahab's daughter was his wife. He did what
was evil in the LORD's sight, 7† but because of the covenant the LORD had
made with David, He was unwilling to destroy the house of David since the
LORD had promised to give a lamp to David and to his sons forever.

8 During Jehoram's reign, Edom rebelled against Judah's domination and
appointed their own king. 9 So Jehoram crossed into Edom with his
commanders and all his chariots. Then at night he set out to attack the
Edomites who had surrounded him and the chariot commanders. 10† And
now Edom is still in rebellion against Judah's domination today. Libnah
also rebelled at that time against his domination because he had abandoned
•Yahweh, the God of his ancestors. 11 Jehoram also built •high places in the
hills of Judah, and he caused the inhabitants of Jerusalem to prostitute
themselves, and he led Judah astray.

Elijah's Letter to Jehoram

12 Then a letter came to Jehoram from Elijah the prophet, saying:

> This is what Yahweh, the God of your ancestor David says:
> "Because you have not walked in the ways of your father

Jehoshaphat or in the ways of Asa king of Judah [13] but have
walked in the way of the kings of Israel, have caused Judah and
the inhabitants of Jerusalem to prostitute themselves like the
house of Ahab prostituted itself, and also have killed your
brothers, your father's family, who were better than you,
[14] Yahweh is now about to strike your people, your sons, your
wives, and all your possessions with a horrible affliction. [15] You
yourself will be struck with many illnesses, including a disease of
the intestines, until your intestines come out day after day because
of the disease."

Jehoram's Last Days

[16] The LORD put it into the mind of the Philistines and the Arabs who
live near the •Cushites to attack Jehoram. [17] So they went to war against
Judah and invaded it. They carried off all the possessions found in the
king's palace and also his sons and wives; not a son was left to him except
Jehoahaz, his youngest son.

[18] After all these things, the LORD afflicted him in his intestines with an
incurable disease. [19†] This continued day after day until two full years
passed. Then his intestines came out because of his disease, and he died
from severe [A] illnesses. But his people did not hold a fire in his honor like
the fire in honor of his fathers.

[20] Jehoram was 32 years old when he became king; he reigned eight
years in Jerusalem. He died to no one's regret [B] and was buried in the city
of David but not in the tombs of the kings.

2 CHRONICLES

Judah’s King Ahaziah

22 Then the inhabitants of Jerusalem made Ahaziah, his youngest son,
king in his place, because the troops that had come with the Arabs to
the camp had killed all the older sons. [A] So Ahaziah son of Jehoram became
king of Judah. 2† Ahaziah was 22 years old when he became king and
reigned one year in Jerusalem. His mother’s name was Athaliah,
granddaughter [B] of Omri.

3 He walked in the ways of the house of Ahab, for his mother gave him
evil advice. 4 So he did what was evil in the LORD’s sight like the house of
Ahab, for they were his advisers after the death of his father, to his
destruction. 5 He also followed their advice and went with Joram son of
Israel’s King Ahab to fight against Hazael, king of Aram, in Ramoth-gilead.
The Arameans [C] wounded Joram, 6 so he returned to Jezreel to recover from
the wounds they inflicted on him in Ramoth-gilead [D] when he fought
against Aram’s King Hazael. Then Judah’s King Ahaziah son of Jehoram
went down to Jezreel to visit Joram son of Ahab since Joram was ill.

7 Ahaziah’s downfall came from God when he went to Joram. When
Ahaziah arrived, he went out with Joram to meet Jehu son of Nimshi,
whom the LORD had anointed to destroy the house of Ahab. 8 So when Jehu
executed judgment on the house of Ahab, he found the rulers of Judah and
the sons of Ahaziah’s brothers who were serving Ahaziah, and he killed
them. 9 Then Jehu looked for Ahaziah, and Jehu’s soldiers captured him
(he was hiding in Samaria). So they brought Ahaziah to Jehu, and they
killed him. The soldiers buried him, for they said, “He is the grandson of
Jehoshaphat who sought the LORD with all his heart.” So no one from the
house of Ahaziah had the strength to rule the kingdom.

Athaliah Usurps the Throne

10† When Athaliah, Ahaziah’s mother, saw that her son was dead, she
proceeded to annihilate all the royal heirs [E] of the house of Judah.
11 Jehoshabeath, the king’s daughter, rescued Joash son of Ahaziah from
the king’s sons who were being killed and put him and the one who nursed
him in a bedroom. Now Jehoshabeath was the daughter of King Jehoram

and the wife of Jehoiada the priest. Since she was Ahaziah’s sister, she hid
Joash from Athaliah so that she did not kill him. [12] While Athaliah ruled
over the land, he was hiding with them in God’s temple six years.

2 CHRONICLES

Athaliah Overthrown

23 [†]Then, in the seventh year, Jehoiada summoned his courage and took the commanders of hundreds into a covenant with him: Azariah son of Jeroham, Ishmael son of Jehohanan, Azariah son of Obed, Maaseiah son of Adaiah, and Elishaphat son of Zichri. 2 They made a circuit throughout Judah. They gathered the Levites from all the cities of Judah and the heads of the families of Israel, and they came to Jerusalem.

3 Then the whole assembly made a covenant with the king in God's temple. Jehoiada said to them, "Here is the king's son! He must reign, just as the LORD promised concerning David's sons. 4 This is what you are to do: a third of you, priests and Levites who are coming on duty on the Sabbath, are to be gatekeepers. 5 A third are to be at the king's palace, and a third are to be at the Foundation Gate, and all the troops will be in the courtyards of the LORD's temple. 6 No one is to enter the LORD's temple but the priests and those Levites who serve; they may enter because they are holy, but all the people are to obey the requirement of the LORD. 7 You must completely surround the king with weapons in hand. Anyone who enters the temple is to be put to death. You must be with the king in all his daily tasks." [A]

8 So the commanders of hundreds did everything Jehoiada the priest commanded. They each brought their men — those coming on duty on the Sabbath and those going off duty on the Sabbath — for Jehoiada the priest did not release the divisions. 9 Jehoiada the priest gave to the commanders of hundreds King David's spears, shields, and quivers [B] that were in God's temple. 10 Then he stationed all the troops with their weapons in hand surrounding the king — from the right side of the temple to the left side, by the altar and by the temple.

11 They brought out the king's son, put the crown on him, gave him the •testimony, and made him king. Jehoiada and his sons anointed him and cried, "Long live the king! "

12 When Athaliah heard the noise from the troops, the guards, and those praising the king, she went to the troops in the LORD's temple. 13 As she

looked, there was the king standing by his pillar at the entrance. The
commanders and the trumpeters were by the king, and all the people of the
land were rejoicing and blowing trumpets while the singers with musical
instruments were leading the praise. Athaliah tore her clothes and screamed,
“Treason, treason! ”

14 Then Jehoiada the priest sent out the commanders of hundreds, those
in charge of the army, saying, “Take her out between the ranks, and put
anyone who follows her to death by the sword,” for the priest had said,
“Don’t put her to death in the LORD’s temple.” 15 So they arrested her, and
she went by the entrance of the Horses’ Gate to the king’s palace, where
they put her to death.

Jehoiada’s Reforms

16 Then Jehoiada made a covenant between himself, the king, and the
people that they would be the LORD’s people. 17† So all the people went to
the temple of •Baal and tore it down. They broke its altars and images into
pieces and killed Mattan, the priest of Baal, at the altars.

18 Then Jehoiada put the oversight of the LORD’s temple into the hands of
the Levitical priests, whom David had appointed over the LORD’s temple,
to offer •burnt offerings to the LORD as it is written in the law of Moses,
with rejoicing and song ordained by [C] David. 19 He stationed gatekeepers
at the gates of the LORD’s temple so that nothing •unclean could enter for
any reason. 20 Then he took with him the commanders of hundreds, the
nobles, the governors of the people, and all the people of the land and
brought the king down from the LORD’s temple. They entered the king’s
palace through the Upper Gate and seated the king on the throne of the
kingdom. 21 All the people of the land rejoiced, and the city was quiet, for
they had put Athaliah to death by the sword.

2 CHRONICLES

Judah's King Joash

24 †Joash was seven years old when he became king and reigned 40
years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Zibiah; she was from
Beer-sheba. 2 Throughout the time of Jehoiada the priest, Joash did what
was right in the LORD's sight. 3 Jehoiada acquired two wives for him, and
he was the father of sons and daughters.

Repairing the Temple

4 Afterward, Joash took it to heart to renovate the LORD's temple. 5 So
he gathered the priests and Levites and said, "Go out to the cities of Judah
and collect money from all Israel to repair the temple of your God as
needed year by year, and do it quickly."

However, the Levites did not hurry. 6 So the king called Jehoiada the high
priest and said, "Why haven't you required the Levites to bring from Judah
and Jerusalem the tax imposed by the LORD's servant Moses and the
assembly of Israel for the tent of the testimony? 7† For the sons of that
wicked Athaliah broke into the LORD's temple and even used the sacred
things of the LORD's temple for the •Baals."

8 At the king's command a chest was made and placed outside the gate of
the LORD's temple. 9† Then a proclamation was issued in Judah and
Jerusalem that the tax God's servant Moses imposed on Israel in the
wilderness be brought to the LORD. 10 All the leaders and all the people
rejoiced, brought the tax, and put it in the chest until it was full.
11 Whenever the chest was brought by the Levites to the king's overseers,
and when they saw that there was a large amount of money, the king's
secretary and the high priest's deputy came and emptied the chest, picked it
up, and returned it to its place. They did this daily and gathered the money
in abundance. 12 Then the king and Jehoiada gave it to those in charge of
the labor on the LORD's temple, who were hiring stonecutters and carpenters
to renovate the LORD's temple, also blacksmiths and coppersmiths to repair
the LORD's temple.

13 The workmen did their work, and through them the repairs progressed.
They restored God's temple to its specifications and reinforced it. 14† When

they finished, they presented the rest of the money to the king and Jehoiada, who made articles for the LORD's temple with it — articles for ministry and for making •burnt offerings, and ladles [A] and articles of gold and silver. They regularly offered burnt offerings in the LORD's temple throughout Jehoiada's life.

Joash's Apostasy

15† Jehoiada died when he was old and full of days; he was 130 years old at his death.
16 He was buried in the city of David with the kings because he had done what was good in Israel with respect to God and His temple.

17 However, after Jehoiada died, the rulers of Judah came and paid homage to the king. Then the king listened to them,
18 and they abandoned the temple of •Yahweh, the God of their ancestors and served the •Asherah poles and the idols. So there was wrath against Judah and Jerusalem for this •guilt of theirs.
19 Nevertheless, He sent them prophets to bring them back to the LORD; they admonished them, but the people would not listen.

20 The Spirit of God took control of [B], Zechariah son of Jehoiada the priest. He stood above the people and said to them, "This is what God says, 'Why are you transgressing the LORD's commands and you do not prosper? Because you have abandoned the LORD, He has abandoned you.' "
21† But they conspired against him and stoned him at the king's command in the courtyard of the LORD's temple.
22 King Joash didn't remember the kindness that Zechariah's father Jehoiada had extended to him, but killed his son. While he was dying, he said, "May the LORD see and demand an account."

Aramean Invasion of Judah

23 At the turn of the year, an Aramean army went to war against Joash. They entered Judah and Jerusalem and destroyed all the leaders of the people among them and sent all the plunder to the king of Damascus.
24 Although the Aramean army came with only a few men, the LORD handed

over a vast army to them because the people of Judah had abandoned Yahweh, the God of their ancestors. So they executed judgment on Joash.

Joash Assassinated

25 When the Arameans saw that Joash had many wounds, they left him. His servants conspired against him, and killed him on his bed, because he had shed the blood of the sons of Jehoiada the priest. So he died, and they buried him in the city of David, but they did not bury him in the tombs of the kings.

26 Those who conspired against him were Zabad, son of the Ammonite woman Shimeath, and Jehozabad, son of the Moabite woman Shimrith.
27 Concerning his sons, the many •oracles about him, and the restoration of
the LORD's temple, they are recorded in the Writing of the Book of the
Kings. His son Amaziah became king in his place.

2 CHRONICLES

Judah's King Amaziah

25 [†]Amaziah became king when he was 25 years old and reigned 29 years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Jehoaddan; she was from Jerusalem. [2] He did what was right in the LORD's sight but not wholeheartedly.

[3] As soon as the kingdom was firmly in his grasp, he executed his servants who had murdered his father the king. [4†] However, he did not put their children to death, because — as it is written in the Law, in the book of Moses, where the LORD commanded — "Fathers must not die because of children, and children must not die because of fathers, but each one will die for his own sin."

Amaziah's Campaign against Edom

[5] Then Amaziah gathered Judah and assembled them according to ancestral house, according to commanders of thousands, and according to commanders of hundreds. He numbered those 20 years old or more for all Judah and Benjamin. He found there to be 300,000 choice men who could serve in the army, bearing spear and shield. [6] Then for 7,500 pounds [A] of silver he hired 100,000 brave warriors from Israel.

[7] However, a man of God came to him and said, "King, do not let Israel's army go with you, for the LORD is not with Israel — all the Ephraimites. [8] But if you go with them, do it! Be strong for battle! But God will make you stumble before the enemy, for God has the power to help or to make one stumble."

[9] Then Amaziah said to the man of God, "What should I do about the 7,500 pounds [B] of silver I gave to Israel's division? "

The man of God replied, "The LORD is able to give you much more than this."

[10] So Amaziah released the division that came to him from Ephraim to go home. But they got very angry with Judah and returned home in a fierce rage.

11 Amaziah strengthened his position and led his people to the Valley of
Salt. He struck down 10,000 Seirites, 12 and the Judahites captured 10,000
alive. They took them to the top of a cliff where they threw them off, and all
of them were dashed to pieces.

13 As for the men of the division that Amaziah sent back so they would not go with him into battle, they raided the cities of Judah from Samaria to Beth-horon, struck down 3,000 of their people, and took a great deal of plunder.

14 After Amaziah came from the attack on the Edomites, he brought the
gods of the Seirites and set them up as his gods. He worshiped before them
and burned incense to them. 15 So the LORD's anger was against Amaziah,
and He sent a prophet to him, who said, "Why have you sought a people's
gods that could not deliver their own people from your hand? "

16 While he was still speaking to him, the king asked, "Have we made you the king's counselor? Stop, why should you lose your life? "

So the prophet stopped, but he said, "I know that God intends to destroy you, because you have done this and have not listened to my advice."

Amaziah's War With Israel's King Joash

17 King Amaziah of Judah took counsel and sent word to Jehoash [C] son of Jehoahaz, son of Jehu, king of Israel, saying, "Come, let us meet face to face."

18 King Jehoash of Israel sent word to King Amaziah of Judah, saying,
"The thistle that was in Lebanon sent a message to the cedar that was in
Lebanon, saying, 'Give your daughter to my son as a wife.' Then a wild
animal that was in Lebanon passed by and trampled the thistle. 19 You have
said, 'Look, I have defeated Edom,' and you have become overconfident
that you will get glory. Now stay at home. Why stir up such trouble so that
you fall and Judah with you? "

[20] But Amaziah would not listen, for this turn of events was from God in order to hand them over to their enemies because they went after the gods of Edom. [21] So King Jehoash of Israel advanced. He and King Amaziah of Judah faced off at Beth-shemesh in Judah. [22] Judah was routed before Israel, and each fled to his own tent. [23] King Jehoash of Israel captured Judah's King Amaziah son of Joash, son of Jehoahaz, at Beth-shemesh. Then Jehoash took him to Jerusalem and broke down 200 yards [D] of Jerusalem's wall from the Ephraim Gate to the Corner Gate. [24†] He took all the gold, silver, all the utensils that were found with Obed-edom in God's temple, the treasures of the king's palace, and the hostages. Then he returned to Samaria.

Amaziah's Death

[25] Judah's King Amaziah son of Joash lived 15 years after the death of Israel's King Jehoash son of Jehoahaz. [26] The rest of the events of Amaziah's reign, from beginning to end, are written in the Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel.

[27] From the time Amaziah turned from following the LORD, a conspiracy was formed against him in Jerusalem, and he fled to Lachish. However, men were sent after him to Lachish, and they put him to death there. [28] They carried him back on horses and buried him with his fathers in the city of Judah.

2 CHRONICLES

Judah’s King Uzziah

26 All the people of Judah took Uzziah, who was 16 years old, and
made him king in place of his father Amaziah. 2 He rebuilt Eloth and
restored it to Judah after Amaziah the king rested with his fathers.

3† Uzziah was 16 years old when he became king and reigned 52 years
in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Jecoliah from Jerusalem. 4 He did
what was right in the LORD's sight as his father Amaziah had done. 5 He
sought God throughout the lifetime of Zechariah, the teacher of the •fear
of God. During the time that he sought the LORD, God gave him success.

Uzziah's Exploits

6 Uzziah went out to wage war against the Philistines, and he tore down
the wall of Gath, the wall of Jabneh, and the wall of Ashdod. Then he built
cities in the vicinity of Ashdod and among the Philistines. 7 God helped him
against the Philistines, the Arabs that live in Gur-baal, and the Meunites.
8 The Ammonites gave Uzziah tribute money, and his fame spread as far
as the entrance of Egypt, for God made him very powerful. 9 Uzziah built
towers in Jerusalem at the Corner Gate, the Valley Gate, and the corner
buttress, and he fortified them. 10† Since he had many cattle both in the
Judean foothills [A] and the plain, he built towers in the desert and dug many
wells. And since he was a lover of the soil, he had farmers and vinedressers
in the hills and in the fertile lands. [B]

11 Uzziah had an army equipped for combat that went out to war by
division according to their assignments, as recorded by Jeiel the court
secretary and Maaseiah the officer under the authority of Hananiah, one of
the king's commanders. 12 The total number of heads of families was 2,600
brave warriors. 13 Under their authority was an army of 307,500 equipped
for combat, a powerful force to help the king against the enemy. 14† Uzziah
provided the entire army with shields, spears, helmets, armor, bows and
slingstones. 15† He made skillfully designed devices in Jerusalem to shoot
arrows and catapult large stones for use on the towers and on the corners.
So his fame spread even to distant places, for he was marvelously helped
until he became strong.

Uzziah's Disease

16 But when he became strong, he grew arrogant and it led to his own
destruction. He acted unfaithfully against the LORD his God by going into
the LORD's sanctuary to burn incense on the incense altar. 17 Azariah the
priest, along with 80 brave priests of the LORD, went in after him. 18 They
took their stand against King Uzziah and said, "Uzziah, you have no right
to offer incense to the LORD — only the consecrated priests, the
descendants of Aaron, have the right to offer incense. Leave the sanctuary,
for you have acted unfaithfully! You will not receive honor from the LORD
God."

19† Uzziah, with a firepan in his hand to offer incense, was enraged. But
when he became enraged with the priests, in the presence of the priests in
the LORD's temple beside the altar of incense, a skin disease broke out on
his forehead. 20 Then Azariah the chief priest and all the priests turned to
him and saw that he was diseased on his forehead. They rushed him out of
there. He himself also hurried to get out because the LORD had afflicted him.
21† So King Uzziah was diseased to the time of his death. He lived in
quarantine [C] with a serious skin disease and was excluded from access to
the LORD's temple, while his son Jotham was over the king's household
governing the people of the land.

22† Now the prophet Isaiah son of Amoz wrote about the rest of the
events of Uzziah's reign, from beginning to end. 23 Uzziah rested with his
fathers, and he was buried with his fathers in the burial ground of the kings'
cemetery, for they said, "He has a skin disease." His son Jotham became
king in his place.

2 CHRONICLES

Judah's King Jotham

27 [†]Jotham was 25 years old when he became king and reigned 16 years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Jerushah daughter of Zadok.
2 He did what was right in the LORD's sight as his father Uzziah had done.
In addition, he didn't enter the LORD's sanctuary, but the people still
behaved corruptly.

3 Jotham built the Upper Gate of the LORD's temple, and he built
extensively on the wall of Ophel. 4 He also built cities in the hill country of
Judah and fortresses and towers in the forests. 5 He waged war against the
king of the Ammonites. He overpowered the Ammonites, and that year they
gave him 7,500 pounds [A] of silver, 50,000 bushels [B] of wheat, and 50,000
bushels [C] of barley. They paid him the same in the second and third years.
6[†] So Jotham strengthened himself because he did not waver in obeying [D]
the LORD his God.

7 As for the rest of the events of Jotham's reign, along with all his wars
and his ways, note that they are written in the Book of the Kings of Israel
and Judah. 8 He was 25 years old when he became king and reigned 16
years in Jerusalem. 9 Jotham rested with his fathers and was buried in the
city of David. His son Ahaz became king in his place.

2 CHRONICLES

Judah's King Ahaz

28 †Ahaz was 20 years old when he became king and reigned 16 years in
Jerusalem. He did not do what was right in the LORD's sight like his
ancestor David, 2 for he walked in the ways of the kings of Israel and made
cast images of the •Baals. 3 He burned incense in the Valley of Hinnom
and burned his children in the fire, imitating the detestable practices of the
nations the LORD had dispossessed before the Israelites. 4 He sacrificed and
burned incense on the •high places, on the hills, and under every green tree.

5 So the LORD his God handed Ahaz over to the king of Aram. He
attacked him and took many captives to Damascus.

Ahaz was also handed over to the king of Israel, who struck him with
great force: 6 Pekah son of Remaliah killed 120,000 in Judah in one
day — all brave men — because they had abandoned the LORD God of their
ancestors. 7 An Ephraimite warrior named Zichri killed the king's son
Maaseiah, Azrikam governor of the palace, and Elkanah who was second to
the king. 8 Then the Israelites took 200,000 captives from their
brothers — women, sons, and daughters. They also took a great deal of
plunder from them and brought it to Samaria.

9 A prophet of the LORD named Oded was there. He went out to meet the
army that came to Samaria and said to them, "Look, the LORD God of your
ancestors handed them over to you because of His wrath against Judah, but
you slaughtered them in a rage that has reached heaven. 10 Now you plan to
reduce the people of Judah and Jerusalem, male and female, to slavery. Are
you not also •guilty before •Yahweh your God? 11 Listen to me and return
the captives you took from your brothers, for the LORD's burning anger is
on you."

12 So some men who were leaders of the Ephraimites — Azariah son of
Jehohanan, Berechiah son of Meshillemoth, Jehizkiah son of Shallum, and
Amasa son of Hadlai — stood in opposition to those coming from the war.
13 They said to them, "You must not bring the captives here, for you plan to
bring guilt on us from the LORD to add to our sins and our guilt. For we have
much guilt, and burning anger is on Israel."

14 The army left the captives and the plunder in the presence of the officers and the congregation. 15[†] Then the men who were designated by name took charge of the captives and provided clothes for their naked ones from the plunder. They clothed them, gave them sandals, food and drink, dressed their wounds, and provided donkeys for all the feeble. The Israelites brought them to Jericho, the City of Palms, among their brothers. Then they returned to Samaria.

16 At that time King Ahaz asked the king of Assyria for help. 17 The Edomites came again, attacked Judah, and took captives. 18 The Philistines also raided the cities of the Judean foothills [A] and the •Negev of Judah and captured Beth-shemesh, Aijalon, Gederoth, Soco and its villages, Timnah and its villages, Gimzo and its villages, and they lived there. 19 For the LORD humbled Judah because of King Ahaz of Judah, who threw off restraint in Judah and was unfaithful to the LORD. 20 Then Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria came against Ahaz; he oppressed him and did not give him support. 21 Although Ahaz plundered the LORD's temple and the palace of the king and of the rulers and gave the plunder to the king of Assyria, it did not help him.

22 At the time of his distress, King Ahaz himself became more unfaithful to the LORD. 23 He sacrificed to the gods of Damascus which had defeated him; he said, "Since the gods of the kings of Aram are helping them, I will sacrifice to them so that they will help me." But they were the downfall of him and of all Israel.

24 Then Ahaz gathered up the utensils of God's temple, cut them into pieces, shut the doors of the LORD's temple, and made himself altars on every street corner in Jerusalem. 25 He made high places in every city of Judah to offer incense to other gods, and he provoked the LORD, the God of his ancestors.

Ahaz's Death

26 As for the rest of his deeds and all his ways, from beginning to end, they are written in the Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel. 27 Ahaz rested

with his fathers and was buried in the city, in Jerusalem, but they did not bring him into the tombs of the kings of Israel. His son Hezekiah became king in his place.

2 CHRONICLES

Judah's King Hezekiah

29 [†]Hezekiah was 25 years old when he became king and reigned 29
years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Abijah daughter of
Zechariah. 2[†] He did what was right in the LORD's sight just as his ancestor
David had done.

3 In the first year of his reign, in the first month, he opened the doors of
the LORD's temple and repaired them. 4 Then he brought in the priests and
Levites and gathered them in the eastern public square. 5 He said to them,
"Hear me, Levites. Consecrate yourselves now and consecrate the temple
of •Yahweh, the God of your ancestors. Remove everything impure from
the holy place. 6 For our fathers were unfaithful and did what is evil in the
sight of the LORD our God. They abandoned Him, turned their faces away
from the LORD's tabernacle, and turned their backs on Him. [A], 7 They also
closed the doors of the portico, extinguished the lamps, did not burn
incense, and did not offer •burnt offerings in the holy place of the God of
Israel. 8 Therefore, the wrath of the LORD was on Judah and Jerusalem, and
He made them an object of terror, horror, and mockery, [B] as you see with
your own eyes. 9 Our fathers fell by the sword, and our sons, our daughters,
and our wives are in captivity because of this. 10 It is in my heart now to
make a covenant with Yahweh, the God of Israel so that His burning anger
may turn away from us. 11 My sons, don't be negligent now, for the LORD
has chosen you to stand in His presence, to serve Him, and to be His
ministers and burners of incense."

Cleansing the Temple

12 Then the Levites stood up:

Mahath son of Amasai and Joel son of Azariah from the Kohathites;
Kish son of Abdi and Azariah son of Jehallelel from the Merarites;
Joah son of Zimmah and Eden son of Joah from the Gershonites;
13 Shimri and Jeuel from the Elizaphanites;
Zechariah and Mattaniah from the Asaphites;

14 Jehiel and Shimei from the Hemanites;
Shemaiah and Uzziel from the Jeduthunites.

15 They gathered their brothers together, consecrated themselves, and went
according to the king's command by the words of the Lord to cleanse the
Lord's temple.

16† The priests went to the entrance of the Lord's temple to cleanse it.
They took all the unclean things they found in the Lord's sanctuary to the
courtyard of the Lord's temple. Then the Levites received them and took
them outside to the Kidron Valley. 17 They began the consecration on the
first day of the first month, and on the eighth day of the month they came to
the portico of the Lord's temple. They consecrated the Lord's temple for
eight days, and on the sixteenth day of the first month they finished.

18 Then they went inside to King Hezekiah and said, "We have cleansed
the whole temple of the Lord, the altar of burnt offering and all its utensils,
and the table for the rows of the •bread of the Presence and all its utensils.
19 We have set up and consecrated all the utensils that King Ahaz rejected
during his reign when he became unfaithful. They are in front of the altar
of the Lord."

Renewal of Temple Worship

20† King Hezekiah got up early, gathered the city officials, and went to
the Lord's temple. 21† They brought seven bulls, seven rams, seven lambs,
and seven male goats as a •sin offering for the kingdom, for the sanctuary,
and for Judah. Then he told the descendants of Aaron, the priests, to offer
them on the altar of the Lord. 22 So they slaughtered the bulls, and the
priests received the blood and sprinkled it on the altar. They slaughtered
the rams and sprinkled the blood on the altar. They slaughtered the lambs
and sprinkled the blood on the altar. 23 Then they brought the goats for the
sin offering right into the presence of the king and the congregation, who
laid their hands on them. 24 The priests slaughtered the goats and put their
blood on the altar for a sin offering, to make •atonement for all Israel, for
the king said that the burnt offering and sin offering were for all Israel.

25 Hezekiah stationed the Levites in the LORD's temple with cymbals,
harps, and lyres according to the command of David, Gad the king's seer,
and Nathan the prophet. For the command was from the LORD through His
prophets. 26 The Levites stood with the instruments of David, and the
priests with the trumpets.

27 Then Hezekiah ordered that the burnt offering be offered on the altar.
When the burnt offerings began, the song of the LORD and the trumpets
began, accompanied by the instruments of David king of Israel. 28 The
whole assembly was worshiping, singing the song, and blowing the
trumpets — all of this continued until the burnt offering was completed.
29 When the burnt offerings were completed, the king and all those present
with him bowed down and worshiped. 30 Then King Hezekiah and the
officials told the Levites to sing praise to the LORD in the words of David
and of •Asaph the seer. So they sang praises with rejoicing and bowed down
and worshiped.

31 Hezekiah concluded, "Now you are consecrated [C] to the LORD. Come
near and bring sacrifices and thank offerings to the LORD's temple." So the
congregation brought sacrifices and thank offerings, and all those with
willing hearts brought burnt offerings. 32 The number of burnt offerings the
congregation brought was 70 bulls, 100 rams, and 200 lambs; all these were
for a burnt offering to the LORD. 33 Six hundred bulls and 3,000 sheep were
consecrated.

34 However, since there were not enough priests, they weren't able to
skin all the burnt offerings, so their Levite brothers helped them until the
work was finished and until the priests consecrated themselves. For the
Levites were more conscientious [D], to consecrate themselves than the
priests were. 35 Furthermore, the burnt offerings were abundant, along with
the fat of the •fellowship offerings and with the •drink offerings for the
burnt offering.

So the service of the LORD's temple was established. 36 Then Hezekiah
and all the people rejoiced over how God had prepared the people, for it had
come about suddenly.

2 CHRONICLES

Celebration of the Passover

30 Then Hezekiah sent word throughout all Israel and Judah, and he also
wrote letters to Ephraim and Manasseh to come to the LORD's temple
in Jerusalem to observe the •Passover of •Yahweh, the God of Israel. 2† For
the king and his officials and the entire congregation in Jerusalem decided
to observe the Passover of the LORD in the second month, 3 because they
were not able to observe it at the appropriate time. Not enough of the priests
had consecrated themselves and the people hadn't been gathered together
in Jerusalem. 4 The proposal pleased the king and the congregation, 5† so
they affirmed the proposal and spread the message throughout all Israel,
from Beer-sheba to Dan, to come to observe the Passover of Yahweh, the
God of Israel in Jerusalem, for they hadn't observed it often, [A] as
prescribed. [B]

6 So the couriers went throughout Israel and Judah with letters from the
hand of the king and his officials, and according to the king's command,
saying, "Israelites, return to Yahweh, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel
so that He may return to those of you who remain, who have escaped from
the grasp of the kings of Assyria. 7† Don't be like your fathers and your
brothers who were unfaithful to Yahweh, the God of their ancestors so that
He made them an object of horror as you yourselves see. 8 Don't become
obstinate [C], now like your fathers did. Give your allegiance [D] to Yahweh,
and come to His sanctuary that He has consecrated forever. Serve the LORD
your God so that He may turn His burning anger away from you, 9 for
when you return to Yahweh, your brothers and your sons will receive mercy
in the presence of their captors and will return to this land. For Yahweh
your God is gracious and merciful; He will not turn His face away from
you if you return to Him."

10 The couriers traveled from city to city in the land of Ephraim and
Manasseh as far as Zebulun, but the inhabitants [E] laughed at them and
mocked them. 11 But some from Asher, Manasseh, and Zebulun humbled
themselves and came to Jerusalem. 12 Also, the power of God was at work
in Judah to unite them [F] to carry out the command of the king and his
officials by the word of the LORD.

[13] A very large assembly of people was gathered in Jerusalem to observe the Festival of Unleavened Bread in the second month. [14] They proceeded to take away the altars that were in Jerusalem, and they took away the incense altars and threw them into the Kidron Valley. [15] They slaughtered the Passover lamb on the fourteenth day of the second month. The priests and Levites were ashamed, and they consecrated themselves and brought •burnt offerings to the LORD's temple. [16] They stood at their prescribed posts, according to the law of Moses, the man of God. The priests sprinkled the blood received from the hand of the Levites, [17] for there were many in the assembly who had not consecrated themselves, and so the Levites were in charge of slaughtering the Passover lambs for every •unclean person to consecrate the lambs to the LORD. [18] A large number of the people — many from Ephraim, Manasseh, Issachar, and Zebulun — were ritually unclean, yet they had eaten the Passover contrary to what was written. But Hezekiah had interceded for them, saying, "May the good LORD provide •atonement on behalf of [19] whoever sets his whole heart on seeking God, Yahweh, the God of his ancestors, even though not according to the purification rules of the sanctuary." [20] So the LORD heard Hezekiah and healed the people. [21] The Israelites who were present in Jerusalem observed the Festival of Unleavened Bread seven days with great joy, and the Levites and the priests praised the LORD day after day with loud instruments. [22] Then Hezekiah encouraged [G], all the Levites who performed skillfully before the LORD. They ate at the appointed festival for seven days, sacrificing •fellowship offerings and giving thanks to Yahweh, the God of their ancestors.

[23] The whole congregation decided to observe seven more days, so they observed seven days with joy, [24] for Hezekiah king of Judah contributed 1,000 bulls and 7,000 sheep for the congregation. Also, the officials contributed 1,000 bulls and 10,000 sheep for the congregation, and many priests consecrated themselves. [25†] Then the whole assembly of Judah with the priests and Levites, the whole assembly that came from Israel, the foreigners who came from the land of Israel, and those who were living in Judah, rejoiced. [26] There was great rejoicing in Jerusalem, for nothing like this was known since the days of Solomon son of David, the king of Israel.

27 Then the priests and the Levites stood to bless the people, and God
heard their voice, and their prayer came into His holy dwelling place in
heaven.

2 CHRONICLES

Removal of Idolatry

31 When all this was completed, all Israel who had attended went out to
the cities of Judah and broke up the sacred pillars, chopped down the
•Asherah poles, and tore down the •high places and altars throughout Judah
and Benjamin, as well as in Ephraim and Manasseh, to the last one. [A] Then
all the Israelites returned to their cities, each to his own possession.

Offerings for Levites

2† Hezekiah reestablished the divisions of the priests and Levites for the
•burnt offerings and •fellowship offerings, for ministry, for giving thanks,
and for praise in the gates of the camp of the LORD, each division
corresponding to his service among the priests and Levites. 3† The king
contributed [B] from his own possessions for the regular morning and
evening burnt offerings, the burnt offerings of the Sabbaths, of the New
Moons, and of the appointed feasts, as written in the law of the LORD. 4 He
told the people who lived in Jerusalem to give a contribution for the priests
and Levites so that they could devote their energy to the law of the LORD.
5 When the word spread, the Israelites gave liberally of the best of the grain,
new wine, oil, honey, and of all the produce of the field, and they brought in
an abundance, a tenth of everything. 6 As for the Israelites and Judahites
who lived in the cities of Judah, they also brought a tenth of the cattle and
sheep, and a tenth of the dedicated things that were consecrated to the LORD
their God. They gathered them into large piles. 7 In the third month they
began building up the piles, and they finished in the seventh month. 8 When
Hezekiah and his officials came and viewed the piles, they praised the LORD
and His people Israel.

9 Hezekiah asked the priests and Levites about the piles. 10† Azariah, the
chief priest of the household of Zadok, answered him, "Since they began
bringing the offering to the LORD's temple, we eat and are satisfied and
there is plenty left over because the LORD has blessed His people; this
abundance is what is left over."

11 Hezekiah told them to prepare chambers in the LORD's temple, and
they prepared them. 12 The offering, the tenth, and the dedicated things
were brought faithfully. Conaniah the Levite was the officer in charge of

them, and his brother Shimei was second. 13 Jehiel, Azaziah, Nahath,
Asahel, Jerimoth, Jozabad, Eliel, Ismachiah, Mahath, and Benaiah were
deputies under the authority of Conaniah and his brother Shimei by
appointment of King Hezekiah and of Azariah the chief official of God's
temple.

14 Kore son of Imnah the Levite, the keeper of the East Gate, was over
the freewill offerings to God to distribute the contribution to the LORD and
the consecrated things. 15 Eden, Miniamin, Jeshua, Shemaiah, Amariah,
and Shecaniah in the cities of the priests were to faithfully distribute it
under his authority to their brothers by divisions, whether large or small.
16 In addition, they distributed it to males registered by genealogy three [C]
years old and above; to all who would enter the LORD's temple for their
daily duty, for their service in their responsibilities according to their
divisions. 17 They distributed also to those recorded by genealogy of the
priests by their ancestral families and the Levites 20 years old and above,
by their responsibilities in their divisions; 18 to those registered by
genealogy — with all their infants, wives, sons, and daughters — of the
whole assembly (for they had faithfully consecrated themselves as holy);
19 and to the descendants of Aaron, the priests, in the common fields of
their cities, in each and every city. There were men who were registered by
name to distribute a portion to every male among the priests and to every
Levite recorded by genealogy.

20 Hezekiah did this throughout all Judah. He did what was good and
upright and true before the LORD his God. 21 He was diligent in every deed
that he began in the service of God's temple, in the instruction and the
commands, in order to seek his God, and he prospered.

2 CHRONICLES

Sennacherib's Invasion

32 [†]After these faithful deeds, Sennacherib king of Assyria came and
entered Judah. He laid siege to the fortified cities and intended [A] to
break into them. 2 Hezekiah saw that Sennacherib had come and that he
planned [B] war on Jerusalem, 3 so he consulted with his officials and his
warriors about stopping up the waters of the springs that were outside the
city, and they helped him. 4 Many people gathered and stopped up all the
springs and the stream that flowed through the land; they said, “Why
should the kings of Assyria come and find plenty of water? ” 5 Then
Hezekiah strengthened his position by rebuilding the entire broken-down
wall and heightening the towers and the other outside wall. He repaired the
supporting terraces of the city of David, and made an abundance of
weapons and shields.

6 He set military commanders over the people and gathered the people in
the square of the city gate. Then he encouraged them, [C], saying, 7 “Be
strong and courageous! Don’t be afraid or discouraged before the king of
Assyria or before the large army that is with him, for there are more with us
than with him. 8 He has only human strength, [D] but we have •Yahweh our
God to help us and to fight our battles.” So the people relied on the words
of King Hezekiah of Judah.

Sennacherib’s Servant’s Speech

9 After this, while Sennacherib king of Assyria with all his armed forces
besieged [E] Lachish, he sent his servants to Jerusalem against King Hezekiah
of Judah and against all those of Judah who were in Jerusalem, saying,
10 “This is what King Sennacherib of Assyria says: ‘What are you relying
on that you remain in Jerusalem under siege? 11 Isn’t Hezekiah misleading
you to give you over to death by famine and thirst when he says, “Yahweh
our God will deliver us from the power of the king of Assyria”? 12 Didn’t
Hezekiah himself remove His •high places and His altars and say to Judah
and Jerusalem, “You must worship before one altar, and you must burn
incense on it”?

[13] " 'Don't you know what I and my fathers have done to all the peoples of the lands? Have any of the national gods of the lands been able to deliver their land from my power? [14] Who among all the gods of these nations that my predecessors •completely destroyed was able to deliver his people from my power, that your God should be able to do the same for you? [15] So now, don't let Hezekiah deceive you, and don't let him mislead you like this. Don't believe him, for no god of any nation or kingdom has been able to deliver his people from my power or the power of my fathers. How much less will your God deliver you from my power! ' "

[16] His servants said more against the LORD God and against His servant Hezekiah. [17] He also wrote letters to mock Yahweh, the God of Israel, saying against Him:

> Just like the national gods of the lands that did not deliver their people from my power, so Hezekiah's God will not deliver His people from my power.

[18†] Then they called out loudly in Hebrew [F] to the people of Jerusalem, who were on the wall, to frighten and discourage them in order that he might capture the city. [19] They spoke against the God of Jerusalem like they had spoken against the gods of the peoples of the earth, which were made by human hands.

Deliverance from Sennacherib

[20] King Hezekiah and the prophet Isaiah son of Amoz prayed about this and cried out to heaven, [21] and the LORD sent an angel who annihilated every brave warrior, leader, and commander in the camp of the king of Assyria. So the king of Assyria returned in disgrace to his land. He went to the temple of his god, and there some of his own children struck him down with the sword.

[22] So the LORD saved Hezekiah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem from the power of King Sennacherib of Assyria and from the power of all others. He gave them rest [G] on every side. [23] Many were bringing an offering to the

LORD to Jerusalem and valuable gifts to King Hezekiah of Judah, and he
was exalted in the eyes of all the nations after that.

Hezekiah's Illness and Pride

24† In those days Hezekiah became sick to the point of death, so he
prayed to the LORD, and He spoke to him and gave him a miraculous sign.
25 However, because his heart was proud, Hezekiah didn't respond
according to the benefit that had come to him. So there was wrath on him,
Judah, and Jerusalem. 26 Then Hezekiah humbled himself for the pride of
his heart — he and the inhabitants of Jerusalem — so the LORD's wrath
didn't come on them during Hezekiah's lifetime.

Hezekiah's Wealth and Works

27 Hezekiah had abundant riches and glory, and he made himself
treasuries for silver, gold, precious stones, spices, shields, and every
desirable item. 28 He made warehouses for the harvest of grain, new wine,
and oil, and stalls for all kinds of cattle, and pens for flocks. 29 He made
cities for himself, and he acquired herds of sheep and cattle in abundance,
for God gave him abundant possessions.

30† This same Hezekiah blocked the outlet of the water of the Upper
Gihon and channeled it smoothly downward and westward to the city of
David. Hezekiah succeeded in everything he did. 31 When the ambassadors
of Babylon's rulers were sent to him to inquire about the miraculous sign
that happened in the land, God left him to test him and discover what was in
his heart.

Hezekiah's Death

32 As for the rest of the events of Hezekiah's reign and his deeds of
faithful love, note that they are written in the Visions of the Prophet Isaiah
son of Amoz, and in the Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel.
33† Hezekiah rested with his fathers and was buried on the ascent to the

tombs of David’s descendants. All Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem paid him honor at his death. His son Manasseh became king in his place.

2 CHRONICLES

Judah’s King Manasseh

33 †Manasseh was 12 years old when he became king and reigned 55
years in Jerusalem. 2 He did what was evil in the LORD's sight,
imitating the detestable practices of the nations that the LORD had
dispossessed before the Israelites. 3† He rebuilt the •high places that his
father Hezekiah had torn down and reestablished the altars for the •Baals.
He made •Asherah poles, and he worshiped the whole heavenly •host and
served them. 4 He built altars in the LORD's temple, where •Yahweh had
said, "Jerusalem is where My name will remain forever." 5 He built altars
to the whole heavenly host in both courtyards of the LORD's temple. 6† He
passed his sons through the fire in the Valley of Hinnom. He practiced
witchcraft, •divination, and sorcery, and consulted mediums and spiritists.
He did a great deal of evil in the LORD's sight, provoking Him.

7 Manasseh set up a carved image of the idol he had made, in God's
temple, about which God had said to David and his son Solomon, "I will
establish My name forever in this temple and in Jerusalem, which I have
chosen out of all the tribes of Israel. 8 I will never again remove the feet of
the Israelites from the land where I stationed your ancestors, if only they
will be careful to do all that I have commanded them through Moses — all
the law, statutes, and judgments." 9 So Manasseh caused Judah and the
inhabitants of Jerusalem to stray so that they did worse evil than the nations
the LORD had destroyed before the Israelites.

Manasseh's Repentance

10 The LORD spoke to Manasseh and his people, but they didn't listen.
11 So He brought against them the military commanders of the king of
Assyria. They captured Manasseh with hooks, bound him with bronze
shackles, and took him to Babylon. 12† When he was in distress, he sought
the favor of Yahweh his God and earnestly humbled himself before the
God of his ancestors. 13 He prayed to Him, so He heard his petition and
granted his request, and brought him back to Jerusalem, to his kingdom. So
Manasseh came to know that Yahweh is God.

[14] After this, he built the outer wall of the city of David from west of
Gihon in the valley to the entrance of the Fish Gate; he brought it around
the Ophel, and he heightened it considerably. He also placed military
commanders in all the fortified cities of Judah.

[15] He removed the foreign gods and the idol from the LORD's temple,
along with all the altars that he had built on the mountain of the LORD's
temple and in Jerusalem, and he threw them outside the city. [16] He built the
altar of the LORD and offered •fellowship and thank offerings on it. Then he
told Judah to serve Yahweh, the God of Israel. [17†] However, the people still
sacrificed at the high places, but only to Yahweh their God.

Manasseh's Death

[18] The rest of the events of Manasseh's reign, along with his prayer to
his God and the words of the seers who spoke to him in the name of
Yahweh, the God of Israel, are written in the Records of Israel's Kings.
[19] His prayer and how God granted his request, and all his sin and
unfaithfulness and the sites where he built high places and set up Asherah
poles and carved images before he humbled himself, they are written in the
Records of Hozai. [20] Manasseh rested with his fathers, and he was buried in
his own house. His son Amon became king in his place.

Judah's King Amon

[21†] Amon was 22 years old when he became king and reigned two years
in Jerusalem. [22] He did what was evil in the LORD's sight just as his father
Manasseh had done. Amon sacrificed to all the carved images that his
father Manasseh had made, and he served them. [23] But he did not humble
himself before the LORD like his father Manasseh humbled himself; instead,
Amon increased his •guilt.

[24†] So his servants conspired against him and put him to death in his
own house. [25†] Then the common people [A] executed all those who
conspired against King Amon and made his son Josiah king in his place.

2 CHRONICLES

Judah's King Josiah

34 [†]Josiah was eight years old when he became king and reigned 31
years in Jerusalem. [2†] He did what was right in the LORD's sight and
walked in the ways of his ancestor David; he did not turn aside to the right
or the left.

Josiah's Reform

[3†] In the eighth year of his reign, while he was still a youth, Josiah began
to seek the God of his ancestor David, and in the twelfth year he began to
cleanse Judah and Jerusalem of the •high places, the •Asherah poles, the
carved images, and the cast images. [4] Then in his presence the altars of the
•Baals were torn down, and he chopped down the incense altars that were
above them. He shattered the Asherah poles, the carved images, and the cast
images, crushed them to dust, and scattered them over the graves of those
who had sacrificed to them. [5] He burned the bones of the priests on their
altars. So he cleansed Judah and Jerusalem. [6†] He did the same in the cities
of Manasseh, Ephraim, and Simeon, and as far as Naphtali and on their
surrounding mountain shrines. [7] He tore down the altars, and he smashed
the Asherah poles and the carved images to powder. He chopped down all
the incense altars throughout the land of Israel and returned to Jerusalem.

Josiah's Repair of the Temple

[8†] In the eighteenth year of his reign, in order to cleanse the land and the
temple, Josiah sent Shaphan son of Azaliah, along with Maaseiah the
governor of the city and the court historian Joah son of Joahaz, to repair the
temple of the LORD his God.

[9] So they went to Hilkiah the high priest, and gave him the money
brought into God's temple. The Levites and the doorkeepers had collected
money from Manasseh, Ephraim, and from the entire remnant of Israel, and
from all Judah, Benjamin, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. [10] They put it
into the hands of those doing the work — those who oversaw the LORD's
temple. They gave it to the workmen who were working in the LORD's
temple, to repair and restore the temple; [11] they gave it to the carpenters and

builders and also used it to buy quarried stone and timbers — for joining and making beams — for the buildings that Judah’s kings had destroyed.

12 The men were doing the work with integrity. Their overseers were Jahath and Obadiah, Levites from the Merarites, and Zechariah and Meshullam from the Kohathites as supervisors. The Levites were all skilled with musical instruments. 13 They were also over the porters and were supervising all those doing the work task by task. Some of the Levites were secretaries, officers, and gatekeepers.

The Recovery of the Book of the Law

14† When they brought out the money that had been deposited in the
LORD's temple, Hilkiah the priest found the book of the law of the LORD
written by the hand of Moses. 15 Consequently, Hilkiah told Shaphan the
court secretary, "I have found the book of the law in the LORD's temple,"
and he gave the book to Shaphan.

16 Shaphan took the book to the king, and also reported, "Your servants
are doing all that was placed in their hands. 17 They have emptied out the
money that was found in the LORD's temple and have put it into the hand of
the overseers and the hand of those doing the work." 18 Then Shaphan the
court secretary told the king, "Hilkiah the priest gave me a book," and
Shaphan read from it in the presence of the king.

19 When the king heard the words of the law, he tore his clothes. 20 Then
he commanded Hilkiah, Ahikam son of Shaphan, Abdon son of Micah,
Shaphan the court secretary, and the king's servant Asaiah, 21 "Go. Ask
•Yahweh for me and for those remaining in Israel and Judah, concerning the
words of the book that was found. For great is the LORD's wrath that is
poured out on us because our fathers have not kept the word of the LORD in
order to do everything written in this book."

Huldah's Prophecy of Judgment

22 So Hilkiah and those the king had designated went to the prophetess
Huldah, the wife of Shallum son of Tokhath, son of Hasrah, keeper of the
wardrobe. She lived in Jerusalem in the Second District. They spoke with
her about this.

23 She said to them, "This is what Yahweh, the God of Israel says: Say to
the man who sent you to Me, 24 'This is what Yahweh says: I am about to
bring disaster on this place and on its inhabitants, fulfilling all the curses
written in the book that they read in the presence of the king of Judah,
25 because they have abandoned Me and burned incense to other gods in
order to provoke Me with all the works of their hands. My wrath will be

poured out on this place, and it will not be quenched.’ [26] Say this to the king
of Judah who sent you to ask Yahweh, ‘This is what Yahweh, the God of
Israel says: As for the words that you heard, [27] because your heart was
tender and you humbled yourself before God when you heard His words
against this place and against its inhabitants, and because you humbled
yourself before Me, and you tore your clothes and wept before Me, I Myself
have heard’ — this is the LORD’s declaration. [28] ‘I will indeed gather you to
your fathers, and you will be gathered to your grave in peace. Your eyes
will not see all the disaster that I am bringing on this place and on its
inhabitants.’ ”

Then they reported to the king.

Affirmation of the Covenant by Josiah and the People

[29] So the king sent messengers and gathered all the elders of Judah and
Jerusalem. [30†] The king went up to the LORD’s temple with all the men of
Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, as well as the priests and the
Levites — all the people from great to small. He read in their hearing all the
words of the book of the covenant that had been found in the LORD’s
temple. [31] Then the king stood at his post and made a covenant in the
LORD’s presence to follow the LORD and to keep His commands, His
decrees, and His statutes with all his heart and with all his soul in order to
carry out the words of the covenant written in this book.

[32] He had all those present in Jerusalem and Benjamin agree [A] to it. So
all the inhabitants of Jerusalem carried out the covenant of God, the God of
their ancestors.

[33] So Josiah removed everything that was detestable from all the lands
belonging to the Israelites, and he required all who were present in Israel to
serve the LORD their God. Throughout his reign they did not turn aside from
following Yahweh, the God of their ancestors.

2 CHRONICLES

Josiah’s Passover Observance

35 Josiah observed the LORD's •Passover and slaughtered the Passover
lambs on the fourteenth day of the first month. 2 He appointed the
priests to their responsibilities and encouraged them to serve in the LORD's
temple. 3† He said to the Levites who taught all Israel the holy things of
the LORD, "Put the holy ark in the temple built by Solomon son of David
king of Israel. Since you do not have to carry it on your shoulders, now
serve •Yahweh your God and His people Israel.

4 "Organize your ancestral houses by your divisions according to the
written instruction of David king of Israel and that of his son Solomon.
5 Serve in the holy place by the divisions of the ancestral houses for your
brothers, the lay people, [A] and the distribution of the tribal household of the
Levites. 6 Slaughter the Passover lambs, consecrate yourselves, and make
preparations for your brothers to carry out the word of the LORD through
Moses."

7 Then Josiah donated 30,000 sheep, lambs, and young goats, plus 3,000
bulls from his own possessions, for the Passover sacrifices for all the lay
people [B] who were present.

8 His officials also donated willingly for the people, the priests, and the
Levites. Hilkiah, Zechariah, and Jehiel, chief officials of God's temple,
gave 2,600 Passover sacrifices and 300 bulls for the priests. 9 Conaniah and
his brothers Shemaiah and Nethanel, and Hashabiah, Jeiel, and Jozabad,
officers of the Levites, donated 5,000 Passover sacrifices for the Levites,
plus 500 bulls.

10 So the service was established; the priests stood at their posts and the
Levites in their divisions according to the king's command. 11 Then they
slaughtered the Passover lambs, and while the Levites were skinning the
animals, the priests sprinkled the blood they had been given. [C] 12 They
removed the •burnt offerings so that they might be given to the divisions of
the ancestral houses of the lay people [D] to offer to the LORD, according to
what is written in the book of Moses; they did the same with the bulls.
13 They roasted the Passover lambs with fire according to regulation. They

boiled the holy sacrifices in pots, kettles, and bowls; and they quickly
brought them to the lay people. [E] 14 Afterward, they made preparations for
themselves and for the priests, since the priests, the descendants of Aaron,
were busy offering up burnt offerings and fat until night. So the Levites
made preparations for themselves and for the priests, the descendants of
Aaron.

15 The singers, the descendants of •Asaph, were at their stations
according to the command of David, Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun the
king's seer. Also, the gatekeepers were at each gate. None of them left
their tasks because their Levite brothers had made preparations for them.

16 So all the service of the LORD was established that day for observing
the Passover and for offering burnt offerings on the altar of the LORD,
according to the command of King Josiah. 17 The Israelites who were
present in Judah also observed the Passover at that time and the Festival of
Unleavened Bread for seven days. 18 No Passover had been observed like
it in Israel since the days of Samuel the prophet. None of the kings of Israel
ever observed a Passover like the one that Josiah observed with the priests,
the Levites, all Judah, the Israelites who were present in Judah, and the
inhabitants of Jerusalem. 19 In the eighteenth year of Josiah's reign, this
Passover was observed.

Josiah's Last Deeds and Death

20 After all this that Josiah had prepared for the temple, Neco king of
Egypt marched up to fight at Carchemish by the Euphrates, and Josiah
went out to confront him. 21[†] But Neco sent messengers to him, saying,
"What is the issue between you and me, king of Judah? I have not come
against you today but I am fighting another dynasty. [F] God told me to
hurry. Stop opposing God who is with me; don't make Him destroy you! "

22 But Josiah did not turn away from him; instead, in order to fight with
him he disguised himself. He did not listen to Neco's words from the
mouth of God, but went to the Valley of Megiddo to fight. 23 The archers
shot King Josiah, and he said to his servants, "Take me away, for I am

severely wounded! ” 24 So his servants took him out of the war chariot,
carried him in his second chariot, and brought him to Jerusalem. Then he
died, and they buried him in the tomb of his fathers. All Judah and
Jerusalem mourned for Josiah. 25† Jeremiah chanted a dirge over Josiah,
and all the singing men and singing women still speak of Josiah in their
dirges to this very day. They established them as a statute for Israel, and
indeed they are written in the Dirges.

26 The rest of the events of Josiah’s reign, along with his deeds of
faithful love according to what is written in the law of the Lord, 27 and his
words, from beginning to end, are written in the Book of the Kings of Israel
and Judah.

2 CHRONICLES

Judah's King Jehoahaz

36 Then the common people [A] took Jehoahaz son of Josiah and made
him king in Jerusalem in place of his father.

[2†] Jehoahaz was 23 years old when he became king and reigned three
months in Jerusalem. [3] The king of Egypt deposed him in Jerusalem and
fined the land 7,500 pounds [B] of silver and 75 pounds [C] of gold.

Judah's King Jehoiakim

[4] Then Neco king of Egypt made Jehoahaz's brother Eliakim king over
Judah and Jerusalem and changed Eliakim's name to Jehoiakim. But Neco
took his brother Jehoahaz and brought him to Egypt.

[5†] Jehoiakim was 25 years old when he became king and reigned 11 years
in Jerusalem. He did what was evil in the sight of the LORD his God.
[6†] Now Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon attacked him and bound him in
bronze shackles to take him to Babylon. [7] Also Nebuchadnezzar took some
of the utensils of the LORD's temple to Babylon and put them in his temple
in Babylon.

[8] The rest of the deeds of Jehoiakim, the detestable things he did, and
what was found against him, are written in the Book of Israel's Kings. His
son Jehoiachin became king in his place.

Judah's King Jehoiachin

[9†] Jehoiachin was 18 years old when he became king and reigned three
months and 10 days in Jerusalem. He did what was evil in the LORD's sight.
[10] In the spring [D] Nebuchadnezzar sent for him and brought him to
Babylon along with the valuable utensils of the LORD's temple. Then he
made Jehoiachin's brother Zedekiah king over Judah and Jerusalem.

Judah's King Zedekiah

[11†] Zedekiah was 21 years old when he became king and reigned 11
years in Jerusalem. [12] He did what was evil in the sight of the LORD his God

and did not humble himself before Jeremiah the prophet at the LORD's
command. [13] He also rebelled against King Nebuchadnezzar who had
made him swear allegiance by God. He became obstinate [E], and hardened
his heart against returning to •Yahweh, the God of Israel. [14] All the leaders
of the priests and the people multiplied their unfaithful deeds, imitating all
the detestable practices of the nations, and they defiled the LORD's temple
that He had consecrated in Jerusalem.

The Destruction of Jerusalem

[15] But Yahweh, the God of their ancestors sent word against them by the
hand of His messengers, sending them time and time again, for He had
compassion on His people and on His dwelling place. [16] But they kept
ridiculing God's messengers, despising His words, and scoffing at His
prophets, until the LORD's wrath was so stirred up against His people that
there was no remedy. [17] So He brought up against them the king of the
Chaldeans, who killed their choice young men with the sword in the house
of their sanctuary. He had no pity on young men or young women, elderly
or aged; He handed them all over to him. [18] He took everything to
Babylon — all the articles of God's temple, large and small, the treasures of
the LORD's temple, and the treasures of the king and his officials. [19] Then
the Chaldeans burned God's temple. They tore down Jerusalem's wall,
burned down all its palaces, and destroyed all its valuable articles.

[20] He deported those who escaped from the sword to Babylon, and they
became servants to him and his sons until the rise of the Persian kingdom.
[21†] This fulfilled the word of the LORD through Jeremiah and the land
enjoyed its Sabbath rest all the days of the desolation until 70 years were
fulfilled.

The Decree of Cyrus

[22†] In the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, the word of the LORD spoken
through [F] Jeremiah was fulfilled. The LORD put it into the mind of King
Cyrus of Persia to issue a proclamation throughout his entire kingdom and
also to put it in writing:

23† This is what King Cyrus of Persia says: The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth and has appointed me to build Him a temple at Jerusalem in Judah. Whoever among you of His people may go up, and may the LORD his God be with him.

EZRA

Introduction to Ezra

Chapter 8

Those Returning with Ezra (Ezra 8:1-20)
Preparing to Return (Ezra 8:21-30)
Arrival in Jerusalem (Ezra 8:31-36)

Chapter 9

Israel's Intermarriage with Pagans (Ezra 9:1-3)
Ezra's Confession (Ezra 9:4-15)

Chapter 10

Sending Away Foreign Wives (Ezra 10:1-17)
Those Married to Foreign Wives (Ezra 10:18-44)

EZRA

The Decree of Cyrus

1 [†]In the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, the word of the LORD spoken through Jeremiah was fulfilled. The LORD put it into the mind of King Cyrus to issue a proclamation throughout his entire kingdom and to put it in writing:

2[†] This is what King Cyrus of Persia says: "The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth and has appointed me to build Him a house at Jerusalem in Judah.
3 Whoever is among His people, may his God be with him, and may he go to Jerusalem in Judah and build the house of the LORD, the God of Israel, the God who is in Jerusalem. 4 Let every survivor, wherever he lives, be assisted by the men of that region with silver, gold, goods, and livestock, along with a freewill offering for the house of God in Jerusalem."

Return from Exile

5 So the family leaders of Judah and Benjamin, along with the priests and Levites — everyone God had motivated [A] — prepared to go up and rebuild the LORD's house in Jerusalem. 6 All their neighbors supported them [B] with silver articles, gold, goods, livestock, and valuables, in addition to all that was given as a freewill offering. 7 King Cyrus also brought out the articles of the LORD's house that Nebuchadnezzar had taken from Jerusalem and had placed in the house of his gods. 8 King Cyrus of Persia had them brought out under the supervision of Mithredath the treasurer, who counted them out to Sheshbazzar the prince of Judah. 9 This was the inventory:

30 gold basins, 1,000 silver basins,
29 silver knives, 10 30 gold bowls,
410 various [C] silver bowls, and 1,000 other articles.

11 The gold and silver articles totaled 5,400. Sheshbazzar brought all of them when the exiles went up from Babylon to Jerusalem.

EZRA

The Exiles Who Returned

2 [†]These now are the people of the province who came from those captive exiles King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon had deported to Babylon. They returned to Jerusalem and Judah, each to his own town.
2[†] They came with Zerubbabel, Jeshua, Nehemiah, Seraiah, Reelaiah, Mordecai, Bilshan, Mispar, Bigvai, Rehum, and Baanah.

The number of the Israelite men included: [A]

3[†] Parosh's descendants	2,172
4 Shephatiah's descendants	372
5 Arah's descendants	775
6 Pahath-moab's descendants:	
Jeshua's and Joab's descendants	2,812
7 Elam's descendants	1,254
8 Zattu's descendants	945
9 Zaccai's descendants	760
10 Bani's descendants	642
11 Bebai's descendants	623
12 Azgad's descendants	1,222
13 Adonikam's descendants	666
14 Bigvai's descendants	2,056

15 Adin’s descendants	454
16 Ater’s descendants: Hezekiah’s	98
17 Bezai’s descendants	323
18 Jorah’s descendants	112
19 Hashum’s descendants	223
20 Gibbar’s descendants	95
21 Bethlehem’s people	123
22 Netophah’s men	56
23 Anathoth’s men	128
24 Azmaveth’s people	42
25 Kiriatharim’s, Chephirah’s, and Beeroth’s people	743
26 Ramah’s and Geba’s people	621
27 Michmas’s men	122
28 Bethel’s and Ai’s men	223
29 Nebo’s people	52
30 Magbish’s people	156
31 the other Elam’s people	1,254

32 Harim’s people	320
33 Lod’s, Hadid’s, and Ono’s people	725
34 Jericho’s people	345
35 Senaah’s people	3,630

36 The priests included:

Jedaiah’s descendants of the house of Jeshua	973
37 Immer’s descendants	1,052
38 Pashhur’s descendants	1,247
39 and Harim’s descendants	1,017

40 The Levites included:

Jeshua’s and Kadmiel’s descendants	
from Hodaviah’s descendants	74

41 The singers included:

•Asaph’s descendants	128

42 The gatekeepers’ descendants included:

Shallum’s descendants, Ater’s descendants,

Talmon's descendants, Akkub's descendants,

Hatita's descendants, Shobai's descendants, in all 139

43 The temple servants included:

Ziha's descendants, Hasupha's descendants,
Tabbaoth's descendants, 44 Keros's descendants,
Siaha's descendants, Padon's descendants,
45 Lebanah's descendants, Hagabah's descendants,
Akkub's descendants, 46 Hagab's descendants,
Shalmai's descendants, Hanan's descendants,
47 Giddel's descendants, Gahar's descendants,
Reaiah's descendants, 48 Rezin's descendants,
Nekoda's descendants, Gazzam's descendants,
49 Uzza's descendants, Paseah's descendants,
Besai's descendants, 50 Asnah's descendants,
Meunim's descendants, Nephusim's descendants,
51 Bakbuk's descendants, Hakupha's descendants,
Harhur's descendants, 52 Bazluth's descendants,
Mehida's descendants, Harsha's descendants,
53 Barkos's descendants, Sisera's descendants,
Temah's descendants, 54 Neziah's descendants,
and Hatipha's descendants.

55 The descendants of Solomon's servants included:

Sotai's descendants, Hassophereth's descendants,

Peruda's descendants, 56 Jaalah's descendants,

Darkon's descendants, Giddel's descendants,

57 Shephatiah's descendants, Hattil's descendants,

Pochereth-hazzebaim's descendants, and Ami's descendants.

58 All the temple servants

and the descendants of Solomon's servants 392.

59 The following are those who came from Tel-melah, Tel-harsha,
Cherub, Addan, and Immer but were unable to prove that their families and
ancestry were Israelite:

60 Delaiah's descendants,

Tobiah's descendants,

Nekoda's descendants 652

61 and from the descendants of the priests: the descendants of Hobaiah, the
descendants of Hakkoz, the descendants of Barzillai — who had taken a
wife from the daughters of Barzillai the Gileadite and was called by their
name. 62† These searched for their entries in the genealogical records, but
they could not be found, so they were disqualified from the priesthood.
63† The governor ordered them not to eat the most holy things until there
was a priest who could consult the •Urim and Thummim.

64 The whole combined assembly numbered 42,360

65 not including their 7,337 male and female slaves,

and their 200 male and female singers.

66 They had 736 horses, 245 mules,

[67] 435 camels, and 6,720 donkeys.

Gifts for the Work

[68†] After they arrived at the LORD's house in Jerusalem, some of the
family leaders gave freewill offerings for the house of God in order to have
it rebuilt on its original site. [69] Based on what they could give, they gave
61,000 gold coins, [B] 6,250 pounds [C] of silver, and 100 priestly garments to
the treasury for the project. [70] The priests, Levites, singers, gatekeepers,
temple servants, and some of the people settled in their towns, and the rest
of Israel settled in their towns.

EZRA

Sacrifice Restored

3 By the seventh month, the Israelites had settled in their towns, and the
people gathered together in Jerusalem. 2† Jeshua son of Jozadak and his
brothers the priests along with Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel and his brothers
began to build the altar of Israel’s God in order to offer •burnt offerings on
it, as it is written in the law of Moses, the man of God. 3† They set up the
altar on its foundation and offered burnt offerings for the morning and
evening on it to the LORD even though they feared the surrounding peoples.
4† They celebrated the Festival of Booths as prescribed, and offered burnt
offerings each day, based on the number specified by ordinance for each
festival day. 5 After that, they offered the regular burnt offering and the
offerings for the beginning of each month [A], and for all the LORD’s
appointed holy occasions, as well as the freewill offerings brought to [B] the
LORD.

6† On the first day of the seventh month they began to offer burnt
offerings to the LORD, even though the foundation of the LORD’s temple had
not yet been laid. 7 They gave money to the stonecutters and artisans, and
gave food, drink, and oil to the people of Sidon and Tyre, so they could
bring cedar wood from Lebanon to Joppa by sea, according to the
authorization given them by King Cyrus of Persia.

Rebuilding the Temple

8 In the second month of the second year after they arrived at God’s
house in Jerusalem, Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, Jeshua son of Jozadak,
and the rest of their brothers, including the priests, the Levites, and all who
had returned to Jerusalem from the captivity, began to build. They
appointed the Levites who were 20 years old or more to supervise the work
on the LORD’s house. 9 Jeshua with his sons and brothers, Kadmiel with his
sons, and the sons of Judah [C] and of Henadad, with their sons and brothers,
the Levites, joined together to supervise those working on the house of
God.

Temple Foundation Completed

10† When the builders had laid the foundation of the LORD's temple, the
priests, dressed in their robes and holding trumpets, and the Levites
descended from •Asaph, holding cymbals, took their positions to praise the
LORD, as King David of Israel had instructed. 11† They sang with praise and
thanksgiving to the LORD: "For He is good; His faithful love to Israel
endures forever." Then all the people gave a great shout of praise to the
LORD because the foundation of the LORD's house had been laid.

12 But many of the older priests, Levites, and family leaders, who had
seen the first temple, wept loudly when they saw the foundation of this
house, but many others shouted joyfully. 13 The people could not
distinguish the sound of the joyful shouting from that of the [D] weeping,
because the people were shouting so loudly. And the sound was heard far
away.

EZRA

Opposition to Rebuilding the Temple

4 When the enemies of Judah and Benjamin heard that the returned
exiles [A], were building a temple for •Yahweh, the God of Israel, 2 they
approached Zerubbabel and the leaders of the families and said to them,
"Let us build with you, for we also worship your God and have been
sacrificing to Him since the time King Esar-haddon of Assyria brought us
here."

3† But Zerubbabel, Jeshua, and the other leaders of Israel's families
answered them, "You may have no part with us in building a house for our
God, since we alone must build it for Yahweh, the God of Israel, as King
Cyrus, the king of Persia has commanded us." 4 Then the people who were
already in the land [B] discouraged [C] the people of Judah and made them
afraid to build. 5 They also bribed officials to act against them to frustrate
their plans throughout the reign of King Cyrus of Persia and until the reign
of King Darius of Persia.

Opposition to Rebuilding the City

6 At the beginning of the reign of Ahasuerus, the people who were
already in the land [D] wrote an accusation against the residents of Judah and
Jerusalem. 7 During the time of King Artaxerxes of Persia, Bishlam,
Mithredath, Tabeel and the rest of his colleagues wrote to King Artaxerxes.
The letter was written in Aramaic and translated. [E]

8 Rehum the chief deputy and Shimshai the scribe wrote a letter to King
Artaxerxes concerning Jerusalem as follows:

> 9† From Rehum [F] the chief deputy, Shimshai the scribe, and the
> rest of their colleagues — the judges and magistrates [G] from
> Tripolis, Persia, Erech, Babylon, Susa (that is, the people of
> Elam), [H] 10 and the rest of the peoples whom the great and
> illustrious Ashurbanipal [I] deported and settled in the cities of
> Samaria and the region west of the Euphrates River.

11 This is the text of the letter they sent to him:

To King Artaxerxes from your servants, the men from the region
west of the Euphrates River:

[12] Let it be known to the king that the Jews who came from you
have returned to us at Jerusalem. They are rebuilding that
rebellious and evil city, finishing its walls, and repairing its
foundations. [13] Let it now be known to the king that if that city is
rebuilt and its walls are finished, they will not pay tribute, duty,
or land tax, and the royal revenue [J] will suffer. [14] Since we have
taken an oath of loyalty to the king, [K] and it is not right for us to
witness his dishonor, we have sent to inform the king [15] that a
search should be made in your fathers' record books. In these
record books you will discover and verify that the city is a
rebellious city, harmful to kings and provinces. There have been
revolts in it since ancient times. That is why this city was
destroyed. [16] We advise the king that if this city is rebuilt and its
walls are finished, you will not have any possession west of the
Euphrates.

Artaxerxes' Reply

[17] The king sent a reply to his chief deputy Rehum, Shimshai the scribe,
and the rest of their colleagues living in Samaria and elsewhere in the
region west of the Euphrates River:

Greetings.

[18] The letter you sent us has been translated and read [L], in my
presence. [19] I issued a decree and a search was conducted. It was
discovered that this city has had uprisings against kings since
ancient times, and there have been rebellions and revolts in it.
[20†] Powerful kings have also ruled over Jerusalem and exercised
authority over the whole region, and tribute, duty, and land tax
were paid to them. [21] Therefore, issue an order for these men to
stop, so that this city will not be rebuilt until a further decree has
been pronounced by me. [22] See that you not neglect this matter.

Otherwise, the damage will increase and the royal interests [M] will suffer.

[23] As soon as the text of King Artaxerxes' letter was read to Rehum, Shimshai the scribe, and their colleagues, they immediately went to the Jews in Jerusalem and forcibly stopped them.

Rebuilding of the Temple Resumed

[24] Now the construction of God's house in Jerusalem had stopped and remained at a standstill until the second year of the reign of King Darius of Persia.

EZRA

5 [†] But when the prophets Haggai and Zechariah son of Iddo prophesied
to the Jews who were in Judah and Jerusalem, in the name of the God of
Israel who was over them, [2] Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel and Jeshua son of
Jozadak began to rebuild God's house in Jerusalem. The prophets of God
were with them, helping them.

[3] At that time Tattenai the governor of the region west of the Euphrates
River, Shethar-bozenai, and their colleagues came to the Jews and asked,
"Who gave you the order to rebuild this temple and finish this
structure? " [A], [4] They also asked them, "What are the names of the
workers who are constructing this building? " [5†] But God was watching [B]
over the Jewish elders. These men wouldn't stop them until a report was
sent to Darius, so that they could receive written instructions about this
matter.

The Letter to Darius

[6] This is the text of the letter that Tattenai the governor of the region west
of the Euphrates River, Shethar-bozenai, and their colleagues, the officials
in the region, sent to King Darius. [7] They sent him a report, written as
follows:

To King Darius:

All greetings.

[8] Let it be known to the king that we went to the house of the
great God in the province of Judah. It is being built with cut [C]
stones, and its beams are being set in the walls. This work is being
done diligently and succeeding through the people's efforts. [9] So
we questioned the elders and asked, "Who gave you the order to
rebuild this temple and finish this structure? " [D] [10] We also asked
them for their names, so that we could write down the names of
their leaders for your information.

[11] This is the reply they gave us:

We are the servants of the God of heaven and earth and are
rebuilding the temple that was built many years ago, which a great
king of Israel built and finished. [12†] But since our fathers angered
the God of heaven, He handed them over to King Nebuchadnezzar
of Babylon, the Chaldean, who destroyed this temple and
deported the people to Babylon. [13] However, in the first year of
Cyrus king of Babylon, he issued a decree to rebuild the house of
God. [14] He also took from the temple in Babylon the gold and
silver articles of God's house that Nebuchadnezzar had taken from
the temple in Jerusalem and carried them to the temple in
Babylon. He released them from the temple in Babylon to a man
named Sheshbazzar, the governor by the appointment of King
Cyrus. [15] Cyrus told him, "Take these articles, put them in the
temple in Jerusalem, and let the house of God be rebuilt on its
original site." [16] Then this same Sheshbazzar came and laid the
foundation of God's house in Jerusalem. It has been under
construction from that time until now, yet it has not been
completed.

[17] So if it pleases the king, let a search of the royal archives [E] in Babylon be conducted to see if it is true that a decree was issued by King Cyrus to rebuild the house of God in Jerusalem. Let the king's decision regarding this matter be sent to us.

EZRA

Darius's Search

6 King Darius gave the order, and they searched in the library of Babylon
in the archives. [A] 2 But it was in the fortress of Ecbatana in the province
of Media that a scroll was found with this record written on it:

3 In the first year of King Cyrus, he issued a decree concerning
the house of God in Jerusalem:

Let the house be rebuilt as a place for offering sacrifices, and let
its original foundations be retained. [B] Its height is to be 90 feet [C]
and its width 90 feet, [D], , 4 with three layers of cut [E] stones and
one of timber. The cost is to be paid from the royal treasury.
5 The gold and silver articles of God's house that Nebuchadnezzar
took from the temple in Jerusalem and carried to Babylon must
also be returned. They are to be brought to the temple in
Jerusalem where they belong [F] and put into the house of God.

Darius's Decree

6 Therefore, you must stay away from that place, Tattenai
governor of the region west of the Euphrates River, Shethar-
bozenai, and your [G] colleagues, the officials in the region.
7 Leave the construction of the house of God alone. Let the
governor and elders of the Jews rebuild this house of God on its
original site.

8[†] I hereby issue a decree concerning what you must do, so that
the elders of the Jews can rebuild the house of God:

The cost is to be paid in full to these men out of the royal
revenues from the taxes of the region west of the Euphrates
River, so that the work will not stop. 9 Whatever is
needed — young bulls, rams, and lambs for •burnt offerings to the
God of heaven, or wheat, salt, wine, and oil, as requested by the
priests in Jerusalem — let it be given to them every day without
fail, 10 so that they can offer sacrifices of pleasing aroma to the
God of heaven and pray for the life of the king and his sons.

[11] I also issue a decree concerning any man who interferes with this directive:

> Let a beam be torn from his house and raised up; he will be impaled on it, and his house will be made into a garbage dump because of this offense. [12] May the God who caused His name to dwell there overthrow any king or people who dares [H] to harm or interfere with this house of God in Jerusalem. I, Darius, have issued the decree. Let it be carried out diligently.

[13] Then Tattenai governor of the region west of the Euphrates River, Shethar-bozenai, and their colleagues diligently carried out what King Darius had decreed. [14] So the Jewish elders continued successfully with the building under the prophesying of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah son of Iddo. They finished the building according to the command of the God of Israel and the decrees of Cyrus, Darius, and King Artaxerxes of Persia.
[15] This house was completed on the third day of the month of Adar in the sixth year of the reign of King Darius.

Temple Dedication and the Passover

[16] Then the Israelites, including the priests, the Levites, and the rest of the exiles, celebrated the dedication of the house of God with joy. [17] For the dedication of God's house they offered 100 bulls, 200 rams, and 400 lambs, as well as 12 male goats as a •sin offering for all Israel — one for each Israelite tribe. [18†] They also appointed the priests by their divisions and the Levites by their groups to the service of God in Jerusalem, according to what is written in the book of Moses.

[19] The exiles observed the •Passover on the fourteenth day of the first month. [20] All of the priests and Levites were ceremonially •clean, because they had purified themselves. They killed the Passover lamb for themselves, their priestly brothers, and all the exiles. [21†] The Israelites who had returned from exile ate it, together with all who had separated themselves from the uncleanness of the Gentiles of the land [I], in order to worship •Yahweh, the God of Israel. [22] They observed the Festival of Unleavened

Bread for seven days with joy, because the LORD had made them joyful, having changed the Assyrian king's attitude toward them, so that he supported them [J] in the work on the house of the God of Israel.

EZRA

Ezra's Arrival

7 After these events, during the reign of King Artaxerxes of Persia, Ezra —

Seraiah's son, Azariah's son,
Hilkiah's son, [2] Shallum's son,
Zadok's son, Ahitub's son,
[3] Amariah's son, Azariah's son,
Meraioth's son, [4] Zerahiah's son,
Uzzi's son, Bukki's son,
[5] Abishua's son, Phinehas's son,
Eleazar's son, Aaron the chief priest's son

[6]† — came up from Babylon. He was a scribe skilled in the law of Moses,
which •Yahweh, the God of Israel, had given. The king had granted him
everything he requested because the hand of Yahweh his God was on him.
[7] Some of the Israelites, priests, Levites, singers, gatekeepers, and temple
servants accompanied him to Jerusalem in the seventh year of King
Artaxerxes.

[8] Ezra came to Jerusalem in the fifth month, during the seventh year of
the king. [9] He began the journey from Babylon on the first day of the first
month and arrived in Jerusalem on the first day of the fifth month since the
gracious hand of his God was on him. [10] Now Ezra had determined in his
heart to study the law of the LORD, obey it, and teach its statutes and
ordinances in Israel.

Letter from Artaxerxes

[11] This is the text of the letter King Artaxerxes gave to Ezra the priest and scribe, an expert in matters of the LORD's commands and statutes for Israel:

> [12] Artaxerxes, king of kings, to Ezra the priest, an expert in the law of the God of heaven:
>
> Greetings.

[13] I issue a decree that any of the Israelites in my kingdom,
including their priests and Levites, who want to go to Jerusalem,
may go with you. [14] You are sent by the king and his seven
counselors to evaluate Judah and Jerusalem according to the law
of your God, which is in your possession. [15] You are also to bring
the silver and gold the king and his counselors have willingly
given to the God of Israel, whose dwelling is in Jerusalem,
[16] and all the silver and gold you receive throughout the province
of Babylon, together with the freewill offerings given by the
people and the priests to the house of their God in Jerusalem.
[17] Then you are to buy with this money as many bulls, rams, and
lambs as needed, along with their •grain and •drink offerings, and
offer them on the altar at the house of your God in Jerusalem.
[18] You may do whatever seems best to you and your brothers with
the rest of the silver and gold, according to the will of your God.
[19] You must deliver to the God of Jerusalem all the articles given
to you for the service of the house of your God. [20] You may use
the royal treasury to pay for anything else needed for the house of
your God.

[21] I, King Artaxerxes, issue a decree to all the treasurers in the
region west of the Euphrates River:

Whatever Ezra the priest, an expert in the law of the God of
heaven, asks of you must be provided promptly, [22] up to 7,500
pounds [A] of silver, 500 bushels [B] of wheat, 550 gallons [C] of wine,
550 gallons [D] of oil, and salt without limit. [E] [23] Whatever is
commanded by the God of heaven must be done diligently for the
house of the God of heaven, so that wrath will not fall on the
realm of the king and his sons. [24†] Be advised that tribute, duty,
and land tax must not be imposed on any priests, Levites, singers,
doorkeepers, temple servants, or other servants of this house of
God.

[25†] And you, Ezra, according to [F] God’s wisdom that you possess,
appoint magistrates and judges to judge all the people in the
region west of the Euphrates who know the laws of your God and

to teach anyone who does not know them. [26†] Anyone who does not keep the law of your God and the law of the king, let a fair judgment be executed against him, whether death, banishment, confiscation of property, or imprisonment.

[27] Praise Yahweh the God of our fathers, who has put it into the king's
mind to glorify the house of the LORD in Jerusalem, [28] and who has shown
favor to me before the king, his counselors, and all his powerful officers.
So I took courage because I was strengthened by Yahweh my God, [G] and I
gathered Israelite leaders to return with me.

EZRA

Those Returning with Ezra

8 These are the family leaders and the genealogical records of those who returned with me from Babylon during the reign of King Artaxerxes:

[2] Gershom, from Phinehas's descendants;
Daniel, from Ithamar's descendants;
Hattush, from David's descendants,
[3] who was of Shecaniah's descendants;
Zechariah, from Parosh's descendants,
and 150 men [A] with him who were registered by genealogy;
[4] Eliehoenai son of Zerahiah
from Pahath-moab's descendants,
and 200 men with him;
[5] Shecaniah son of Jahaziel
from Zattu's descendants,
and 300 men with him;
[6] Ebed son of Jonathan
from Adin's descendants,
and 50 men with him;
[7] Jeshaiah son of Athaliah
from Elam's descendants,
and 70 men with him;
[8] Zebadiah son of Michael
from Shephatiah's descendants,
and 80 men with him;
[9] Obadiah son of Jehiel
from Joab's descendants,
and 218 men with him;
[10] Shelomith son of Josiphiah
from Bani's descendants,
and 160 men with him;
[11] Zechariah son of Bebai
from Bebai's descendants,
and 28 men with him;
[12] Johanan son of Hakkatan

from Azgad's descendants,
and 110 men with him;
[13] these are the last ones, from Adonikam's descendants,
and their names are:
Eliphelet, Jeuel, and Shemaiah,
and 60 men with them;
[14] Uthai and Zaccur
from Bigvai's descendants,
and 70 men with them.

[15] I gathered them at the river [B] that flows to Ahava, and we camped
there for three days. I searched among the people and priests, but found no
Levites there. [16] Then I summoned the leaders: Eliezer, Ariel, Shemaiah,
Elnathan, Jarib, Elnathan, Nathan, Zechariah, and Meshullam, as well as
the teachers Joiarib and Elnathan. [17] I sent them to Iddo, the leader at
Casiphia, with a message for [C] him and his brothers, the temple servants at
Casiphia, that they should bring us ministers for the house of our God.
[18] Since the gracious hand of our God was on us, they brought us
Sherebiah — a man of insight from the descendants of Mahli, a descendant
of Levi son of Israel — along with his sons and brothers, 18 men, [19] plus
Hashabiah, along with Jeshaiah, from the descendants of Merari, and his
brothers and their sons, 20 men. [20] There were also 220 of the temple
servants, who had been appointed by David and the leaders for the work of
the Levites. All were identified by name.

Preparing to Return

[21] I proclaimed a fast by the Ahava River, [D] so that we might humble
ourselves before our God and ask Him for a safe journey for us, our
children, and all our possessions. [22] I did this because I was ashamed to ask
the king for infantry and cavalry to protect us from enemies during the
journey, since we had told him, "The hand of our God is gracious to all who
seek Him, but His great anger is against all who abandon Him." [23] So we
fasted and pleaded with our God about this, and He granted our request.

24 I selected 12 of the leading priests, along with Sherebiah, Hashabiah,
and 10 of their brothers. 25 I weighed out to them the silver, the gold, and
the articles — the contribution for the house of our God that the king, his
counselors, his leaders, and all the Israelites who were present had offered.
26 I weighed out to them 24 tons [E] of silver, silver articles weighing 7,500
pounds, [F] 7,500 pounds [G] of gold, 27 20 gold bowls worth 1,000 gold
coins, [H] and two articles of fine gleaming bronze, as valuable as gold.
28 Then I said to them, “You are holy to the LORD, and the articles are holy.
The silver and gold are a freewill offering to the LORD God of your fathers.
29 Guard them carefully until you weigh them out in the chambers of the
LORD’s house before the leading priests, Levites, and heads of the Israelite
families in Jerusalem.” 30 So the priests and Levites took charge of the
silver, the gold, and the articles that had been weighed out, to bring them to
the house of our God in Jerusalem.

Arrival in Jerusalem

31 We set out from the Ahava River [I] on the twelfth day of the first month
to go to Jerusalem. We were strengthened by our God, [J] and He protected
us from the power of the enemy and from ambush along the way. 32 So we
arrived at Jerusalem and rested there for three days. 33 On the fourth day
the silver, the gold, and the articles were weighed out in the house of our
God into the care of Meremoth the priest, son of Uriah. Eleazar son of
Phinehas was with him. The Levites Jozabad son of Jeshua and Noadiah
son of Binnui were also with them. 34 Everything was verified by number
and weight, and the total weight was recorded at that time.

35 The exiles who had returned from the captivity offered •burnt
offerings to the God of Israel: 12 bulls for all Israel, 96 rams, and 77 lambs,
along with 12 male goats as a •sin offering. All this was a burnt offering for
the LORD. 36 They also delivered the king’s edicts to the royal satraps and
governors of the region west of the Euphrates, so that they would support
the people and the house of God.

EZRA

Israel's Intermarriage with Pagans

9 After these things had been done, the leaders approached me and said:
"The people of Israel, the priests, and the Levites have not separated
themselves from the surrounding peoples whose detestable practices are
like those of the Canaanites, Hittites, Perizzites, Jebusites, Ammonites,
Moabites, Egyptians, and Amorites. 2 Indeed, the Israelite men [A] have
taken some of their daughters as wives for themselves and their sons, so
that the holy •seed has become mixed with the surrounding peoples. The
leaders [B] and officials have taken the lead in this unfaithfulness!" 3† When
I heard this report, I tore my tunic and robe, pulled out some of the hair
from my head and beard, and sat down devastated.

Ezra's Confession

4 Everyone who trembled at the words of the God of Israel gathered
around me, because of the unfaithfulness of the exiles, while I sat
devastated until the evening offering. 5 At the evening offering, I got up
from my humiliation, with my tunic and robe torn. Then I fell on my knees
and spread out my hands to •Yahweh my God. 6 And I said:

> My God, I am ashamed and embarrassed to lift my face toward
> You, my God, because our iniquities are higher than our heads
> and our •guilt is as high as the heavens. 7 Our guilt has been
> terrible from the days of our fathers until the present. Because of
> our iniquities we have been handed over, along with our kings and
> priests, to the surrounding kings, and to the sword, captivity,
> plundering, and open shame, as it is today. 8 But now, for a brief
> moment, grace has come from Yahweh our God to preserve a
> remnant for us and give us a stake in His holy place. Even in our
> slavery, God has given us new life and light to our eyes. 9 Though
> we are slaves, our God has not abandoned us in our slavery. He
> has extended grace to us in the presence of the Persian kings,
> giving us new life, so that we can rebuild the house of our God
> and repair its ruins, to give us a wall in Judah and Jerusalem.
>
> 10 Now, our God, what can we say in light of [C] this? For we have
> abandoned the commands 11† You gave through Your servants the
> prophets, saying: "The land you are entering to possess is an

impure land. The surrounding peoples have filled it from end to
end with their uncleanness by their impurity and detestable
practices. 12 So do not give your daughters to their sons in
marriage or take their daughters for your sons. Never seek their
peace or prosperity, so that you will be strong, eat the good things
of the land, and leave it as an inheritance to your sons forever."
13 After all that has happened to us because of our evil deeds and
terrible guilt — though You, our God, have punished us less than
our sins deserve and have allowed us to survive [D] — 14 should
we break Your commands again and intermarry with the peoples
who commit these detestable practices? Wouldn't You become so
angry with us that You would destroy us, leaving no survivors?
15 LORD God of Israel, You are righteous, for we survive as a
remnant today. Here we are before You with our guilt, though no
one can stand in Your presence because of this.

EZRA

Sending Away Foreign Wives

10 While Ezra prayed and confessed, weeping and falling facedown
before the house of God, an extremely large assembly of Israelite
men, women, and children gathered around him. The people also wept
bitterly. 2 Then Shecaniah son of Jehiel, an Elamite, responded to Ezra:
“We have been unfaithful to our God by marrying foreign women from the
surrounding peoples, but there is still hope for Israel in spite of this. 3† Let
us therefore make a covenant before our God to send away all the foreign
wives and their children, according to the counsel of my lord and of those
who tremble at the command of our God. Let it be done according to the
law. 4 Get up, for this matter is your responsibility, and we support you. Be
strong and take action! ”

5 Then Ezra got up and made the leading priests, Levites, and all Israel
take an oath to do what had been said; so they took the oath. 6 Ezra then
went from the house of God and walked to the chamber of Jehohanan son
of Eliashib, where he spent the night. He did not eat food or drink water,
because he was mourning over the unfaithfulness of the exiles.

7 They circulated a proclamation throughout Judah and Jerusalem that all
the exiles should gather at Jerusalem. 8 Whoever did not come within three
days would forfeit all his possessions, [A] according to the decision of the
leaders and elders, and would be excluded from the assembly of the exiles.

9 So all the men of Judah and Benjamin gathered in Jerusalem within the
three days. On the twentieth day of the ninth month, all the people sat in the
square at the house of God, trembling because of this matter and because of
the heavy rain. 10 Then Ezra the priest stood up and said to them, “You have
been unfaithful by marrying foreign women, adding to Israel’s •guilt.
11 Therefore, make a confession to •Yahweh the God of your fathers and do
His will. Separate yourselves from the surrounding peoples and your
foreign wives.”

12 Then all the assembly responded with a loud voice: “Yes, we will do as
you say! 13 But there are many people, and it is the rainy season. We don’t
have the stamina to stay out in the open. This isn’t something that can be

done in a day or two, for we have rebelled terribly in this matter. [14] Let our
leaders represent the entire assembly. Then let all those in our towns who
have married foreign women come at appointed times, together with the
elders and judges of each town, in order to avert the fierce anger of our
God concerning this matter." [15] Only Jonathan son of Asahel and Jahzeiah
son of Tikvah opposed this, with Meshullam and Shabbethai the Levite
supporting them.

[16] The exiles did what had been proposed. Ezra the priest selected men
who were family leaders, all identified by name, to represent [B] their
ancestral houses. They convened on the first day of the tenth month to
investigate the matter, [17] and by the first day of the first month they had
dealt with all the men who had married foreign women.

Those Married to Foreign Wives

[18] The following were found to have married foreign women from the
descendants of the priests:

from the descendants of Jeshua son of Jozadak and his brothers:
Maaseiah, Eliezer, Jarib, and Gedaliah. [19] They pledged [C] to send their
wives away, and being guilty, they offered a ram from the flock for their
guilt;

[20] Hanani and Zebadiah from Immer's descendants;
[21] Maaseiah, Elijah, Shemaiah, Jehiel, and Uzziah
from Harim's descendants;
[22] Elioenai, Maaseiah, Ishmael, Nethanel, Jozabad, and Elasah
from Pashhur's descendants.

[23] The Levites:

Jozabad, Shimei, Kelaiah (that is Kelita), Pethahiah, Judah, and Eliezer.

[24] The singers:

Eliashib.

The gatekeepers:

Shallum, Telem, and Uri.

[25] The Israelites:

Parosh's descendants: Ramiah, Izziah, Malchijah, Mijamin, Eleazar,
Malchijah, and Benaiah;
[26] Elam's descendants: Mattaniah, Zechariah, Jehiel, Abdi, Jeremoth,
and Elijah;
[27] Zattu's descendants: Elioenai, Eliashib, Mattaniah, Jeremoth, Zabad,
and Aziza;
[28] Bebai's descendants: Jehohanan, Hananiah, Zabbai, and Athlai;
[29] Bani's descendants: Meshullam, Malluch, Adaiah, Jashub, Sheal,
and Jeremoth;
[30] Pahath-moab's descendants: Adna, Chelal, Benaiah, Maaseiah,
Mattaniah, Bezalel, Binnui, and Manasseh;
[31] Harim's descendants: Eliezer, Isshijah, Malchijah, Shemaiah,
Shimeon, [32] Benjamin, Malluch, and Shemariah;
[33] Hashum's descendants: Mattenai, Mattattah, Zabad, Eliphelet,
Jeremai, Manasseh, and Shimei;

[34] Bani's descendants: Maadai, Amram, Uel, [35] Benaiah, Bedeiah,
Cheluhi, [36] Vaniah, Meremoth, Eliashib, [37] Mattaniah, Mattenai, Jaasu,
[38] Bani, Binnui, Shimei, [39] Shelemiah, Nathan, Adaiah, [40] Machnadebai,
Shashai, Sharai, [41] Azarel, Shelemiah, Shemariah, [42] Shallum, Amariah,
and Joseph;

43 Nebo's descendants: Jeiel, Mattithiah, Zabad, Zebina, Jaddai, Joel,
and Benaiah.

44 All of these had married foreign women, and some of the wives had
given birth to children.

NEHEMIAH

Introduction to Nehemiah

NEHEMIAH

1 [†]The words of Nehemiah son of Hacaliah:

News from Jerusalem

During the month of Chislev in the twentieth year, when I was in the
fortress city of Susa, 2 Hanani, one of my brothers, arrived with men from
Judah, and I questioned them about Jerusalem and the Jewish remnant that
had survived the exile. 3 They said to me, “The remnant in the province,
who survived the exile, are in great trouble and disgrace. Jerusalem’s wall
has been broken down, and its gates have been burned down.”

Nehemiah’s Prayer

4 When I heard these words, I sat down and wept. I mourned for a
number of days, fasting and praying before the God of heaven. 5 I said,

> •Yahweh, the God of heaven, the great and awe-inspiring God
> who keeps His gracious covenant with those who love Him and
> keep His commands, 6 let Your eyes be open and Your ears be
> attentive to hear Your servant’s prayer that I now pray to You day
> and night for Your servants, the Israelites. I confess the sins [A] we
> have committed against You. Both I and my father’s house have
> sinned. 7[†] We have acted corruptly toward You and have not kept
> the commands, statutes, and ordinances You gave Your servant
> Moses. 8 Please remember what You commanded Your servant
> Moses: “If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the
> peoples. 9 But if you return to Me and carefully observe My
> commands, even though your exiles were banished to the ends of
> the earth, [B] I will gather them from there and bring them to the
> place where I chose to have My name dwell.” 10 They are Your
> servants and Your people. You redeemed them by Your great
> power and strong hand. 11[†] Please, Lord, let Your ear be attentive
> to the prayer of Your servant and to that of Your servants who
> delight to revere Your name. Give Your servant success today,
> and have compassion on him in the presence of this man.

At the time, I was the king’s cupbearer.

NEHEMIAH

Nehemiah Sent to Jerusalem

2 During the month of Nisan in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes, when wine was set before him, I took the wine and gave it to the king. I had never been sad in his presence, 2 so the king said to me, “Why are you [A] sad, when you aren’t sick? This is nothing but depression.” [B]

I was overwhelmed with fear 3† and replied to the king, “May the king live forever! Why should I [C] not be sad when the city where my ancestors are buried lies in ruins and its gates have been destroyed by fire? ”

4 Then the king asked me, “What is your request? ”

So I prayed to the God of heaven 5 and answered the king, “If it pleases the king, and if your servant has found favor with you, send me to Judah and to the city where my ancestors are buried, [D] so that I may rebuild it.”

6 The king, with the queen seated beside him, asked me, “How long will your journey take, and when will you return? ” So I gave him a definite time, and it pleased the king to send me.

7 I also said to the king: “If it pleases the king, let me have letters written to the governors of the region west of the Euphrates River, so that they will grant me safe passage until I reach Judah. 8† And let me have a letter written to Asaph, keeper of the king’s forest, so that he will give me timber to rebuild the gates of the temple’s fortress, the city wall, and the home where I will live.” [E] The king granted my requests, for I was graciously strengthened by my God. [F]

9 I went to the governors of the region west of the Euphrates and gave them the king’s letters. The king had also sent officers of the infantry and cavalry with me. 10† When Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite official heard that someone had come to seek the well-being of the Israelites, they were greatly displeased.

Preparing to Rebuild the Walls

[11] After I arrived in Jerusalem and had been there three days, [12] I got up
at night and took a few men with me. I didn't tell anyone what my God had
laid on my heart to do for Jerusalem. The only animal I took [G] was the one I
was riding. [13] I went out at night through the Valley Gate toward the
Serpent's [H] Well and the Dung Gate, and I inspected the walls of Jerusalem
that had been broken down and its gates that had been destroyed by fire.
[14] I went on to the Fountain Gate and the King's Pool, but farther down it
became too narrow for my animal to go through. [15] So I went up at night by
way of the valley and inspected the wall. Then heading back, I entered
through the Valley Gate and returned. [16†] The officials did not know where
I had gone or what I was doing, for I had not yet told the Jews, priests,
nobles, officials, or the rest of those who would be doing the work. [17] So I
said to them, "You see the trouble we are in. Jerusalem lies in ruins and its
gates have been burned down. Come, let's rebuild Jerusalem's wall, so that
we will no longer be a disgrace." [18] I told them how the gracious hand of
my God had been on me, and what the king had said to me.

They said, "Let's start rebuilding," and they were encouraged [I] to do this good work.

[19] When Sanballat the Horonite, Tobiah the Ammonite official, and
Geshem the Arab heard about this, they mocked and despised us, and said,
"What is this you're doing? Are you rebelling against the king? "

[20] I gave them this reply, "The God of heaven is the One who will grant
us success. We, His servants, will start building, but you have no share,
right, or historic claim in Jerusalem."

NEHEMIAH

Rebuilding the Walls

3 Eliashib the high priest and his fellow priests began rebuilding the
Sheep Gate. They dedicated it and installed its doors. After building the
wall to the Tower of the Hundred and the Tower of Hananel, they dedicated
it. 2 The men of Jericho built next to Eliashib, and next to them Zaccur son
of Imri built.

Fish Gate

3 The sons of Hassenaah built the Fish Gate. They built it with beams
and installed its doors, bolts, and bars. 4 Next to them Meremoth son of
Uriah, son of Hakkoz, made repairs. Beside them Meshullam son of
Berechiah, son of Meshezabel, made repairs. Next to them Zadok son of
Baana made repairs. 5 Beside them the Tekoites made repairs, but their
nobles did not lift a finger to help [A] their supervisors.

Old Gate, Broad Wall, and Tower of the Ovens

6 Joiada son of Paseah and Meshullam son of Besodeiah repaired the
Old [B] Gate. They built it with beams and installed its doors, bolts, and bars.
7 Next to them the repairs were done by Melatiah the Gibeonite, Jadon the
Meronothite, and the men of Gibeon and Mizpah, who were under the
authority [C] of the governor of the region west of the Euphrates River.
8 After him Uzziel son of Harhaiah, the goldsmith, made repairs, and next
to him Hananiah son of the perfumer made repairs. They restored Jerusalem
as far as the Broad Wall.

9 Next to them Rephaiah son of Hur, ruler over half the district of
Jerusalem, made repairs. 10 After them Jedaiah son of Harumaph made
repairs across from his house. Next to him Hattush the son of Hashabneiah
made repairs. 11 Malchijah son of Harim and Hasshub son of Pahath-moab
made repairs to another section, as well as to the Tower of the Ovens.
12 Beside him Shallum son of Hallohesh, ruler over half the district of
Jerusalem, made repairs — he and his daughters.

Valley Gate, Dung Gate, and Fountain Gate

13 Hanun and the inhabitants of Zanoah repaired the Valley Gate. They
rebuilt it and installed its doors, bolts, and bars, and repaired 500 yards [D] of
the wall to the Dung Gate. 14 Malchijah son of Rechab, ruler over the
district of Beth-haccherem, repaired the Dung Gate. He rebuilt it and
installed its doors, bolts, and bars.

15 Shallun son of Col-hozeh, ruler over the district of Mizpah, repaired
the Fountain Gate. He rebuilt it and roofed it. Then he installed its doors,
bolts, and bars. He also made repairs to the wall of the Pool of Shelah near
the king's garden, as far as the stairs that descend from the city of David.

16 After him Nehemiah son of Azbuk, ruler over half the district of Beth-
zur, made repairs up to a point opposite the tombs of David, as far as the
artificial pool and the House of the Warriors. 17 Next to him the Levites
made repairs under Rehum son of Bani. Beside him Hashabiah, ruler over
half the district of Keilah, made repairs for his district. 18 After him their
fellow Levites made repairs under Binnui son of Henadad, ruler over half
the district of Keilah. 19 Next to him Ezer son of Jeshua, ruler over Mizpah,
made repairs to another section opposite the ascent to the armory at the
Angle.

The Angle, Water Gate, and Tower on the Ophel

20 After him Baruch son of Zabbai diligently repaired another section,
from the Angle to the door of the house of Eliashib the high priest.
21 Beside him Meremoth son of Uriah, son of Hakkoz, made repairs to
another section, from the door of Eliashib's house to the end of his house.
22 And next to him the priests from the surrounding area made repairs.

23 After them Benjamin and Hasshub made repairs opposite their house.
Beside them Azariah son of Maaseiah, son of Ananiah, made repairs beside
his house. 24 After him Binnui son of Henadad made repairs to another
section, from the house of Azariah to the Angle and the corner. 25 Palal son
of Uzai made repairs opposite the Angle and tower that juts out from the
upper palace [E] of the king, by the courtyard of the guard. Beside him

Pedaiah son of Parosh, 26 and the temple servants living on Ophel made
repairs opposite the Water Gate toward the east and the tower that juts out.
27 Next to him the Tekoites made repairs to another section from a point
opposite the great tower that juts out, as far as the wall of Ophel.

Horse Gate, Inspection Gate, and Sheep Gate

28 Each of the priests made repairs above the Horse Gate, each opposite
his own house. 29 After them Zadok son of Immer made repairs opposite his
house. And beside him Shemaiah son of Shecaniah, guard of the East Gate,
made repairs. 30 Next to him Hananiah son of Shelemiah and Hanun the
sixth son of Zalaph made repairs to another section.

After them Meshullam son of Berechiah made repairs opposite his room.
31 Next to him Malchijah, one of the goldsmiths, made repairs to the house
of the temple servants and the merchants, opposite the Inspection [F] Gate,
and as far as the upper room of the corner. 32 The goldsmiths and
merchants made repairs between the upper room of the corner and the
Sheep Gate.

NEHEMIAH

Chapter 4 *Progress in Spite of Opposition*

[1]When Sanballat heard that we were rebuilding the wall, he became
furious. He mocked the Jews [2] before his colleagues and the powerful
men [A] of Samaria, and said, “What are these pathetic Jews doing? Can they
restore it by themselves? Will they offer sacrifices? Will they ever finish it?
Can they bring these burnt stones back to life from the mounds of
rubble? ” [3] Then Tobiah the Ammonite, who was beside him, said,
“Indeed, even if a fox climbed up what they are building, he would break
down their stone wall! ”

[4] Listen, our God, for we are despised. Make their insults return on their
own heads and let them be taken as plunder to a land of captivity. [5] Do not
cover their •guilt or let their sin be erased from Your sight, because they
have provoked [B] the builders.

[6] So we rebuilt the wall until the entire wall was joined together up to
half its height, for the people had the will to keep working.

[7] When Sanballat, Tobiah, and the Arabs, Ammonites, and Ashdodites
heard that the repair to the walls of Jerusalem was progressing and that the
gaps were being closed, they became furious. [8] They all plotted together to
come and fight against Jerusalem and throw it into confusion. [9] So we
prayed to our God and stationed a guard because of them day and night.

[10] In Judah, it was said: [C]

The strength of the laborer fails,
since there is so much rubble.
We will never be able
to rebuild the wall.

[11] And our enemies said, “They won’t know or see anything until we’re
among them and can kill them and stop the work.” [12] When the Jews who
lived nearby arrived, they said to us time and again, [D] “Everywhere you

turn, they attack [E] us." [13] So I stationed people behind the lowest sections
of the wall, at the vulnerable areas. I stationed them by families with their
swords, spears, and bows. [14] After I made an inspection, I stood up and said
to the nobles, the officials, and the rest of the people, "Don't be afraid of
them. Remember the great and awe-inspiring Lord, and fight for your
countrymen, your sons and daughters, your wives and homes."

Sword and Trowel

[15†] When our enemies heard that we knew their scheme and that God had
frustrated it, every one of us returned to his own work on the wall. [16] From
that day on, half of my men did the work while the other half held spears,
shields, bows, and armor. The officers supported all the people of Judah,
[17] who were rebuilding the wall. The laborers who carried the loads worked
with one hand and held a weapon with the other. [18] Each of the builders had
his sword strapped around his waist while he was building, and the
trumpeter was beside me. [19] Then I said to the nobles, the officials, and the
rest of the people: "The work is enormous and spread out, and we are
separated far from one another along the wall. [20] Wherever you hear the
trumpet sound, rally to us there. Our God will fight for us! " [21] So we
continued the work, while half of the men were holding spears from
daybreak until the stars came out. [22] At that time, I also said to the people,
"Let everyone and his servant spend the night inside Jerusalem, so that they
can stand guard by night and work by day." [23] And I, my brothers, my men,
and the guards with me never took off our clothes. Each carried his weapon,
even when washing. [F]

NEHEMIAH

Social Injustice

5 There was a widespread outcry from the people and their wives against
their Jewish countrymen. 2 Some were saying, “We, our sons, and our
daughters are numerous. Let us get grain so that we can eat and live.”
3 Others were saying, “We are mortgaging our fields, vineyards, and homes
to get grain during the famine.” 4 Still others were saying, “We have
borrowed money to pay the king’s tax on our fields and vineyards. 5 We
and our children are just like our countrymen and their children, yet we are
subjecting our sons and daughters to slavery. Some of our daughters are
already enslaved, but we are powerless [A] because our fields and vineyards
belong to others.”

6 I became extremely angry when I heard their outcry and these
complaints. 7 After seriously considering the matter, I accused the nobles
and officials, saying to them, “Each of you is charging his countrymen
interest.” So I called a large assembly against them 8 and said, “We have
done our best to buy back our Jewish countrymen who were sold to
foreigners, but now you sell your own countrymen, and we have to buy
them back.” They remained silent and could not say a word. 9 Then I said,
“What you are doing isn’t right. Shouldn’t you walk in the •fear of our God
and not invite the reproach of our foreign enemies? 10 Even I, as well as
my brothers and my servants, have been lending them money and grain.
Please, let us stop charging this interest. [B] 11 Return their fields, vineyards,
olive groves, and houses to them immediately, along with the percentage [C]
of the money, grain, new wine, and olive oil that you have been assessing
them.”

12 They responded: “We will return these things and require nothing more
from them. We will do as you say.”

So I summoned the priests and made everyone take an oath to do this.
13 I also shook the folds of my robe and said, “May God likewise shake
from his house and property everyone who doesn’t keep this promise. May
he be shaken out and have nothing! ”

The whole assembly said, "•Amen," and they praised the LORD. Then the people did as they had promised.

Good and Bad Governors

[14] Furthermore, from the day King Artaxerxes appointed me to be their governor in the land of Judah — from the twentieth year until his thirty-second year, 12 years — I and my associates never ate from the food allotted to the governor. [15†] The governors who preceded me had heavily burdened the people, taking food and wine from them, as well as a pound [D] of silver. Their subordinates also oppressed the people, but I didn't do this, because of the fear of God. [16] Instead, I devoted myself to the construction of the wall, and all my subordinates were gathered there for the work. We didn't buy any land.

[17] There were 150 Jews and officials, as well as guests from the surrounding nations at my table. [18] Each [E] day, one ox, six choice sheep, and some fowl were prepared for me. An abundance of all kinds of wine was provided every 10 days. But I didn't demand the food allotted to the governor, because the burden on the people was so heavy.

[19] Remember me favorably, my God, for all that I have done for this people.

NEHEMIAH

Attempts to Discourage the Builders

6 When Sanballat, Tobiah, Geshem the Arab, and the rest of our enemies
heard that I had rebuilt the wall and that no gap was left in it — though
at that time I had not installed the doors in the gates — [2] Sanballat and
Geshem sent me a message: "Come, let's meet together in the villages of [A]
the Ono Valley." But they were planning to harm me.

[3] So I sent messengers to them, saying, "I am doing a great work and
cannot come down. Why should the work cease while I leave it and go
down to you? " [4] Four times they sent me the same proposal, and I gave
them the same reply.

[5] Sanballat sent me this same message a fifth time by his aide, who had
an open letter in his hand. [6] In it was written:

> It is reported among the nations — and Geshem [B] agrees — that
> you and the Jews plan to rebel. This is the reason you are building
> the wall. According to these reports, you are to become their king
> [7] and have even set up the prophets in Jerusalem to proclaim on
> your behalf: "There is a king in Judah." These rumors will be
> heard by the king. So come, let's confer together.

[8] Then I replied to him, "There is nothing to these rumors you are
spreading; you are inventing them in your own mind." [9] For they were all
trying to intimidate us, saying, "They will become discouraged [C] in the
work, and it will never be finished."

But now, my God, strengthen me. [D]

Attempts to Intimidate Nehemiah

[10†] I went to the house of Shemaiah son of Delaiah, son of Mehetabel,
who was restricted to his house. He said:

Let us meet at the house of God
inside the temple.
Let us shut the temple doors

because they are coming to kill you.
They are coming to kill you tonight! [E]

[11] But I said, "Should a man like me run away? How can I enter the temple
and live? I will not go." [12] I realized that God had not sent him, because of
the prophecy he spoke against me. Tobiah and Sanballat had hired him.
[13] He was hired, so that I would be intimidated, do as he suggested, sin,
and get a bad reputation, in order that they could discredit me.

[14] My God, remember Tobiah and Sanballat for what they have done,
and also Noadiah the prophetess and the other prophets who wanted to
intimidate me.

The Wall Completed

[15] The wall was completed in 52 days, on the twenty-fifth day of the
month Elul. [16] When all our enemies heard this, all the surrounding
nations were intimidated and lost their confidence, [F] for they realized that
this task had been accomplished by our God.

[17] During those days, the nobles of Judah sent many letters to Tobiah,
and Tobiah's letters came to them. [18] For many in Judah were bound by
oath to him, since he was a son-in-law of Shecaniah son of Arah, and his
son Jehohanan had married the daughter of Meshullam son of Berechiah.
[19] These nobles kept mentioning Tobiah's good deeds to me, and they
reported my words to him. And Tobiah sent letters to intimidate me.

NEHEMIAH

The Exiles Return

7 When the wall had been rebuilt and I had the doors installed, the
gatekeepers, singers, and Levites were appointed. 2 Then I put my
brother Hanani in charge of Jerusalem, along with Hananiah, commander
of the fortress, because he was a faithful man who •feared God more than
most. 3 I said to them, "Do not open the gates of Jerusalem until the sun is
hot, and let the doors be shut and securely fastened while the guards are on
duty. Station the citizens of Jerusalem as guards, some at their posts and
some at their homes."

4† The city was large and spacious, but there were few people in it, and
no houses had been built yet. 5 Then my God put it into my mind to
assemble the nobles, the officials, and the people to be registered by
genealogy. I found the genealogical record of those who came back first,
and I found the following written in it:

6 These are the people of the province who went up among the captive
exiles deported by King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. Each of them
returned to Jerusalem and Judah, to his own town. 7 They came with
Zerubbabel, Jeshua, Nehemiah, Azariah, Raamiah, Nahamani, Mordecai,
Bilshan, Mispereth, Bigvai, Nehum, and Baanah.

The number of the Israelite men included:

8 Parosh's descendants	2,172
9 Shephatiah's descendants	372
10 Arah's descendants	652
11 Pahath-moab's descendants:	
Jeshua's and Joab's descendants	2,818
12 Elam's descendants	1,254

13 Zattu’s descendants	845
14 Zaccai’s descendants	760
15 Binnui’s descendants	648
16 Bebai’s descendants	628
17 Azgad’s descendants	2,322
18 Adonikam’s descendants	667
19 Bigvai’s descendants	2,067
20 Adin’s descendants	655
21 Ater’s descendants: of Hezekiah	98
22 Hashum’s descendants	328
23 Bezai’s descendants	324
24 Hariph’s descendants	112
25 Gibeon’s descendants	95
26 Bethlehem’s and Netophah’s men	188
27 Anathoth’s men	128
28 Beth-azmaveth’s men	42
29 Kiriath-jearim’s, Chephirah’s, and Beeroth’s men	743

[30] Ramah's and Geba's men 621

[31] Michmas's men 122

[32] Bethel's and Ai's men 123

[33] the other Nebo's men 52

[34] the other Elam's people 1,254

[35] Harim's people 320

[36] Jericho's people 345

[37] Lod's, Hadid's, and Ono's people 721

[38] Senaah's people 3,930.

[39] The priests included:

Jedaiah's descendants of the house of Jeshua 973

[40] Immer's descendants 1,052

[41] Pashhur's descendants 1,247

[42] Harim's descendants 1,017.

[43] The Levites included:

Jeshua's descendants: of Kadmiel

Hodevah's descendants 74.

44 The singers included:

•Asaph's descendants 148.

45 The gatekeepers included:

Shallum's descendants, Ater's descendants,

Talmon's descendants, Akkub's descendants,

Hatita's descendants, Shobai's descendants 138.

46 The temple servants included:

Ziha's descendants, Hasupha's descendants,
Tabbaoth's descendants,
47 Keros's descendants,
Sia's descendants, Padon's descendants,
48 Lebanah's descendants, Hagabah's descendants,
Shalmai's descendants,
49 Hanan's descendants,
Giddel's descendants, Gahar's descendants,
50 Reaiah's descendants, Rezin's descendants,
Nekoda's descendants,
51 Gazzam's descendants,
Uzza's descendants, Paseah's descendants,
52 Besai's descendants, Meunim's descendants,
Nephishesim's descendants,
53 Bakbuk's descendants,
Hakupha's descendants, Harhur's descendants,
54 Bazlith's descendants, Mehida's descendants,
Harsha's descendants,
55 Barkos's descendants,
Sisera's descendants, Temah's descendants,
56 Neziah's descendants, Hatipha's descendants.

[57] The descendants of Solomon's servants included:

Sotai's descendants, Sophereth's descendants,
Perida's descendants, [58] Jaala's descendants,
Darkon's descendants, Giddel's descendants,
[59] Shephatiah's descendants, Hattil's descendants,
Pochereth-hazzebaim's descendants, Amon's descendants.

[60] All the temple servants

and the descendants of Solomon's servants	392.

[61] The following are those who came from Tel-melah, Tel-harsha, Cherub, Addon, and Immer, but were unable to prove that their families and ancestors were Israelite:

[62] Delaiah's descendants,

Tobiah's descendants,

and Nekoda's descendants	642

[63] and from the priests: the descendants of Hobaiah, the descendants of
Hakkoz, and the descendants of Barzillai — who had taken a wife from the
daughters of Barzillai the Gileadite and was called by their name. [64] These
searched for their entries in the genealogical records, but they could not be
found, so they were disqualified from the priesthood. [65†] The governor
ordered them not to eat the most holy things until there was a priest who
could consult the •Urim and Thummim.

[66] The whole combined assembly numbered	42,360

[67] not including their 7,337 male and female slaves,

as well as their 245 male and female singers.

[68] They had 736 horses, 245 mules,

[69] 435 camels, and 6,720 donkeys.

[70] Some of the family leaders gave to the project. The governor gave
1,000 gold coins, [A] 50 bowls, and 530 priestly garments to the treasury.
[71] Some of the family leaders gave 20,000 gold coins and 2,200 silver
minas to the treasury for the project. [72] The rest of the people gave 20,000
gold coins, 2,000 silver minas, and 67 priestly garments. [73†] So the priests,
Levites, gatekeepers, temple singers, some of the people, temple servants,
and all Israel settled in their towns.

Public Reading of the Law

When the seventh month came and the Israelites had settled in their towns,

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8 [†] all the people gathered together at the square in front of the Water
Gate. They asked Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of
Moses that the LORD had given Israel. 2 On the first day of the seventh
month, Ezra the priest brought the law before the assembly of men,
women, and all who could listen with understanding. 3[†] While he was
facing the square in front of the Water Gate, he read out of it from
daybreak until noon before the men, the women, and those who could
understand. All the people listened attentively [A] to the book of the law.
4 Ezra the scribe stood on a high wooden platform made for this purpose.
Mattithiah, Shema, Anaiah, Uriah, Hilkiah, and Maaseiah stood beside him
on his right; to his left were Pedaiah, Mishael, Malchijah, Hashum, Hash-
baddanah, Zechariah, and Meshullam. 5 Ezra opened the book in full view
of all the people, since he was elevated above everyone. As he opened it, all
the people stood up. 6 Ezra praised the LORD, the great God, and with their
hands uplifted all the people said, "•Amen, Amen! " Then they bowed
down and worshiped the LORD with their faces to the ground.

7 Jeshua, Bani, Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodiah, Maaseiah,
Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, and Pelaiah, who were Levites,
explained the law to the people as they stood in their places. 8 They read
out of the book of the law of God, translating and giving the meaning so
that the people could understand what was read. 9 Nehemiah the governor,
Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who were instructing the people
said to all of them, "This day is holy to the LORD your God. Do not mourn
or weep." For all the people were weeping as they heard the words of the
law. 10 Then he said to them, "Go and eat what is rich, drink what is sweet,
and send portions to those who have nothing prepared, since today is holy
to our Lord. Do not grieve, because the joy of the LORD is your
stronghold." 11 And the Levites quieted all the people, saying, "Be still,
since today is holy. Do not grieve." 12 Then all the people began to eat and
drink, send portions, and have a great celebration, because they had
understood the words that were explained to them.

Festival of Booths Observed

13 On the second day, the family leaders of all the people, along with the
priests and Levites, assembled before Ezra the scribe to study the words of
the law. 14† They found written in the law how the LORD had commanded
through Moses that the Israelites should dwell in booths during the festival
of the seventh month. 15 So they proclaimed and spread this news
throughout their towns and in Jerusalem, saying, “Go out to the hill country
and bring back branches of olive, wild olive, myrtle, palm, and other leafy
trees to make booths, just as it is written.” 16 The people went out, brought
back branches, and made booths for themselves on each of their rooftops,
and courtyards, the court of the house of God, the square by the Water
Gate, and the square by the Gate of Ephraim. 17 The whole community
that had returned from exile made booths and lived in them. They had not
celebrated like this from the days of Joshua son of Nun until that day. And
there was tremendous joy. 18 Ezra read out of the book of the law of God
every day, from the first day to the last. The Israelites celebrated the festival
for seven days, and on the eighth day there was an assembly, according to
the ordinance.

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National Confession of Sin

9

9 On the twenty-fourth day of this month the Israelites assembled; they
were fasting, wearing •sackcloth, and had put dust on their heads.
2 Those of Israelite descent separated themselves from all foreigners, and
they stood and confessed their sins and the •guilt of their fathers. 3 While
they stood in their places, they read from the book of the law of the LORD
their God for a fourth of the day and spent another fourth of the day in
confession and worship of the LORD their God. 4 Jeshua, Bani, Kadmiel,
Shebaniah, Bunni, Sherebiah, Bani, and Chenani stood on the raised
platform built for the Levites and cried out loudly to the LORD their God.
5 Then the Levites — Jeshua, Kadmiel, Bani, Hashabneiah, Sherebiah,
Hodiah, Shebaniah, and Pethahiah — said, "Stand up. Praise •Yahweh your
God from everlasting to everlasting."

Praise Your glorious name,
and may it be exalted above all blessing and praise.
6† You alone are Yahweh.
You created the heavens,
the highest heavens with all their host,
the earth and all that is on it,
the seas and all that is in them.
You give life to all of them,
and the heavenly host worships You.
7† You are Yahweh,
the God who chose Abram
and brought him out of Ur of the Chaldeans,
and changed his name to Abraham.
8† You found his heart faithful in Your sight,
and made a covenant with him
to give the land of the Canaanites,
Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites,
Jebusites, and Girgashites —
to give it to his descendants.
You have kept Your promise,
for You are righteous.

9 You saw the oppression of our ancestors in Egypt
and heard their cry at the •Red Sea.

10[†] You performed signs and wonders against Pharaoh,
all his officials, and all the people of his land,
for You knew how arrogantly they treated our ancestors.
You made a name for Yourself
that endures to this day.
11 You divided the sea before them,
and they crossed through it on dry ground.
You hurled their pursuers into the depths
like a stone into churning waters.
12 You led them with a pillar of cloud by day,
and with a pillar of fire by night,
to illuminate the way they should go.
13 You came down on Mount Sinai,
and spoke to them from heaven.
You gave them impartial ordinances, reliable instructions,
and good statutes and commands.
14 You revealed Your holy Sabbath to them,
and gave them commands, statutes, and instruction
through Your servant Moses.
15 You provided bread from heaven for their hunger;
You brought them water from the rock for their thirst.
You told them to go in and possess the land
You had sworn [A] to give them.

16 But our ancestors acted arrogantly;
they became stiff-necked and did not listen to Your commands.
17 They refused to listen
and did not remember Your wonders
You performed among them.
They became stiff-necked and appointed a leader
to return to their slavery in Egypt.
But You are a forgiving God,
gracious and compassionate,
slow to anger and rich in faithful love,
and You did not abandon them.
18 Even after they had cast an image of a calf

for themselves and said,
"This is your God who brought you out of Egypt,"
and they had committed terrible blasphemies,
19 You did not abandon them in the wilderness
because of Your great compassion.
During the day the pillar of cloud
never turned away from them,
guiding them on their journey.
And during the night the pillar of fire
illuminated the way they should go.
20 You sent Your good Spirit to instruct them.
You did not withhold Your manna from their mouths,
and You gave them water for their thirst.
21 You provided for them in the wilderness 40 years
and they lacked nothing.
Their clothes did not wear out,
and their feet did not swell.

22 You gave them kingdoms and peoples
and assigned them to be a boundary.
They took possession
of the land of Sihon king of Heshbon
and of the land of Og king of Bashan.
23 You multiplied their descendants
like the stars of heaven
and brought them to the land
You told their ancestors to go in and take possession of it.
24 So their descendants went in and possessed the land:
You subdued the Canaanites who inhabited the land before them
and handed their kings and the surrounding peoples over to them,
to do as they pleased with them.
25 They captured fortified cities and fertile land
and took possession of well-supplied houses,
cisterns cut out of rock, vineyards,
olive groves, and fruit trees in abundance.
They ate, were filled,
became prosperous, and delighted in Your great goodness.

[26] But they were disobedient and rebelled against You.
They flung Your law behind their backs
and killed Your prophets
who warned them
in order to turn them back to You.
They committed terrible blasphemies.
[27] So You handed them over to their enemies,
who oppressed them.
In their time of distress, they cried out to You,
and You heard from heaven.
In Your abundant compassion
You gave them deliverers, who rescued them
from the power of their enemies.
[28] But as soon as they had relief,
they again did what was evil in Your sight.
So You abandoned them to the power of their enemies,
who dominated them.
When they cried out to You again,
You heard from heaven and rescued them
many times in Your compassion.
[29] You warned them to turn back to Your law,
but they acted arrogantly
and would not obey Your commands.
They sinned against Your ordinances,
which a person will live by if he does them.
They stubbornly resisted, [B]
stiffened their necks, and would not obey.
[30][†] You were patient with them for many years,
and Your Spirit warned them through Your prophets,
but they would not listen.
Therefore, You handed them over to the surrounding peoples.
[31] However, in Your abundant compassion,
You did not destroy them or abandon them,
for You are a gracious and compassionate God.

[32] So now, our God — the great, mighty,

and awe-inspiring God who keeps His gracious covenant —
do not view lightly all the hardships that have afflicted us,
our kings and leaders,
our priests and prophets,
our ancestors and all Your people,
from the days of the Assyrian kings until today.
33 You are righteous concerning all that has come on us,
because You have acted faithfully,
while we have acted wickedly.
34 Our kings, leaders, priests, and ancestors
did not obey Your law
or listen to Your commands
and warnings You gave them.
35 When they were in their kingdom,
with Your abundant goodness that You gave them,
and in the spacious and fertile land You set before them,
they would not serve You or turn from their wicked ways.

36 Here we are today,
slaves in the land You gave our ancestors
so that they could enjoy its fruit and its goodness.
Here we are — slaves in it!
37 Its abundant harvest goes to the kings
You have set over us,
because of our sins.
They rule over our bodies
and our livestock as they please.
We are in great distress.

Israel's Vow of Faithfulness

38 In view of all this, we are making a binding agreement in writing on a sealed document containing the names of our leaders, Levites, and priests.

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10 Those whose seals were on the document were:

Nehemiah the governor, son of Hacaliah, and Zedekiah,
2 Seraiah, Azariah, Jeremiah,
3 Pashhur, Amariah, Malchijah,
4 Hattush, Shebaniah, Malluch,
5 Harim, Meremoth, Obadiah,
6 Daniel, Ginnethon, Baruch,
7 Meshullam, Abijah, Mijamin,
8 Maaziah, Bilgai, and Shemaiah.
These were the priests.

9 The Levites were:
Jeshua son of Azaniah,
Binnui of the sons of Henadad, Kadmiel,
10 and their brothers
Shebaniah, Hodiah, Kelita, Pelaiah, Hanan,
11 Mica, Rehob, Hashabiah,
12 Zaccur, Sherebiah, Shebaniah,
13 Hodiah, Bani, and Beninu.

14 The leaders of the people were:
Parosh, Pahath-moab, Elam, Zattu, Bani,
15 Bunni, Azgad, Bebai,
16 Adonijah, Bigvai, Adin,
17 Ater, Hezekiah, Azzur,
18 Hodiah, Hashum, Bezai,
19 Hariph, Anathoth, Nebai,
20 Magpiash, Meshullam, Hezir,
21 Meshezabel, Zadok, Jaddua,
22 Pelatiah, Hanan, Anaiah,
23 Hoshea, Hananiah, Hasshub,
24 Hallohesh, Pilha, Shobek,

[25] Rehum, Hashabnah, Maaseiah,
[26] Ahijah, Hanan, Anan,
[27] Malluch, Harim, Baanah.

[28] The rest of the people — the priests, Levites, gatekeepers, singers, and
temple servants, along with their wives, sons, and daughters, everyone who
is able to understand and who has separated themselves from the
surrounding peoples to obey the law of God — [29] join with their noble
brothers and commit themselves with a sworn oath [A], to follow the law of
God given through God's servant Moses and to carefully obey all the
commands, ordinances, and statutes of •Yahweh our Lord.

Details of the Vow

[30†] We will not give our daughters in marriage to the surrounding peoples and will not take their daughters as wives for our sons.

[31] When the surrounding peoples bring merchandise or any kind of grain to sell on the Sabbath day, we will not buy from them on the Sabbath or a holy day. We will also leave the land uncultivated in the seventh year and will cancel every debt.

[32] We will impose the following commands on ourselves:

To give an eighth of an ounce of silver [B] yearly for the service of
the house of our God: [33] the bread displayed before the Lord, [C],
the daily •grain offering, the regular •burnt offering, the Sabbath
and New Moon offerings, the appointed festivals, the holy things,
the •sin offerings to •atone for Israel, and for all the work of the
house of our God.

[34] We have cast lots among the priests, Levites, and people for the donation of wood by our ancestral houses at the appointed times each year. They are to bring the wood to our God's house to burn on the altar of the Lord our God, as it is written in the law.

[35] We will bring the •firstfruits of our land and of every fruit tree
to the Lord's house year by year. [36] We will also bring the

firstborn of our sons and our livestock, as prescribed by the law,
and will bring the firstborn of our herds and flocks to the house of
our God, to the priests who serve in our God's house. 37 We will
bring a loaf from our first batch of dough to the priests at the
storerooms of the house of our God. We will also bring the
firstfruits of our grain offerings, of every fruit tree, and of the new
wine and oil. A tenth of our land's produce belongs to the
Levites, for the Levites are to collect the one-tenth offering in all
our agricultural towns. 38 A priest of Aaronic descent must
accompany the Levites when they collect the tenth, and the
Levites must take a tenth of this offering to the storerooms of the
treasury in the house of our God. 39 For the Israelites and the
Levites are to bring the contributions of grain, new wine, and oil
to the storerooms where the articles of the sanctuary are kept and
where the priests who minister are, along with the gatekeepers and
singers. We will not neglect the house of our God.

NEHEMIAH

Resettling Jerusalem

11 Now the leaders of the people stayed in Jerusalem, and the rest of the
people cast lots for one out of ten to come and live in Jerusalem, the
holy city, while the other nine-tenths remained in their towns. [2] The people
praised all the men who volunteered to live in Jerusalem.

[3] These are the heads of the province who stayed in Jerusalem (but in the
villages of Judah each lived on his own property in their towns — the
Israelites, priests, Levites, temple servants, and descendants of Solomon's
servants — [4] while some of the descendants of Judah and Benjamin settled
in Jerusalem):

Judah's descendants:

Athaiah son of Uzziah, son of Zechariah, son of Amariah, son of
Shephatiah, son of Mahalalel, of Perez's descendants; [5] and
Maaseiah son of Baruch, son of Col-hozeh, son of Hazaiah, son of
Adaiah, son of Joiarib, son of Zechariah, a descendant of the
Shilonite. [6] The total number of Perez's descendants, who settled
in Jerusalem, was 468 capable men.

[7] These were Benjamin's descendants:

Sallu son of Meshullam, son of Joed, son of Pedaiah, son of
Kolaiah, son of Maaseiah, son of Ithiel, son of Jeshaiah, [8] and
after him Gabbai and Sallai: 928. [9] Joel son of Zichri was the
officer over them, and Judah son of Hassenuah was second in
command over the city.

[10] The priests:

Jedaiah son of Joiarib, Jachin, and [11] Seraiah son of Hilkiah, son
of Meshullam, son of Zadok, son of Meraioth, son of Ahitub, the
chief official of God's temple, [12] and their relatives who did the
work at the temple: 822. Adaiah son of Jeroham, son of Pelaliah,
son of Amzi, son of Zechariah, son of Pashhur, son of Malchijah
[13] and his relatives, the leaders of families: 242. Amashsai son of
Azarel, son of Ahzai, son of Meshillemoth, son of Immer, [14] and

their relatives, capable men: 128. Zabdiel son of Haggedolim, was
their chief.

[15] The Levites:

Shemaiah son of Hasshub, son of Azrikam, son of Hashabiah, son
of Bunni; [16] and Shabbethai and Jozabad, from the leaders of the
Levites, who supervised the work outside the house of God;
[17] Mattaniah son of Mica, son of Zabdi, son of •Asaph, the leader
who began the thanksgiving in prayer; Bakbukiah, second among
his relatives; and Abda son of Shammua, son of Galal, son of
Jeduthun. [18] All the Levites in the holy city: 284.

[19] The gatekeepers:

Akkub, Talmon, and their relatives, who guarded the gates: 172.

[20] The rest of Israel, the priests, and the Levites were in all the villages of
Judah, each on his own inherited property. [21] The temple servants lived on
Ophel; Ziha and Gishpa supervised the temple servants.

The Levites and Priests

[22] The leader of the Levites in Jerusalem was Uzzi son of Bani, son of
Hashabiah, son of Mattaniah, son of Mica, of the descendants of Asaph,
who were singers for the service of God's house. [23] There was, in fact, a
command of the king regarding them, and an ordinance regulating [A] the
singers' daily tasks. [24] Pethahiah son of Meshezabel, of the descendants of
Zerah son of Judah, was the king's agent [B] in every matter concerning the
people.

[25] As for the farming settlements with their fields:

Some of Judah's descendants lived in Kiriath-arba and its villages,
Dibon and its villages, and Jekabzeel and its villages;
[26] in Jeshua, Moladah, Beth-pelet,
[27] Hazar-shual, and Beer-sheba and its villages;

[28] in Ziklag and Meconah and its villages;
[29] in En-rimmon, Zorah, Jarmuth, and
[30] Zanoah and Adullam with their villages;
in Lachish with its fields and Azekah and its villages.
So they settled from Beer-sheba to the Valley of Hinnom.

[31] Benjamin's descendants:
from Geba, [C] Michmash, Aija,
and Bethel — and its villages,
[32] Anathoth, Nob, Ananiah,
[33] Hazor, Ramah, Gittaim,
[34] Hadid, Zeboim, Neballat,
[35] Lod, and Ono, the Valley of Craftsmen.
[36] Some of the Judean divisions of Levites were in Benjamin.

NEHEMIAH

12 These are the priests and Levites who went up with Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel and with Jeshua:

Seraiah, Jeremiah, Ezra,
2 Amariah, Malluch, Hattush,
3 Shecaniah, Rehum, Meremoth,
4 Iddo, Ginnethoi, Abijah,
5 Mijamin, Maadiah, Bilgah,
6 Shemaiah, Joiarib, Jedaiah,
7 Sallu, Amok, Hilkiah, Jedaiah.

These were the leaders of the priests and their relatives in the days of Jeshua.

8 The Levites:

Jeshua, Binnui, Kadmiel,
Sherebiah, Judah, and Mattaniah —
he and his relatives were in charge of the praise songs.
9 Bakbukiah, Unni, and their relatives stood opposite them in the services.
10 Jeshua fathered Joiakim,
Joiakim fathered Eliashib,
Eliashib fathered Joiada,
11 Joiada fathered Jonathan,
and Jonathan fathered Jaddua.

12 In the days of Joiakim, the leaders of the priestly families were:

Meraiah	of Seraiah,
Hananiah	of Jeremiah,
13 Meshullam	of Ezra,
Jehohanan	of Amariah,
14 Jonathan	of Malluchi,

Joseph of Shebaniah,
15 Adna of Harim,
Helkai of Meraioth,
16 Zechariah of Iddo,
Meshullam of Ginnethon,
17 Zichri of Abijah,
Piltai of Moadiah, of Miniamin,
18 Shammua of Bilgah,
Jehonathan of Shemaiah,
19 Mattenai of Joiarib,
Uzzi of Jedaiah,
20 Kallai of Sallai,
Eber of Amok,
21 Hashabiah of Hilkiah,
and Nethanel of Jedaiah.

22 In the days of Eliashib, Joiada, Johanan, and Jaddua, the leaders of the
families of the Levites and priests were recorded while Darius the Persian
ruled. 23 Levi's descendants, the leaders of families, were recorded in the
Book of the Historical Records during the days of Johanan son of Eliashib.
24 The leaders of the Levites — Hashabiah, Sherebiah, and Jeshua son of
Kadmiel, along with their relatives opposite them — gave praise and
thanks, division by division, as David the man of God had prescribed.
25 This included Mattaniah, Bakbukiah, and Obadiah. Meshullam, Talmon,
and Akkub were gatekeepers who guarded the storerooms at the gates.
26 These served in the days of Joiakim son of Jeshua, son of Jozadak, and in
the days of Nehemiah the governor and Ezra the priest and scribe.

Dedication of the Wall

27 At the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem, they sent for the Levites
wherever they lived and brought them to Jerusalem to celebrate the joyous
dedication with thanksgiving and singing accompanied by cymbals, harps,
and lyres. 28 The singers gathered from the region around Jerusalem, from
the villages of the Netophathites, 29 from Beth-gilgal, and from the fields

of Geba and Azmaveth, for they had built villages for themselves around
Jerusalem. [30] After the priests and Levites had purified themselves, they
purified the people, the gates, and the wall.

[31] Then I brought the leaders of Judah up on top of the wall, and I
appointed two large processions that gave thanks. One went to the right on
the wall, toward the Dung Gate. [32] Hoshaiah and half the leaders of Judah
followed, [33] along with Azariah, Ezra, Meshullam, [34] Judah, Benjamin,
Shemaiah, Jeremiah, [35] and some of the priests' sons with trumpets, and
Zechariah son of Jonathan, son of Shemaiah, son of Mattaniah, son of
Micaiah, son of Zaccur, son of •Asaph followed [36] as well as his
relatives — Shemaiah, Azarel, Milalai, Gilalai, Maai, Nethanel, Judah, and
Hanani, with the musical instruments of David, the man of God. Ezra the
scribe went in front of them. [37] At the Fountain Gate they climbed the
steps of the city of David on the ascent of the wall and went above the
house of David to the Water Gate on the east.

[38] The second thanksgiving procession went to the left, and I followed it
with half the people along the top of the wall, past the Tower of the Ovens
to the Broad Wall, [39] above the Gate of Ephraim, and by the Old Gate, the
Fish Gate, the Tower of Hananel, and the Tower of the Hundred, to the
Sheep Gate. They stopped at the Gate of the Guard. [40] The two
thanksgiving processions stood in the house of God. So did I and half of the
officials accompanying me, [41] as well as the priests:

Eliakim, Maaseiah, Miniamin,
Micaiah, Elioenai, Zechariah,
and Hananiah, with trumpets;
[42] and Maaseiah, Shemaiah, Eleazar,
Uzzi, Jehohanan, Malchijah, Elam, and Ezer.

Then the singers sang, with Jezrahiah as the leader. [43] On that day they
offered great sacrifices and rejoiced because God had given them great joy.
The women and children also celebrated, and Jerusalem's rejoicing was
heard far away.

Support of the Levites' Ministry

[44] On that same day men were placed in charge of the rooms that housed
the supplies, contributions, •firstfruits, and tenths. The legally required
portions for the priests and Levites were gathered from the village fields,
because Judah was grateful to the priests and Levites who were serving.
[45] They performed the service of their God and the service of purification,
along with the singers and gatekeepers, as David and his son Solomon had
prescribed. [46] For long ago, in the days of David and Asaph, there were
leaders of the singers and songs of praise and thanksgiving to God. [47] So
in the days of Zerubbabel and Nehemiah, all Israel contributed the daily
portions for the singers and gatekeepers. They also set aside daily portions
for the Levites, and the Levites set aside daily portions for the descendants
of Aaron.

NEHEMIAH

Nehemiah's Further Reforms

13 At that time the book of Moses was read publicly to [A] the people.
The command was found written in it that no Ammonite or Moabite
should ever enter the assembly of God, 2 because they did not meet the
Israelites with food and water. Instead, they hired Balaam against them to
curse them, but our God turned the curse into a blessing. 3[†] When they
heard the law, they separated all those of mixed descent from Israel.

4 Now before this, Eliashib the priest had been put in charge of the
storerooms of the house of our God. He was a relative [B] of Tobiah 5 and
had prepared a large room for him where they had previously stored the
•grain offerings, the frankincense, the articles, and the tenths of grain, new
wine, and oil prescribed for the Levites, singers, and gatekeepers, along
with the contributions for the priests.

6 While all this was happening, I was not in Jerusalem, because I had
returned to King Artaxerxes of Babylon in the thirty-second year of his
reign. It was only later that I asked the king for a leave of absence 7 so I
could return to Jerusalem. Then I discovered the evil that Eliashib had done
on behalf of Tobiah by providing him a room in the courts of God's house.
8 I was greatly displeased and threw all of Tobiah's household possessions
out of the room. 9 I ordered that the rooms be purified, and I had the
articles of the house of God restored there, along with the grain offering and
frankincense. 10 I also found out that because the portions for the Levites
had not been given, each of the Levites and the singers performing the
service had gone back to his own field. 11 Therefore, I rebuked the
officials, saying, "Why has the house of God been neglected? " I gathered
the Levites and singers together and stationed them at their posts. 12 Then
all Judah brought a tenth of the grain, new wine, and oil into the
storehouses. 13 I appointed as treasurers over the storehouses Shelemiah the
priest, Zadok the scribe, and Pedaiah of the Levites, with Hanan son of
Zaccur, son of Mattaniah to assist them, because they were considered
trustworthy. They were responsible for the distribution to their colleagues.

14 Remember me for this, my God, and don't erase the deeds of faithful
love I have done for the house of my God and for its services.

[15] At that time I saw people in Judah treading wine presses on the
Sabbath. They were also bringing in stores of grain and loading them on
donkeys, along with wine, grapes, and figs. All kinds of goods were being
brought to Jerusalem on the Sabbath day. So I warned them against selling
food on that day. [16] The Tyrians living there were importing fish and all
kinds of merchandise and selling them on the Sabbath to the people of
Judah in Jerusalem.

[17] I rebuked the nobles of Judah and said to them: "What is this evil you
are doing — profaning the Sabbath day? [18] Didn't your ancestors do the
same, so that our God brought all this disaster on us and on this city? And
now you are rekindling His anger against Israel by profaning the Sabbath! "

[19] When shadows began to fall on the gates of Jerusalem just before the
Sabbath, I gave orders that the gates be closed and not opened until after the
Sabbath. I posted some of my men at the gates, so that no goods could
enter during the Sabbath day. [20] Once or twice the merchants and those
who sell all kinds of goods camped outside Jerusalem, [21] but I warned
them, "Why are you camping in front of the wall? If you do it again, I'll use
force [C] against you." After that they did not come again on the Sabbath.
[22] Then I instructed the Levites to purify themselves and guard the gates in
order to keep the Sabbath day holy.

Remember me for this also, my God, and look on me with compassion
in keeping with Your abundant, faithful love.

[23†] In those days I also saw Jews who had married women from Ashdod,
Ammon, and Moab. [24] Half of their children spoke the language of Ashdod
or the language of one of the other peoples but could not speak Hebrew. [D]
[25] I rebuked them, cursed them, beat some of their men, and pulled out their
hair. I forced them to take an oath before God and said: "You must not
give your daughters in marriage to their sons or take their daughters as
wives for your sons or yourselves! [26] Didn't King Solomon of Israel sin in
matters like this? There was not a king like him among many nations. He
was loved by his God and God made him king over all Israel, yet foreign

women drew him into sin. 27 Why then should we hear about you doing all
this terrible evil and acting unfaithfully against our God by marrying
foreign women? ”

28 Even one of the sons of Jehoiada, son of Eliashib the high priest, had
become a son-in-law to Sanballat the Horonite. So I drove him away from
me.

29 Remember them, my God, for defiling the priesthood as well as the
covenant of the priesthood and the Levites.

30 So I purified them from everything foreign and assigned specific
duties to each of the priests and Levites. 31 I also arranged for the donation
of wood at the appointed times and for the •firstfruits.

Remember me, my God, with favor.

ESTHER

Introduction to Esther

ESTHER

Vashti Angers the King

1 [†]These events took place during the days of Ahasuerus, who ruled 127
provinces from India to •Cush. 2 In those days King Ahasuerus reigned
from his royal throne in the fortress at Susa. 3[†] He held a feast in the third
year of his reign for all his officials and staff, the army of Persia and
Media, the nobles, and the officials from the provinces. 4 He displayed the
glorious wealth of his kingdom and the magnificent splendor of his
greatness for a total of 180 days.

5 At the end of this time, the king held a week-long banquet in the
garden courtyard of the royal palace for all the people, from the greatest to
the least, who were present in the fortress of Susa. 6 White and violet linen
hangings were fastened with fine white and purple linen cords to silver rods
on marble [A] columns. Gold and silver couches were arranged on a mosaic
pavement of red feldspar, [B] marble, [C] mother-of-pearl, and precious stones.

7 Beverages were served in an array of gold goblets, each with a
different design. Royal wine flowed freely, according to the king's bounty
8 and no restraint was placed on the drinking. The king had ordered every
wine steward in his household to serve as much as each person wanted.
9 Queen Vashti also gave a feast for the women of King Ahasuerus's palace.

10[†] On the seventh day, when the king was feeling good from the wine,
Ahasuerus commanded Mehuman, Biztha, Harbona, Bigtha, Abagtha,
Zethar, and Carkas, the seven eunuchs who personally served him, 11 to
bring Queen Vashti before him with her royal crown. He wanted to show off
her beauty to the people and the officials, because she was very beautiful.
12 But Queen Vashti refused to come at the king's command that was
delivered by his eunuchs. The king became furious and his anger burned
within him.

The King's Decree

13 The king consulted the wise men who understood the times, [D], for it
was his normal procedure to confer with experts in law and justice. 14 The
most trusted ones [E] were Carshena, Shethar, Admatha, Tarshish, Meres,

Marsena, and Memucan. They were the seven officials of Persia and
Media who had personal access to the king and occupied the highest
positions in the kingdom. [15] The king asked, “According to the law, what
should be done with Queen Vashti, since she refused to obey King
Ahasuerus’s command that was delivered by the eunuchs? ”

[16] Memucan said in the presence of the king and his officials, “Queen
Vashti has wronged not only the king, but all the officials and the peoples
who are in every one of King Ahasuerus’s provinces. [17] For the queen’s
action will become public knowledge to all the women and cause them to
despise their husbands and say, ‘King Ahasuerus ordered Queen Vashti
brought before him, but she did not come.’ [18] Before this day is over, the
noble women of Persia and Media who hear about the queen’s act will say
the same thing to all the king’s officials, resulting in more contempt and
fury.

[19†] “If it meets the king’s approval, he should personally issue a royal
decree. Let it be recorded in the laws of Persia and Media, so that it cannot
be revoked: Vashti is not to enter King Ahasuerus’s presence, and her royal
position is to be given to another woman who is more worthy than she.
[20] The decree the king issues will be heard throughout his vast kingdom, so
all women will honor their husbands, from the least to the greatest.”

[21] The king and his counselors approved the proposal, and he followed
Memucan’s advice. [22†] He sent letters to all the royal provinces, to each
province in its own script and to each ethnic group in its own language,
that every man should be master of his own house and speak in the
language of his own people.

ESTHER

Search for a New Queen

2 [†]Some time later, when King Ahasuerus's rage had cooled down, he
remembered Vashti, what she had done, and what was decided against
her. 2 The king's personal attendants [A] suggested, "Let a search be made
for beautiful young women for the king. 3 Let the king appoint
commissioners in each province of his kingdom, so that they may assemble
all the beautiful young women to the harem at the fortress of Susa. Put
them under the care of Hegai, the king's eunuch, who is in charge of the
women, and give them the required beauty treatments. 4 Then the young
woman who pleases the king will become queen instead of Vashti." This
suggestion pleased the king, and he did accordingly.

5[†] In the fortress of Susa, there was a Jewish man named Mordecai son
of Jair, son of Shimei, son of Kish, a Benjaminite. 6[†] He had been taken
into exile from Jerusalem with the other captives when King
Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon took King Jeconiah of Judah into exile.
7[†] Mordecai was the legal guardian of his cousin [B] Hadassah (that is,
Esther), because she didn't have a father or mother. The young woman had
a beautiful figure and was extremely good-looking. When her father and
mother died, Mordecai had adopted her as his own daughter.

8 When the king's command and edict became public knowledge, many
young women gathered at the fortress of Susa under Hegai's care. Esther
was also taken to the palace and placed under the care of Hegai, who was in
charge of the women. 9[†] The young woman pleased him and gained his
favor [C] so that he accelerated the process of the beauty treatments and the
special diet that she received. He assigned seven hand-picked female
servants to her from the palace and transferred her and her servants to the
harem's best quarters.

10 Esther did not reveal her ethnic background or her birthplace, because
Mordecai had ordered her not to. 11 Every day Mordecai took a walk in
front of the harem's courtyard to learn how Esther was doing and to see
what was happening to her.

12 During the year before each young woman's turn to go to King
Ahasuerus, the harem regulation required her to receive beauty treatments

with oil of myrrh for six months and then with perfumes and cosmetics for
another six months. [13] When the young woman would go to the king, she
was given whatever she requested to take with her from the harem to the
palace. [14] She would go in the evening, and in the morning she would return
to a second harem under the supervision of Shaashgaz, the king's eunuch in
charge of the concubines. She never went to the king again, unless he
desired her and summoned her by name.

Esther Becomes Queen

[15] Esther was the daughter of Abihail, the uncle of Mordecai who had
adopted her as his own daughter. When her turn came to go to the king, she
did not ask for anything except what Hegai, the king's trusted official in
charge of the harem, suggested. Esther won approval in the sight of
everyone who saw her.

[16] She was taken to King Ahasuerus in the royal palace in the tenth
month, the month Tebeth, in the seventh year of his reign. [17][†] The king
loved Esther more than all the other women. She won more favor and
approval from him than did any of the other young women. He placed the
royal crown on her head and made her queen in place of Vashti. [18] The king
held a great banquet for all his officials and staff. It was Esther's banquet.
He freed his provinces from tax payments and gave gifts worthy of the
king's bounty.

[19] When the young women were assembled together for a second time,
Mordecai was sitting at the King's Gate. [20] Esther still had not revealed her
birthplace or her ethnic background, as Mordecai had directed. She obeyed
Mordecai's orders, as she always had while he raised her.

Mordecai Saves the King

[21][†] During those days while Mordecai was sitting at the King's Gate,
Bigthan and Teresh, two eunuchs who guarded the king's entrance, became
infuriated and planned to assassinate [D] King Ahasuerus. [22] When Mordecai
learned of the plot, he reported it to Queen Esther, and she told the king on

Mordecai's behalf. [23] When the report was investigated and verified, both men were hanged on the gallows. This event was recorded in the Historical Record in the king's presence.

ESTHER

Haman’s Plan to Kill the Jews

3 After all this took place, King Ahasuerus honored Haman, son of
Hammedatha the Agagite. He promoted him in rank and gave him a
higher position than all the other officials. 2† The entire royal staff at the
King’s Gate bowed down and paid homage to Haman, because the king
had commanded this to be done for him. But Mordecai would not bow
down or pay homage. 3 The members of the royal staff at the King’s Gate
asked Mordecai, “Why are you disobeying the king’s command? ” 4 When
they had warned him day after day and he still would not listen to them,
they told Haman to see if Mordecai’s actions would be tolerated, since he
had told them he was a Jew.

5 When Haman saw that Mordecai was not bowing down or paying him
homage, he was filled with rage. 6† And when he learned of Mordecai’s
ethnic identity, Haman decided not to do away with [A] Mordecai alone. He
planned to destroy all of Mordecai’s people, the Jews, throughout
Ahasuerus’s kingdom.

7 In the first month, the month of Nisan, in King Ahasuerus’s twelfth
year, Pur (that is, the lot) was cast before Haman for each day in each
month, and it fell on the twelfth month, the month Adar. 8 Then Haman
informed King Ahasuerus, “There is one ethnic group, scattered throughout
the peoples in every province of your kingdom, yet living in isolation.
Their laws are different from everyone else’s and they do not obey the
king’s laws. It is not in the king’s best interest to tolerate them. 9 If the
king approves, let an order be drawn up authorizing their destruction, and I
will pay 375 tons of silver to [B] the accountants for deposit in the royal
treasury.”

10 The king removed his signet ring from his finger and gave it to Haman
son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the enemy of the Jewish people. 11† Then
the king told Haman, “The money and people are given to you to do with as
you see fit.”

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12 The royal scribes were summoned on the thirteenth day of the first
month, and the order was written exactly as Haman commanded. It was
intended for the royal satraps, the governors of each of the provinces, and
the officials of each ethnic group and written for each province in its own
script and to each ethnic group in its own language. It was written in the
name of King Ahasuerus and sealed with the royal signet ring. 13† Letters
were sent by couriers to each of the royal provinces telling the officials to
destroy, kill, and annihilate all the Jewish people — young and old, women
and children — and plunder their possessions on a single day, the thirteenth
day of Adar, the twelfth month.

14 A copy of the text, issued as law throughout every province, was
distributed to all the peoples so that they might get ready for that day.
15 The couriers left, spurred on by royal command, and the law was issued
in the fortress of Susa. The king and Haman sat down to drink, while the
city of Susa was in confusion.

ESTHER

Mordecai Appeals to Esther

4 When Mordecai learned all that had occurred, he tore his clothes, put
on •sackcloth and ashes, went into the middle of the city, and cried
loudly and bitterly. [2] He only went as far as the King's Gate, since the law
prohibited anyone wearing sackcloth from entering the King's Gate. [3] There
was great mourning among the Jewish people in every province where the
king's command and edict came. They fasted, wept, and lamented, and
many lay on sackcloth and ashes.

[4] Esther's female servants and her eunuchs came and reported the news
to her, and the queen was overcome with fear. She sent clothes for
Mordecai to wear so he could take off his sackcloth, but he did not accept
them. [5] Esther summoned Hathach, one of the king's eunuchs assigned to
her, and dispatched him to Mordecai to learn what he was doing and why. [A]
[6] So Hathach went out to Mordecai in the city square in front of the King's
Gate. [7] Mordecai told him everything that had happened as well as the exact
amount of money Haman had promised to pay the royal treasury for the
slaughter of the Jews.

[8] Mordecai also gave him a copy of the written decree issued in Susa
ordering their destruction, so that Hathach might show it to Esther, explain
it to her, and command her to approach the king, implore his favor, and
plead with him personally for her people. [9] Hathach came and repeated
Mordecai's response to Esther.

[10] Esther spoke to Hathach and commanded him to tell Mordecai,
[11†] "All the royal officials and the people of the royal provinces know that
one law applies to every man or woman who approaches the king in the
inner courtyard and who has not been summoned — the death penalty.
Only if the king extends the gold scepter will that person live. I have not
been summoned to appear before the king for the last [B] 30 days."
[12] Esther's response was reported to Mordecai.

[13] Mordecai told the messenger to reply to Esther, "Don't think that you
will escape the fate of all the Jews because you are in the king's palace.
[14†] If you keep silent at this time, liberation and deliverance will come to

the Jewish people from another place, but you and your father's house will
be destroyed. Who knows, perhaps you have come to your royal position
for such a time as this."

15 Esther sent this reply to Mordecai: 16 "Go and assemble all the Jews
who can be found in Susa and fast for me. Don't eat or drink for three days,
day or night. I and my female servants will also fast in the same way. After
that, I will go to the king even if it is against the law. If I perish, I perish."
17† So Mordecai went and did everything Esther had ordered him.

ESTHER

Esther Approaches the King

5 On the third day, Esther dressed up in her royal clothing and stood in
the inner courtyard of the palace facing it. The king was sitting on his
royal throne in the royal courtroom, facing its entrance. 2 As soon as the
king saw Queen Esther standing in the courtyard, she won his approval. [A]
The king extended the gold scepter in his hand toward Esther, and she
approached and touched the tip of the scepter.

3 "What is it, Queen Esther? " the king asked her. "Whatever you want,
even to half the kingdom, will be given to you."

4 "If it pleases the king," Esther replied, "may the king and Haman come
today to the banquet I have prepared for them."

5[†] The king commanded, "Hurry, and get Haman so we can do as Esther
has requested." So the king and Haman went to the banquet Esther had
prepared.

6 While drinking the [B] wine, the king asked Esther, "Whatever you ask
will be given to you. Whatever you want, even to half the kingdom, will be
done."

7 Esther answered, "This is my petition and my request: 8 If the king
approves of me [C] and if it pleases the king to grant my petition and perform
my request, may the king and Haman come to the banquet I will prepare
for them. Tomorrow I will do what the king has asked."

9 That day Haman left full of joy and in good spirits. [D] But when Haman
saw Mordecai at the King's Gate, and Mordecai didn't rise or tremble in
fear at his presence, Haman was filled with rage toward Mordecai. 10 Yet
Haman controlled himself and went home. He sent for his friends and his
wife Zeresh to join him. 11 Then Haman described for them his glorious
wealth and his many sons. He told them all how the king had honored him
and promoted him in rank over the other officials and the royal staff.
12 "What's more," Haman added, "Queen Esther invited no one but me to
join the king at the banquet she had prepared. I am invited again tomorrow

to join her with the king. [13] Still, none of this satisfies me since I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the King's Gate all the time."

[14] His wife Zeresh and all his friends told him, "Have them build a gallows 75 feet [E] high. Ask the king in the morning to hang Mordecai on it. Then go to the banquet with the king and enjoy yourself." The advice pleased Haman, so he had the gallows constructed.

ESTHER

Mordecai Honored by the King

6 That night sleep escaped the king, so he ordered the book recording
daily events to be brought and read to the king. [2] They found the written
report of how Mordecai had informed on Bigthana and Teresh, two eunuchs
who guarded the king's entrance, when they planned to assassinate King
Ahasuerus. [3] The king inquired, "What honor and special recognition have
been given to Mordecai for this act? "

The king's personal attendants replied, "Nothing has been done for him."

[4] The king asked, "Who is in the court? " Now Haman was just entering
the outer court of the palace to ask the king to hang Mordecai on the
gallows he had prepared for him.

[5] The king's attendants answered him, "Haman is there, standing in the
court."

"Have him enter," the king ordered.

[6] Haman entered, and the king asked him, "What should be done for the
man the king wants to honor? "

Haman thought to himself, "Who is it the king would want to honor more
than me? " [7] Haman told the king, "For the man the king wants to honor:
[8] Have them bring a royal garment that the king himself has worn and a
horse the king himself has ridden, which has a royal diadem on its head.
[9] Put the garment and the horse under the charge of one of the king's most
noble officials. Have them clothe the man the king wants to honor, parade
him on the horse through the city square, and proclaim before him, 'This is
what is done for the man the king wants to honor.' "

[10] The king told Haman, "Hurry, and do just as you proposed. Take a
garment and a horse for Mordecai the Jew, who is sitting at the King's
Gate. Do not leave out anything you have suggested." [11] So Haman took the
garment and the horse. He clothed Mordecai and paraded him through the
city square, crying out before him, "This is what is done for the man the
king wants to honor."

[12] Then Mordecai returned to the King's Gate, but Haman,
overwhelmed, [A] hurried off for home with his head covered. [13] Haman told
his wife Zeresh and all his friends everything that had happened. His
advisers and his wife Zeresh said to him, "Since Mordecai is Jewish, and
you have begun to fall before him, you won't overcome him, because your
downfall is certain." [14] While they were still speaking with him, the
eunuchs of the king arrived and rushed Haman to the banquet Esther had
prepared.

ESTHER

Haman Is Executed

7 The king and Haman came to feast [A] with Esther the queen. 2 Once again, on the second day while drinking wine, the king asked Esther, “Queen Esther, whatever you ask will be given to you. Whatever you seek, even to half the kingdom, will be done.”

3 Queen Esther answered, “If I have obtained your approval, [B] my king, and if the king is pleased, spare my life — this is my request; and spare my people — this is my desire. 4 For my people and I have been sold out to destruction, death, and extermination. If we had merely been sold as male and female slaves, I would have kept silent. Indeed, the trouble wouldn’t be worth burdening the king.”

5 King Ahasuerus spoke up and asked Queen Esther, “Who is this, and where is the one who would devise such a scheme? ” [C]

6 Esther answered, “The adversary and enemy is this evil Haman.”

Haman stood terrified before the king and queen. 7 Angered by this, the king arose from where they were drinking wine and went to the palace garden. Haman remained to beg Queen Esther for his life because he realized the king was planning something terrible for him. 8 Just as the king returned from the palace garden to the house of wine drinking, Haman was falling on the couch where Esther was reclining. The king exclaimed, “Would he actually violate the queen while I am in the palace? ” As soon as the statement left the king’s mouth, Haman’s face was covered.

9 Harbona, one of the royal eunuchs, said: “There is a gallows 75 feet [D] tall at Haman’s house that he made for Mordecai, who gave the report that saved [E] the king.”

The king commanded, “Hang him on it.”

10 They hanged Haman on the gallows he had prepared for Mordecai. Then the king’s anger subsided.

ESTHER

Esther Intervenes for the Jews

8 That same day King Ahasuerus awarded Queen Esther the estate of
Haman, the enemy of the Jews. Mordecai entered the king's presence
because Esther had revealed her relationship to Mordecai.
2 The king
removed his signet ring he had recovered from Haman and gave it to
Mordecai, and Esther put him in charge of Haman's estate.

3 Then Esther addressed the king again. She fell at his feet, wept, and
begged him to revoke the evil of Haman the Agagite, and his plot he had
devised against the Jews.
4 The king extended the gold scepter toward
Esther, so she got up and stood before the king.

5 She said, "If it pleases the king, and I have found approval before him,
if the matter seems right to the king and I am pleasing in his sight, let a
royal edict be written. Let it revoke the documents the scheming Haman son
of Hammedatha the Agagite, wrote to destroy the Jews who are in all the
king's provinces.
6 For how could I bear to see the disaster that would
come on my people? How could I bear to see the destruction of my
relatives? "

7 King Ahasuerus said to Esther the Queen and to Mordecai the Jew,
"Look, I have given Haman's estate to Esther, and he was hanged on the
gallows because he attacked [A] the Jews.
8 You may write in the king's
name whatever pleases you concerning the Jews, and seal it with the royal
signet ring. A document written in the king's name and sealed with the
royal signet ring cannot be revoked."

9 On the twenty-third day of the third month (that is, the month Sivan),
the royal scribes were summoned. Everything was written exactly as
Mordecai ordered for the Jews, to the satraps, the governors, and the
officials of the 127 provinces from India to •Cush. The edict was written
for each province in its own script, for each ethnic group in its own
language, and to the Jews in their own script and language.

10 Mordecai wrote in King Ahasuerus's name and sealed the edicts with
the royal signet ring. He sent the documents by mounted couriers, who
rode fast horses bred from the royal racing mares.

11 The king’s edict gave the Jews in each and every city the right to
assemble and defend themselves, to destroy, kill, and annihilate every
ethnic and provincial army hostile to them, including women and children,
and to take their possessions as spoils of war. 12 This would take place on a
single day throughout all the provinces of King Ahasuerus, on the thirteenth
day of the twelfth month, the month Adar.

13 A copy of the text, issued as law throughout every province, was
distributed to all the peoples so the Jews could be ready to avenge
themselves against their enemies on that day. 14 The couriers rode out in
haste on their royal horses at the king’s urgent command. The law was also
issued in the fortress of Susa.

15 Mordecai went from the king’s presence clothed in royal purple and
white, with a great gold crown and a purple robe of fine linen. The city of
Susa shouted and rejoiced, 16 and the Jews celebrated [B] with gladness, joy,
and honor. 17 In every province and every city, wherever the king’s
command and his law reached, joy and rejoicing took place among the
Jews. There was a celebration and a holiday. [C] And many of the ethnic
groups of the land professed themselves to be Jews because fear of the
Jews had overcome them.

ESTHER

Victories of the Jews

9 The king's command and law went into effect on the thirteenth day of
the twelfth month, the month Adar. On the day when the Jews'
enemies had hoped to overpower them, just the opposite happened. The
Jews overpowered those who hated them. 2 In each of King Ahasuerus's
provinces the Jews assembled in their cities to attack those who intended to
harm them. [A] Not a single person could withstand them; terror of them fell
on every nationality.

3 All the officials of the provinces, the satraps, the governors, and the
royal civil administrators [B] aided the Jews because they were afraid of
Mordecai. 4 For Mordecai exercised great power in the palace, and his
fame spread throughout the provinces as he became more and more
powerful.

5 The Jews put all their enemies to the sword, killing and destroying
them. They did what they pleased to those who hated them. 6 In the fortress
of Susa the Jews killed and destroyed 500 men, 7 including Parshandatha,
Dalphon, Aspatha, 8 Poratha, Adalia, Aridatha, 9 Parmashta, Arisai, Aridai,
and Vaizatha. 10 They killed these 10 sons of Haman son of Hammedatha,
the enemy of the Jews. However, they did not seize [C] any plunder.

ARTICLE

Does The Bible Demean Women? ⇒

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11 On that day the number of people killed in the fortress of Susa was
reported to the king. 12 The king said to Queen Esther, "In the fortress of
Susa the Jews have killed and destroyed 500 men, including Haman's 10
sons. What have they done in the rest of the royal provinces? Whatever you
ask will be given to you. Whatever you seek will also be done."

13 Esther answered, "If it pleases the king, may the Jews who are in Susa
also have tomorrow to carry out today's law, and may the bodies of

Haman's 10 sons be hung on the gallows." [14†] The king gave the orders for this to be done, so a law was announced in Susa, and they hung the bodies of Haman's 10 sons. [15] The Jews in Susa assembled again on the fourteenth day of the month of Adar and killed 300 men in Susa, but they did not seize [D] any plunder.

[16] The rest of the Jews in the royal provinces assembled, defended themselves, and got rid of [E] their enemies. They killed 75,000 of those who hated them, but they did not seize [F] any plunder. [17] They fought on the thirteenth day of the month of Adar and rested on the fourteenth, and it became a day of feasting and rejoicing.

[18] But the Jews in Susa had assembled on the thirteenth and the fourteenth days of the month. They rested on the fifteenth day of the month, and it became a day of feasting and rejoicing. [19] This explains why the rural Jews who live in villages observe the fourteenth day of the month of Adar as a time of rejoicing and feasting. It is a holiday when they send gifts to one another.

[20] Mordecai recorded these events and sent letters to all the Jews in all of King Ahasuerus's provinces, both near and far. [21] He ordered them to celebrate the fourteenth and fifteenth days of the month Adar every year
[22] because during those days the Jews got rid of [G] their enemies. That was the month when their sorrow was turned into rejoicing and their mourning into a holiday. They were to be days of feasting, rejoicing, and of sending gifts to one another and the poor.

[23] So the Jews agreed to continue the practice they had begun, as Mordecai had written them to do. [24] For Haman son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the enemy of all the Jews, had plotted against the Jews to destroy them. He cast the Pur (that is, the lot) to crush and destroy them. [25] But when the matter was brought before the king, he commanded by letter that the evil plan Haman had devised against the Jews return on his own head and that he should be hanged with his sons on the gallows. [26] For this reason these days are called Purim, from the word Pur.

Because of all the instructions in this letter as well as what they had
witnessed and what had happened to them, [27] the Jews bound themselves,
their descendants, and all who joined with them to a commitment that they
would not fail to celebrate these two days each and every year according to
the written instructions and according to the time appointed. [28] These days
are remembered and celebrated by every generation, family, province, and
city, so that these days of Purim will not lose their significance in Jewish
life and their memory will not fade from their descendants.

[29] Queen Esther daughter of Abihail, along with Mordecai the Jew,
wrote this second letter with full authority to confirm the letter about
Purim. [30] He sent letters with messages of peace and faithfulness to all the
Jews who were in the 127 provinces of the kingdom of Ahasuerus, [31] in
order to confirm these days of Purim at their proper time just as Mordecai
the Jew and Queen Esther had established them and just as they had
committed themselves and their descendants to the practices of fasting and
lamentation. [32] So Esther’s command confirmed these customs of Purim,
which were then written into the record.

ESTHER

Mordecai's Fame

10 King Ahasuerus imposed a tax throughout the land even to the farthest shores. [A], 2 All of his powerful and magnificent accomplishments and the detailed account of Mordecai's great rank to which the king had honored him, have they not been written in the Historical Records of the Kings of Media and Persia?
3[†] Mordecai the Jew was second only to King Ahasuerus, famous among the Jews, and highly popular with many of his relatives. He continued to seek good for his people and to speak for the welfare of all his descendants.

JOB

Introduction to Job

JOB

Job and His Family

1 †There was a man in the country of Uz named Job. He was a man of
perfect integrity, who •feared God and turned away from evil. 2 He had
seven sons and three daughters. 3 His estate included 7,000 sheep, 3,000
camels, 500 yoke of oxen, 500 female donkeys, and a very large number of
servants. Job was the greatest man among all the people of the east.

4 His sons used to take turns having banquets at their homes. They would
send an invitation to their three sisters to eat and drink with them.
5 Whenever a round of banqueting was over, Job would send for his
children and purify them, rising early in the morning to offer burnt offerings
for [A] all of them. For Job thought: Perhaps my children have sinned, having
cursed God in their hearts. This was Job's regular practice.

Satan's First Test of Job

6† One day the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD,
and Satan [B] also came with them. 7† The LORD asked Satan, "Where have
you come from? "

"From roaming through the earth," Satan answered Him, "and walking around on it."

8 Then the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered My servant Job? No one else on earth is like him, a man of perfect integrity, who fears God and turns away from evil."

9 Satan answered the LORD, "Does Job fear God for nothing? 10 Haven't
You placed a hedge around him, his household, and everything he owns?
You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased
in the land. 11 But stretch out Your hand and strike everything he owns, and
he will surely curse You to Your face."

12† "Very well," the LORD told Satan, "everything he owns is in your power. However, you must not lay a hand on Job himself." So Satan left the LORD's presence.

ARTICLE

How Can God Have All Power and Be Loving and Yet There Be Evil? ⇒

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[13] One day when Job's sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine
in their oldest brother's house, [14†] a messenger came to Job and reported:
"While the oxen were plowing and the donkeys grazing nearby, [15†] the
Sabeans swooped down and took them away. They struck down the
servants with the sword, and I alone have escaped to tell you! "

[16] He was still speaking when another messenger came and reported: "A
lightning storm [C] struck from heaven. It burned up the sheep and the
servants and devoured them, and I alone have escaped to tell you! "

[17†] That messenger was still speaking when yet another came and
reported: "The Chaldeans formed three bands, made a raid on the camels,
and took them away. They struck down the servants with the sword, and I
alone have escaped to tell you! "

[18] He was still speaking when another messenger came and reported:
"Your sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest
brother's house. [19] Suddenly a powerful wind swept in from the desert and
struck the four corners of the house. It collapsed on the young people so
that they died, and I alone have escaped to tell you! "

[20] Then Job stood up, tore his robe, and shaved his head. He fell to the
ground and worshiped, [21] saying:

Naked I came from my mother's womb,
and naked I will leave this life. [D],
The Lord gives, and the Lord takes away.
Praise the name of •Yahweh.

22 Throughout all this Job did not sin or blame God for anything. [E]

JOB

Satan's Second Test of Job

2 One day the sons of God came again to present themselves before the
LORD, and Satan also came with them to present himself before the
LORD. 2 The LORD asked Satan, “Where have you come from? ”

“From roaming through the earth,” Satan answered Him, “and walking around on it.”

3† Then the LORD said to Satan, “Have you considered My servant Job? No one else on earth is like him, a man of perfect integrity, who •fears God and turns away from evil. He still retains his integrity, even though you incited Me against him, to destroy him without just cause.”

4 “Skin for skin! ” Satan answered the LORD. “A man will give up
everything he owns in exchange for his life. 5 But stretch out Your hand and
strike his flesh and bones, and he will surely curse You to Your face.”

6 “Very well,” the LORD told Satan, “he is in your power; only spare his
life.” 7 So Satan left the LORD’s presence and infected Job with terrible boils
from the sole of his foot to the top of his head. 8 Then Job took a piece of
broken pottery to scrape himself while he sat among the ashes.

9† His wife said to him, “Do you still retain your integrity? Curse God and die! ”

10 “You speak as a foolish woman speaks,” he told her. “Should we accept only good from God and not adversity? ” Throughout all this Job did not sin in what he said. A

Job’s Three Friends

11 Now when Job’s three friends — Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the
Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite — heard about all this adversity that
had happened to him, each of them came from his home. They met together
to go and sympathize with him and comfort him. 12 When they looked from
a distance, they could barely recognize him. They wept aloud, and each
man tore his robe and threw dust into the air and on his head. 13 Then they

sat on the ground with him seven days and nights, but no one spoke a word to him because they saw that his suffering was very intense.

JOB

Job’s Opening Speech

3 After this, Job began to speak and cursed the day he was born. [2] He said:

[3] May the day I was born perish,
and the night when they said,
"A boy is conceived."
[4] If only that day had turned to darkness!
May God above not care about it,
or light shine on it.
[5] May darkness and gloom reclaim it,
and a cloud settle over it.
May an eclipse of the sun [A] terrify it.
[6] If only darkness had taken that night away!
May it not appear among the days of the year
or be listed in the calendar. [B]
[7] Yes, may that night be barren;
may no joyful shout be heard in it.
[8†] Let those who curse certain days
cast a spell on it,
those who are skilled in rousing •Leviathan.
[9] May its morning stars grow dark.
May it wait for daylight but have none;
may it not see the breaking [C] of dawn.
[10] For that night did not shut
the doors of my mother's womb,
and hide sorrow from my eyes.

[11] Why was I not stillborn;
why didn't I die as I came from the womb?
[12] Why did the knees receive me,
and why were there breasts for me to nurse?
[13†] Now I would certainly be lying down in peace;
I would be asleep.
Then I would be at rest
[14] with the kings and counselors of the earth,
who rebuilt ruined cities for themselves,

15 or with princes who had gold,
who filled their houses with silver.
16 Or why was I not hidden like a miscarried child,
like infants who never see daylight?
17 There the wicked cease to make trouble,
and there the weary find rest.
18 The captives are completely at ease;
they do not hear the voice of their oppressor.
19 Both small and great are there,
and the slave is set free from his master.

20 Why is light given to one burdened with grief,
and life to those whose existence is bitter,
21 who wait for death, but it does not come,
and search for it more than for hidden treasure,
22 who are filled with much joy
and are glad when they reach the grave?
23 Why is life given to a man whose path is hidden,
whom God has hedged in?

ARTICLE

What Does the Bible Say About Euthanasia? ⇒

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24 I sigh when food is put before me, [D]
and my groans pour out like water.
25 For the thing I feared has overtaken me,
and what I dreaded has happened to me.
26 I cannot relax or be still;
I have no rest, for trouble comes.

JOB

FIRST SERIES OF SPEECHES

Eliphaz Speaks

4 Then Eliphaz the Temanite replied:

2 Should anyone try to speak with you
when you are exhausted?
Yet who can keep from speaking?
3 Indeed, you have instructed many
and have strengthened weak hands.
4 Your words have steadied the one who was stumbling
and braced the knees that were buckling.
5 But now that this has happened to you,
you have become exhausted.
It strikes you, and you are dismayed.
6 Isn't your piety your confidence,
and the integrity of your life [A] your hope?
7 Consider: who has perished when he was innocent?
Where have the honest been destroyed?
8 In my experience, those who plow injustice
and those who sow trouble reap the same.
9 They perish at a single blast from God
and come to an end by the breath of His nostrils.
10 The lion may roar and the fierce lion growl,
but the fangs of young lions are broken.
11 The strong lion dies if it catches no prey,
and the cubs of the lioness are scattered.

12[†] A word was brought to me in secret;
my ears caught a whisper of it.
13 Among unsettling thoughts from visions in the night,
when deep sleep descends on men,
14 fear and trembling came over me
and made all my bones shake.
15 A wind [B] passed by me,
and I shuddered with fear. [C]
16 A figure stood there,
but I could not recognize its appearance;

a form loomed before my eyes.
I heard a quiet voice:
17 “Can a person be more righteous than God,
or a man more pure than his Maker? ”
18 If God puts no trust in His servants
and He charges His angels with foolishness, [D]
19 how much more those who dwell in clay houses,
whose foundation is in the dust,
who are crushed like a moth!
20 They are smashed to pieces from dawn to dusk;
they perish forever while no one notices.
21 Are their tent cords not pulled up?
They die without wisdom.

JOB

5 †Call out if you please. Will anyone answer you?
Which of the holy ones will you turn to?
2 For anger kills a fool,
and jealousy slays the gullible.
3 I have seen a fool taking root,
but I immediately pronounced a curse on his home.
4 His children are far from safety.
They are crushed at the city •gate,
with no one to rescue them.
5 The hungry consume his harvest,
even taking it out of the thorns. [A]
The thirsty pant for his children's wealth.
6 For distress does not grow out of the soil,
and trouble does not sprout from the ground.
7 But mankind is born for trouble
as surely as sparks fly upward.

8 However, if I were you, I would appeal to God
and would present my case to Him.
9 He does great and unsearchable things,
wonders without number.
10 He gives rain to the earth
and sends water to the fields.
11 He sets the lowly on high,
and mourners are lifted to safety.
12 He frustrates the schemes of the crafty
so that they [B] achieve no success.
13† He traps the wise in their craftiness
so that the plans of the deceptive
are quickly brought to an end.
14 They encounter darkness by day,
and they grope at noon
as if it were night.
15 He saves the needy from their sharp words [C],
and from the clutches of the powerful.

16 So the poor have hope,
and injustice shuts its mouth.
17 See how happy the man is God corrects;
so do not reject the discipline of the •Almighty.
18 For He crushes but also binds up;
He strikes, but His hands also heal.
19 He will rescue you from six calamities;
no harm will touch you in seven.
20 In famine He will redeem you from death,
and in battle, from the power of the sword.
21 You will be safe from slander [D]
and not fear destruction when it comes.
22 You will laugh at destruction and hunger
and not fear the animals of the earth.
23 For you will have a covenant with the stones of the field,
and the wild animals will be at peace with you.
24 You will know that your tent is secure,
and nothing will be missing when you inspect your home.
25 You will also know that your offspring will be many
and your descendants like the grass of the earth.
26 You will approach the grave in full vigor,
as a stack of sheaves is gathered in its season.

27 We have investigated this, and it is true!
Hear it and understand it for yourself.

JOB

Job’s Reply to Eliphaz

6 [†]Then Job answered:

[2] If only my grief could be weighed
and my devastation placed with it in the scales.
[3] For then it would outweigh the sand of the seas!
That is why my words are rash.
[4] Surely the arrows of the •Almighty have pierced [A] me;
my spirit drinks their poison.
God's terrors are arrayed against me.
[5] Does a wild donkey bray over fresh grass
or an ox low over its fodder?
[6] Is bland food eaten without salt?
Is there flavor in an egg white? [B]
[7] I refuse to touch them;
they are like contaminated food.

[8] If only my request would be granted
and God would provide what I hope for:
[9] that He would decide to crush me,
to unleash His power and cut me off!
[10] It would still bring me comfort,
and I would leap for joy in unrelenting pain
that I have not denied [C] the words of the Holy One.

[11] What strength do I have that I should continue to hope?
What is my future, that I should be patient?
[12] Is my strength that of stone,
or my flesh made of bronze?
[13] Since I cannot help myself,
the hope for success has been banished from me.

[14] A despairing man should receive loyalty from his friends, [D],
even if he abandons the •fear of the Almighty.
[15] My brothers are as treacherous as a •wadi,
as seasonal streams that overflow
[16] and become darkened [E] because of ice,

and the snow melts into them.
17 The wadis evaporate in warm weather;
they disappear from their channels in hot weather.
18 Caravans turn away from their routes,
go up into the desert, and perish.
19 The caravans of Tema look for these streams.
The traveling merchants of Sheba hope for them.
20 They are ashamed because they had been confident of finding water.
When they arrive there, they are frustrated.
21 So this is what you have now become to me.
When you see something dreadful, you are afraid.
22 Have I ever said: "Give me something"
or "Pay a bribe for me from your wealth"
23 or "Deliver me from the enemy's power"
or "Redeem me from the grasp of the ruthless"?

24 Teach me, and I will be silent.
Help me understand what I did wrong.
25 How painful honest words can be!
But what does your rebuke prove?
26 Do you think that you can disprove my words
or that a despairing man's words are mere wind?
27† No doubt you would cast lots for a fatherless child
and negotiate a price to sell your friend.

28 But now, please look at me;
would I lie to your face?
29 Reconsider; don't be unjust.
Reconsider; my righteousness is still the issue.
30 Is there injustice on my tongue
or can my palate not taste disaster?

JOB

7 [†]Isn't mankind consigned to forced labor on earth?
Are not his days like those of a hired hand?
2 Like a slave he longs for shade;
like a hired man he waits for his pay.
3 So I have been made to inherit months of futility,
and troubled nights have been assigned to me.
4 When I lie down I think:
When will I get up?
But the evening drags on endlessly,
and I toss and turn until dawn.
5 My flesh is clothed with maggots and encrusted with dirt. [A]
My skin forms scabs [B] and then oozes.

6 My days pass more swiftly than a weaver's shuttle;
they come to an end without hope.
7[†] Remember that my life is but a breath.
My eye will never again see anything good.
8 The eye of anyone who looks on me
will no longer see me.
Your eyes will look for me, but I will be gone.
9 As a cloud fades away and vanishes,
so the one who goes down to •Sheol will never rise again.
10 He will never return to his house;
his hometown will no longer remember [C] him.

11 Therefore I will not restrain my mouth.
I will speak in the anguish of my spirit;
I will complain in the bitterness of my soul.
12[†] Am I the sea [D], or a sea monster,
that You keep me under guard?
13 When I say: My bed will comfort me,
and my couch will ease my complaint,
14 then You frighten me with dreams,
and terrify me with visions,
15 so that I prefer strangling [E] —

death rather than life in this body. [F]
16 I give up! I will not live forever.
Leave me alone, for my days are a breath. [G]

17 What is man, that You think so highly of him
and pay so much attention to him?
18 You inspect him every morning,
and put him to the test every moment.
19 Will You ever look away from me,
or leave me alone long enough to swallow? [H]
20 If I have sinned, what have I done to You,
Watcher of mankind?
Why have You made me Your target,
so that I have become a burden to You?
21[†] Why not forgive my sin
and pardon my transgression?
For soon I will lie down in the grave.
You will eagerly seek me, but I will be gone.

JOB

Bildad Speaks

8 Then Bildad the Shuhite replied:

[2] How long will you go on saying these things?
Your words are a blast of wind.
[3] Does God pervert justice?
Does the •Almighty pervert what is right?
[4] Since your children sinned against Him,
He gave them over to their rebellion.
[5] But if you earnestly seek God
and ask the Almighty for mercy,
[6] if you are pure and upright,
then He will move even now on your behalf
and restore the home where your righteousness dwells.
[7] Then, even if your beginnings were modest,
your final days will be full of prosperity.

[8] For ask the previous generation,
and pay attention to what their fathers discovered,
[9†] since we were born only yesterday and know nothing.
Our days on earth are but a shadow.
[10] Will they not teach you and tell you
and speak from their understanding?
[11] Does papyrus grow where there is no marsh?
Do reeds flourish without water?
[12] While still uncut shoots,
they would dry up quicker than any other plant.
[13] Such is the destiny [A] of all who forget God;
the hope of the godless will perish.
[14] His source of confidence is fragile; [B]
what he trusts in is a spider's web.
[15] He leans on his web, but it doesn't stand firm.
He grabs it, but it does not hold up.
[16] He is a well-watered plant in the sunshine;
his shoots spread out over his garden.
[17] His roots are intertwined around a pile of rocks.

He looks for a home among the stones.
18 If he is uprooted [C] from his place,
it will deny knowing him, saying, “I never saw you.”
19 Surely this is the joy of his way of life;
yet others will sprout from the dust.
20 Look, God does not reject a person of integrity,
and He will not support evildoers.
21 He will yet fill your mouth with laughter
and your lips with a shout of joy.
22 Your enemies will be clothed with shame;
the tent of the wicked will exist no longer.

JOB

Job's Reply to Bildad

9 Then Job answered:

2 Yes, I know what you've said is true,
but how can a person be justified before God?

ARTICLE

Didn't the Church Oppose Galileo? ⇒

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3 If one wanted to take Him to court,
he could not answer God [A] once in a thousand times.
4† God is wise and all-powerful.
Who has opposed Him and come out unharmed?
5 He removes mountains without their knowledge,
overturning them in His anger.
6† He shakes the earth from its place
so that its pillars tremble.
7 He commands the sun not to shine
and seals off the stars.
8† He alone stretches out the heavens
and treads on the waves of the sea. [B]
9 He makes the stars: the Bear, [C] Orion,
the Pleiades, and the constellations [D] of the southern sky.
10 He does great and unsearchable things,
wonders without number.
11 If He passes by me, I wouldn't see Him;
if He goes right by, I wouldn't recognize Him.
12 If He snatches something, who can stop [E] Him?
Who can ask Him, "What are You doing? "
13† God does not hold back His anger;
•Rahab's assistants cringe in fear beneath Him!

14 How then can I answer Him

or choose my arguments against Him?
15 Even if I were in the right, I could not answer.
I could only beg my Judge for mercy.
16 If I summoned Him and He answered me,
I do not believe He would pay attention to what I said.
17 He batters me with a whirlwind
and multiplies my wounds without cause.
18 He doesn't let me catch my breath
but soaks me with bitter experiences.
19 If it is a matter of strength, look, He is the Mighty One!
If it is a matter of justice, who can summon Him?
20 Even if I were in the right, my own mouth would condemn me;
if I were blameless, my mouth would declare me •guilty.

21 Though I am blameless,
I no longer care about myself;
I renounce my life.
22 It is all the same. Therefore I say,
"He destroys both the blameless and the wicked."
23 When disaster brings sudden death,
He mocks the despair of the innocent.
24 The earth [F] is handed over to the wicked;
He blindfolds [G] its judges.
If it isn't He, then who is it?

25 My days fly by faster than a runner;
they flee without seeing any good.
26 They sweep by like boats made of papyrus,
like an eagle swooping down on its prey.
27 If I said, "I will forget my complaint,
change my expression, and smile,"
28 I would still live in terror of all my pains.
I know You will not acquit me.
29 Since I will be found guilty,
why should I labor in vain?
30 If I wash myself with snow,

and cleanse my hands with lye,
31 then You dip me in a pit of mud,
and my own clothes despise me!

32 For He is not a man like me, that I can answer Him,
that we can take each other to court.
33 There is no one to judge between us,
to lay his hand on both of us.
34 Let Him take His rod away from me
so His terror will no longer frighten me.
35 Then I would speak and not fear Him.
But that is not the case; I am on my own.

JOB

10 I am disgusted with my life.
I will express my complaint
and speak in the bitterness of my soul.
2 I will say to God:
"Do not declare me •guilty!
Let me know why You prosecute me.
3 Is it good for You to oppress,
to reject the work of Your hands,
and favor [A] the plans of the wicked?
4 Do You have eyes of flesh,
or do You see as a human sees?
5 Are Your days like those of a human,
or Your years like those of a man,
6 that You look for my wrongdoing
and search for my sin,
7 even though You know that I am not wicked
and that there is no one who can deliver from Your hand?

8 "Your hands shaped me and formed me.
Will You now turn and destroy me?
9 Please remember that You formed me like clay.
Will You now return me to dust?
10 Did You not pour me out like milk
and curdle me like cheese?
11 You clothed me with skin and flesh,
and wove me together with bones and tendons.
12 You gave me life and faithful love,
and Your care has guarded my life.

13 "Yet You concealed these thoughts in Your heart;
I know that this was Your hidden plan: [B]
14 if I sin, You would notice, [C]
and would not acquit me of my wrongdoing.
15 If I am wicked, woe to me!
And even if I am righteous, I cannot lift up my head.
I am filled with shame

and aware of my affliction.
16 If I am proud, [D] You hunt me like a lion
and again display Your miraculous power against me.
17 You produce new witnesses [E] against me
and multiply Your anger toward me.
Hardships assault me, wave after wave. [F]

18 “Why did You bring me out of the womb?
I should have died and never been seen.
19 I wish [G] I had never existed
but had been carried from the womb to the grave.
20 Are my days not few? Stop it!
Leave me alone, so that I can smile a little
21† before I go to a land of darkness and gloom,
never to return.
22 It is a land of blackness like the deepest darkness,
gloomy and chaotic,
where even the light is like [H] the darkness.”

JOB

Zophar Speaks

11 Then Zophar the Naamathite replied:

2 Should this stream of words go unanswered
and such a talker [A] be acquitted?
3 Should your babbling put others to silence,
so that you can keep on ridiculing
with no one to humiliate you?
4 You have said, “My teaching is sound,
and I am pure in Your sight.”
5 But if only God would speak
and declare His case [B] against you,
6† He would show you the secrets of wisdom,
for true wisdom has two sides.
Know then that God has chosen to overlook some of your sin.

7† Can you fathom the depths of God
or discover the limits of the •Almighty?
8 They are higher than the heavens — what can you do?
They are deeper than •Sheol — what can you know?
9 Their measure is longer than the earth
and wider than the sea.

10 If He passes by and throws someone in prison
or convenes a court, who can stop Him?
11 Surely He knows which people are worthless.
If He sees iniquity, will He not take note of it?
12 But a stupid man will gain understanding
as soon as a wild donkey is born a man!

13 As for you, if you redirect your heart
and lift up your hands to Him in prayer —
14 if there is iniquity in your hand, remove it,
and don’t allow injustice to dwell in your tents —
15 then you will hold your head high, free from fault.
You will be firmly established and unafraid.
16 For you will forget your suffering,

recalling it only as waters that have flowed by.
17 Your life will be brighter than noonday;
its darkness will be like the morning.
18 You will be confident, because there is hope.
You will look carefully about and lie down in safety.

19 You will lie down without fear,
and many will seek your favor.
20 But the sight of the wicked will fail.
Their way of escape will be cut off,
and their only hope is their last breath.

JOB

Job's Reply to Zophar

12 Then Job answered:

2 No doubt you are the people,
and wisdom will die with you!
3 But I also have a mind;
I am not inferior to you.
Who doesn't know the things you are talking about? [A]

4† I am a laughingstock to my [B] friends,
by calling on God, who answers me. [C]
The righteous and upright man is a laughingstock.
5 The one who is at ease holds calamity in contempt
and thinks it is prepared for those whose feet are slipping.
6 The tents of robbers are safe,
and those who provoke God are secure;
God's power provides this. [D]

7 But ask the animals, and they will instruct you;
ask the birds of the sky, and they will tell you.
8 Or speak to the earth, and it will instruct you;
let the fish of the sea inform you.
9† Which of all these does not know
that the hand of the LORD has done this?
10 The life of every living thing is in His hand,
as well as the breath of all mankind.
11 Doesn't the ear test words
as the palate tastes food?
12 Wisdom is found with the elderly,
and understanding comes with long life.

13 Wisdom and strength belong to God;
counsel and understanding are His.
14 Whatever He tears down cannot be rebuilt;
whoever He imprisons cannot be released.
15 When He withholds the waters, everything dries up,
and when He releases them, they destroy the land.

[16] True wisdom and power belong to Him.
The deceived and the deceiver are His.
[17] He leads counselors away barefoot
and makes judges go mad.
[18] He releases the bonds put on by kings
and fastens a belt around their waists.
[19] He leads priests away barefoot
and overthrows established leaders.
[20] He deprives trusted advisers of speech
and takes away the elders' good judgment.
[21] He pours out contempt on nobles
and disarms [E] the strong.
[22] He reveals mysteries from the darkness
and brings the deepest darkness into the light.
[23] He makes nations great, then destroys them;
He enlarges nations, then leads them away.
[24] He deprives the world's leaders of reason,
and makes them wander in a trackless wasteland.
[25] They grope around in darkness without light;
He makes them stagger like drunken men.

JOB

13 Look, my eyes have seen all this;
my ears have heard and understood it.
2 Everything you know, I also know;
I am not inferior to you.
3 Yet I prefer to speak to the •Almighty
and argue my case before God.
4 But you coat the truth with lies;
you are all worthless doctors.
5 If only you would shut up
and let that be your wisdom!

6 Hear now my argument,
and listen to my defense. [A]
7 Would you testify unjustly on God’s behalf
or speak deceitfully for Him?
8 Would you show partiality to Him
or argue the case in His defense?
9 Would it go well if He examined you?
Could you deceive Him as you would deceive a man?
10 Surely He would rebuke you
if you secretly showed partiality.
11 Would God’s majesty not terrify you?
Would His dread not fall on you?
12 Your memorable sayings are proverbs of ash;
your defenses are made of clay.

13 Be quiet, [B] and I will speak.
Let whatever comes happen to me.
14 Why do I put myself at risk [C]
and take my life in my own hands?
15[†] Even if He kills me, I will hope in Him.
I will still defend my ways before Him.
16 Yes, this will result in my deliverance,
for no godless person can appear before Him.
17 Pay close attention to my words;
let my declaration ring in your ears.

[18] Now then, I have prepared my case;
I know that I am right.
[19] Can anyone indict me?
If so, I will be silent and die.

[20] Only grant these two things to me, God,
so that I will not have to hide from Your presence:
[21] remove Your hand from me,
and do not let Your terror frighten me.
[22] Then call, and I will answer,
or I will speak, and You can respond to me.
[23] How many iniquities and sins have I committed? [D]
Reveal to me my transgression and sin.
[24] Why do You hide Your face
and consider me Your enemy?
[25] Will You frighten a wind-driven leaf?
Will You chase after dry straw?
[26] For You record bitter accusations against me
and make me inherit the iniquities of my youth.
[27] You put my feet in the stocks
and stand watch over all my paths,
setting a limit for the soles [E] of my feet.

[28] Man wears out like something rotten,
like a moth-eaten garment.

JOB

14 [†]Man born of woman
is short of days and full of trouble.
2 He blossoms like a flower, then withers;
he flees like a shadow and does not last.
3 Do You really take notice of one like this?
Will You bring me into judgment against You?
4 Who can produce something pure from what is impure?
No one!
5 Since man's days are determined
and the number of his months depends on You,
and since You have set [A] limits he cannot pass,
6 look away from him and let him rest
so that he can enjoy his day like a hired hand.

7 There is hope for a tree:
If it is cut down, it will sprout again,
and its shoots will not die.
8 If its roots grow old in the ground
and its stump starts to die in the soil,
9 the smell of water makes it thrive
and produce twigs like a sapling.
10 But a man dies and fades away;
he breathes his last — where is he?
11 As water disappears from the sea
and a river becomes parched and dry,
12 so man lies down never to rise again.
They will not wake up until the heavens are no more;
they will not stir from their sleep.

13[†] If only You would hide me in •Sheol
and conceal me until Your anger passes.
If only You would appoint a time for me
and then remember me.
14 When a man dies, will he come back to life?
If so, I would wait all the days of my struggle
until my relief comes.

15 You would call, and I would answer You.
You would long for the work of Your hands.
16 For then You would count my steps
but would not take note of my sin.
17 My rebellion would be sealed up in a bag,
and You would cover over my iniquity.

18 But as a mountain collapses and crumbles
and a rock is dislodged from its place,
19 as water wears away stones
and torrents wash away the soil from the land,
so You destroy a man's hope.
20 You completely overpower him, and he passes on;
You change his appearance and send him away.
21 If his sons receive honor, he does not know it;
if they become insignificant, he is unaware of it.
22 He feels only the pain of his own body
and mourns only for himself.

JOB

SECOND SERIES OF SPEECHES

Eliphaz Speaks

15 Then Eliphaz the Temanite replied:

[2] Does a wise man answer with empty [A] counsel
or fill himself [B] with the hot east wind?
[3] Should he argue with useless talk
or with words that serve no good purpose?
[4] But you even undermine the •fear of God
and hinder meditation before Him.
[5] Your iniquity teaches you what to say,
and you choose the language of the crafty.
[6] Your own mouth condemns you, not I;
your own lips testify against you.

[7] Were you the first person ever born,
or were you brought forth before the hills?
[8] Do you listen in on the council of God,
or have a monopoly on wisdom?
[9] What do you know that we don't?
What do you understand that is not clear to us?
[10] Both the gray-haired and the elderly are with us,
men older than your father.
[11] Are God's consolations not enough for you,
even the words that deal gently with you?
[12] Why has your heart misled you,
and why do your eyes flash
[13] as you turn your anger [C] against God
and allow such words to leave your mouth?

[14†] What is man, that he should be pure,
or one born of woman, that he should be righteous?
[15] If God puts no trust in His holy ones
and the heavens are not pure in His sight,
[16] how much less one who is revolting and corrupt,
who drinks injustice like water?

[17] Listen to me and I will inform you.

I will describe what I have seen,
18 what was declared by wise men
and was not suppressed by their ancestors,
19 the land was given to them alone
when no foreigner passed among them.
20 A wicked man writhes in pain all his days;
only a few [D] years are reserved for the ruthless.
21 Dreadful sounds fill his ears;
when he is at peace, a robber attacks him.
22 He doesn't believe he will return from darkness;
he is destined for the sword.
23 He wanders about for food, saying, "Where is it? "
He knows the day of darkness is at hand.
24 Trouble and distress terrify him,
overwhelming him like a king prepared for battle.
25 For he has stretched out his hand against God
and has arrogantly opposed the •Almighty.
26 He rushes headlong at Him
with his thick, studded shields.
27 Though his face is covered with fat [E]
and his waistline bulges with it,
28 he will dwell in ruined cities,
in abandoned houses destined to become piles of rubble.
29 He will no longer be rich; his wealth will not endure.
His possessions will not increase in the land.
30 He will not escape from the darkness;
flames will wither his shoots,
and by the breath of God's mouth, he will depart.
31 Let him not put trust in worthless things, being led astray,
for what he gets in exchange will prove worthless.
32 It will be accomplished before his time,
and his branch will not flourish.
33 He will be like a vine that drops its unripe grapes
and like an olive tree that sheds its blossoms.

34 For the company of the godless will have no children,
and fire will consume the tents of those who offer bribes.
35 They conceive trouble and give birth to evil;
their womb prepares deception.

JOB

Job's Reply to Eliphaz

16 Then Job answered:

[2] I have heard many things like these.
You are all miserable comforters.
[3] Is there no end to your empty [A] words?
What provokes you that you continue testifying?
[4] If you were in my place I could also talk like you.
I could string words together against you
and shake my head at you.
[5] Instead, I would encourage you with my mouth,
and the consolation from my lips would bring relief.

[6] Even if I speak, my suffering is not relieved,
and if I hold back, what have I lost?
[7] Surely He [B] has now exhausted me.
You have devastated my entire family.
[8] You have shriveled me up [C] — it has become a witness;
My frailty rises up against me and testifies to my face.
[9] His anger tears at me, and He harasses me.
He gnashes His teeth at me.
My enemy pierces me with His eyes.
[10] They open their mouths against me
and strike my cheeks with contempt;
they join themselves together against me.
[11] God hands me over to unjust men;
He throws me into the hands of the wicked.
[12] I was at ease, but He shattered me;
He seized me by the scruff of the neck
and smashed me to pieces.
He set me up as His target;
[13] His archers [D] surround me.
He pierces my kidneys without mercy
and pours my bile on the ground.
[14] He breaks through my defenses again and again; [E]
He charges at me like a warrior.

15 I have sewn •sackcloth over my skin;
I have buried my strength [F] in the dust.
16 My face has grown red with weeping,
and darkness covers my eyes,
17 although my hands are free from violence
and my prayer is pure.

18 Earth, do not cover my blood;
may my cry for help find no resting place.
19† Even now my witness is in heaven,
and my advocate is in the heights!
20 My friends scoff at me
as I weep before God.
21 I wish that someone might arbitrate
between a man and God
just as a •man pleads for his friend.
22 For only a few years will pass
before I go the way of no return.

JOB

17 My spirit is broken.
My days are extinguished.
A graveyard awaits me.
2 Surely mockers surround [A] me
and my eyes must gaze at their rebellion.

3 Make arrangements! Put up security for me. [B],
Who else will be my sponsor? [C]
4 You have closed their minds to understanding,
therefore You will not honor them.
5 If a man informs on his friends for a price,
the eyes of his children will fail.

6 He has made me an object of scorn to the people;
I have become a man people spit at. [D],
7 My eyes have grown dim from grief,
and my whole body has become but a shadow.
8 The upright are appalled at this,
and the innocent are roused against the godless.
9 Yet the righteous person will hold to his way,
and the one whose hands are •clean will grow stronger.
10 But come back and try again, all of you.
I will not find a wise man among you.

11 My days have slipped by;
my plans have been ruined,
even the things dear to my heart.
12 They turned night into day
and made light seem near in the face of darkness.
13† If I await •Sheol as my home,
spread out my bed in darkness,
14 and say to corruption: You are my father,
and to the maggot: My mother or my sister,
15 where then is my hope?
Who can see any hope for me?
16† Will it go down to the gates of Sheol,

or will we descend together to the dust?

JOB

Bildad Speaks

18 Then Bildad the Shuhite replied:

[2] How long until you stop talking?
Show some sense, and then we can talk.
[3] Why are we regarded as cattle,
as stupid in your sight?
[4] You who tear yourself in anger [A] —
should the earth be abandoned on your account,
or a rock be removed from its place?

[5] Yes, the light of the wicked is extinguished;
the flame of his fire does not glow.
[6] The light in his tent grows dark,
and the lamp beside him is put out.
[7] His powerful stride is shortened,
and his own schemes trip him up.
[8] For his own feet lead him into a net,
and he strays into its mesh.
[9] A trap catches him by the heel;
a noose seizes him.
[10] A rope lies hidden for him on the ground,
and a snare waits for him along the path.
[11] Terrors frighten him on every side
and harass him at every step.
[12†] His strength is depleted;
disaster lies ready for him to stumble. [B]
[13] Parts of his skin are eaten away;
death's firstborn consumes his limbs.
[14†] He is ripped from the security of his tent
and marched away to the king of terrors.
[15] Nothing he owned remains in his tent.
Burning sulfur is scattered over his home.
[16] His roots below dry up,
and his branches above wither away.
[17] All memory of him perishes from the earth;

he has no name anywhere. [C]
18 He is driven from light to darkness
and chased from the inhabited world.
19 He has no children or descendants among his people,
no survivor where he used to live.
20 Those in the west are appalled at his fate,
while those in the east tremble in horror.
21 Indeed, such is the dwelling of the unjust man,
and this is the place of the one who does not know God.

JOB

Job's Reply to Bildad

19 Then Job answered:

[2] How long will you torment me
and crush me with words?
[3] You have humiliated me ten times now,
and you mistreat [A] me without shame.
[4] Even if it is true that I have sinned,
my mistake concerns only [B] me.
[5] If you really want to appear superior to me
and would use my disgrace as evidence against me,
[6] then understand that it is God who has wronged me
and caught me in His net.

[7] I cry out: “Violence!” but get no response;
I call for help, but there is no justice.
[8] He has blocked my way so that I cannot pass through;
He has veiled my paths with darkness.
[9] He has stripped me of my honor
and removed the crown from my head.
[10] He tears me down on every side so that I am ruined. [C]
He uproots my hope like a tree.
[11] His anger burns against me,
and He regards me as one of His enemies.
[12] His troops advance together;
they construct a ramp [D] against me
and camp around my tent.

[13] He has removed my brothers from me;
my acquaintances have abandoned me.
[14] My relatives stop coming by,
and my close friends have forgotten me.
[15] My house guests [E] and female servants regard me as a stranger;
I am a foreigner in their sight.
[16] I call for my servant, but he does not answer,
even if I beg him with my own mouth.

[17] My breath is offensive to my wife,
and my own family [F] finds me repulsive.
[18] Even young boys scorn me.
When I stand up, they mock me.
[19] All of my best friends [G] despise me,
and those I love have turned against me.
[20†] My skin and my flesh cling to my bones;
I have escaped by the skin of my teeth.

[21] Have mercy on me, my friends, have mercy,
for God's hand has struck me.
[22] Why do you persecute me as God does?
Will you never get enough of my flesh?

[23†] I wish that my words were written down,
that they were recorded on a scroll
[24] or were inscribed in stone forever
by an iron stylus and lead!
[25†] But I know my living Redeemer, [H],
and He will stand on the dust [I] at last. [J]
[26] Even after my skin has been destroyed, [K]
yet I will see God in [L] my flesh.
[27] I will see Him myself;
my eyes will look at Him, and not as a stranger. [M]
My heart longs [N] within me.

[28] If you say, "How will we pursue him,
since the root of the problem lies with him? "
[29] then be afraid of the sword,
because wrath brings punishment by the sword,
so that you may know there is a judgment.

JOB

Zophar Speaks

20 [†]Then Zophar the Naamathite replied:

[2] This is why my unsettling thoughts compel me to answer,
because I am upset! [A]
[3] I have heard a rebuke that insults me,
and my understanding [B] makes me reply.

[4] Don't you know that ever since antiquity,
from the time man was placed on earth,
[5] the joy of the wicked has been brief
and the happiness of the godless has lasted only a moment?
[6] Though his arrogance reaches heaven,
and his head touches the clouds,
[7] he will vanish forever like his own dung.
Those who know [C] him will ask, "Where is he? "
[8] He will fly away like a dream and never be found;
he will be chased away like a vision in the night.
[9] The eye that saw him will see him no more,
and his household will no longer see him.
[10] His children will beg from [D] the poor,
for his own hands must give back his wealth.
[11] His bones may be full of youthful vigor,
but will lie down with him in the grave.

[12] Though evil tastes sweet in his mouth
and he conceals it under his tongue,
[13] though he cherishes it and will not let it go
but keeps it in his mouth,
[14] yet the food in his stomach turns
into cobras' venom inside him.
[15] He swallows wealth but must vomit it up;
God will force it from his stomach.
[16] He will suck the poison of cobras;
a viper's fangs [E] will kill him.
[17] He will not enjoy the streams,

the rivers flowing with honey and cream.
18 He must return the fruit of his labor without consuming it;
he doesn't enjoy the profits from his trading.
19 For he oppressed and abandoned the poor;
he seized a house he did not build.

20 Because his appetite is never satisfied, [F]
he does not let anything he desires escape.
21 Nothing is left for him to consume;
therefore, his prosperity will not last.
22 At the height of his success [G] distress will come to him;
the full weight of misery will crush him.
23 When he fills his stomach,
God will send His burning anger against him,
raining it down on him while he is eating.
24 If he flees from an iron weapon,
an arrow from a bronze bow will pierce him.
25 He pulls it out of his back,
the flashing tip out of his liver. [H]
Terrors come over him.
26 Total darkness is reserved for his treasures.
A fire unfanned by human hands will consume him;
it will feed on what is left in his tent.
27 The heavens will expose his iniquity,
and the earth will rise up against him.
28 The possessions in his house will be removed,
flowing away on the day of God's anger.
29 This is the wicked man's lot from God,
the inheritance God ordained for him.

JOB

Job's Reply to Zophar

21 Then Job answered:

2 Pay close attention to my words;
let this be the consolation you offer.
3 Bear with me while I speak;
then after I have spoken, you may continue mocking.

4 As for me, is my complaint against a man?
Then why shouldn't I be impatient?
5 Look at me and shudder;
put your hand over your mouth.
6 When I think about it, I am terrified
and my body trembles in horror.
7† Why do the wicked continue to live,
growing old and becoming powerful?
8 Their children are established while they are still alive, [A]
and their descendants, before their eyes.
9 Their homes are secure and free of fear;
no rod from God strikes them.
10 Their bulls breed without fail;
their cows calve and do not miscarry.
11 They let their little ones run around like lambs;
their children skip about,
12 singing to the tambourine and lyre
and rejoicing at the sound of the flute.
13 They spend their days in prosperity
and go down to •Sheol in peace.
14 Yet they say to God: "Leave us alone!
We don't want to know Your ways.
15 Who is the •Almighty, that we should serve Him,
and what will we gain by pleading with Him? "
16 But their prosperity is not of their own doing.
The counsel of the wicked is far from me!

17 How often is the lamp of the wicked put out?
Does disaster [B] come on them?

Does He apportion destruction in His anger?
[18] Are they like straw before the wind,
like chaff a storm sweeps away?
[19] God reserves a person's punishment for his children.
Let God repay the person himself, so that he may know it.
[20] Let his own eyes see his demise;
let him drink from the Almighty's wrath!
[21] For what does he care about his family once he is dead,
when the number of his months has run out?

[22] Can anyone teach God knowledge,
since He judges the exalted ones?
[23] One person dies in excellent health, [C]
completely secure and at ease.
[24] His body is [D] well fed, [E]
and his bones are full of marrow. [F]
[25] Yet another person dies with a bitter soul,
having never tasted prosperity.
[26] But they both lie in the dust,
and worms cover them.

[27] I know your thoughts very well,
the schemes you would wrong me with.
[28] For you say, "Where now is the nobleman's house? "
and "Where are the tents the wicked lived in? "
[29] Have you never consulted those who travel the roads?
Don't you accept their reports? [G]
[30] Indeed, the evil man is spared from the day of disaster,
rescued from the day of wrath.
[31] Who would denounce his behavior to his face?
Who would repay him for what he has done?
[32] He is carried to the grave,
and someone keeps watch over his tomb.
[33] The dirt on his grave is [H] sweet to him.
Everyone follows behind him,

and those who go before him are without number.

34 So how can you offer me such futile comfort?
Your answers are deceptive.

THIRD SERIES OF SPEECHES

Eliphaz Speaks

22 Then Eliphaz the Temanite replied:

2 Can a man be of any use to God?
Can even a wise man be of use to Him?
3 Does it delight the •Almighty if you are righteous?
Does He profit if you perfect your behavior?

4 Does He correct you and take you to court
because of your piety?
5 Isn't your wickedness abundant
and aren't your iniquities endless?
6 For you took collateral from your brothers without cause,
stripping off their clothes and leaving them naked.
7 You gave no water to the thirsty
and withheld food from the famished,
8† while the land belonged to a powerful man
and an influential man lived on it.
9 You sent widows away empty-handed,
and the strength of the fatherless was crushed.
10 Therefore snares surround you,
and sudden dread terrifies you,
11 or darkness, so you cannot see,
and a flood of water covers you.

12 Isn't God as high as the heavens?
And look at the highest stars — how lofty they are!
13 Yet you say: "What does God know?
Can He judge through thick darkness?
14 Clouds veil Him so that He cannot see,
as He walks on the circle of the sky."
15 Will you continue on the ancient path
that wicked men have walked?
16 They were snatched away before their time,
and their foundations were washed away by a river.
17 They were the ones who said to God, "Leave us alone! "
and "What can the Almighty do to us? "

18 But it was He who filled their houses with good things.
The counsel of the wicked is far from me!
19 The righteous see this and rejoice;
the innocent mock them, saying,
20 "Surely our opponents are destroyed,
and fire has consumed what they left behind."

21 Come to terms with God and be at peace;
in this way [A] good will come to you.
22 Receive instruction from His mouth,
and place His sayings in your heart.
23 If you return to the Almighty, you will be renewed.
If you banish injustice from your tent
24† and consign your gold to the dust,
the gold of Ophir to the stones in the •wadis,
25 the Almighty will be your gold
and your finest silver.
26 Then you will delight in the Almighty
and lift up your face to God.
27 You will pray to Him, and He will hear you,
and you will fulfill your vows.
28 When you make a decision, it will be carried out, [B]
and light will shine on your ways.
29 When others are humiliated and you say, "Lift them up,"
God will save the humble. [C],
30 He will even rescue the •guilty one,
who will be rescued by the purity of your hands.

JOB

Job's Reply to Eliphaz

23 Then Job answered:

[2] Today also my complaint is bitter.
His hand is heavy despite my groaning.
[3] If only I knew how to find Him,
so that I could go to His throne.
[4] I would plead my case before Him
and fill my mouth with arguments.
[5] I would learn how [A] He would answer me;
and understand what He would say to me.
[6] Would He prosecute me forcefully?
No, He will certainly pay attention to me.
[7] Then an upright man could reason with Him,
and I would escape from my Judge forever.

[8†] If I go east, He is not there,
and if I go west, I cannot perceive Him.
[9] When He is at work to the north, I cannot see Him;
when He turns south, I cannot find Him.
[10] Yet He knows the way I have taken; [B]
when He has tested me, I will emerge as pure gold.
[11] My feet have followed in His tracks;
I have kept to His way and not turned aside.
[12] I have not departed from the commands of His lips;
I have treasured the words of His mouth
more than my daily food.

[13] But He is unchangeable; who can oppose Him?
He does what He desires.
[14] He will certainly accomplish what He has decreed for me,
and He has many more things like these in mind. [C]
[15] Therefore I am terrified in His presence;
when I consider this, I am afraid of Him.
[16] God has made my heart faint;
the •Almighty has terrified me.
[17] Yet I am not destroyed [D] by the darkness,

by the thick darkness that covers my face.

JOB

24 [†]Why does the •Almighty not reserve times for judgment?
Why do those who know Him never see His days?
2 The wicked displace boundary markers.
They steal a flock and provide pasture for it.
3 They drive away the donkeys owned by the fatherless
and take the widow's ox as collateral.
4 They push the needy off the road;
the poor of the land are forced into hiding.
5 Like wild donkeys in the desert,
the poor go out to their task of foraging for food;
the wilderness provides nourishment for their children.
6 They gather their fodder in the field
and glean the vineyards of the wicked.
7 Without clothing, they spend the night naked,
having no covering against the cold.
8 Drenched by mountain rains,
they huddle against [A] the rocks, shelterless.
9 The fatherless infant is snatched from the breast;
the nursing child of the poor is seized as collateral.
10 Without clothing, they wander about naked.
They carry sheaves but go hungry.
11 They crush olives in their presses; [B]
they tread the winepresses, but go thirsty.
12 From the city, men groan;
the mortally wounded cry for help,
yet God pays no attention to this crime.

13 The wicked are those who rebel against the light.
They do not recognize its ways
or stay on its paths.
14 The murderer rises at dawn
to kill the poor and needy,
and by night he becomes a thief.
15 The adulterer's eye watches for twilight,
thinking: No eye will see me;

he covers his face.
16 In the dark they break [C] into houses;
by day they lock themselves in, [D]
never experiencing the light.
17 For the morning is like darkness to them.
Surely they are familiar with the terrors of darkness!

18† They float [E] on the surface of the water.
Their section of the land is cursed,
so that they never go to their vineyards.
19 As dry ground and heat snatch away the melted snow,
so •Sheol steals those who have sinned.
20 The womb forgets them;
worms feed on them;
they are remembered no more.
So injustice is broken like a tree.
21 They prey on the childless woman who is unable to conceive,
and do not deal kindly with the widow.
22 Yet God drags away [F] the mighty by His power;
when He rises up, they have no assurance of life.
23 He gives them a sense of security, so they can rely on it,
but His eyes watch over their ways.
24 They are exalted for a moment, then they are gone;
they are brought low and shrivel up like everything else.
They wither like heads of grain.

25 If this is not true, then who can prove me a liar
and show that my speech is worthless?

JOB

Bildad Speaks

25 Then Bildad the Shuhite replied:

2 Dominion and dread belong to Him,
the One who establishes harmony in the heavens. [A]
3 Can His troops be numbered?
Does His light not shine on everyone?
4† How can a person be justified before God?
How can one born of woman be pure?
5 If even the moon does not shine
and the stars are not pure in His sight,
6† how much less man, who is a maggot,
and the son of man, who is a worm!

JOB

Job's Reply to Bildad

26 Then Job answered:

2 How you have helped the powerless
and delivered the arm that is weak!
3 How you have counseled the unwise
and thoroughly explained the path to success!
4 Who did you speak these words to?
Whose breath came out of your mouth?

5 The departed spirits tremble
beneath the waters and all that inhabit them.
6 •Sheol is naked before God,
and •Abaddon has no covering.
7† He stretches the northern skies over empty space;
He hangs the earth on nothing.
8 He wraps up the waters in His clouds,
yet the clouds do not burst beneath their weight.
9 He obscures the view of His throne,
spreading His cloud over it.
10 He laid out the horizon on the surface of the waters
at the boundary between light and darkness.
11 The pillars that hold up the sky tremble,
astounded at His rebuke.
12† By His power He stirred the sea,
and by His understanding He crushed •Rahab.
13 By His breath the heavens gained their beauty;
His hand pierced the fleeing serpent.
14 These are but the fringes of His ways;
how faint is the word we hear of Him!
Who can understand His mighty thunder?

JOB

27 Job continued his discourse, saying:

2† As God lives, who has deprived me of justice,
and the •Almighty who has made me bitter,
3 as long as my breath is still in me
and the breath from God remains in my nostrils,
4 my lips will not speak unjustly,
and my tongue will not utter deceit.
5 I will never affirm that you are right.
I will maintain my integrity [A] until I die.
6 I will cling to my righteousness and never let it go.
My conscience will not accuse me as long as I live!

7 May my enemy be like the wicked
and my opponent like the unjust.
8 For what hope does the godless man have when he is cut off,
when God takes away his life?
9 Will God hear his cry
when distress comes on him?
10 Will he delight in the Almighty?
Will he call on God at all times?
11 I will teach you about God's power.
I will not conceal what the Almighty has planned. [B]
12 All of you have seen this for yourselves,
why do you keep up this empty talk?

13† This is a wicked man's lot from God,
the inheritance the ruthless receive from the Almighty.
14 Even if his children increase, they are destined for the sword;
his descendants will never have enough food.
15 Those who survive him will be buried by the plague,
yet their widows will not weep for them.
16 Though he piles up silver like dust
and heaps up a wardrobe like clay —
17 he may heap it up, but the righteous will wear it,
and the innocent will divide up his silver.

18 The house he built is like a moth's cocoon
or a booth set up by a watchman.
19 He lies down wealthy, but will do so no more;
when he opens his eyes, it is gone.
20 Terrors overtake him like a flood;
a storm wind sweeps him away at night.
21 An east wind picks him up, and he is gone;
it carries him away from his place.
22 It blasts at him without mercy,
while he flees desperately from its grasp.
23 It claps its hands at him
and scorns him from its place.

JOB

Job's Hymn to Wisdom

28 [†]Surely there is a mine for silver
and a place where gold is refined.
2[†] Iron is taken from the ground,
and copper is smelted from ore.
3 A miner puts an end to the darkness;
he probes [A] the deepest recesses
for ore in the gloomy darkness.
4 He cuts a shaft far from human habitation,
in places unknown to those who walk above ground. [B]
Suspended far away from people,
the miners swing back and forth.
5 Food may come from the earth,
but below the surface the earth is transformed as by fire.
6 Its rocks are a source of sapphire, [C]
containing flecks of gold.
7 No bird of prey knows that path;
no falcon's eye has seen it.
8 Proud beasts have never walked on it;
no lion has ever prowled over it.
9 The miner strikes the flint
and transforms the mountains at their foundations.
10 He cuts out channels in the rocks,
and his eyes spot every treasure.
11 He dams up the streams from flowing
so that he may bring to light what is hidden.

12 But where can wisdom be found,
and where is understanding located?
13 No man can know its value,
since it cannot be found in the land of the living.
14 The ocean depths say, "It's not in me,"
while the sea declares, "I don't have it."
15 Gold cannot be exchanged for it,
and silver cannot be weighed out for its price.
16 Wisdom cannot be valued in the gold of Ophir,

in precious onyx or sapphire. [D],
17 Gold and glass do not compare with it,
and articles of fine gold cannot be exchanged for it.
18 Coral and quartz are not worth mentioning.
The price of wisdom is beyond pearls.
19 Topaz from •Cush cannot compare with it,
and it cannot be valued in pure gold.

20 Where then does wisdom come from,
and where is understanding located?
21 It is hidden from the eyes of every living thing
and concealed from the birds of the sky.
22 •Abaddon and Death say,
“We have heard news of it with our ears.”
23 But God understands the way to wisdom,
and He knows its location.
24 For He looks to the ends of the earth
and sees everything under the heavens.
25 When God fixed the weight of the wind
and limited the water by measure,
26 when He established a limit [E] for the rain
and a path for the lightning,
27 He considered wisdom and evaluated it;
He established it and examined it.
28† He said to mankind,
“The •fear of the Lord is this: wisdom.
And to turn from evil is understanding.”

JOB

Job’s Final Claim of Innocence

29 Job continued his discourse, saying:

2 If only I could be as in months gone by,
in the days when God watched over me,
3 when His lamp shone above my head,
and I walked through darkness by His light!
4 I would be as I was in the days of my youth
when God's friendship rested on my tent,
5 when the •Almighty was still with me
and my children were around me,
6† when my feet were bathed in cream
and the rock poured out streams of oil for me!

7 When I went out to the city •gate
and took my seat in the town square,
8 the young men saw me and withdrew,
while older men stood to their feet.
9 City officials stopped talking
and covered their mouths with their hands.
10 The noblemen's voices were hushed,
and their tongues stuck to the roof of their mouths.
11 When they heard me, they blessed me,
and when they saw me, they spoke well of me. [A]
12 For I rescued the poor man who cried out for help,
and the fatherless child who had no one to support him.
13 The dying man blessed me,
and I made the widow's heart rejoice.
14 I clothed myself in righteousness,
and it enveloped me;
my just decisions were like a robe and a turban.
15 I was eyes to the blind
and feet to the lame.
16 I was a father to the needy,
and I examined the case of the stranger.
17 I shattered the fangs of the unjust

and snatched the prey from his teeth.

18 So I thought: I will die in my own nest
and multiply my days as the sand. [B]
19 My roots will have access to water,
and the dew will rest on my branches all night.
20 My strength will be refreshed within me,
and my bow will be renewed in my hand.

21 Men listened to me with expectation,
waiting silently for my advice.
22 After a word from me they did not speak again;
my speech settled on them like dew.
23 They waited for me as for the rain
and opened their mouths as for spring showers.
24 If I smiled at them, they couldn’t believe it;
they were thrilled at [C] the light of my countenance.
25 I directed their course and presided as chief.
I lived as a king among his troops,
like one who comforts those who mourn.

JOB

30 But now they mock me,
men younger than I am,
whose fathers I would have refused to put
with my sheep dogs.
2 What use to me was the strength of their hands?
Their vigor had left them.
3 Emaciated from poverty and hunger,
they gnawed the dry land,
the desolate wasteland by night.
4 They plucked mallow [A], among the shrubs,
and the roots of the broom tree were their food.
5 They were expelled from human society;
people shouted at them as if they were thieves.
6 They are living on the slopes of the •wadis,
among the rocks and in holes in the ground.
7 They bray among the shrubs;
they huddle beneath the thistles.
8 Foolish men, without even a name.
They were forced to leave the land.

9 Now I am mocked by their songs;
I have become an object of scorn to them.
10 They despise me and keep their distance from me;
they do not hesitate to spit in my face.
11 Because God has loosened my bowstring and oppressed me,
they have cast off restraint in my presence.
12 The rabble [B] rise up at my right;
they trap [C] my feet
and construct their siege ramp [D] against me.
13 They tear up my path;
they contribute to my destruction,
without anyone to help them.
14 They advance as through a gaping breach;
they keep rolling in through the ruins.
15 Terrors are turned loose against me;

they chase my dignity away like the wind,
and my prosperity has passed by like a cloud.

16† Now my life is poured out before my eyes,
and days of suffering have seized me.
17 Night pierces my bones,
but my gnawing pains never rest.
18 My clothing is distorted with great force;
He chokes me by the neck of my garment. [E]
19 He throws me into the mud,
and I have become like dust and ashes.

20 I cry out to You for help, but You do not answer me;
when I stand up, You merely look at me.
21 You have turned against me with cruelty;
You harass me with Your strong hand.
22 You lift me up on the wind and make me ride it;
You scatter me in the storm.
23 Yes, I know that You will lead me to death —
the place appointed for all who live.

24 Yet no one would stretch out his hand
against a ruined man [F]
when he cries out to him for help
because of his distress.
25 Have I not wept for those who have fallen on hard times?
Has my soul not grieved for the needy?
26 But when I hoped for good, evil came;
when I looked for light, darkness came.
27 I am churning within [G] and cannot rest;
days of suffering confront me.
28 I walk about blackened, but not by the sun. [H]
I stood in the assembly and cried out for help.
29 I have become a brother to jackals
and a companion of ostriches.
30 My skin blackens and flakes off, [I]

and my bones burn with fever.
31 My lyre is used for mourning
and my flute for the sound of weeping.

JOB

31 [†] I have made a covenant with my eyes.
How then could I look at a young woman? [A],
2 For what portion would I have from God above,
or what inheritance from the •Almighty on high?
3 Doesn't disaster come to the unjust
and misfortune to evildoers?
4 Does He not see my ways
and number all my steps?

5 If I have walked in falsehood
or my foot has rushed to deceit,
6 let God weigh me in accurate scales,
and He will recognize my integrity.

7 If my step has turned from the way,
my heart has followed my eyes,
or impurity has stained my hands,
8 let someone else eat what I have sown,
and let my crops be uprooted.

9 If my heart has been seduced by my neighbor's wife
or I have lurked at his door,
10 let my own wife grind grain for another man,
and let other men sleep with [B] her.
11 For that would be a disgrace;
it would be a crime deserving punishment. [C],
12 For it is a fire that consumes down to •Abaddon;
it would destroy my entire harvest.

13 If I have dismissed the case of my male or female servants
when they made a complaint against me,
14 what could I do when God stands up to judge?
How should I answer Him when He calls me to account?
15[†] Did not the One who made me in the womb also make them?
Did not the same God form us both in the womb?

16 If I have refused the wishes of the poor

or let the widow's eyes go blind,
17 if I have eaten my few crumbs alone
without letting the fatherless eat any of it —
18† for from my youth, I raised him as his father,
and since the day I was born [D] I guided the widow —
19 if I have seen anyone dying for lack of clothing
or a needy person without a cloak,
20 if he [E] did not bless me
while warming himself with the fleece from my sheep,
21 if I ever cast my vote [F] against a fatherless child
when I saw that I had support in the city •gate,
22 then let my shoulder blade fall from my back,
and my arm be pulled from its socket.
23 For disaster from God terrifies me,
and because of His majesty I could not do these things.

24 If I placed my confidence in gold
or called fine gold my trust,
25 if I have rejoiced because my wealth is great
or because my own hand has acquired so much,
26 if I have gazed at the sun when it was shining
or at the moon moving in splendor,
27 so that my heart was secretly enticed
and I threw them a kiss, [G]
28 this would also be a crime deserving punishment,
for I would have denied God above.

29 Have I rejoiced over my enemy's distress,
or become excited when trouble came his way?
30 I have not allowed my mouth to sin
by asking for his life with a curse.
31 Haven't the members of my household said,
"Who is there who has not had enough to eat at Job's table? "
32 No stranger had to spend the night on the street,
for I opened my door to the traveler.

33 Have I covered my transgressions as others do [H]
by hiding my •guilt in my heart,
34 because I greatly feared the crowds,
and the contempt of the clans terrified me,
so I grew silent and would not go outside?

35 If only I had someone to hear my case!
Here is my signature; let the Almighty answer me.
Let my Opponent compose His indictment.
36 I would surely carry it on my shoulder
and wear it like a crown.
37 I would give Him an account of all my steps;
I would approach Him like a prince.

38 If my land cries out against me
and its furrows join in weeping,
39 if I have consumed its produce without payment
or shown contempt for its tenants, [I]
40† then let thorns grow instead of wheat
and stinkweed instead of barley.

The words of Job are concluded.

JOB

Elihu's Angry Response

32 [†]So these three men quit answering Job, because he was righteous in
his own eyes. 2 Then Elihu son of Barachel the Buzite from the
family of Ram became angry. He was angry at Job because he had justified
himself rather than God. 3 He was also angry at Job's three friends because
they had failed to refute him and yet had condemned him.

4 Now Elihu had waited to speak to Job because they were all older than
he. 5 But when he saw that the three men could not answer Job, he became
angry.

6 So Elihu son of Barachel the Buzite replied:

I am young in years,
while you are old;
therefore I was timid and afraid
to tell you what I know.
7 I thought that age should speak
and maturity should teach wisdom.
8 But it is a spirit in man [A]
and the breath of the •Almighty
that give him understanding.
9 It is not only the old who are wise
or the elderly who understand how to judge.
10 Therefore I say, "Listen to me.
I too will declare what I know."
11 Look, I waited for your conclusions;
I listened to your insights
as you sought for words.
12 I paid close attention to you.
Yet no one proved Job wrong;
not one of you refuted his arguments.
13 So do not claim, "We have found wisdom;
let God deal with him, not man."
14 But Job has not directed his argument to me,
and I will not respond to him with your arguments.

15 Job's friends are dismayed and can no longer answer;
words have left them.
16 Should I continue to wait now that they are silent,
now that they stand there and no longer answer?
17 I too will answer; [B]
yes, I will tell what I know.
18 For I am full of words,
and my spirit [C] compels me to speak.
19 My heart [D] is like unvented wine;
it is about to burst like new wineskins.
20 I must speak so that I can find relief;
I must open my lips and respond.
21 I will be partial to no one,
and I will not give anyone an undeserved title.
22 For I do not know how to give such titles;
otherwise, my Maker would remove me in an instant.

JOB

Elihu Confronts Job

33 But now, Job, pay attention to my speech,
and listen to all my words.
2 I am going to open my mouth;
my tongue will form words on my palate.
3 My words come from my upright heart,
and my lips speak with sincerity what they know.
4 The Spirit of God has made me,
and the breath of the •Almighty gives me life.
5 Refute me if you can.
Prepare your case against me; take your stand.
6 I am just like you before God;
I was also pinched off from a piece of clay.
7 Fear of me should not terrify you;
the pressure I exert [A] against you will be light.

8 Surely you have spoken in my hearing,
and I have heard these very [B] words:
9 "I am pure, without transgression;
I am •clean and have no •guilt.
10 But He finds reasons to oppose me;
He regards me as His enemy.
11 He puts my feet in the stocks;
He stands watch over all my paths."

12 But I tell you that you are wrong in this matter,
since God is greater than man.
13† Why do you take Him to court
for not answering anything a person asks? [C]
14 For God speaks time and again,
but a person may not notice it.
15 In a dream, a vision in the night,
when deep sleep falls on people
as they slumber on their beds,
16 He uncovers their ears at that time
and terrifies them with warnings,

[17] in order to turn a person from his actions
and suppress his pride. [D]
[18†] God spares his soul from the •Pit,
his life from crossing the river of death. [E]
[19] A person may be disciplined on his bed with pain
and constant distress in his bones,
[20] so that he detests bread,
and his soul despises his favorite food.
[21] His flesh wastes away to nothing, [F]
and his unseen bones stick out.
[22] He draws near to the Pit,
and his life to the executioners.
[23†] If there is an angel on his side,
one mediator out of a thousand,
to tell a person what is right for him [G]
[24] and to be gracious to him and say,
"Spare him from going down to the Pit;
I have found a ransom,"
[25] then his flesh will be healthier [H] than in his youth,
and he will return to the days of his youthful vigor.
[26] He will pray to God, and God will delight in him.
That man will see His face with a shout of joy,
and God will restore his righteousness to him.
[27] He will look at men and say,
"I have sinned and perverted what was right;
yet I did not get what I deserved. [I]
[28] He redeemed my soul from going down to the Pit,
and I will continue to see the light."
[29] God certainly does all these things
two or three times to a man
[30] in order to turn him back from the Pit,
so he may shine with the light of life.
[31] Pay attention, Job, and listen to me.
Be quiet, and I will speak.

32 But if you have something to say, [J] answer me;
speak, for I would like to justify you.
33 If not, then listen to me;
be quiet, and I will teach you wisdom.

JOB

34 Then Elihu continued, [A] saying:

[2] Hear my words, you wise men,
and listen to me, you knowledgeable ones.
[3] Doesn't the ear test words
as the palate tastes food?
[4] Let us judge for ourselves what is right;
let us decide together what is good.
[5] For Job has declared, "I am righteous,
yet God has deprived me of justice.
[6] Would I lie about my case?
My wound [B] is incurable,
though I am without transgression."
[7] What man is like Job?
He drinks derision like water.
[8] He keeps company with evildoers
and walks with wicked men.
[9] For he has said, "A man gains nothing
when he becomes God's friend."

[10] Therefore listen to me, you men of understanding.
It is impossible for God to do wrong,
and for the •Almighty to act unjustly.
[11] For He repays a person according to his deeds,
and He brings his ways on him.
[12] Indeed, it is true that God does not act wickedly
and the Almighty does not pervert justice.
[13] Who gave Him authority over the earth?
Who put Him in charge of the entire world?
[14] If He put His mind to it
and withdrew the spirit and breath He gave,
[15] every living thing would perish together
and mankind would return to the dust.

[16] If you have understanding, hear this;
listen to what I have to say.

17 Could one who hates justice govern the world?
Will you condemn the mighty Righteous One,
18 who says to a king, “Worthless man! ”
and to nobles, “Wicked men! ”?
19 God is not partial to princes
and does not favor the rich over the poor,
for they are all the work of His hands.
20 They die suddenly in the middle of the night;
people shudder, then pass away.
Even the mighty are removed without effort.

21 For His eyes watch over a man’s ways,
and He observes all his steps.
22 There is no darkness, no deep darkness,
where evildoers can hide themselves.
23 God does not need to examine a person further,
that one should approach Him in court.
24 He shatters the mighty without an investigation
and sets others in their place.
25 Therefore, He recognizes their deeds
and overthrows them by night, and they are crushed.
26 In full view of the public, [C]
He strikes them for their wickedness,
27 because they turned aside from following Him
and did not understand any of His ways
28 but caused the poor to cry out to Him,
and He heard the outcry of the afflicted.
29[†] But when God is silent, who can declare Him •guilty?
When He hides His face, who can see Him?
Yet He watches over both individuals and nations,
30 so that godless men should not rule
or ensnare the people.

31 Suppose someone says to God,
“I have endured my punishment;
I will no longer act wickedly.

32 Teach me what I cannot see;
if I have done wrong, I won't do it again."
33 Should God repay you on your terms
when you have rejected His?
You must choose, not I!
So declare what you know.
34 Reasonable men will say to me,
along with the wise men who hear me,
35 "Job speaks without knowledge;
his words are without insight."
36 If only Job were tested to the limit,
because his answers are like those of wicked men.
37 For he adds rebellion to his sin;
he scornfully claps in our presence,
while multiplying his words against God.

JOB

35 Then Elihu continued, saying:

2 Do you think it is just when you say,
“I am righteous before God”?
3 For you ask, “What does it profit You,
and what benefit comes to me, if I do not sin? ”
4 I will answer you
and your friends with you.
5 Look at the heavens and see;
gaze at the clouds high above you.
6† If you sin, how does it affect God?
If you multiply your transgressions, what does it do to Him?
7 If you are righteous, what do you give Him,
or what does He receive from your hand?
8 Your wickedness affects a person like yourself,
and your righteousness another human being.
9 People cry out because of severe oppression;
they shout for help because of the arm of the mighty.
10 But no one asks, “Where is God my Maker,
who provides us with songs in the night,
11 who gives us more understanding than the animals of the earth
and makes us wiser than the birds of the sky? ”
12 There they cry out, but He does not answer,
because of the pride of evil men.
13 Indeed, God does not listen to empty cries,
and the •Almighty does not take note of it —
14 how much less when [A] you complain [B]
that you do not see Him,
that your case is before Him
and you are waiting for Him.
15 But now, because God’s anger does not punish
and He does not pay attention to transgression,
16 Job opens his mouth in vain
and multiplies words without knowledge.

JOB

36 Then Elihu continued, saying:

[2] Be patient with me a little longer, and I will inform you,
for there is still more to be said on God's behalf.
[3] I will get my knowledge from a distant place
and ascribe justice to my Maker.
[4] For my arguments are without flaw; [A]
one who has perfect knowledge is with you.

[5] Yes, God is mighty, but He despises no one;
He understands all things. [B]
[6] He does not keep the wicked alive,
but He gives justice to the afflicted.
[7] He does not remove His gaze from the righteous,
but He seats them forever with enthroned kings,
and they are exalted.

[8] If people are bound with chains
and trapped by the cords of affliction,
[9] God tells them what they have done
and how arrogantly they have transgressed.
[10] He opens their ears to correction
and insists they repent from iniquity.
[11] If they serve Him obediently,
they will end their days in prosperity
and their years in happiness.
[12] But if they do not obey,
they will cross the river of death [C]
and die without knowledge.

[13] Those who have a godless heart harbor anger;
even when God binds them, they do not cry for help.
[14] They die in their youth;
their life ends among male cult prostitutes.
[15] God rescues the afflicted by their affliction;
He instructs them by their torment.

16 Indeed, He lured you from the jaws [D] of distress
to a spacious and unconfined place.
Your table was spread with choice food.
17 Yet now you are obsessed with the judgment due the wicked;
judgment and justice have seized you.
18 Be careful that no one lures you with riches; [E]
do not let a large ransom [F] lead you astray.
19 Can your wealth [G] or all your physical exertion
keep you from distress?
20 Do not long for the night
when nations will disappear from their places.
21 Be careful that you do not turn to iniquity,
for that is why you have been tested by [H] affliction.

22 Look, God shows Himself exalted by His power.
Who is a teacher like Him?
23 Who has appointed His way for Him,
and who has declared, "You have done wrong"?
24 Remember that you should praise His work,
which people have sung about.
25† All mankind has seen it;
people have looked at it from a distance.
26 Yes, God is exalted beyond our knowledge;
the number of His years cannot be counted.
27 For He makes waterdrops evaporate; [I]
they distill the rain into its [J] mist,
28 which the clouds pour out
and shower abundantly on mankind.
29 Can anyone understand how the clouds spread out
or how the thunder roars from God's pavilion?
30 See how He spreads His lightning around Him
and covers the depths of the sea.
31† For He judges the nations with these;
He gives food in abundance.
32 He covers His hands with lightning

and commands it to hit its mark.
33† The [K] thunder declares His presence; [L]
the cattle also, the approaching storm.

JOB

37 My heart pounds at this
and leaps from my chest. [A]
2 Just listen to His thunderous voice
and the rumbling that comes from His mouth.
3 He lets it loose beneath the entire sky;
His lightning to the ends of the earth.

4 Then there comes a roaring sound;
God thunders with His majestic voice.
He does not restrain the lightning
when His rumbling voice is heard.
5 God thunders marvelously with His voice;
He does great things that we cannot comprehend.
6 For He says to the snow, "Fall to the earth,"
and the torrential rains, His mighty torrential rains,
7 serve as His sign to all mankind,
so that all men may know His work.
8 The wild animals enter their lairs
and stay in their dens.
9[†] The windstorm comes from its chamber,
and the cold from the driving north winds.
10 Ice is formed by the breath of God,
and watery expanses are frozen.
11 He saturates clouds with moisture;
He scatters His lightning through them.
12 They swirl about,
turning round and round at His direction,
accomplishing everything He commands them
over the surface of the inhabited world.
13 He causes this to happen for punishment,
for His land, or for His faithful love.

14 Listen to this, Job.
Stop and consider God's wonders.
15 Do you know how God directs His clouds
or makes their lightning flash?

16 Do you understand how the clouds float,
those wonderful works of Him who has perfect knowledge?
17 You whose clothes get hot
when the south wind brings calm to the land,
18† can you help God spread out the skies
as hard as a cast metal mirror?
19 Teach us what we should say to Him;
we cannot prepare our case because of our darkness.
20 Should He be told that I want to speak?
Can a man speak when he is confused?
21 Now men cannot even look at the sun
when it is in the skies,
after a wind has swept through and cleared them away.
22† Yet out of the north He comes, shrouded in a golden glow;
awesome majesty surrounds Him.
23 The •Almighty — we cannot reach Him —
He is exalted in power!
He will not oppress justice and abundant righteousness,
24 Therefore, men •fear Him.
He does not look favorably on any who are wise in heart.

JOB

The LORD Speaks

38 Then the LORD answered Job from the whirlwind. He said:

[2] Who is this who obscures My counsel
with ignorant words?
[3] Get ready to answer Me like a man;
when I question you, you will inform Me.
[4†] Where were you when I established the earth?
Tell Me, if you have [A] understanding.

ARTICLE

Does the Bible Teach the Abuse of Nature? ⇒

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[5] Who fixed its dimensions? Certainly you know!
Who stretched a measuring line across it?
[6] What supports its foundations?
Or who laid its cornerstone
[7†] while the morning stars sang together
and all the sons of God shouted for joy?

[8†] Who enclosed the sea behind doors
when it burst from the womb,
[9] when I made the clouds its garment
and thick darkness its blanket, [B],
[10] when I determined its boundaries [C]
and put its bars and doors in place,
[11] when I declared: “You may come this far, but no farther;
your proud waves stop here”?

[12] Have you ever in your life commanded the morning
or assigned the dawn its place,
[13] so it may seize the edges of the earth
and shake the wicked out of it?
[14] The earth is changed as clay is by a seal;

its hills stand out like the folds of a garment.
15 Light [D] is withheld from the wicked,
and the arm raised in violence is broken.

16 Have you traveled to the sources of the sea
or walked in the depths of the oceans?
17 Have the gates of death been revealed to you?
Have you seen the gates of deep darkness?
18 Have you comprehended the extent of the earth?
Tell Me, if you know all this.

19† Where is the road to the home of light?
Do you know where darkness lives,
20 so you can lead it back to its border?
Are you familiar with the paths to its home?
21 Don't you know? You were already born;
you have lived so long! [E]
22† Have you entered the place where the snow is stored?
Or have you seen the storehouses of hail,
23 which I hold in reserve for times of trouble,
for the day of warfare and battle?
24 What road leads to the place where light is dispersed? [F]
Where is the source of the east wind that spreads across the earth?

25 Who cuts a channel for the flooding rain
or clears the way for lightning,
26 to bring rain on an uninhabited land,
on a desert with no human life, [G]
27 to satisfy the parched wasteland
and cause the grass to sprout?
28 Does the rain have a father?
Who fathered the drops of dew?
29 Whose womb did the ice come from?
Who gave birth to the frost of heaven
30 when water becomes as hard as stone, [H]
and the surface of the watery depths is frozen?

31† Can you fasten the chains of the Pleiades
or loosen the belt of Orion?
32 Can you bring out the constellations [I] in their season
and lead the Bear [J] and her cubs?
33 Do you know the laws of heaven?
Can you impose its [K] authority on earth?
34 Can you command [L] the clouds
so that a flood of water covers you?
35 Can you send out lightning bolts, and they go?
Do they report to you: “Here we are.”?

36 Who put wisdom in the heart [M]
or gave the mind understanding?
37† Who has the wisdom to number the clouds?
Or who can tilt the water jars of heaven
38 when the dust hardens like cast metal
and the clods of dirt stick together?

39 Can you hunt prey for a lioness
or satisfy the appetite of young lions
40 when they crouch in their dens
and lie in wait within their lairs?
41 Who provides the raven’s food
when its young cry out to God
and wander about for lack of food?

JOB

39 Do you know when mountain goats give birth?
Have you watched the deer in labor?
2 Can you count the months they are pregnant [A]
so you can know the time they give birth?
3 They crouch down to give birth to their young;
they deliver their newborn. [B]
4 Their offspring are healthy and grow up in the open field.
They leave and do not return. [C]

5 Who set the wild donkey free?
Who released the swift donkey from its harness?
6 I made the wilderness its home,
and the salty wasteland its dwelling.
7 It scoffs at the noise of the village
and never hears the shouts of a driver.
8 It roams the mountains for its pastureland,
searching for anything green.
9 Would the wild ox be willing to serve you?
Would it spend the night by your feeding trough?
10 Can you hold the wild ox to a furrow by its harness?
Will it plow the valleys behind you?
11 Can you depend on it because its strength is great?
Would you leave it to do your hard work?
12 Can you trust the wild ox to harvest your grain
and bring it to your threshing floor?

13† The wings of the ostrich flap joyfully,
but are her feathers and plumage like the stork's? [D],
14† She abandons her eggs on the ground
and lets them be warmed in the sand.
15 She forgets that a foot may crush them
or that some wild animal may trample them.
16 She treats her young harshly, as if they were not her own,
with no fear that her labor may have been in vain.
17 For God has deprived her of wisdom;

He has not endowed her with understanding.
18 When she proudly [E] spreads her wings,
she laughs at the horse and its rider.

19 Do you give strength to the horse?
Do you adorn his neck with a mane? [F]
20 Do you make him leap like a locust?
His proud snorting fills one with terror.
21 He paws in the valley and rejoices in his strength;
He charges into battle. [G]
22 He laughs at fear, since he is afraid of nothing;
he does not run from the sword.
23 A quiver rattles at his side,
along with a flashing spear and a lance. [H]
24 He charges ahead [I] with trembling rage;
he cannot stand still at the trumpet's sound.
25 When the trumpet blasts, he snorts defiantly. [J]
He smells the battle from a distance;
he hears the officers' shouts and the battle cry.

26 Does the hawk take flight by your understanding
and spread its wings to the south?
27 Does the eagle soar at your command
and make its nest on high?
28 It lives on a cliff where it spends the night;
its stronghold is on a rocky crag.
29 From there it searches for prey;
its eyes penetrate the distance.
30 Its brood gulps down blood,
and where the slain are, it is there.

JOB

40

The LORD answered Job:

[2] Will the one who contends with the •Almighty correct Him?
Let him who argues with God give an answer. [A]

[3] Then Job answered the LORD:

[4] I am so insignificant. How can I answer You?
I place my hand over my mouth.
[5] I have spoken once, and I will not reply;
twice, but now I can add nothing.

[6] Then the LORD answered Job from the whirlwind:

[7] Get ready to answer Me like a man;
When I question you, you will inform Me.
[8] Would you really challenge My justice?
Would you declare Me •guilty to justify yourself?
[9] Do you have an arm like God's?
Can you thunder with a voice like His?

[10] Adorn yourself with majesty and splendor,
and clothe yourself with honor and glory.
[11] Unleash your raging anger;
look on every proud person and humiliate him.
[12] Look on every proud person and humble him;
trample the wicked where they stand. [B]
[13] Hide them together in the dust;
imprison them in the grave. [C]
[14] Then I will confess to you
that your own right hand can deliver you.

[15†] Look at Behemoth,
which I made along with you.
He eats grass like an ox.
[16] Look at the strength of his loins

and the power in the muscles of his belly.
17 He stiffens his tail like a cedar tree;
the tendons of his thighs are woven firmly together.
18 His bones are bronze tubes;
his limbs are like iron rods.
19 He is the foremost of God’s works;
only his Maker can draw the sword against him.
20 The hills yield food for him,
while all sorts of wild animals play there.
21 He lies under the lotus plants,
hiding in the protection [D] of marshy reeds.
22 Lotus plants cover him with their shade;
the willows by the brook surround him.
23 Though the river rages, Behemoth is unafraid;
he remains confident, even if the Jordan surges up to his mouth.
24 Can anyone capture him while he looks on, [E]
or pierce his nose with snares?

JOB

Chapter 41

[1]Can you pull in •Leviathan with a hook
or tie his tongue down with a rope?
[2] Can you put a cord [A] through his nose
or pierce his jaw with a hook?
[3] Will he beg you for mercy
or speak softly to you?
[4] Will he make a covenant with you
so that you can take him as a slave forever?
[5] Can you play with him like a bird
or put him on a leash [B] for your girls?
[6] Will traders bargain for him
or divide him among the merchants?
[7] Can you fill his hide with harpoons
or his head with fishing spears?
[8] Lay a [C] hand on him.
You will remember the battle
and never repeat it!
[9] Any hope of capturing him proves false.
Does a person not collapse at the very sight of him?
[10] No one is ferocious enough to rouse Leviathan;
who then can stand against Me?
[11] Who confronted Me, that I should repay him?
Everything under heaven belongs to Me.

[12] I cannot be silent about his limbs,
his power, and his graceful proportions.
[13] Who can strip off his outer covering?
Who can penetrate his double layer of armor?
[14] Who can open his jaws, [D]
surrounded by those terrifying teeth?
[15] His pride is in his rows of scales,
closely sealed together.
[16] One scale is so close to another [E]
that no air can pass between them.

17 They are joined to one another,
so closely connected [F] they cannot be separated.
18 His snorting [G] flashes with light,
while his eyes are like the rays [H] of dawn.
19 Flaming torches shoot from his mouth;
fiery sparks fly out!
20 Smoke billows from his nostrils
as from a boiling pot or burning reeds.
21 His breath sets coals ablaze,
and flames pour out of his mouth.
22 Strength resides in his neck,
and dismay dances before him.
23 The folds of his flesh are joined together,
solid as metal [I] and immovable.
24 His heart is as hard as a rock,
as hard as a lower millstone!
25† When Leviathan rises, the mighty [J] are terrified;
they withdraw because of his thrashing.
26 The sword that reaches him will have no effect,
nor will a spear, dart, or arrow.
27 He regards iron as straw,
and bronze as rotten wood.
28 No arrow can make him flee;
slingstones become like stubble to him.
29 A club is regarded as stubble,
and he laughs at the sound of a javelin.
30 His undersides are jagged potsherds,
spreading the mud like a threshing sledge.
31 He makes the depths seethe like a cauldron;
he makes the sea like an ointment jar.
32 He leaves a shining wake behind him; [K]
one would think the deep had gray hair!
33 He has no equal on earth —
a creature devoid of fear!

[34] He surveys everything that is haughty;
he is king over all the proud beasts. [L]

JOB

Job Replies to the LORD

42 [†]Then Job replied to the LORD:

[2] I know that You can do anything
and no plan of Yours can be thwarted.
[3] You asked, “Who is this who conceals My counsel with ignorance? ”
Surely I spoke about things I did not understand,
things too wonderful for me to [A] know.
[4] You said, “Listen now, and I will speak.
When I question you, you will inform Me.”
[5] I had heard rumors about You,
but now my eyes have seen You.
[6] Therefore I take back my words
and repent in dust and ashes.

[7†] After the LORD had finished speaking [B] to Job, He said to Eliphaz the
Temanite: “I am angry with you and your two friends, for you have not
spoken the truth about Me, as My servant Job has. [8] Now take seven bulls
and seven rams, go to My servant Job, and offer a burnt offering for
yourselves. Then My servant Job will pray for you. I will surely accept his
prayer and not deal with you as your folly deserves. For you have not
spoken the truth about Me, as My servant Job has.” [9] Then Eliphaz the
Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite went and did as
the LORD had told them, and the LORD accepted Job’s prayer.

God Restores Job

[10] After Job had prayed for his friends, the LORD restored his prosperity
and doubled his previous possessions. [11] All his brothers, sisters, and
former acquaintances came to his house and dined with him in his house.
They sympathized with him and comforted him concerning all the adversity
the LORD had brought on him. Each one gave him a *qesitah* and a gold
earring.

[12] So the LORD blessed the last part of Job’s life more than the first. He
owned 14,000 sheep, 6,000 camels, 1,000 yoke of oxen, and 1,000 female
donkeys. [13] He also had seven sons and three daughters. [14] He named his

first daughter Jemimah, his second Keziah, and his third Keren-happuch.
[15] No women as beautiful as Job's daughters could be found in all the land,
and their father granted them an inheritance with their brothers.

[16] Job lived 140 years after this and saw his children and their children to
the fourth generation. [17] Then Job died, old and full of days.

PSALMS

Introduction to Psalms

Psalm 1

Psalm 39

The Fleeting Nature of Life (Psalm 39:1-13)

Psalm 40

Thanksgiving and a Cry for Help (Psalm 40:1-17)

Psalm 41

Victory in Spite of Betrayal (Psalm 41:1-13)

Psalm 42

Longing for God (Psalm 42:1-10)

Psalm 43 (Psalm 43)

Psalm 44

Israel's Complaint (Psalm 44:1-26)

Psalm 45

A Royal Wedding Song (Psalm 45:1-17)

Psalm 46

God Our Refuge (Psalm 46:1-11)

Psalm 47

God Our King (Psalm 47:1-9)

Psalm 48

Zion Exalted (Psalm 48:1-14)

Psalm 49

Misplaced Trust in Wealth (Psalm 49:1-20)

Psalm 50

God as Judge (Psalm 50:1-23)

Psalm 51

A Prayer for Restoration (Psalm 51:1-19)

Psalm 52

God Judges the Proud (Psalm 52:1-9)

Psalm 53

A Portrait of Sinners (Psalm 53:1-6)

Psalm 54

Prayer for Deliverance (Psalm 54:1-7)

Psalm 55

Betrayal by a Friend (Psalm 55:1-23)

Psalm 56

A Call for God's Protection (Psalm 56:1-13)

Psalm 57

Praise for God's Protection (Psalm 57:1-11)

Psalm 58
A Cry against Injustice (Psalm 58:1-11)
Psalm 59
God Our Stronghold (Psalm 59:1-17)
Psalm 60
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Protection from Evildoers (Psalm 64:1-10)
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God's Care for the Earth (Psalm 65:1-13)
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All Will Praise God (Psalm 67:1-7)
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God's Majestic Power (Psalm 68:1-35)
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A Plea for Rescue (Psalm 69:1-36)
Psalm 70
A Call for Deliverance (Psalm 70:1-5)
Psalm 71
God's Help in Old Age (Psalm 71:1-24)
Psalm 72
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Psalm 73
God's Ways Vindicated (Psalm 73:1-28)
Psalm 74
Prayer for Israel (Psalm 74:1-23)
Psalm 75
God Judges the Wicked (Psalm 75:1-10)
Psalm 76

PSALMS

BOOK I

(Psalms 1–41)

The Two Ways

1 † How happy is the man
who does not follow [A] the advice of the wicked
or take [B] the path of sinners
or join a group [C] of mockers!
2† Instead, his delight is in the LORD's instruction,
and he meditates on it day and night.
3† He is like a tree planted beside streams of water [D]
that bears its fruit in season [E]
and whose leaf does not wither.
Whatever he does prospers.

4† The wicked are not like this;
instead, they are like chaff that the wind blows away.
5† Therefore the wicked will not survive [F] the judgment,
and sinners will not be in the community of the righteous.

6† For the LORD watches over the way of the righteous,
but the way of the wicked leads to ruin.

PSALMS

Coronation of the Son

2 † Why do the nations rebel [A],
and the peoples plot in vain?
2† The kings of the earth take their stand,
and the rulers conspire together
against the LORD and His Anointed One: [B]
3 “Let us tear off their chains
and free ourselves from their restraints.” [C]

4† The One enthroned [D] in heaven laughs;
the Lord ridicules them.
5 Then He speaks to them in His anger
and terrifies them in His wrath:
6 “I have consecrated My King [E]
on •Zion, My holy mountain.”

7† I will declare the LORD’s decree:
He said to Me, “You are My Son; [F]
today I have become Your [G] Father.
8 Ask of Me,
and I will make the nations Your [H] inheritance
and the ends of the earth Your [I] possession.
9† You will break them with a rod of iron;
You [J] will shatter them like pottery.” [K]

10 So now, kings, be wise;
receive instruction, you judges of the earth.
11 Serve the LORD with reverential awe
and rejoice with trembling.
12† Pay homage to [L] the Son or He [M] will be angry
and you will perish in your rebellion, [N],
for His [O] anger may ignite at any moment.
All those who take refuge in Him [P] are happy.

PSALMS

Confidence in Troubled Times

3 LORD, how my foes increase!
There are many who attack me.
2† Many say about me,
"There is no help for him in God."

•*Selah*

3† But You, LORD, are a shield around me,
my glory, and the One who lifts up my head.
4† I cry aloud to the LORD,
and He answers me from His holy mountain.

Selah

5 I lie down and sleep;
I wake again because the LORD sustains me.
6 I am not afraid of the thousands of people
who have taken their stand against me on every side.

7† Rise up, LORD!
Save me, my God!
You strike all my enemies on the cheek;
You break the teeth of the wicked.
8 Salvation belongs to the LORD;
may Your blessing be on Your people.

Selah

PSALMS

A Night Prayer

4 Answer me when I call,
God, who vindicates me. [A]
You freed me from affliction;
be gracious to me and hear my prayer.

2 How long, exalted men, will my honor be insulted?
How long will you love what is worthless
and pursue a lie?

•*Selah*

3 Know that the LORD has set apart
the faithful for Himself;
the LORD will hear when I call to Him.
4 Be angry [B] and do not sin;
on your bed, reflect in your heart and be still.

Selah

5 Offer sacrifices in righteousness [C]
and trust in the LORD.

6 Many are saying, "Who can show us anything good? "
Look on us with favor, LORD.

7 You have put more joy in my heart
than they have when their grain and new wine abound.
8 I will both lie down and sleep in peace,
for You alone, LORD, make me live in safety.

PSALMS

The Refuge of the Righteous

5 Listen to my words, LORD;
consider my sighing.
2 Pay attention to the sound of my cry,
my King and my God,
for I pray to You.

3 At daybreak, LORD, You hear my voice;
at daybreak I plead my case to You and watch expectantly.

4 For You are not a God who delights in wickedness;
evil cannot dwell with You.
5† The boastful cannot stand in Your presence;
You hate all evildoers.
6 You destroy those who tell lies;
the LORD abhors a man of bloodshed and treachery.

7 But I enter Your house
by the abundance of Your faithful love;
I bow down toward Your holy temple
in reverential awe of You.
8 LORD, lead me in Your righteousness
because of my adversaries; [A]
make Your way straight before me.

9 For there is nothing reliable in what they say; [B],
destruction is within them;
their throat is an open grave;
they flatter with their tongues.
10† Punish them, God;
let them fall by their own schemes.
Drive them out because of their many crimes,
for they rebel against You.

11 But let all who take refuge in You rejoice;
let them shout for joy forever.
May You shelter them,
and may those who love Your name boast about You.
12† For You, LORD, bless the righteous one;

You surround him with favor like a shield.

PSALMS

A Prayer for Mercy

6 † LORD, do not rebuke me in Your anger;
do not discipline me in Your wrath.
2 Be gracious to me, LORD, for I am weak; A
heal me, LORD, for my bones are shaking;
3 my whole being is shaken with terror.
And You, LORD — how long?

4† Turn, LORD! Rescue me;
save me because of Your faithful love.
5† For there is no remembrance of You in death;
who can thank You in •Sheol?

6† I am weary from my groaning;
with my tears I dampen my pillow B
and drench my bed every night.
7 My eyes are swollen from grief;
they grow old because of all my enemies.

8 Depart from me, all evildoers,
for the LORD has heard the sound of my weeping.
9 The LORD has heard my plea for help;
the LORD accepts my prayer.
10† All my enemies will be ashamed and shake with terror;
they will turn back and suddenly be disgraced.

PSALMS

Prayer for Justice

7 •Yahweh my God, I seek refuge in You;
save me from all my pursuers and rescue me
2 or they [A] will tear me like a lion,
ripping me apart with no one to rescue me. [B]

3 Yahweh my God, if I have done this,
if there is injustice on my hands,
4 if I have done harm to one at peace with me
or have plundered [C] my adversary without cause,
5 may an enemy pursue and overtake me;
may he trample me to the ground
and leave my honor in the dust.

•*Selah*

6 Rise up, LORD, in Your anger;
lift Yourself up against the fury of my adversaries;
awake for me;
You have ordained [D] a judgment.
7 Let the assembly of peoples gather around You;
take Your seat on high over it.
8† The LORD judges the peoples;
vindicate me, LORD,
according to my righteousness and my integrity. [E]

9† Let the evil of the wicked come to an end,
but establish the righteous.
The One who examines the thoughts and emotions [F]
is a righteous God.
10 My shield is with [G] God,
who saves the upright in heart.
11 God is a righteous judge
and a God who shows His wrath every day.

12 If anyone does not repent,
God [H] will sharpen His sword;
He has strung [I] His bow and made it ready.

13 He has prepared His deadly weapons;
He tips His arrows with fire.

14 See, the wicked one is pregnant with evil,
conceives trouble, and gives birth to deceit.
15† He dug a pit and hollowed it out
but fell into the hole he had made.
16 His trouble comes back on his own head,
and his violence falls on the top of his head.

17† I will thank the LORD for His righteousness;
I will sing about the name of Yahweh the •Most High.

PSALMS

God's Glory, Man's Dignity

8 [†] •Yahweh, our Lord,
how magnificent is Your name throughout the earth!

You have covered the heavens with Your majesty. [A]
2 Because of Your adversaries,
You have established a stronghold
from the mouths of children and nursing infants
to silence the enemy and the avenger.

3 When I observe Your heavens,
the work of Your fingers,
the moon and the stars,
which You set in place,
4 what is man that You remember him,
the son of man that You look after him?
5[†] You made him little less than God
and crowned him with glory and honor.

ARTICLE

What Does the Bible Teach About Human Beings? ⇒

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6 You made him lord over the works of Your hands;
You put everything under his feet: [C]
7 all the sheep and oxen,
as well as the animals in the wild,
8 the birds of the sky,
and the fish of the sea
that pass through the currents of the seas.

9 Yahweh, our Lord,
how magnificent is Your name throughout the earth!

PSALMS

Celebration of God's Justice

9 I will thank •Yahweh with all my heart;
I will declare all Your wonderful works.
2 I will rejoice and boast about You;
I will sing about Your name, •Most High.

3 When my enemies retreat,
they stumble and perish before You.
4 For You have upheld my just cause; [A],
You are seated on Your throne as a righteous judge.
5† You have rebuked the nations:
You have destroyed the wicked;
You have erased their name forever and ever.
6 The enemy has come to eternal ruin;
You have uprooted the cities,
and the very memory of them has perished.

7† But the LORD sits enthroned forever;
He has established His throne for judgment.
8 He judges the world with righteousness;
He executes judgment on the nations with fairness.
9 The LORD is a refuge for the oppressed,
a refuge in times of trouble.
10† Those who know Your name trust in You
because You have not abandoned
those who seek You, Yahweh.

11 Sing to the LORD, who dwells in •Zion;
proclaim His deeds among the nations.
12† For the One who seeks an accounting
for bloodshed remembers them;
He does not forget the cry of the afflicted.

13 Be gracious to me, LORD;
consider my affliction at the hands of those who hate me.
Lift me up from the gates of death,
14† so that I may declare all Your praises.
I will rejoice in Your salvation

within the gates of Daughter Zion.

15† The nations have fallen into the pit they made;
their foot is caught in the net they have concealed.
16 The LORD has revealed Himself;
He has executed justice,
striking down [B] the wicked
by the work of their hands.

•*Higgaion*. •*Selah*

17 The wicked will return to •Sheol —
all the nations that forget God.
18 For the oppressed will not always be forgotten;
the hope of the afflicted will not perish forever.

19 Rise up, LORD! Do not let man prevail;
let the nations be judged in Your presence.
20 Put terror in them, LORD;
let the nations know they are only men.

Selah

PSALMS

10 LORD, why do You stand so far away?
Why do You hide in times of trouble?
2† In arrogance the wicked relentlessly pursue the afflicted;
let them be caught in the schemes they have devised.

3 For the wicked one boasts about his own cravings;
the one who is greedy curses [A] and despises the LORD.
4 In all his scheming,
the wicked arrogantly thinks: [B]
"There is no accountability,
since God does not exist."
5 His ways are always secure; [C]
Your lofty judgments are beyond his sight;
he scoffs at all his adversaries.
6 He says to himself, "I will never be moved —
from generation to generation without calamity."
7 Cursing, deceit, and violence fill his mouth;
trouble and malice are under his tongue.
8 He waits in ambush near the villages;
he kills the innocent in secret places.
His eyes are on the lookout for the helpless;
9 he lurks in secret like a lion in a thicket.
He lurks in order to seize the afflicted;
he seizes the afflicted and drags him in his net.
10 So he is oppressed and beaten down;
the helpless fall because of his strength.
11 He says to himself, "God has forgotten;
He hides His face and will never see."

12 Rise up, LORD God! Lift up Your hand.
Do not forget the afflicted.
13 Why has the wicked person despised God?
He says to himself, "You will not demand an account."
14 But You Yourself have seen trouble and grief,
observing it in order to take the matter into Your hands.
The helpless entrusts himself to You;

You are a helper of the fatherless.
15 Break the arm of the wicked and evil person;
call his wickedness into account
until nothing remains of it. [D]

16 The LORD is King forever and ever;
the nations will perish from His land.
17 LORD, You have heard the desire of the humble;
You will strengthen their hearts.
You will listen carefully,
18 doing justice for the fatherless and the oppressed
so that men of the earth may terrify them no more.

PSALMS

Refuge in the Lord

11 I have taken refuge in the LORD.
How can you say to me,
“Escape to the mountain like a bird! [A],
2† For look, the wicked string the bow;
they put the [B] arrow on the bowstring
to shoot from the shadows at the upright in heart.
3† When the foundations are destroyed,
what can the righteous do? ”

4† The LORD is in His holy temple;
the LORD’s throne is in heaven.
His eyes watch; He examines [C] •everyone.
5 The LORD examines the righteous and the wicked.
He hates the lover of violence.
6† He will rain burning coals and sulfur on the wicked;
a scorching wind will be their portion. [D],
7† For the LORD is righteous; He loves righteous deeds.
The upright will see His face.

PSALMS

Oppression by the Wicked

12 Help, Lord, for no faithful one remains;
the loyal have disappeared from the •human race.
2 They lie to one another;
they speak with flattering lips and deceptive hearts.
3 May the Lord cut off all flattering lips
and the tongue that speaks boastfully.
4 They say, "Through our tongues we have power; [A]
our lips are our own — who can be our master? "

5† "Because of the oppression of the afflicted
and the groaning of the poor,
I will now rise up," says the Lord.
"I will put the one who longs for it in a safe place."

6† The words of the Lord are pure words,
like silver refined in an earthen furnace,
purified seven times.

7 You, Lord, will guard us;
You will protect us from this generation forever.
8 The wicked wander [B] everywhere,
and what is worthless is exalted by the human race.

PSALMS

A Plea for Deliverance

13 Lord, how long will You forget me?
Forever?
How long will You hide Your face from me?
2 How long will I store up anxious concerns [A] within me,
agony in my mind every day?
How long will my enemy dominate me?

3 Consider me and answer, Lord my God.
Restore brightness to my eyes;
otherwise, I will sleep in death.
4 My enemy will say, “I have triumphed over him,”
and my foes will rejoice because I am shaken.

5 But I have trusted in Your faithful love;
my heart will rejoice in Your deliverance.
6[†] I will sing to the Lord
because He has treated me generously.

PSALMS

A Portrait of Sinners

14 † The fool says in his heart, "God does not exist."
They are corrupt; they do vile deeds.
There is no one who does good.
2 The LORD looks down from heaven on the •human race
to see if there is one who is wise,
one who seeks God.
3 All have turned away;
all alike have become corrupt.
There is no one who does good,
not even one.

4 Will evildoers never understand?
They consume My people as they consume bread;
they do not call on the LORD.

5 Then [A] they will be filled with terror,
for God is with those who are [B] righteous.
6 You sinners frustrate the plans of the afflicted,
but the LORD is his refuge.

7 Oh, that Israel's deliverance would come from •Zion!
When the LORD restores the fortunes of His people, [C]
Jacob will rejoice; Israel will be glad. [D]

PSALMS

A Description of the Godly

15 LORD, who can dwell in Your tent?
Who can live on Your holy mountain?

2 The one who lives honestly, practices righteousness,
and acknowledges the truth in his heart —

ARTICLE

Notable Christian Opologist: Anselm ⇒

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3 who does not slander with his tongue,
who does not harm his friend
or discredit his neighbor,
4 who despises the one rejected by the LORD [A]
but honors those who •fear the LORD,
who keeps his word whatever the cost,
5† who does not lend his money at interest
or take a bribe against the innocent —
the one who does these things will never be moved.

PSALMS

Confidence in the LORD

16 Protect me, God, for I take refuge in You.
[2] I said to •Yahweh, “You are my Lord;
I have nothing good besides You.” [A],
[3] As for the holy people who are in the land,
they are the noble ones.
All my delight is in them.
[4] The sorrows of those who take another god
for themselves will multiply;
I will not pour out their •drink offerings of blood,
and I will not speak their names with my lips.

[5] LORD, You are my portion [B]
and my cup of blessing;
You hold my future.
[6†] The boundary lines have fallen for me
in pleasant places;
indeed, I have a beautiful inheritance.

[7] I will praise the LORD who counsels me —
even at night my conscience instructs me.
[8] I keep the LORD in mind [C] always.
Because He is at my right hand,
I will not be shaken.

[9] Therefore my heart is glad
and my spirit rejoices;
my body also rests securely.
[10†] For You will not abandon me to •Sheol;
You will not allow Your Faithful One to see decay.
[11] You reveal the path of life to me;
in Your presence is abundant joy;
in Your right hand are eternal pleasures.

PSALMS

A Prayer for Protection

17 LORD, hear a just cause;
pay attention to my cry;
listen to my prayer —
from lips free of deceit.
2 Let my vindication come from You,
for You see what is right.
3 You have tested my heart;
You have examined me at night.
You have tried me and found nothing evil;
I have determined that my mouth will not sin. [A]
4 Concerning what people do:
by the word of Your lips
I have avoided the ways of the violent.
5 My steps are on Your paths;
my feet have not slipped.

6 I call on You, God,
because You will answer me;
listen closely to me; hear what I say.
7 Display the wonders of Your faithful love,
Savior of all who seek refuge
from those who rebel against Your right hand. [B]
8 Protect me as the pupil of Your eye;
hide me in the shadow of Your wings
9 from [C] the wicked who treat me violently, [D]
my deadly enemies who surround me.

10 They have become hardened; [E],
their mouths speak arrogantly.
11 They advance against me; now they surround me.
They are determined [F]
to throw me to the ground.
12 They are [G] like a lion eager to tear,
like a young lion lurking in ambush.

13 Rise up, LORD!

Confront him; bring him down.
With Your sword, save me from the wicked.
14 With Your hand, LORD, save me from men,
from men of the world
whose portion is in this life:
You fill their bellies with what You have in store;
their sons are satisfied,
and they leave their surplus to their children.

15† But I will see Your face in righteousness;
when I awake, I will be satisfied with Your presence. H

PSALMS

Praise for Deliverance

18 I love You, LORD, my strength.
2 The LORD is my rock,
my fortress, and my deliverer,
my God, my mountain where I seek refuge,
my shield and the •horn of my salvation,
my stronghold.
3 I called to the LORD, who is worthy of praise,
and I was saved from my enemies.

4 The ropes of death were wrapped around me;
the torrents of destruction terrified me.
5 The ropes of •Sheol entangled me;
the snares of death confronted me.
6 I called to the LORD in my distress,
and I cried to my God for help.
From His temple He heard my voice,
and my cry to Him reached His ears.

7 Then the earth shook and quaked;
the foundations of the mountains trembled;
they shook because He burned with anger.
8† Smoke rose from His nostrils,
and consuming fire came from His mouth;
coals were set ablaze by it. [A],
9 He parted the heavens and came down,
a dark cloud beneath His feet.
10 He rode on a cherub and flew,
soaring on the wings of the wind.
11 He made darkness His hiding place,
dark storm clouds His canopy around Him.
12 From the radiance of His presence,
His clouds swept onward with hail and blazing coals.
13 The LORD thundered from heaven;
the •Most High projected His voice.
14 He shot His arrows and scattered them;
He hurled [B] lightning bolts and routed them.

[15] The depths of the sea became visible,
the foundations of the world were exposed,
at Your rebuke, LORD,
at the blast of the breath of Your nostrils.

[16] He reached down from heaven
and took hold of me;
He pulled me out of deep waters.
[17] He rescued me from my powerful enemy
and from those who hated me,
for they were too strong for me.
[18] They confronted me in the day of my distress,
but the LORD was my support.
[19] He brought me out to a spacious place;
He rescued me because He delighted in me.

[20] The LORD rewarded me
according to my righteousness;
He repaid me
according to the cleanness of my hands.
[21] For I have kept the ways of the LORD
and have not turned from my God to wickedness.
[22] Indeed, I have kept all His ordinances in mind [C]
and have not disregarded His statutes.
[23] I was blameless toward Him
and kept myself from sinning.
[24] So the LORD repaid me
according to my righteousness,
according to the cleanness of my hands in His sight.

[25] With the faithful
You prove Yourself faithful;
with the blameless man
You prove Yourself blameless;
[26] with the pure
You prove Yourself pure,
but with the crooked

You prove Yourself shrewd.
27 For You rescue an afflicted people,
but You humble those with haughty eyes.
28 LORD, You light my lamp;
my God illuminates my darkness.
29 With You I can attack a barrier, [D]
and with my God I can leap over a wall.

30 God — His way is perfect;
the word of the LORD is pure.
He is a shield to all who take refuge in Him.
31 For who is God besides •Yahweh?
And who is a rock? Only our God.
32 God — He clothes me with strength
and makes my way perfect.
33 He makes my feet like the feet of a deer
and sets me securely on the heights. [E],
34† He trains my hands for war;
my arms can bend a bow of bronze.
35 You have given me the shield of Your salvation;
Your right hand upholds me,
and Your humility exalts me.
36 You widen a place beneath me for my steps,
and my ankles do not give way.

37 I pursue my enemies and overtake them;
I do not turn back until they are wiped out.
38 I crush them, and they cannot get up;
they fall beneath my feet.
39 You have clothed me with strength for battle;
You subdue my adversaries beneath me.
40 You have made my enemies retreat before me; [F]
I annihilate those who hate me.
41 They cry for help, but there is no one to save them —
they cry to the LORD, but He does not answer them.
42 I pulverize them like dust before the wind;

I trample them like mud in the streets.

43 You have freed me from the feuds among the people;
You have appointed me the head of nations;
a people I had not known serve me.
44 Foreigners submit to me grudgingly;
as soon as they hear, [G] they obey me.
45 Foreigners lose heart
and come trembling from their fortifications.

46 The LORD lives — may my rock be praised!
The God of my salvation is exalted.
47 God — He gives me vengeance
and subdues peoples under me.
48 He frees me from my enemies.
You exalt me above my adversaries;
You rescue me from violent men.
49 Therefore I will praise You, Yahweh, among the nations;
I will sing about Your name.
50 He gives great victories to His king;
He shows loyalty to His anointed,
to David and his descendants forever.

PSALMS

The Witness of Creation and Scripture

19 † The heavens declare the glory of God,
and the sky [A] proclaims the work of His hands.
2 Day after day they pour out speech;
night after night they communicate knowledge. [B]
3 There is no speech; there are no words;
their voice is not heard.
4 Their message has gone out to all the earth,
and their words to the ends of the world.

In the heavens [C] He has pitched a tent for the sun.
5† It is like a groom coming from the [D] bridal chamber;
it rejoices like an athlete running a course.
6 It rises from one end of the heavens
and circles [E] to their other end;
nothing is hidden from its heat.

ARTICLE

Does the Cosmological Argument Show There Is A God? ⇒

7† The instruction of the LORD is perfect,
renewing one's life;
the •testimony of the LORD is trustworthy,
making the inexperienced wise.
8 The precepts of the LORD are right,
making the heart glad;
the command of the LORD is radiant,
making the eyes light up.
9 The •fear of the LORD is pure,
enduring forever;
the ordinances of the LORD are reliable
and altogether righteous.
10 They are more desirable than gold —

than an abundance of pure gold;
and sweeter than honey,
which comes from the honeycomb.
11 In addition, Your servant is warned by them;
there is great reward in keeping them.

12 Who perceives his unintentional sins?
Cleanse me from my hidden faults.
13 Moreover, keep Your servant from willful sins;
do not let them rule over me.
Then I will be innocent
and cleansed from blatant rebellion.
14 May the words of my mouth
and the meditation of my heart
be acceptable to You,
LORD, my rock and my Redeemer.

PSALMS

Deliverance in Battle

20 † May •Yahweh answer you in a day of trouble;
may the name of Jacob's God protect you.
2 May He send you help from the sanctuary
and sustain you from •Zion.
3 May He remember all your offerings
and accept your •burnt offering.

•*Selah*

4 May He give you what your heart desires
and fulfill your whole purpose.
5 Let us shout for joy at your victory
and lift the banner in the name of our God.
May Yahweh fulfill all your requests.

6† Now I know that the LORD gives victory to His anointed;
He will answer him from His holy heaven
with mighty victories from His right hand.
7† Some take pride in chariots, and others in horses,
but we take pride in the name of Yahweh our God.
8 They collapse and fall,
but we rise and stand firm.
9 LORD, give victory to the king!
May He [A] answer us on the day that we call.

PSALMS

The King's Victory

21 LORD, the king finds joy in Your strength.
How greatly he rejoices in Your victory!
2 You have given him his heart’s desire
and have not denied the request of his lips.

•*Selah*

3 For You meet him with rich blessings;
You place a crown of pure gold on his head.
4 He asked You for life, and You gave it to him —
length of days forever and ever.
5 His glory is great through Your victory;
You confer majesty and splendor on him.
6 You give him blessings forever;
You cheer him with joy in Your presence.
7 For the king relies on the LORD;
through the faithful love of the •Most High
he is not shaken.

8 Your hand will capture all your enemies;
your right hand will seize those who hate you.
9 You will make them burn
like a fiery furnace when you appear;
the LORD will engulf them in His wrath,
and fire will devour them.
10 You will wipe their descendants from the earth
and their offspring from the •human race.
11 Though they intend to harm [A] you
and devise a wicked plan, they will not prevail.
12 Instead, you will put them to flight
when you aim your bow [B] at their faces.

13 Be exalted, LORD, in Your strength;
we will sing and praise Your might.

PSALMS

From Suffering to Praise

22 [†] My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?
Why are You so far from my deliverance
and from my words of groaning? [A]
2 My God, I cry by day, but You do not answer,
by night, yet I have no rest.
3 But You are holy,
enthroned on the praises of Israel.
4 Our fathers trusted in You;
they trusted, and You rescued them.
5 They cried to You and were set free;
they trusted in You and were not disgraced.

6 But I am a worm and not a man,
scorned by men and despised by people.
7 Everyone who sees me mocks me;
they sneer [B] and shake their heads:
8[†] "He relies on [C] the LORD;
let Him rescue him;
let the LORD [D] deliver him,
since He takes pleasure in him."

9 You took me from the womb,
making me secure while at my mother's breast.
10 I was given over to You at birth; [E]
You have been my God from my mother's womb.

11 Do not be far from me, because distress is near
and there is no one to help.

12 Many bulls surround me;
strong ones of Bashan encircle me.
13 They open their mouths against me —
lions, mauling and roaring.
14 I am poured out like water,
and all my bones are disjointed;
my heart is like wax,
melting within me.

[15] My strength is dried up like baked clay;
my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth.
You put me into the dust of death.
[16†] For dogs have surrounded me;
a gang of evildoers has closed in on me;
they pierced my hands and my feet.
[17] I can count all my bones;
people [F] look and stare at me.
[18†] They divided my garments among themselves,
and they cast lots for my clothing.

[19] But You, Lord, don't be far away.
My strength, come quickly to help me.
[20] Deliver my life from the sword,
my only life [G] from the power of these dogs.
[21] Save me from the mouth of the lion!
You have rescued [H] me
from the horns of the wild oxen.

[22] I will proclaim Your name to my brothers;
I will praise You in the congregation.
[23] You who •fear •Yahweh, praise Him!
All you descendants of Jacob, honor Him!
All you descendants of Israel, revere Him!
[24] For He has not despised or detested
the torment of the afflicted.
He did not hide His face from him
but listened when he cried to Him for help.

[25] I will give praise [I] in the great congregation
because of You;
I will fulfill my vows
before those who fear You. [J],
[26†] The humble [K] will eat and be satisfied;
those who seek the Lord will praise Him.
May your hearts live forever!

27 All the ends of the earth will remember
and turn to the LORD.
All the families of the nations
will bow down before You,
28 for kingship belongs to the LORD;
He rules over the nations.
29 All who prosper on earth will eat and bow down;
all those who go down to the dust
will kneel before Him —
even the one who cannot preserve his life.
30 Their descendants will serve Him;
the next generation will be told about the Lord.
31 They will come and tell a people yet to be born
about His righteousness —
what He has done.

PSALMS

The Good Shepherd

23

[†] The LORD is my shepherd;
there is nothing I lack.
2 He lets me lie down in green pastures;
He leads me beside quiet waters.
3 He renews my life;
He leads me along the right paths [A]
for His name's sake.
4[†] Even when I go through the darkest valley, [B]
I fear no danger,
for You are with me;
Your rod and Your staff — they comfort me.

5 You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies;
You anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.
6[†] Only goodness and faithful love will pursue me
all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the LORD
as long as I live. [C]

PSALMS

The King of Glory

24 † The earth and everything in it,
the world and its inhabitants,
belong to the LORD;
2 for He laid its foundation on the seas
and established it on the rivers.

3† Who may ascend the mountain of the LORD?
Who may stand in His holy place?
4 The one who has •clean hands and a pure heart,
who has not set his mind [A] on what is false,
and who has not sworn deceitfully.
5 He will receive blessing from the LORD,
and righteousness from the God of his salvation.
6 Such is the generation of those who seek Him,
who seek the face of the God of Jacob.

•*Selah*

7† Lift up your heads, you gates!
Rise up, ancient doors!
Then the King of glory will come in.
8 Who is this King of glory?
The LORD, strong and mighty,
the LORD, mighty in battle.
9 Lift up your heads, you gates!
Rise up, ancient doors!
Then the King of glory will come in.
10 Who is He, this King of glory?
The LORD of •Hosts,
He is the King of glory.

Selah

PSALMS

Dependence on the LORD

25

LORD, I turn to You. [A]
[2] My God, I trust in You.
Do not let me be disgraced;
do not let my enemies gloat over me.
[3] No one who waits for You
will be disgraced;
those who act treacherously without cause
will be disgraced.

[4] Make Your ways known to me, LORD;
teach me Your paths.
[5] Guide me in Your truth and teach me,
for You are the God of my salvation;
I wait for You all day long.
[6] Remember, LORD, Your compassion
and Your faithful love,
for they have existed from antiquity. [B]
[7] Do not remember the sins of my youth
or my acts of rebellion;
in keeping with Your faithful love, remember me
because of Your goodness, LORD.

[8] The LORD is good and upright;
therefore He shows sinners the way.
[9] He leads the humble in what is right
and teaches them His way.
[10] All the LORD's ways show faithful love and truth
to those who keep His covenant and decrees.
[11] Because of Your name, •Yahweh,
forgive my sin, for it is great.

[12] Who is the man who •fears the LORD?
He will show him the way he should choose.
[13] He will live a good life,
and his descendants will inherit the land. [C]
[14] The secret counsel of the LORD

is for those who fear Him,
and He reveals His covenant to them.
15 My eyes are always on the LORD,
for He will pull my feet out of the net.

16 Turn to me and be gracious to me,
for I am alone and afflicted.
17 The distresses of my heart increase; [D]
bring me out of my sufferings.
18 Consider my affliction and trouble,
and take away all my sins.
19 Consider my enemies; they are numerous,
and they hate me violently.
20 Guard me and deliver me;
do not let me be put to shame,
for I take refuge in You.
21 May integrity and what is right
watch over me,
for I wait for You.

22 God, redeem Israel, from all its distresses.

PSALMS

Prayer for Vindication

26 Vindicate me, LORD,
because I have lived with integrity
and have trusted in the LORD without wavering.
2† Test me, LORD, and try me;
examine my heart and mind.
3 For Your faithful love is before my eyes,
and I live by Your truth.

4† I do not sit with the worthless
or associate with hypocrites.
5 I hate a crowd of evildoers,
and I do not sit with the wicked.
6 I wash my hands in innocence
and go around Your altar, LORD,
7 raising my voice in thanksgiving
and telling about Your wonderful works.

8 LORD, I love the house where You dwell,
the place where Your glory resides.
9† Do not destroy me along with sinners,
or my life along with men of bloodshed
10 in whose hands are evil schemes
and whose right hands are filled with bribes.

11 But I live with integrity;
redeem me and be gracious to me.
12 My foot stands on level ground;
I will praise the LORD in the assemblies.

PSALMS

My Stronghold

27 The LORD is my light and my salvation —
whom should I fear?
The LORD is the stronghold of my life —
of whom should I be afraid?
2 When evildoers came against me to devour my flesh,
my foes and my enemies stumbled and fell.
3 Though an army deploys against me,
my heart is not afraid;
though a war breaks out against me,
still I am confident.

4† I have asked one thing from the LORD;
it is what I desire:
to dwell in the house of the LORD
all the days of my life,
gazing on the beauty of the LORD
and seeking Him in His temple.
5 For He will conceal me in His shelter
in the day of adversity;
He will hide me under the cover of His tent;
He will set me high on a rock.
6 Then my head will be high
above my enemies around me;
I will offer sacrifices in His tent with shouts of joy.
I will sing and make music to the LORD.

7 LORD, hear my voice when I call;
be gracious to me and answer me.
8† My heart says this about You,
"You are to seek My face."
LORD, I will seek Your face.
9 Do not hide Your face from me;
do not turn Your servant away in anger.
You have been my helper;
do not leave me or abandon me,
God of my salvation.
10 Even if my father and mother abandon me,

the Lord cares for me.

11 Because of my adversaries,
show me Your way, Lord,
and lead me on a level path.
12 Do not give me over to the will of my foes,
for false witnesses rise up against me,
breathing violence.

13 I am certain that I will see the Lord's goodness
in the land of the living.
14 Wait for the Lord;
be strong [A] and courageous.
Wait for the Lord.

PSALMS

My Strength

28 LORD, I call to You;
my rock, do not be deaf to me.
If You remain silent to me,
I will be like those going down to the •Pit.
2 Listen to the sound of my pleading
when I cry to You for help,
when I lift up my hands
toward Your holy sanctuary.

3 Do not drag me away with the wicked,
with the evildoers,
who speak in friendly ways with their neighbors
while malice is in their hearts.

ARTICLE

Is Beauty in the Eye of the Beholder? ⇒

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4 Repay them according to what they have done —
according to the evil of their deeds.
Repay them according to the work of their hands;
give them back what they deserve.
5 Because they do not consider
what the LORD has done
or the work of His hands,
He will tear them down and not rebuild them.

6 May the LORD be praised,
for He has heard the sound of my pleading.
7 The LORD is my strength and my shield;
my heart trusts in Him, and I am helped.
Therefore my heart rejoices,
and I praise Him with my song.

8 The LORD is the strength of His people;

He is a stronghold of salvation for His anointed.
9 Save Your people, bless Your possession,
shepherd them, and carry them forever.

PSALMS

The Voice of the LORD

29 † Ascribe to •Yahweh, you heavenly beings, [A]
ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.
2 Ascribe to Yahweh the glory due His name;
worship Yahweh
in the splendor of His holiness. [B]

3 The voice of the LORD is above the waters.
The God of glory thunders —
the LORD, above vast waters,
4 the voice of the LORD in power,
the voice of the LORD in splendor.
5† The voice of the LORD breaks the cedars;
the LORD shatters the cedars of Lebanon.
6 He makes Lebanon skip like a calf,
and Sirion, like a young wild ox.
7 The voice of the LORD flashes flames of fire.
8 The voice of the LORD shakes the wilderness;
the LORD shakes the wilderness of Kadesh.
9† The voice of the LORD makes the deer give birth [C]
and strips the woodlands bare.

In His temple all cry, “Glory! ”

10† The LORD sat enthroned at the flood;
the LORD sits enthroned, King forever.
11 The LORD gives His people strength;
the LORD blesses His people with peace.

PSALMS

Joy in the Morning

30 I will exalt You, LORD,
because You have lifted me up
and have not allowed my enemies
to triumph over me.
2 LORD my God,
I cried to You for help, and You healed me.
3† LORD, You brought me up from •Sheol;
You spared me from among those
going down to the •Pit.

4† Sing to •Yahweh, you His faithful ones,
and praise His holy name.
5 For His anger lasts only a moment,
but His favor, a lifetime.
Weeping may spend the night,
but there is joy in the morning.

6 When I was secure, I said,
"I will never be shaken."
7 LORD, when You showed Your favor,
You made me stand like a strong mountain;
when You hid Your face, I was terrified.
8 LORD, I called to You;
I sought favor from my Lord:
9 "What gain is there in my death,
if I go down to the Pit?
Will the dust praise You?
Will it proclaim Your truth?
10 LORD, listen and be gracious to me;
LORD, be my helper."

11 You turned my lament into dancing;
You removed my •sackcloth
and clothed me with gladness,
12 so that I can sing to You and not be silent.
LORD my God, I will praise You forever.

PSALMS

A Plea for Protection

31 LORD, I seek refuge in You;
let me never be disgraced.
Save me by Your righteousness.
2 Listen closely to me; rescue me quickly.
Be a rock of refuge for me,
a mountain fortress to save me.
3 For You are my rock and my fortress;
You lead and guide me
because of Your name.
4 You will free me from the net
that is secretly set for me,
for You are my refuge.
5† Into Your hand I entrust my spirit;
You redeem [A] me, LORD, God of truth.

6 I hate those who are devoted to worthless idols,
but I trust in the LORD.
7 I will rejoice and be glad in Your faithful love
because You have seen my affliction.
You have known the troubles of my life
8 and have not handed me over to the enemy.
You have set my feet in a spacious place.

9 Be gracious to me, LORD,
because I am in distress;
my eyes are worn out from angry sorrow —
my whole being [B] as well.
10 Indeed, my life is consumed with grief
and my years with groaning;
my strength has failed
because of my sinfulness,
and my bones waste away.
11 I am ridiculed by all my adversaries
and even by my neighbors.
I am dreaded by my acquaintances;
those who see me in the street run from me.

12 I am forgotten: gone from memory
like a dead person — like broken pottery.
13 I have heard the gossip of many;
terror is on every side.
When they conspired against me,
they plotted to take my life.

14 But I trust in You, LORD;
I say, "You are my God."
15 The course of my life is in Your power;
deliver me from the power of my enemies
and from my persecutors.
16 Show Your favor to Your servant;
save me by Your faithful love.
17 LORD, do not let me be disgraced when I call on You.
Let the wicked be disgraced;
let them be silent in •Sheol.
18 Let lying lips be quieted;
they speak arrogantly against the righteous
with pride and contempt.

19 How great is Your goodness
that You have stored up for those who •fear You
and accomplished in the sight of •everyone
for those who take refuge in You.
20 You hide them in the protection of Your presence;
You conceal them in a shelter [D]
from the schemes of men,
from quarrelsome tongues.
21 May the LORD be praised,
for He has wonderfully shown His faithful love to me
in a city under siege. [E]
22 In my alarm I had said,
"I am cut off from Your sight."
But You heard the sound of my pleading
when I cried to You for help.

23 Love the LORD, all His faithful ones.
The LORD protects the loyal,
but fully repays the arrogant.
24 Be strong [F] and courageous,
all you who put your hope in the LORD.

PSALMS

The Joy of Forgiveness

32 [†] How joyful is the one
whose transgression is forgiven,
whose sin is covered!
2 How joyful is the man
the LORD does not charge with sin
and in whose spirit is no deceit!

3[†] When I kept silent, my bones became brittle
from my groaning all day long.
4 For day and night Your hand was heavy on me;
my strength was drained [A]
as in the summer's heat.

•*Selah*

5 Then I acknowledged my sin to You
and did not conceal my iniquity.
I said,
"I will confess my transgressions to the LORD,"
and You took away the •guilt of my sin.

Selah

6[†] Therefore let everyone who is faithful pray to You
at a time that You may be found. [B]
When great floodwaters come,
they will not reach him.
7 You are my hiding place;
You protect me from trouble.
You surround me with joyful shouts of deliverance.

Selah

8 I will instruct you and show you the way to go;
with My eye on you, I will give counsel.
9 Do not be like a horse or mule,
without understanding,
that must be controlled with bit and bridle
or else it will not come near you.

10 Many pains come to the wicked,
but the one who trusts in the LORD
will have faithful love surrounding him.
11 Be glad in the LORD and rejoice,
you righteous ones;
shout for joy,
all you upright in heart.

PSALMS

Praise to the Creator

33 Rejoice in the LORD, you righteous ones;
praise from the upright is beautiful.
2 Praise the LORD with the lyre;
make music to Him with a ten-stringed harp.
3† Sing a new song to Him;
play skillfully on the strings, with a joyful shout.

4 For the word of the LORD is right,
and all His work is trustworthy.
5 He loves righteousness and justice;
the earth is full of the LORD's unfailing love.

6 The heavens were made by the word of the LORD,
and all the stars, by the breath of His mouth.
7 He gathers the waters of the sea into a heap;
He puts the depths into storehouses.
8 Let the whole earth tremble before the LORD;
let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him.
9 For He spoke, and it came into being;
He commanded, and it came into existence.

10 The LORD frustrates the counsel of the nations;
He thwarts the plans of the peoples.
11 The counsel of the LORD stands forever,
the plans of His heart from generation to generation.
12 Happy is the nation whose God is •Yahweh —
the people He has chosen to be His own possession!

13 The LORD looks down from heaven;
He observes everyone.
14 He gazes on all the inhabitants of the earth
from His dwelling place.
15 He alone shapes their hearts;
He considers all their works.
16† A king is not saved by a large army;
a warrior will not be delivered by great strength.
17 The horse is a false hope for safety;

it provides no escape by its great power.

18 Now the eye of the LORD is on those who •fear Him —
those who depend on His faithful love
19 to deliver them from death
and to keep them alive in famine.

20 We wait for Yahweh;
He is our help and shield.
21 For our hearts rejoice in Him
because we trust in His holy name.
22 May Your faithful love rest on us, Yahweh,
for we put our hope in You.

PSALMS

The LORD Delivers the Righteous

34 I will praise the LORD at all times;
His praise will always be on my lips.
2 I will boast in the LORD;
the humble will hear and be glad.
3 Proclaim •Yahweh's greatness with me;
let us exalt His name together.

4 I sought the LORD, and He answered me
and delivered me from all my fears.
5 Those who look to Him are radiant with joy;
their faces will never be ashamed.
6 This poor man cried, and the LORD heard him
and saved him from all his troubles.
7† The Angel of the LORD encamps
around those who •fear Him, and rescues them.

8 Taste and see that the LORD is good.
How happy is the man who takes refuge in Him!
9 You who are His holy ones, fear Yahweh,
for those who fear Him lack nothing.
10 Young lions lack food and go hungry,
but those who seek the LORD
will not lack any good thing.

11 Come, children, listen to me;
I will teach you the fear of the LORD.
12 Who is the man who delights in life,
loving a long life to enjoy what is good?
13 Keep your tongue from evil
and your lips from deceitful speech.
14 Turn away from evil and do what is good;
seek peace and pursue it.

15 The eyes of the LORD are on the righteous,
and His ears are open to their cry for help.
16 The face of the LORD is set
against those who do what is evil,

to erase [A] all memory of them from the earth.
17 The righteous [B] cry out, and the LORD hears,
and delivers them from all their troubles.
18 The LORD is near the brokenhearted;
He saves those crushed in spirit.

19 Many adversities come to the one who is righteous,
but the LORD delivers him from them all.
20† He protects all his bones;
not one of them is broken.
21 Evil brings death to the wicked,
and those who hate the righteous will be punished.
22 The LORD redeems the life of His servants,
and all who take refuge in Him will not be punished.

PSALMS

Prayer for Victory

35 Oppose my opponents, LORD;
fight those who fight me.
2 Take Your shields — large and small —
and come to my aid.
3 Draw the spear and javelin against my pursuers,
and assure me: "I am your deliverance."

4 Let those who seek to kill me
be disgraced and humiliated;
let those who plan to harm me
be turned back and ashamed.
5 Let them be like chaff in the wind,
with the angel of the LORD driving them away.
6 Let their way be dark and slippery,
with the angel of the LORD pursuing them.
7 They hid their net for me without cause;
they dug a pit for me without cause.
8 Let ruin come on him unexpectedly,
and let the net that he hid ensnare him;
let him fall into it — to his ruin.

9 Then I will rejoice in the LORD;
I will delight in His deliverance.
10 My very bones will say,
"LORD, who is like You,
rescuing the poor from one too strong for him,
the poor or the needy from one who robs him? "

11 Malicious witnesses come forward;
they question me about things I do not know.
12 They repay me evil for good,
making me desolate.
13 Yet when they were sick,
my clothing was •sackcloth;
I humbled myself with fasting,
and my prayer was genuine. [A],
14 I went about grieving as if for my friend or brother;

I was bowed down with grief,
like one mourning a mother.
[15] But when I stumbled, they gathered in glee;
they gathered against me.
Assailants I did not know
tore at me and did not stop.
[16] With godless mockery [B]
they gnashed their teeth at me.

[17] Lord, how long will You look on?
Rescue my life from their ravages,
my only one from the young lions.
[18] I will praise You in the great congregation;
I will exalt You among many people.
[19] Do not let my deceitful enemies rejoice over me;
do not let those who hate me without cause
look at me maliciously.
[20] For they do not speak in friendly ways,
but contrive deceitful schemes [C]
against those who live peacefully in the land.
[21] They open their mouths wide against me and say,
"Aha, aha! We saw it! " [D]

[22] You saw it, LORD; do not be silent.
Lord, do not be far from me.
[23] Wake up and rise to my defense,
to my cause, my God and my LORD!
[24] Vindicate me, LORD my God,
in keeping with Your righteousness,
and do not let them rejoice over me.
[25] Do not let them say in their hearts,
"Aha! Just what we wanted."
Do not let them say,
"We have swallowed him up! "
[26] Let those who rejoice at my misfortune
be disgraced and humiliated;

let those who exalt themselves over me
be clothed with shame and reproach.

27 Let those who want my vindication
shout for joy and be glad;
let them continually say,
"The LORD be exalted.
He takes pleasure in His servant's well-being."
28 And my tongue will proclaim Your righteousness,
Your praise all day long.

PSALMS

Human Wickedness and God's Love

36 † An •oracle within my heart
concerning the transgression of the wicked person:
There is no dread of God before his eyes,
2 for in his own eyes he flatters himself too much
to discover and hate his sin.
3 The words of his mouth are malicious and deceptive;
he has stopped acting wisely and doing good.
4 Even on his bed he makes malicious plans.
He sets himself on a path that is not good
and does not reject evil.

5 LORD, Your faithful love reaches to heaven,
Your faithfulness to the clouds.
6 Your righteousness is like the highest mountains;
Your judgments, like the deepest sea.
LORD, You preserve man and beast.
7† God, Your faithful love is so valuable
that •people take refuge in the shadow of Your wings.
8 They are filled from the abundance of Your house;
You let them drink from Your refreshing stream,
9 for with You is life's fountain.
In Your light we will see light.

10 Spread Your faithful love over those who know You,
and Your righteousness over the upright in heart.
11 Do not let the foot of the arrogant man come near me
or the hand of the wicked one drive me away.
12 There the evildoers fall;
they have been thrown down and cannot rise.

PSALMS

Instruction in Wisdom

37 [†] Do not be agitated by evildoers;
do not envy those who do wrong.
2 For they wither quickly like grass
and wilt like tender green plants.

3 Trust in the LORD and do what is good;
dwell in the land and live securely. [A]
4 Take delight in the LORD,
and He will give you your heart’s desires.

5 Commit your way to the LORD;
trust in Him, and He will act,
6 making your righteousness shine like the dawn,
your justice like the noonday.

7 Be silent before the LORD and wait expectantly for Him;
do not be agitated by one who prospers in his way,
by the man who carries out evil plans.

8 Refrain from anger and give up your rage;
do not be agitated — it can only bring harm.
9 For evildoers will be destroyed,
but those who put their hope in the LORD
will inherit the land. [B]

10 A little while, and the wicked person will be no more;
though you look for him, he will not be there.
11 But the humble will inherit the land [C]
and will enjoy abundant prosperity.

12 The wicked person schemes against the righteous
and gnashes his teeth at him.
13 The Lord laughs at him
because He sees that his day is coming.

14 The wicked have drawn the sword and strung the [D] bow
to bring down the afflicted and needy
and to slaughter those whose way is upright.

15 Their swords will enter their own hearts,
and their bows will be broken.

16 The little that the righteous man has is better
than the abundance of many wicked people.
17 For the arms [E] of the wicked will be broken,
but the LORD supports the righteous.

18 The LORD watches over the blameless all their days,
and their inheritance will last forever.
19 They will not be disgraced in times of adversity;
they will be satisfied in days of hunger.

20 But the wicked will perish;
the LORD's enemies, like the glory of the pastures,
will fade away —
they will fade away like smoke.

21 The wicked man borrows and does not repay,
but the righteous one is gracious and giving.
22 Those who are blessed by Him will inherit the land, [F]
but those cursed by Him will be destroyed.

23 A man's steps are established by the LORD,
and He takes pleasure in his way.
24 Though he falls, he will not be overwhelmed,
because the LORD holds his hand. [G]

25† I have been young and now I am old,
yet I have not seen the righteous abandoned
or his children begging for bread.
26 He is always generous, always lending,
and his children are a blessing.

27 Turn away from evil and do what is good,
and dwell there forever.
28 For the LORD loves justice
and will not abandon His faithful ones.
They are kept safe forever,

but the children of the wicked will be destroyed.
29 The righteous will inherit the land [H]
and dwell in it permanently.

30 The mouth of the righteous utters wisdom;
his tongue speaks what is just.
31 The instruction of his God is in his heart;
his steps do not falter.

32 The wicked one lies in wait for the righteous
and seeks to kill him;
33 the LORD will not leave him
in the power of the wicked one
or allow him to be condemned when he is judged.

34 Wait for the LORD and keep His way,
and He will exalt you to inherit the land.
You will watch when the wicked are destroyed.

35 I have seen a wicked, violent man
well-rooted [I] like a flourishing native tree.
36 Then I passed by and noticed he was gone;
I searched for him, but he could not be found.

37 Watch the blameless and observe the upright,
for the man of peace will have a future. [J],
38 But transgressors will all be eliminated;
the future [K] of the wicked will be destroyed.

39 The salvation of the righteous is from the LORD,
their refuge in a time of distress.
40 The LORD helps and delivers them;
He will deliver them from the wicked and will save them
because they take refuge in Him.

PSALMS

Prayer of a Suffering Sinner

38 LORD, do not punish me in Your anger
or discipline me in Your wrath.
2 For Your arrows have sunk into me,
and Your hand has pressed down on me.

3 There is no health in my body
because of Your indignation;
there is no strength [A] in my bones
because of my sin.
4 For my sins have flooded over my head;
they are a burden too heavy for me to bear.
5 My wounds are foul and festering
because of my foolishness.
6 I am bent over and brought low;
all day long I go around in mourning.
7 For my loins are full of burning pain,
and there is no health in my body.
8 I am faint and severely crushed;
I groan because of the anguish of my heart.

9 Lord, my every desire is known to [B] You;
my sighing is not hidden from You.
10 My heart races, my strength leaves me,
and even the light of my eyes has faded. [C]
11 My loved ones and friends stand back from my affliction,
and my relatives stand at a distance.
12 Those who seek my life set traps,
and those who want to harm me threaten to destroy me;
they plot treachery all day long.

13 I am like a deaf person; I do not hear.
I am like a speechless person
who does not open his mouth.
14 I am like a man who does not hear
and has no arguments in his mouth.
15 I put my hope in You, LORD;

You will answer, Lord my God.
16 For I said, "Don't let them rejoice over me —
those who are arrogant toward me when I stumble."
17 For I am about to fall,
and my pain is constantly with me.
18 So I confess my •guilt;
I am anxious because of my sin.
19 But my enemies are vigorous and powerful; [D]
many hate me for no reason.
20 Those who repay evil for good
attack me for pursuing good.

21 LORD, do not abandon me;
my God, do not be far from me.
22 Hurry to help me,
Lord, my Savior.

PSALMS

The Fleeting Nature of Life

39 I said, "I will guard my ways
so that I may not sin with my tongue;
I will guard my mouth with a muzzle
as long as the wicked are in my presence."
2 I was speechless and quiet;
I kept silent, even from speaking good,
and my pain intensified.
3 My heart grew hot within me;
as I mused, a fire burned.
I spoke with my tongue:
4 "LORD, reveal to me the end of my life
and the number of my days.
Let me know how short-lived I am.
5 You, indeed, have made my days short in length,
and my life span as nothing in Your sight.
Yes, every mortal man is only a vapor.

•*Selah*

6 "Certainly, man walks about like a mere shadow.
Indeed, they frantically rush around in vain,
gathering possessions
without knowing who will get them.
7 Now, Lord, what do I wait for?
My hope is in You.
8 Deliver me from all my transgressions;
do not make me the taunt of fools.
9 I am speechless; I do not open my mouth
because of what You have done.
10 Remove Your torment from me;
I fade away because of the force of Your hand.
11 You discipline a man with punishment for sin,
consuming like a moth what is precious to him;
every man is only a vapor.

Selah

12 "Hear my prayer, LORD,

and listen to my cry for help;
do not be silent at my tears.
For I am a foreigner residing with You,
a temporary resident like all my fathers.
13 Turn Your angry gaze from me
so that I may be cheered up
before I die and am gone.”

PSALMS

Thanksgiving and a Cry for Help

40 I waited patiently for the LORD,
and He turned to me and heard my cry for help.
2 He brought me up from a desolate [A] pit,
out of the muddy clay,
and set my feet on a rock,
making my steps secure.
3 He put a new song in my mouth,
a hymn of praise to our God.
Many will see and fear
and put their trust in the LORD.

4 How happy is the man
who has put his trust in the LORD
and has not turned to the proud
or to those who run after lies!
5 LORD my God, You have done many things —
Your wonderful works and Your plans for us;
none can compare with You.
If I were to report and speak of them,
they are more than can be told.

6† You do not delight in sacrifice and offering;
You open my ears to listen. [B]
You do not ask for a whole •burnt offering or a •sin offering.
7 Then I said, "See, I have come;
it is written about me in the volume of the scroll.
8 I delight to do Your will, my God;
Your instruction lives within me." [C]

9 I proclaim righteousness in the great assembly;
see, I do not keep my mouth closed [D] —
as You know, LORD.
10 I did not hide Your righteousness in my heart;
I spoke about Your faithfulness and salvation;
I did not conceal Your constant love and truth
from the great assembly.

11 LORD, do not withhold Your compassion from me;
Your constant love and truth will always guard me.
12 For troubles without number have surrounded me;
my sins have overtaken me; I am unable to see.
They are more than the hairs of my head,
and my courage leaves me.
13 LORD, be pleased to deliver me;
hurry to help me, LORD.

14 Let those who seek to take my life
be disgraced and confounded.
Let those who wish me harm
be driven back and humiliated.
15 Let those who say to me, “Aha, aha! ”
be horrified because of their shame.

16 Let all who seek You rejoice and be glad in You;
let those who love Your salvation continually say,
“The LORD is great! ”
17 I am afflicted and needy;
the Lord thinks of me.
You are my helper and my deliverer;
my God, do not delay.

PSALMS

Victory in Spite of Betrayal

41 Happy is one who cares for the poor;
the LORD will save him in a day of adversity.
2 The LORD will keep him and preserve him;
he will be blessed in the land.
You will not give him over to the desire of his enemies.
3 The LORD will sustain him on his sickbed;
You will heal him on the bed where he lies.

4 I said, “LORD, be gracious to me;
heal me, for I have sinned against You.”
5 My enemies speak maliciously about me:
“When will he die and be forgotten? ”
6 When one of them comes to visit, he speaks deceitfully;
he stores up evil in his heart;
he goes out and talks.
7 All who hate me whisper together about me;
they plan to harm me.
8 “Lethal poison has been poured into him,
and he won’t rise again from where he lies! ”
9† Even my friend [A] in whom I trusted,
one who ate my bread,
has raised his heel against me.

10 But You, LORD, be gracious to me and raise me up;
then I will repay them.
11 By this I know that You delight in me:
my enemy does not shout in triumph over me.
12 You supported me because of my integrity
and set me in Your presence forever.

13† May •Yahweh, the God of Israel, be praised
from everlasting to everlasting.
•Amen and amen.

PSALMS

BOOK II

(Psalms 42–72)

Longing for God

42 As a deer longs for streams of water,
so I long for You, God.
2† I thirst for God, the living God.
When can I come and appear before God?
3 My tears have been my food day and night,
while all day long people say to me,
“Where is your God? ”
4 I remember this as I pour out my heart:
how I walked with many,
leading the festive procession to the house of God,
with joyful and thankful shouts.

5† Why am I so depressed?
Why this turmoil within me?
Put your hope in God, for I will still praise Him,
my Savior and my God.
6† I am deeply depressed;
therefore I remember You from the land of Jordan
and the peaks of Hermon, from Mount Mizar.
7 Deep calls to deep in the roar of Your waterfalls;
all Your breakers and Your billows have swept over me.
8 The Lord will send His faithful love by day;
His song will be with me in the night —
a prayer to the God of my life.

9 I will say to God, my rock,
“Why have You forgotten me?
Why must I go about in sorrow
because of the enemy’s oppression? ”
10 My adversaries taunt me,
as if crushing my bones,
while all day long they say to me,
“Where is your God? ”
11 Why am I so depressed?
Why this turmoil within me?
Put your hope in God, for I will still praise Him,
my Savior and my God.

PSALMS

Psalm 43

[1] Vindicate me, God, and defend my cause
against an ungodly nation;
rescue me from the deceitful and unjust man.
[2] For You are the God of my refuge.
Why have You rejected me?
Why must I go about in sorrow
because of the enemy's oppression?

[3†] Send Your light and Your truth; let them lead me.
Let them bring me to Your holy mountain,
to Your dwelling place.
[4] Then I will come to the altar of God,
to God, my greatest joy.
I will praise You with the lyre,
God, my God.

[5] Why am I so depressed?
Why this turmoil within me?
Put your hope in God, for I will still praise Him,
my Savior and my God.

PSALMS

Israel's Complaint

44 God, we have heard with our ears —
our ancestors have told us —
the work You accomplished in their days,
in days long ago:
2 to plant them,
You drove out the nations with Your hand;
to settle them,
You crushed the peoples.
3 For they did not take the land by their sword —
their arm did not bring them victory —
but by Your right hand, Your arm,
and the light of Your face,
for You were pleased with them.

4 You are my King, my God,
who ordains victories for Jacob.
5 Through You we drive back our foes;
through Your name we trample our enemies.
6 For I do not trust in my bow,
and my sword does not bring me victory.
7 But You give us victory over our foes
and let those who hate us be disgraced.
8 We boast in God all day long;
we will praise Your name forever.

•*Selah*

9 But You have rejected and humiliated us;
You do not march out with our armies.
10 You make us retreat from the foe,
and those who hate us
have taken plunder for themselves.
11 You hand us over to be eaten like sheep
and scatter us among the nations.
12 You sell Your people for nothing;
You make no profit from selling them.
13 You make us an object of reproach to our neighbors,

a source of mockery and ridicule to those around us.
[14] You make us a joke among the nations,
a laughingstock [A] among the peoples.
[15] My disgrace is before me all day long,
and shame has covered my face,
[16] because of the voice of the scorner and reviler,
because of the enemy and avenger.

[17] All this has happened to us,
but we have not forgotten You
or betrayed Your covenant.
[18] Our hearts have not turned back;
our steps have not strayed from Your path.
[19] But You have crushed us in a haunt of jackals
and have covered us with deepest darkness.
[20†] If we had forgotten the name of our God
and spread out our hands to a foreign god,
[21] wouldn't God have found this out,
since He knows the secrets of the heart?
[22] Because of You we are slain all day long;
we are counted as sheep to be slaughtered.

[23†] Wake up, Lord! Why are You sleeping?
Get up! Don't reject us forever!
[24] Why do You hide Yourself
and forget our affliction and oppression?
[25] For we have sunk down to the dust;
our bodies cling to the ground.
[26] Rise up! Help us!
Redeem us because of Your faithful love.

PSALMS

A Royal Wedding Song

45 My heart is moved by a noble theme
as I recite my verses to the king;
my tongue is the pen of a skillful writer.
2 You are the most handsome of •men;
grace flows from your lips.
Therefore God has blessed you forever.

3 Mighty warrior, strap your sword at your side.
In your majesty and splendor —
4 in your splendor ride triumphantly
in the cause of truth, humility, and justice.
May your right hand show your awe-inspiring acts.
5 Your arrows pierce the hearts of the king's enemies;
the peoples fall under you.

6† Your throne, God, is [A] forever and ever;
the scepter of Your [B] kingdom is a scepter of justice.
7 You love righteousness and hate wickedness;
therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of joy
more than your companions.
8 Myrrh, aloes, and cassia perfume all your garments;
from ivory palaces harps bring you joy.
9 Kings' daughters are among your honored women;
the queen, adorned with gold from Ophir,
stands at your right hand.

10† Listen, daughter, pay attention and consider:
forget your people and your father's house,
11 and the king will desire your beauty.
Bow down to him, for he is your lord.
12 The daughter of Tyre, the wealthy people,
will seek your favor with gifts.

13 In her chamber, the royal daughter is all glorious,
her clothing embroidered with gold.
14 In colorful garments she is led to the king;
after her, the virgins, her companions, are brought to you.

15 They are led in with gladness and rejoicing;
they enter the king’s palace.

16 Your sons will succeed your ancestors;
you will make them princes throughout the land.
17 I will cause your name to be remembered for all generations;
therefore the peoples will praise you forever and ever.

PSALMS

God Our Refuge

46 God is our refuge and strength,
a helper who is always found
in times of trouble.
2† Therefore we will not be afraid,
though the earth trembles
and the mountains topple
into the depths of the seas,
3 though its waters roar and foam
and the mountains quake with its turmoil.

•*Selah*

4† There is a river —
its streams delight the city of God,
the holy dwelling place of the •Most High.
5 God is within her; she will not be toppled.
God will help her when the morning dawns.
6 Nations rage, kingdoms topple;
the earth melts when He lifts His voice.
7 The LORD of •Hosts is with us;
the God of Jacob is our stronghold.

Selah

8 Come, see the works of the LORD,
who brings devastation on the earth.
9 He makes wars cease throughout the earth.
He shatters bows and cuts spears to pieces;
He burns up the chariots. [A],
10 "Stop your fighting — and know that I am God,
exalted among the nations, exalted on the earth."
11 •Yahweh of Hosts is with us;
the God of Jacob is our stronghold.

Selah

PSALMS

God Our King

47 Clap your hands, all you peoples;
shout to God with a jubilant cry.
2 For •Yahweh, the •Most High, is awe-inspiring,
a great King over all the earth.
3 He subdues peoples under us
and nations under our feet.

ARTICLE

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4 He chooses for us our inheritance —
the pride of Jacob, whom He loves.

•*Selah*

5† God ascends among shouts of joy,
the LORD, among the sound of trumpets.
6 Sing praise to God, sing praise;
sing praise to our King, sing praise!
7 Sing a song of wisdom,
for God is King of all the earth.

8† God reigns over the nations;
God is seated on His holy throne.
9 The nobles of the peoples have assembled
with the people of the God of Abraham.
For the leaders [A] of the earth belong to God;
He is greatly exalted.

PSALMS

Zion Exalted

48 The LORD is great and highly praised
in the city of our God.
His holy mountain, [2†] rising splendidly,
is the joy of the whole earth.
Mount •Zion on the slopes of the north
is the city of the great King.
3 God is known as a stronghold
in its citadels.

4 Look! The kings assembled;
they advanced together.
5 They looked and froze with fear;
they fled in terror.
6 Trembling seized them there,
agony like that of a woman in labor,
7 as You wrecked the ships of Tarshish
with the east wind.

8 Just as we heard, so we have seen
in the city of •Yahweh of •Hosts,
in the city of our God;
God will establish it forever.

•*Selah*

9 God, within Your temple,
we contemplate Your faithful love.
10 Your name, God, like Your praise,
reaches to the ends of the earth;
Your right hand is filled with justice.
11 Mount Zion is glad.
The towns [A] of Judah rejoice
because of Your judgments.

12 Go around Zion, encircle it;
count its towers,
13 note its ramparts; tour its citadels
so that you can tell a future generation:

14 “This God, our God forever and ever —
He will always lead us.”

PSALMS

Misplaced Trust in Wealth

49 Hear this, all you peoples;
listen, all who inhabit the world,
2 both low and high, [A]
rich and poor together.
3 My mouth speaks wisdom;
my heart’s meditation brings understanding.
4 I turn my ear to a proverb;
I explain my riddle with a lyre.

5 Why should I fear in times of trouble?
The iniquity of my foes surrounds me.
6 They trust in their wealth
and boast of their abundant riches.
7† Yet these cannot redeem a person [B]
or pay his ransom to God —
8 since the price of redeeming him is too costly,
one should forever stop trying [C], —
9 so that he may live forever
and not see the •Pit.

10 For one can see that wise men die;
foolish and stupid men also pass away.
Then they leave their wealth to others.
11 Their graves are their eternal homes,
their homes from generation to generation,
though they have named estates after themselves.
12† But despite his assets, [D] man will not last;
he is like the animals that perish.

13 This is the way of those who are arrogant,
and of their followers,
who approve of their words. [E]

•*Selah*

14† Like sheep they are headed for •Sheol;
Death will shepherd them.
The upright will rule over them in the morning,

and their form will waste away in Sheol, [F]
far from their lofty abode.
15 But God will redeem my life
from the power of Sheol,
for He will take me.

Selah

16 Do not be afraid when a man gets rich,
when the wealth [G] of his house increases.
17 For when he dies, he will take nothing at all;
his wealth [H] will not follow him down.
18 Though he praises himself during his lifetime —
and people praise you when you do well for yourself —
19 he will go to the generation of his fathers;
they will never see the light.
20 A man with valuable possessions [I]
but without understanding
is like the animals that perish.

PSALMS

God as Judge

50 •Yahweh, the God of gods [A] speaks;
He summons the earth from east to west. [B],
2 From •Zion, the perfection of beauty,
God appears in radiance. [C]
3 Our God is coming; He will not be silent!
Devouring fire precedes Him,
and a storm rages around Him.
4 On high, He summons heaven and earth
in order to judge His people.
5 “Gather My faithful ones to Me,
those who made a covenant with Me by sacrifice.”
6 The heavens proclaim His righteousness,
for God is the Judge.

•*Selah*

7† “Listen, My people, and I will speak;
I will testify against you, Israel.
I am God, your God.
8 I do not rebuke you for your sacrifices
or for your •burnt offerings,
which are continually before Me.
9 I will not accept a bull from your household
or male goats from your pens,
10 for every animal of the forest is Mine,
the cattle on a thousand hills.
11 I know every bird of the mountains,
and the creatures of the field are Mine.
12 If I were hungry, I would not tell you,
for the world and everything in it is Mine.
13 Do I eat the flesh of bulls
or drink the blood of goats?
14 Sacrifice a thank offering to God,
and pay your vows to the •Most High.
15 Call on Me in a day of trouble;
I will rescue you, and you will honor Me.”

16† But God says to the wicked:
“What right do you have to recite My statutes
and to take My covenant on your lips?
17 You hate instruction
and turn your back on My words. [D]
18 When you see a thief,
you make friends with him,
and you associate with adulterers.
19 You unleash your mouth for evil
and harness your tongue for deceit.
20 You sit, maligning your brother,
slandering your mother’s son.
21 You have done these things, and I kept silent;
you thought I was just like you.
But I will rebuke you
and lay out the case before you. [E]

22† “Understand this, you who forget God,
or I will tear you apart,
and there will be no one to rescue you.
23 Whoever sacrifices a thank offering honors Me,
and whoever orders his conduct,
I will show him the salvation of God.”

PSALMS

A Prayer for Restoration

51 Be gracious to me, God,
according to Your faithful love;
according to Your abundant compassion,
blot out my rebellion.
2 Wash away my •guilt
and cleanse me from my sin.
3 For I am conscious of my rebellion,
and my sin is always before me.
4† Against You — You alone — I have sinned
and done this evil in Your sight.
So You are right when You pass sentence;
You are blameless when You judge.
5† Indeed, I was guilty when I was born;
I was sinful when my mother conceived me.

6 Surely You desire integrity in the inner self,
and You teach me wisdom deep within.
7 Purify me with hyssop, and I will be •clean;
wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.
8† Let me hear joy and gladness;
let the bones You have crushed rejoice.
9 Turn Your face away [A] from my sins
and blot out all my guilt.

10† God, create a clean heart for me
and renew a steadfast [B] spirit within me.
11† Do not banish me from Your presence
or take Your Holy Spirit from me.
12† Restore the joy of Your salvation to me,
and give me a willing spirit. [C]
13 Then I will teach the rebellious Your ways,
and sinners will return to You.

14 Save me from the guilt of bloodshed, God,
the God of my salvation,
and my tongue will sing of Your righteousness.

15† Lord, open my lips,
and my mouth will declare Your praise.
16† You do not want a sacrifice, or I would give it;
You are not pleased with a •burnt offering.
17 The sacrifice pleasing to God is [D] a broken spirit.
God, You will not despise a broken and humbled heart.

18† In Your good pleasure, cause •Zion to prosper;
build [E] the walls of Jerusalem.
19 Then You will delight in righteous sacrifices,
whole burnt offerings;
then bulls will be offered on Your altar.

PSALMS

God Judges the Proud

52 Why brag about evil, you hero!
God's faithful love is constant.
2 Like a sharpened razor,
your tongue devises destruction,
working treachery.
3 You love evil instead of good,
lying instead of speaking truthfully.

•*Selah*

4 You love any words that destroy,
you treacherous tongue!

5 This is why God will bring you down forever.
He will take you, ripping you out of your tent;
He will uproot you from the land of the living.

Selah

6 The righteous will look on with awe
and will ridicule him:
7 "Here is the man
who would not make God his refuge,
but trusted in the abundance of his riches,
taking refuge in his destructive behavior." [A]

8 But I am like a flourishing olive tree
in the house of God;
I trust in God's faithful love forever and ever.
9 I will praise You forever for what You have done.
In the presence of Your faithful people,
I will put my hope in Your name, for it is good.

PSALMS

A Portrait of Sinners

53 The fool says in his heart, “God does not exist.”
They are corrupt, and they do vile deeds.
There is no one who does good.
2 God looks down from heaven on the •human race
to see if there is one who is wise,
one who seeks God.
3 All have turned away;
all alike have become corrupt.
There is no one who does good,
not even one.

4 Will evildoers never understand?
They consume My people as they consume bread;
they do not call on God.
5 Then they will be filled with terror —
terror like no other —
because God will scatter
the bones of those who besiege you.
You will put them to shame,
for God has rejected them.

6 Oh, that Israel’s deliverance would come from •Zion!
When God restores the fortunes of His people, [A]
Jacob will rejoice; Israel will be glad.

PSALMS

Prayer for Deliverance

54 God, save me by Your name,
and vindicate me by Your might!
2 God, hear my prayer;
listen to the words of my mouth.
3 For strangers rise up against me,
and violent men seek my life.
They have no regard for God. [A]

•*Selah*

4 God is my helper;
the Lord is the sustainer of my life. [B],
5† He will repay my adversaries for their evil.
Because of Your faithfulness, annihilate them.

6 I will sacrifice a freewill offering to You.
I will praise Your name, •Yahweh,
because it is good.
7 For He has delivered me from every trouble,
and my eye has looked down on my enemies.

PSALMS

Betrayal by a Friend

55 God, listen to my prayer
and do not ignore [A] my plea for help.
2 Pay attention to me and answer me.
I am restless and in turmoil with my complaint,
3 because of the enemy's voice,
because of the pressure [B] of the wicked.
For they bring down disaster on me
and harass me in anger.

4 My heart shudders within me;
terrors of death sweep over me.
5 Fear and trembling grip me;
horror has overwhelmed me.
6 I said, "If only I had [C] wings like a dove!
I would fly away and find rest.
7 How far away I would flee;
I would stay in the wilderness.

•*Selah*

8 I would hurry to my shelter
from the raging wind and the storm."

9 Lord, confuse [D] and confound their speech, [E]
for I see violence and strife in the city;
10 day and night they make the rounds on its walls.
Crime and trouble are within it;
11 destruction is inside it;
oppression and deceit never leave its marketplace.

12 Now it is not an enemy who insults me —
otherwise I could bear it;
it is not a foe who rises up against me —
otherwise I could hide from him.
13 But it is you, a man who is my peer,
my companion and good friend!
14 We used to have close fellowship;
we walked with the crowd into the house of God.

15† Let death take them by surprise;
let them go down to •Sheol alive,
because evil is in their homes and within them.
16 But I call to God,
and the LORD will save me.
17 I complain and groan morning, noon, and night,
and He hears my voice.
18 Though many are against me,
He will redeem me from my battle unharmed.
19 God, the One enthroned from long ago,
will hear and will humiliate them

Selah

because they do not change
and do not •fear God.

20 My friend acts violently
against those at peace with him;
he violates his covenant.
21 His buttery words are smooth,
but war is in his heart.
His words are softer than oil,
but they are drawn swords.

22 Cast your burden on the LORD,
and He will sustain you;
He will never allow the righteous to be shaken.

23 God, You will bring them down
to the •Pit of destruction;
men of bloodshed and treachery
will not live out half their days.
But I will trust in You.

PSALMS

A Call for God's Protection

56 Be gracious to me, God, for man tramples me;
he fights and oppresses me all day long.
[2] My adversaries trample me all day,
for many arrogantly fight against me. [A]

[3] When I am afraid,
I will trust in You.
[4] In God, whose word I praise,
in God I trust; I will not fear.
What can man do to me?

[5] They twist my words all day long;
all their thoughts against me are evil.
[6] They stir up strife, [B] they lurk;
they watch my steps
while they wait to take my life.
[7] Will they escape in spite of such sin?
God, bring down the nations in wrath.

[8†] You Yourself have recorded my wanderings. [C]
Put my tears in Your bottle.
Are they not in Your records?
[9] Then my enemies will retreat on the day when I call.
This I know: God is for me.

[10] In God, whose word I praise,
in the LORD, whose word I praise,
[11] in God I trust; I will not fear.
What can man do to me?

[12] I am obligated by vows [D] to You, God;
I will make my thank offerings to You.
[13] For You delivered me from death,
even my feet from stumbling,
to walk before God in the light of life.

PSALMS

Praise for God's Protection

57 Be gracious to me, God, be gracious to me,
for I take refuge in You.
I will seek refuge in the shadow of Your wings
until danger passes.
2 I call to God •Most High,
to God who fulfills His purpose for me. [A]
3 He reaches down from heaven and saves me,
challenging the one who tramples me.

•*Selah*

God sends His faithful love and truth.
4 I am surrounded by lions;
I lie down with those who devour •men.
Their teeth are spears and arrows;
their tongues are sharp swords.
5 God, be exalted above the heavens;
let Your glory be over the whole earth.
6 They prepared a net for my steps;
I was despondent.
They dug a pit ahead of me,
but they fell into it!

Selah

7 My heart is confident, God, my heart is confident.
I will sing; I will sing praises.
8 Wake up, my soul! [B]
Wake up, harp and lyre!
I will wake up the dawn.
9 I will praise You, Lord, among the peoples;
I will sing praises to You among the nations.
10 For Your faithful love is as high as the heavens;
Your faithfulness reaches the clouds.
11 God, be exalted above the heavens;
let Your glory be over the whole earth.

PSALMS

A Cry against Injustice

58 † Do you really speak righteously, you mighty ones? [A]
Do you judge •people fairly?
2 No, you practice injustice in your hearts;
with your hands you weigh out violence in the land.

3 The wicked go astray from the womb;
liars err from birth.
4 They have venom like the venom of a snake,
like the deaf cobra that stops up its ears,
5 that does not listen to the sound of the charmers
who skillfully weave spells.

6 God, knock the teeth out of their mouths;
LORD, tear out the young lions' fangs.
7 They will vanish like water that flows by;
they will aim their useless arrows. [B], [C],
8 Like a slug that moves along in slime,
like a woman's miscarried child,
they will not see the sun.

9 Before your pots can feel the heat of the thorns —
whether green or burning —
He will sweep them away. [D],
10† The righteous one will rejoice
when he sees the retribution;
he will wash his feet in the blood of the wicked.
11 Then people will say,
"Yes, there is a reward for the righteous!
There is a God who judges on earth! "

PSALMS

God Our Stronghold

59 Deliver me from my enemies, my God;
protect me from those who rise up against me.
2 Deliver me from those who practice sin,
and save me from men of bloodshed.
3 LORD, look! They set an ambush for me.
Powerful men attack me,
but not because of any sin or rebellion of mine.
4 For no fault of mine,
they run and take up a position.
Awake to help me, and take notice.
5 LORD God of •Hosts, You are the God of Israel,
rise up to punish all the nations;
do not show grace to any wicked traitors.

•*Selah*

6 They return at evening, snarling like dogs
and prowling around the city.
7 Look, they spew from their mouths —
sharp words from [A] their lips.
"For who," they say, "will hear? "
8† But You laugh at them, LORD;
You ridicule all the nations.
9 I will keep watch for You, my strength,
because God is my stronghold.
10† My faithful God will come to meet me;
God will let me look down on my adversaries.

11 Do not kill them; otherwise, my people will forget.
By Your power, make them homeless wanderers
and bring them down,
Lord, our shield.
12 For the sin of their mouths and the words of their lips,
let them be caught in their pride.
They utter curses and lies.
13 Consume them in rage;
consume them until they are gone.

Then people will know throughout [B] the earth
that God rules over Jacob.

Selah

14 And they return at evening, snarling like dogs
and prowling around the city.
15 They scavenge for food;
they growl if they are not satisfied.

16 But I will sing of Your strength
and will joyfully proclaim
Your faithful love in the morning.
For You have been a stronghold for me,
a refuge in my day of trouble.
17 To You, my strength, I sing praises,
because God is my stronghold —
my faithful God.

PSALMS

Prayer in Difficult Times

60 God, You have rejected us;
You have broken out [A] against us;
You have been angry. Restore us! [B],
2 You have shaken the land and split it open.
Heal its fissures, for it shudders.
3 You have made Your people suffer hardship;
You have given us wine to drink
that made us stagger.
4 You have given a signal flag to those who •fear You,
so that they can flee before the archers. [C]

•*Selah*

5 Save with Your right hand, and answer me,
so that those You love may be rescued.

6† God has spoken in His sanctuary: [D]
"I will triumph! I will divide up Shechem.
I will apportion the Valley of Succoth.
7 Gilead is Mine, Manasseh is Mine,
and Ephraim is My helmet;
Judah is My scepter.
8 Moab is My washbasin.
I throw My sandal on Edom;
I shout in triumph over Philistia."

9 Who will bring me to the fortified city?
Who will lead me to Edom?
10 God, haven't You rejected us?
God, You do not march out with our armies.
11 Give us aid against the foe,
for human help is worthless.
12 With God we will perform valiantly;
He will trample our foes.

PSALMS

Security in God

61 God, hear my cry;
pay attention to my prayer.
2 I call to You from the ends of the earth
when my heart is without strength.
Lead me to a rock that is high above me,
3 for You have been a refuge for me,
a strong tower in the face of the enemy.
4 I will live in Your tent forever
and take refuge under the shelter of Your wings.

•*Selah*

5 God, You have heard my vows;
You have given a heritage
to those who •fear Your name.
6 Add days to the king's life;
may his years span many generations.
7 May he sit enthroned before God forever;
appoint faithful love and truth to guard him.
8 Then I will continually sing of Your name,
fulfilling my vows day by day.

PSALMS

Trust in God Alone

62 I am at rest in God alone;
my salvation comes from Him.
2 He alone is my rock and my salvation,
my stronghold; I will never be shaken.

3 How long will you threaten a man?
Will all of you attack
as if he were a leaning wall
or a tottering stone fence?
4 They only plan to bring him down
from his high position.
They take pleasure in lying;
they bless with their mouths,
but they curse inwardly.

•*Selah*

5 Rest in God alone, my soul,
for my hope comes from Him.
6 He alone is my rock and my salvation,
my stronghold; I will not be shaken.
7 My salvation and glory depend on God, my strong rock.
My refuge is in God.
8 Trust in Him at all times, you people;
pour out your hearts before Him.
God is our refuge.

Selah

9 •Men are only a vapor;
exalted men, an illusion.
Weighed in the scales, they go up;
together they are less than a vapor.
10 Place no trust in oppression,
or false hope in robbery.
If wealth increases,
pay no attention to it. [A]

11 God has spoken once;

I have heard this twice:
strength belongs to God,
12 and faithful love belongs to You, LORD.
For You repay each according to his works.

PSALMS

Praise God Who Satisfies

63 God, You are my God; I eagerly seek You.
I thirst for You;
my body faints for You
in a land that is dry, desolate, and without water.
2† So I gaze on You in the sanctuary
to see Your strength and Your glory.

3 My lips will glorify You
because Your faithful love is better than life.
4† So I will praise You as long as I live;
at Your name, I will lift up my hands.
5 You satisfy me as with rich food; [A]
my mouth will praise You with joyful lips.

6 When I think of You as I lie on my bed,
I meditate on You during the night watches
7 because You are my helper;
I will rejoice in the shadow of Your wings.
8 I follow close to You;
Your right hand holds on to me.

9 But those who seek to destroy my life
will go into the depths of the earth.
10 They will be given over to the power of the sword;
they will become the jackals' prey.
11 But the king will rejoice in God;
all who swear by Him [B] will boast,
for the mouths of liars will be shut.

PSALMS

Protection from Evildoers

64 God, hear my voice when I complain.
Protect my life from the terror of the enemy.
2 Hide me from the scheming of wicked people,
from the mob of evildoers,
3† who sharpen their tongues like swords
and aim bitter words like arrows,
4 shooting from concealed places at the innocent.
They shoot at him suddenly and are not afraid.
5 They encourage each other in an evil plan; [A], [B]
they talk about hiding traps and say,
"Who will see them? " [C]
6 They devise crimes and say,
"We have perfected a secret plan."
The inner man and the heart are mysterious.

7 But God will shoot them with arrows;
suddenly, they will be wounded.
8 They will be made to stumble;
their own tongues work against them.
All who see them will shake their heads.
9 Then everyone will fear
and will tell about God's work,
for they will understand what He has done.

10 The righteous one rejoices in the LORD
and takes refuge in Him;
all those who are upright in heart
will offer praise.

PSALMS

God’s Care for the Earth

65 Praise is rightfully Yours, [A]
God, in •Zion;
vows to You will be fulfilled.
2 All humanity will come to You,
the One who hears prayer.
3 Iniquities overwhelm me;
only You can •atone for [B] our rebellions.
4 How happy is the one You choose
and bring near to live in Your courts!
We will be satisfied with the goodness of Your house,
the holiness of Your temple. [C]

5 You answer us in righteousness,
with awe-inspiring works,
God of our salvation,
the hope of all the ends of the earth
and of the distant seas.
6 You establish the mountains by Your power,
robed with strength.
7 You silence the roar of the seas,
the roar of their waves,
and the tumult of the nations.
8 Those who live far away are awed by Your signs;
You make east and west shout for joy.

ARTICLE

Notable Christian Apologist: Joseph Butler ⇒

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9 You visit the earth and water it abundantly,
enriching it greatly.
God's stream is filled with water,
for You prepare the earth [D] in this way,
providing people with grain.

10 You soften it with showers and bless its growth,
soaking its furrows and leveling its ridges.
11 You crown the year with Your goodness;
Your ways overflow with plenty. [E]
12 The wilderness pastures overflow,
and the hills are robed with joy.
13 The pastures are clothed with flocks
and the valleys covered with grain.
They shout in triumph; indeed, they sing.

PSALMS

Praise for God's Mighty Acts

66 Shout joyfully to God, all the earth!
2 Sing about the glory of His name;
make His praise glorious.
3 Say to God, “How awe-inspiring are Your works!
Your enemies will cringe before You
because of Your great strength.
4 All the earth will worship You
and sing praise to You.
They will sing praise to Your name.”

•*Selah*

5 Come and see the wonders of God;
His acts for •humanity are awe-inspiring.
6 He turned the sea into dry land,
and they crossed the river on foot.
There we rejoiced in Him.
7 He rules forever by His might;
He keeps His eye on the nations.
The rebellious should not exalt themselves.

Selah

8 Praise our God, you peoples;
let the sound of His praise be heard.
9 He keeps us alive [A]
and does not allow our feet to slip.

10 For You, God, tested us;
You refined us as silver is refined.
11 You lured us into a trap;
You placed burdens on our backs.
12 You let men ride over our heads;
we went through fire and water,
but You brought us out to abundance. [B]

13 I will enter Your house with •burnt offerings;
I will pay You my vows

14 that my lips promised
and my mouth spoke during my distress.
15 I will offer You fattened sheep as burnt offerings,
with the fragrant smoke of rams;
I will sacrifice oxen with goats.

Selah

16 Come and listen, all who •fear God,
and I will tell what He has done for me.
17 I cried out to Him with my mouth,
and praise was on my tongue.
18 If I had been aware of malice in my heart,
the Lord would not have listened.
19 However, God has listened;
He has paid attention to the sound of my prayer.
20 May God be praised!
He has not turned away my prayer
or turned His faithful love from me.

PSALMS

All Will Praise God

67 May God be gracious to us and bless us;
look on us with favor

•*Selah*

2 so that Your way may be known on earth,
Your salvation among all nations.

3 Let the peoples praise You, God;
let all the peoples praise You.
4 Let the nations rejoice and shout for joy,
for You judge the peoples with fairness
and lead the nations on earth.

Selah

5 Let the peoples praise You, God,
let all the peoples praise You.

6 The earth has produced its harvest;
God, our God, blesses us.
7 God will bless us,
and all the ends of the earth will •fear Him.

PSALMS

God's Majestic Power

68 [†] God arises. His enemies scatter,
and those who hate Him flee from His presence.
2 As smoke is blown away,
so You blow them away.
As wax melts before the fire,
so the wicked are destroyed before God.
3 But the righteous are glad;
they rejoice before God and celebrate with joy.

4[†] Sing to God! Sing praises to His name.
Exalt Him who rides on the clouds [A] —
His name is •Yahweh [B] — and rejoice before Him.
5 God in His holy dwelling is
a father of the fatherless
and a champion of widows.
6 God provides homes for those who are deserted.
He leads out the prisoners to prosperity, [C]
but the rebellious live in a scorched land.

7[†] God, when You went out before Your people,
when You marched through the desert,

•*Selah*

8 the earth trembled and the skies poured down rain
before God, the God of Sinai, [D]
before God, the God of Israel.
9 You, God, showered abundant rain;
You revived Your inheritance when it languished.
10 Your people settled in it;
God, You provided for the poor by Your goodness.

11[†] The Lord gave the command;
a great company of women brought the good news:
12 "The kings of the armies flee — they flee! "
She who stays at home divides the spoil.
13[†] While [E] you lie among the sheepfolds, [F]

the wings of a dove are covered with silver,
and its feathers with glistening gold.
14 When the •Almighty scattered kings in the land,
it snowed on Zalmon. [G]

15 Mount Bashan is God's towering mountain;
Mount Bashan is a mountain of many peaks.
16† Why gaze with envy, you mountain peaks,
at the mountain God desired for His dwelling?
The LORD will live there forever!
17† God's chariots are tens of thousands,
thousands and thousands;
the Lord is among them in the sanctuary [H]
as He was at Sinai.
18† You ascended to the heights, taking away captives;
You received gifts from [I] people,
even from the rebellious,
so that the LORD God might live there. [J]

19 May the Lord be praised!
Day after day He bears our burdens;
God is our salvation.

Selah

20 Our God is a God of salvation,
and escape from death belongs to the Lord GOD.
21 Surely God crushes the heads of His enemies,
the hairy head of one who goes on in his •guilty acts.
22 The Lord said, "I will bring them back from Bashan;
I will bring them back from the depths of the sea
23 so that your foot may wade in blood
and your dogs' tongues may have their share
from the enemies."
24 People have seen Your procession, God,
the procession of my God,
my King, in the sanctuary. [K],

25 Singers lead the way,
with musicians following;
among them are young women
playing tambourines.
26 Praise God in the assemblies;
praise the LORD from the fountain of Israel.
27 There is Benjamin, the youngest, leading them,
the rulers of Judah in their assembly, [L]
the rulers of Zebulun, the rulers of Naphtali.

28 Your God has decreed your strength.
Show Your strength, God,
You who have acted on our behalf.
29 Because of Your temple at Jerusalem,
kings will bring tribute to You.
30 Rebuke the beast in the reeds,
the herd of bulls with the calves of the peoples.
Trample underfoot those with bars of silver. [M]
Scatter the peoples who take pleasure in war.
31 Ambassadors will come [N] from Egypt;
•Cush will stretch out its hands to God.

32 Sing to God, you kingdoms of the earth;
sing praise to the Lord,

Selah

33 to Him who rides in the ancient, highest heavens.
Look, He thunders with His powerful voice!
34 Ascribe power to God.
His majesty is over Israel,
His power among the clouds.
35 God, You are awe-inspiring in Your sanctuaries.
The God of Israel gives power and strength to His people.
May God be praised!

PSALMS

A Plea for Rescue

69 Save me, God,
for the water has risen to my neck.
2† I have sunk in deep mud, and there is no footing;
I have come into deep waters,
and a flood sweeps over me.
3 I am weary from my crying;
my throat is parched.
My eyes fail, looking for my God.
4 Those who hate me without cause
are more numerous than the hairs of my head;
my deceitful enemies, who would destroy me,
are powerful.
Though I did not steal, I must repay.

5 God, You know my foolishness,
and my •guilty acts are not hidden from You.
6 Do not let those who put their hope in You
be disgraced because of me,
Lord God of •Hosts;
do not let those who seek You
be humiliated because of me,
God of Israel.
7 For I have endured insults because of You,
and shame has covered my face.
8 I have become a stranger to my brothers
and a foreigner to my mother's sons
9 because zeal for Your house has consumed me,
and the insults of those who insult You
have fallen on me.
10 I mourned and fasted,
but it brought me insults.
11 I wore •sackcloth as my clothing,
and I was a joke to them.
12† Those who sit at the city •gate talk about me,
and drunkards make up songs about me.

13 But as for me, LORD,
my prayer to You is for a time of favor.
In Your abundant, faithful love, God,
answer me with Your sure salvation.
14 Rescue me from the miry mud; don't let me sink.
Let me be rescued from those who hate me
and from the deep waters.
15 Don't let the floodwaters sweep over me
or the deep swallow me up;
don't let the •Pit close its mouth over me.
16 Answer me, LORD,
for Your faithful love is good;
in keeping with Your great compassion,
turn to me.
17 Don't hide Your face from Your servant,
for I am in distress.
Answer me quickly!
18 Draw near to me and redeem me;
ransom me because of my enemies.

19 You know the insults I endure —
my shame and disgrace.
You are aware of all my adversaries.
20 Insults have broken my heart,
and I am in despair.
I waited for sympathy,
but there was none;
for comforters, but found no one.
21† Instead, they gave me gall for my food,
and for my thirst
they gave me vinegar to drink.

22† Let their table set before them be a snare,
and let it be a trap for their allies.
23 Let their eyes grow too dim to see,
and let their loins continually shake.

24 Pour out Your rage on them,
and let Your burning anger overtake them.
25 Make their fortification desolate;
may no one live in their tents.
26 For they persecute the one You struck
and talk about the pain of those You wounded.
27 Add guilt to their guilt;
do not let them share in Your righteousness.
28 Let them be erased from the book of life
and not be recorded with the righteous.

29 But as for me — poor and in pain —
let Your salvation protect me, God.
30 I will praise God's name with song
and exalt Him with thanksgiving.
31 That will please •Yahweh more than an ox,
more than a bull with horns and hooves.
32 The humble will see it and rejoice.
You who seek God, take heart!
33 For the LORD listens to the needy
and does not despise
His own who are prisoners.

34 Let heaven and earth praise Him,
the seas and everything that moves in them,
35 for God will save •Zion
and build up [A] the cities of Judah.
They will live there and possess it.
36 The descendants of His servants will inherit it,
and those who love His name will live in it.

PSALMS

A Call for Deliverance

70 God, deliver me.
Hurry to help me, LORD!

2 Let those who seek my life
be disgraced and confounded;
let those who wish me harm
be driven back and humiliated.
3 Let those who say, “Aha, aha! ”
retreat because of their shame.

4 Let all who seek You rejoice and be glad in You;
let those who love Your salvation
continually say, “God is great! ”
5† I am afflicted and needy;
hurry to me, God.
You are my help and my deliverer;
LORD, do not delay.

PSALMS

God’s Help in Old Age

71

LORD, I seek refuge in You;
let me never be disgraced.
2 In Your justice, rescue and deliver me;
listen closely to me and save me.
3 Be a rock of refuge for me,
where I can always go.
Give the command to save me,
for You are my rock and fortress.
4 Deliver me, my God, from the power of the wicked,
from the grasp of the unjust and oppressive.
5 For You are my hope, Lord GOD,
my confidence from my youth.
6 I have leaned on You from birth;
You took me from my mother's womb.
My praise is always about You.
7 I have become an ominous sign to many,
but You are my strong refuge.
8 My mouth is full of praise
and honor to You all day long.

9 Don't discard me in my old age;
as my strength fails, do not abandon me.
10 For my enemies talk about me,
and those who spy on me plot together,
11 saying, "God has abandoned him;
chase him and catch him,
for there is no one to rescue him."
12 God, do not be far from me;
my God, hurry to help me.
13 May my adversaries be disgraced and destroyed;
may those who seek my harm
be covered with disgrace and humiliation.
14 But I will hope continually
and will praise You more and more.
15 My mouth will tell about Your righteousness
and Your salvation all day long,

though I cannot sum them up.
16 I come because of the mighty acts of the Lord GOD;
I will proclaim Your righteousness, Yours alone.

17 God, You have taught me from my youth,
and I still proclaim Your wonderful works.
18 Even when I am old and gray,
God, do not abandon me.
Then I will [A] proclaim Your power
to another generation,
Your strength to all who are to come.
19 Your righteousness reaches heaven, God,
You who have done great things;
God, who is like You?
20 You caused me to experience
many troubles and misfortunes,
but You will revive me again.
You will bring me up again,
even from the depths of the earth.
21 You will increase my honor
and comfort me once again.
22 Therefore, I will praise You with a harp
for Your faithfulness, my God;
I will sing to You with a lyre,
Holy One of Israel.
23 My lips will shout for joy
when I sing praise to You
because You have redeemed me.
24 Therefore, my tongue will proclaim
Your righteousness all day long,
for those who seek my harm
will be disgraced and confounded.

PSALMS

A Prayer for the King

72 God, give Your justice to the king
and Your righteousness to the king's son.
2 He will judge Your people with righteousness
and Your afflicted ones with justice.
3 May the mountains bring prosperity [A] to the people
and the hills, righteousness.
4† May he vindicate the afflicted among the people,
help the poor,
and crush the oppressor.

5 May he continue while the sun endures
and as long as the moon, throughout all generations.
6 May he be like rain that falls on the cut grass,
like spring showers that water the earth.
7 May the righteous flourish in his days
and prosperity [B] abound
until the moon is no more.

8 May he rule from sea to sea
and from the Euphrates
to the ends of the earth.
9 May desert tribes kneel before him
and his enemies lick the dust.
10 May the kings of Tarshish
and the coasts and islands bring tribute,
the kings of Sheba and Seba offer gifts.
11 Let all kings bow down to him,
all nations serve him.

12 For he will rescue the poor who cry out
and the afflicted who have no helper.
13 He will have pity on the poor and helpless
and save the lives of the poor.
14 He will redeem them from oppression and violence,
for their lives are [C] precious [D] in his sight.

15 May he live long!

May gold from Sheba be given to him.
May prayer be offered for him continually,
and may he be blessed all day long.
16 May there be plenty of grain in the land;
may it wave on the tops of the mountains.
May its crops be like Lebanon.
May people flourish in the cities
like the grass of the field.
17 May his name endure forever;
as long as the sun shines,
may his fame increase.
May all nations be blessed by him
and call him blessed.

18† May the LORD God, the God of Israel,
who alone does wonders, be praised.
19 May His glorious name be praised forever;
the whole earth is filled with His glory.
•Amen and amen.
20 The prayers of David son of Jesse are concluded.

PSALMS

BOOK III

(Psalms 73–89)

God's Ways Vindicated

73 God is indeed good to Israel,
to the pure in heart.
2 But as for me, my feet almost slipped;
my steps nearly went astray.
3 For I envied the arrogant;
I saw the prosperity of the wicked.

4 They have an easy time until they die, [A]
and their bodies are well fed. [B],
5 They are not in trouble like others;
they are not afflicted like most people.
6 Therefore, pride is their necklace,
and violence covers them like a garment.
7 Their eyes bulge out from fatness;
the imaginations of their hearts run wild.
8 They mock, and they speak maliciously;
they arrogantly threaten oppression.
9 They set their mouths against heaven,
and their tongues strut across the earth.
10 Therefore His people turn to them [C]
and drink in their overflowing words. [D]
11 The wicked say, “How can God know?
Does the •Most High know everything? ”
12 Look at them — the wicked!
They are always at ease,
and they increase their wealth.

13 Did I purify my heart
and wash my hands in innocence for nothing?
14 For I am afflicted all day long
and punished every morning.
15 If I had decided to say these things aloud,
I would have betrayed Your people. [E]
16 When I tried to understand all this,
it seemed hopeless [F]

[17] until I entered God's sanctuary.
Then I understood their destiny.
[18] Indeed, You put them in slippery places;
You make them fall into ruin.
[19] How suddenly they become a desolation!
They come to an end, swept away by terrors.
[20] Like one waking from a dream,
Lord, when arising, You will despise their image.

[21] When I became embittered
and my innermost being [G] was wounded,
[22] I was stupid and didn't understand;
I was an unthinking animal toward You.
[23] Yet I am always with You;
You hold my right hand.
[24†] You guide me with Your counsel,
and afterward You will take me up in glory. [H],
[25] Who do I have in heaven but You?
And I desire nothing on earth but You.
[26] My flesh and my heart may fail,
but God is the strength [I] of my heart,
my portion forever.
[27] Those far from You will certainly perish;
You destroy all who are unfaithful to You.
[28] But as for me, God's presence is my good.
I have made the Lord GOD my refuge,
so I can tell about all You do.

PSALMS

Prayer for Israel

74

Why have You rejected us forever, God?
Why does Your anger burn
against the sheep of Your pasture?
2 Remember Your congregation,
which You purchased long ago
and redeemed as the tribe for Your own possession.
Remember Mount •Zion where You dwell.
3 Make Your way [A] to the everlasting ruins,
to all that the enemy has destroyed in the sanctuary.
4 Your adversaries roared in the meeting place
where You met with us. [B]
They set up their emblems as signs.
5 It was like men in a thicket of trees,
wielding axes,
6 then smashing all the carvings
with hatchets and picks.
7 They set Your sanctuary on fire;
they utterly [C] desecrated
the dwelling place of Your name.
8 They said in their hearts,
“Let us oppress them relentlessly.”
They burned down every place throughout the land
where God met with us. [D],
9 There are no signs for us to see.
There is no longer a prophet.
And none of us knows how long this will last.
10 God, how long will the enemy mock?
Will the foe insult Your name forever?
11 Why do You hold back Your hand?
Stretch out [E] Your right hand and destroy them!

12 God my King is from ancient times,
performing saving acts on the earth.
13† You divided the sea with Your strength;
You smashed the heads of the sea monsters

in the waters;
14 You crushed the heads of •Leviathan;
You fed him to the creatures of the desert.
15 You opened up springs and streams;
You dried up ever-flowing rivers.
16 The day is Yours, also the night;
You established the moon and the sun.
17 You set all the boundaries of the earth;
You made summer and winter.

18 Remember this: the enemy has mocked •Yahweh,
and a foolish people has insulted Your name.
19 Do not give the life of Your dove to beasts;
do not forget the lives of Your poor people forever.
20 Consider the covenant,
for the dark places of the land are full of violence.
21 Do not let the oppressed turn away in shame;
let the poor and needy praise Your name.
22 Rise up, God, defend Your cause!
Remember the insults
that fools bring against You all day long.
23 Do not forget the clamor of Your adversaries,
the tumult of Your opponents that goes up constantly.

PSALMS

God Judges the Wicked

75 We give thanks to You, God;
we give thanks to You, for Your name is near.
People tell about Your wonderful works.

2 “When I choose a time,
I will judge fairly.
3 When the earth and all its inhabitants shake,
I am the One who steadies its pillars.

•*Selah*

4 I say to the boastful, ‘Do not boast,’
and to the wicked, ‘Do not lift up your •horn.
5† Do not lift up your horn against heaven
or speak arrogantly.’ ”

6 Exaltation does not come
from the east, the west, or the desert,
7 for God is the Judge:
He brings down one and exalts another.
8 For there is a cup in the LORD’s hand,
full of wine blended with spices, and He pours from it.
All the wicked of the earth will drink,
draining it to the dregs.

9 As for me, I will tell about Him forever;
I will sing praise to the God of Jacob.

10 “I will cut off all the horns of the wicked,
but the horns of the righteous will be lifted up.”

PSALMS

God, the Powerful Judge

76 God is known in Judah;
His name is great in Israel.
2† His tent is in Salem,
His dwelling place in •Zion.
3† There He shatters the bow’s flaming arrows,
the shield, the sword, and the weapons of war.

•*Selah*

4 You are resplendent and majestic
coming down from the mountains of prey.
5 The brave-hearted have been plundered;
they have slipped into their final sleep.
None of the warriors was able to lift a hand.
6 At Your rebuke, God of Jacob,
both chariot and horse lay still.

7 And You — You are to be •feared. [A]
When You are angry,
who can stand before You?
8 From heaven You pronounced judgment.
The earth feared and grew quiet
9 when God rose up to judge
and to save all the lowly of the earth.

Selah

10 Even human wrath will praise You;
You will clothe Yourself
with their remaining wrath. [B]

11 Make and keep your vows
to the LORD your God;
let all who are around Him bring tribute
to the awe-inspiring One. [C]
12 He humbles the spirit of leaders;
He is feared by the kings of the earth.

PSALMS

Confidence in a Time of Crisis

77 I cry aloud to God,
aloud to God, and He will hear me.
2 I sought the Lord in my day of trouble.
My hands were continually lifted up
all night long;
I refused to be comforted.
3 I think of God; I groan;
I meditate; my spirit becomes weak.

•*Selah*

4 You have kept me from closing my eyes;
I am troubled and cannot speak.
5 I consider days of old,
years long past.
6 At night I remember my music;
I meditate in my heart, and my spirit ponders.

7 "Will the Lord reject forever
and never again show favor?
8 Has His faithful love ceased forever?
Is His promise at an end for all generations?
9 Has God forgotten to be gracious?
Has He in anger withheld His compassion? "

Selah

10 So I say, "I am grieved [A]
that the right hand of the •Most High has changed."
11 I will remember the LORD's works;
yes, I will remember Your ancient wonders.
12 I will reflect on all You have done
and meditate on Your actions.

13 God, Your way is holy.
What god is great like God?
14 You are the God who works wonders;
You revealed Your strength among the peoples.

15 With power You redeemed Your people,
the descendants of Jacob and Joseph.

Selah

16 The waters saw You, God.
The waters saw You; they trembled.
Even the depths shook.
17 The clouds poured down water.
The storm clouds thundered;
Your arrows flashed back and forth.
18 The sound of Your thunder was in the whirlwind;
lightning lit up the world.
The earth shook and quaked.
19 Your way went through the sea
and Your path through the great waters,
but Your footprints were unseen.
20 You led Your people like a flock
by the hand of Moses and Aaron.

PSALMS

Lessons from Israel's Past

78 My people, hear my instruction;
listen to what I say.
2 I will declare wise sayings;
I will speak mysteries from the past —
3 things we have heard and known
and that our fathers have passed down to us.
4 We must not hide them from their children,
but must tell a future generation
the praises of the LORD,
His might, and the wonderful works
He has performed.
5 He established a •testimony in Jacob
and set up a law in Israel,
which He commanded our fathers
to teach to their children
6 so that a future generation —
children yet to be born — might know.
They were to rise and tell their children
7 so that they might put their confidence in God
and not forget God's works,
but keep His commands.
8 Then they would not be like their fathers,
a stubborn and rebellious generation,
a generation whose heart was not loyal
and whose spirit was not faithful to God.

9 The Ephraimite archers turned back
on the day of battle.
10 They did not keep God's covenant
and refused to live by His law.
11 They forgot what He had done,
the wonderful works He had shown them.
12 He worked wonders in the sight of their fathers
in the land of Egypt, the region of Zoan.
13 He split the sea and brought them across;
the water stood firm like a wall.

14 He led them with a cloud by day
and with a fiery light throughout the night.
15 He split rocks in the wilderness
and gave them drink as abundant as the depths.
16 He brought streams out of the stone
and made water flow down like rivers.

17 But they continued to sin against Him,
rebelling in the desert against the •Most High.
18 They deliberately [A] tested God,
demanding the food they craved.
19 They spoke against God, saying,
“Is God able to provide food in the wilderness?
20 Look! He struck the rock and water gushed out;
torrents overflowed.
But can He also provide bread
or furnish meat for His people? ”
21 Therefore, the LORD heard and became furious;
then fire broke out against Jacob,
and anger flared up against Israel
22 because they did not believe God
or rely on His salvation.
23 He gave a command to the clouds above
and opened the doors of heaven.
24 He rained manna for them to eat;
He gave them grain from heaven.
25 People [B] ate the bread of angels. [C]
He sent them an abundant supply of food.
26 He made the east wind blow in the skies
and drove the south wind by His might.
27 He rained meat on them like dust,
and winged birds like the sand of the seas.
28 He made them fall in His camp,
all around His tent. ,
29 They ate and were completely satisfied,

for He gave them what they craved.
30 Before they had satisfied their desire,
while the food was still in their mouths,
31 God's anger flared up against them,
and He killed some of their best men.
He struck down Israel's choice young men.

32 Despite all this, they kept sinning
and did not believe His wonderful works.
33 He made their days end in futility,
their years in sudden disaster.
34 When He killed some of them,
the rest began to seek Him;
they repented and searched for God.
35 They remembered that God was their rock,
the Most High God, their Redeemer.
36 But they deceived Him with their mouths,
they lied to Him with their tongues,
37 their hearts were insincere toward Him,
and they were unfaithful to His covenant.
38 Yet He was compassionate;
He •atoned for [E] their •guilt
and did not destroy them.
He often turned His anger aside
and did not unleash [F] all His wrath.
39 He remembered that they were only flesh,
a wind that passes and does not return.

40 How often they rebelled against Him
in the wilderness
and grieved Him in the desert.
41 They constantly tested God
and provoked the Holy One of Israel.
42 They did not remember His power shown
on the day He redeemed them from the foe,
43 when He performed His miraculous signs in Egypt

and His wonders in the region of Zoan.
44 He turned their rivers into blood,
and they could not drink from their streams.
45 He sent among them swarms of flies,
which fed on them,
and frogs, which devastated them.
46 He gave their crops to the caterpillar
and the fruit of their labor to the locust.
47 He killed their vines with hail
and their sycamore fig trees with a flood.
48 He handed over their livestock to hail
and their cattle to lightning bolts.
49 He sent His burning anger against them:
fury, indignation, and calamity —
a band of deadly messengers. [G]
50 He cleared a path for His anger.
He did not spare them from death
but delivered their lives to the plague.
51 He struck all the firstborn in Egypt,
the first progeny of the tents of Ham.
52 He led His people out like sheep
and guided them like a flock in the wilderness.
53 He led them safely, and they were not afraid;
but the sea covered their enemies.
54 He brought them to His holy land,
to the mountain His right hand acquired.
55 He drove out nations before them.
He apportioned their inheritance by lot
and settled the tribes of Israel in their tents.

56 But they rebelliously tested the Most High God,
for they did not keep His decrees.
57 They treacherously turned away like their fathers;
they became warped like a faulty bow.
58 They enraged Him with their •high places

and provoked His jealousy with their carved images.
59 God heard and became furious;
He completely rejected Israel.
60 He abandoned the tabernacle at Shiloh,
the tent where He resided among men. [H],
61 He gave up His strength to captivity
and His splendor to the hand of a foe.
62 He surrendered His people to the sword
because He was enraged with His heritage.
63 Fire consumed His chosen young men,
and His young women had no wedding songs. [I]
64 His priests fell by the sword,
but the [J] widows could not lament.

65 Then the Lord awoke as if from sleep,
like a warrior from the effects of wine.
66 He beat back His foes;
He gave them lasting shame.
67† He rejected the tent of Joseph
and did not choose the tribe of Ephraim.
68 He chose instead the tribe of Judah,
Mount •Zion, which He loved.
69 He built His sanctuary like the heights,
like the earth that He established forever.
70 He chose David His servant
and took him from the sheepfolds;
71 He brought him from tending ewes
to be shepherd over His people Jacob —
over Israel, His inheritance.
72 He shepherded them with a pure heart
and guided them with his skillful hands.

PSALMS

Faith amid Confusion

79 God, the nations have invaded Your inheritance,
desecrated Your holy temple,
and turned Jerusalem into ruins.
2 They gave the corpses of Your servants
to the birds of the sky for food,
the flesh of Your godly ones
to the beasts of the earth.
3 They poured out their blood
like water all around Jerusalem,
and there was no one to bury them.
4 We have become an object of reproach
to our neighbors,
a source of mockery and ridicule
to those around us.

5 How long, •Yahweh? Will You be angry forever?
Will Your jealousy keep burning like fire?
6 Pour out Your wrath on the nations
that don't acknowledge You,
on the kingdoms that don't call on Your name,
7 for they have devoured Jacob
and devastated his homeland.
8 Do not hold past sins [A] against us;
let Your compassion come to us quickly,
for we have become weak.

9 God of our salvation, help us —
for the glory of Your name.
Deliver us and •atone for [B] our sins,
because of Your name.
10 Why should the nations ask,
"Where is their God? "
Before our eyes,
let vengeance for the shed blood of Your servants
be known among the nations.
11 Let the groans of the prisoners reach You;
according to Your great power,

preserve those condemned to die.

12 Pay back sevenfold to our neighbors
the reproach they have hurled at You, Lord.
13 Then we, Your people, the sheep of Your pasture,
will thank You forever;
we will declare Your praise
to generation after generation.

PSALMS

A Prayer for Restoration

80 [†] Listen, Shepherd of Israel,
who leads Joseph like a flock;
You who sit enthroned on the •cherubim,
rise up
2 before Ephraim,
Benjamin, and Manasseh.
Rally Your power and come to save us.
3[†] Restore us, God;
look on us with favor,
and we will be saved.

4 LORD God of •Hosts,
how long will You be angry
with Your people's prayers?
5 You fed them the bread of tears
and gave them a full measure [A]
of tears to drink.
6 You make us quarrel with our neighbors;
our enemies make fun of us.
7 Restore us, God of Hosts;
look on us with favor, and we will be saved.

8 You uprooted a vine from Egypt;
You drove out the nations and planted it.
9 You cleared a place for it;
it took root and filled the land.
10 The mountains were covered by its shade,
and the mighty cedars [B] with its branches.
11 It sent out sprouts toward the Sea
and shoots toward the River.

12 Why have You broken down its walls
so that all who pass by pick its fruit?
13 The boar from the forest tears it
and creatures of the field feed on it.
14 Return, God of Hosts.

Look down from heaven and see;
take care of this vine,
15 the root [C] Your right hand has planted,
the shoot [D] that You made strong for Yourself.
16 It was cut down and burned up; [E]
they [F] perish at the rebuke of Your countenance.
17 Let Your hand be with the man at Your right hand,
with the son of man
You have made strong for Yourself.
18 Then we will not turn away from You;
revive us, and we will call on Your name.
19 Restore us, •Yahweh, the God of Hosts;
look on us with favor, and we will be saved.

PSALMS

A Call to Obedience

81 † Sing for joy to God our strength;
shout in triumph to the God of Jacob.
2 Lift up a song — play the tambourine,
the melodious lyre, and the harp.
3 Blow the horn on the day of our feasts [A]
during the new moon
and during the full moon.
4 For this is a statute for Israel,
a judgment of the God of Jacob.
5 He set it up as an ordinance for Joseph
when He went throughout the land of Egypt.

I heard an unfamiliar language:
6 "I relieved his shoulder from the burden;
his hands were freed from carrying the basket.
7† You called out in distress, and I rescued you;
I answered you from the thundercloud.
I tested you at the waters of Meribah.

•*Selah*

8† Listen, My people, and I will admonish you.
Israel, if you would only listen to Me!
9 There must not be a strange god among you;
you must not bow down to a foreign god.
10 I am •Yahweh your God,
who brought you up from the land of Egypt.
Open your mouth wide, and I will fill it.

11 "But My people did not listen to Me;
Israel did not obey Me.
12 So I gave them over to their stubborn hearts
to follow their own plans.
13 If only My people would listen to Me
and Israel would follow My ways,
14 I would quickly subdue their enemies
and turn My hand against their foes."

15 Those who hate the LORD
would pretend submission to Him;
their doom would last forever.
16 But He would feed Israel [B] with the best wheat.
“I would satisfy you with honey from the rock.”

PSALMS

A Plea for Righteous Judgment

82 [†] God has taken His place in the divine assembly;
He judges among the gods: [A]
2 “How long will you judge unjustly
and show partiality to the wicked?

•*Selah*

3 Provide justice for the needy and the fatherless;
uphold the rights of the oppressed and the destitute.
4 Rescue the poor and needy;
save them from the power of the wicked.”

5 They do not know or understand;
they wander in darkness.
All the foundations of the earth are shaken.

6 I said, “You are gods;
you are all sons of the •Most High.
7 However, you will die like men
and fall like any other ruler.”

8 Rise up, God, judge the earth,
for all the nations belong to You.

PSALMS

Prayer against Enemies

83 God, do not keep silent.
Do not be deaf, God; do not be idle.
2 See how Your enemies make an uproar;
those who hate You have acted arrogantly. [A],
3 They devise clever schemes against Your people;
they conspire against Your treasured ones.
4 They say, “Come, let us wipe them out as a nation
so that Israel’s name will no longer be remembered.”
5 For they have conspired with one mind;
they form an alliance [B] against You —
6 the tents of Edom and the Ishmaelites,
Moab and the Hagrites,
7 Gebal, Ammon, and Amalek,
Philistia with the inhabitants of Tyre.
8 Even Assyria has joined them;
they lend support [C] to the sons of Lot.

•*Selah*

9 Deal with them as You did with Midian,
as You did with Sisera
and Jabin at the Kishon River.
10 They were destroyed at En-dor;
they became manure for the ground.
11 Make their nobles like Oreb and Zeeb,
and all their tribal leaders like Zebah and Zalmunna,
12 who said, “Let us seize God’s pastures for ourselves.”

13 Make them like tumbleweed, my God,
like straw before the wind.
14 As fire burns a forest,
as a flame blazes through mountains,
15 so pursue them with Your tempest
and terrify them with Your storm.
16 Cover their faces with shame
so that they will seek Your name •Yahweh.

17 Let them be put to shame and terrified forever;
let them perish in disgrace.
18 May they know that You alone —
whose name is Yahweh —
are the •Most High over all the earth.

PSALMS

Longing for God’s House

84 How lovely is Your dwelling place,
LORD of •Hosts.
2 I long and yearn
for the courts of the LORD;
my heart and flesh cry out for [A] the living God.

3 Even a sparrow finds a home,
and a swallow, a nest for herself
where she places her young —
near Your altars, LORD of Hosts,
my King and my God.
4 How happy are those who reside in Your house,
who praise You continually.

•*Selah*

5 Happy are the people whose strength is in You,
whose hearts are set on pilgrimage.
6† As they pass through the Valley of Baca, [B]
they make it a source of springwater;
even the autumn rain will cover it with blessings. [C],
7 They go from strength to strength;
each appears before God in •Zion.

8 LORD God of Hosts, hear my prayer;
listen, God of Jacob.

Selah

9 Consider our shield, God;
look on the face of Your anointed one.

10 Better a day in Your courts
than a thousand anywhere else.
I would rather be at the door of the house of my God
than to live in the tents of wicked people.
11 For the LORD God is a sun and shield.
The LORD gives grace and glory;
He does not withhold the good

from those who live with integrity.
12 Happy is the person who trusts in You,
LORD of Hosts!

PSALMS

Restoration of Favor

85 LORD, You showed favor to Your land;
You restored Jacob's prosperity. [A],
2 You took away Your people's •guilt;
You covered all their sin.

•*Selah*

3 You withdrew all Your fury;
You turned from Your burning anger.

4 Return to us, God of our salvation,
and abandon Your displeasure with us.
5 Will You be angry with us forever?
Will You prolong Your anger for all generations?
6 Will You not revive us again
so that Your people may rejoice in You?
7 Show us Your faithful love, LORD,
and give us Your salvation.

8 I will listen to what God will say;
surely the LORD will declare peace
to His people, His godly ones,
and not let them go back to foolish ways.
9 His salvation is very near those who •fear Him,
so that glory may dwell in our land.

10 Faithful love and truth will join together;
righteousness and peace will embrace.
11 Truth will spring up from the earth,
and righteousness will look down from heaven.
12 Also, the LORD will provide what is good,
and our land will yield its crops.
13 Righteousness will go before Him
to prepare the way for His steps.

PSALMS

Lament and Petition

86 Listen, LORD, and answer me,
for I am poor and needy.
2 Protect my life, for I am faithful.
You are my God; save Your servant who trusts in You.
3 Be gracious to me, Lord,
for I call to You all day long.
4 Bring joy to Your servant's life,
because I turn to You, Lord.

5 For You, Lord, are kind and ready to forgive,
rich in faithful love to all who call on You.
6 LORD, hear my prayer;
listen to my plea for mercy.
7 I call on You in the day of my distress,
for You will answer me.

8† Lord, there is no one like You among the gods,
and there are no works like Yours.
9 All the nations You have made
will come and bow down before You, Lord,
and will honor Your name.
10 For You are great and perform wonders;
You alone are God.

11 Teach me Your way, •Yahweh,
and I will live by Your truth.
Give me an undivided mind to •fear Your name.
12 I will praise You with all my heart, Lord my God,
and will honor Your name forever.
13 For Your faithful love for me is great,
and You deliver my life from the depths of •Sheol.

14 God, arrogant people have attacked me;
a gang of ruthless men seeks my life.
They have no regard for You.
15 But You, Lord, are a compassionate and gracious God,
slow to anger and rich in faithful love and truth.

16† Turn to me and be gracious to me.
Give Your strength to Your servant;
save the son of Your female servant.
17 Show me a sign of Your goodness;
my enemies will see and be put to shame
because You, LORD, have helped and comforted me.

PSALMS

Zion, the City of God

87 His foundation is on the holy mountains.
[2] The LORD loves the gates of •Zion
more than all the dwellings of Jacob.
[3] Glorious things are said about you,
city of God.

•*Selah*

[4†] "I will mention those who know Me:
•Rahab, Babylon, Philistia, Tyre, and •Cush —
each one was born there."
[5] And it will be said of Zion,
"This one and that one were born in her."
The •Most High Himself will establish her.
[6] When He registers the peoples,
the LORD will record,
"This one was born there."

Selah

[7] Singers and dancers alike will say,
"My whole source of joy is [A] in you."

PSALMS

A Cry of Desperation

88 LORD, God of my salvation,
I cry out before You day and night.
2 May my prayer reach Your presence;
listen to my cry.

3 For I have had enough troubles,
and my life is near •Sheol.
4 I am counted among those going down to the •Pit.
I am like a man without strength,
5 abandoned [A] among the dead.
I am like the slain lying in the grave,
whom You no longer remember,
and who are cut off from Your care. [B]

6 You have put me in the lowest part of the Pit,
in the darkest places, in the depths.
7 Your wrath weighs heavily on me;
You have overwhelmed me with all Your waves.

•*Selah*

8 You have distanced my friends from me;
You have made me repulsive to them.
I am shut in and cannot go out.
9 My eyes are worn out from crying.
LORD, I cry out to You all day long;
I spread out my hands to You.

10† Do You work wonders for the dead?
Do departed spirits rise up to praise You?

Selah

11 Will Your faithful love be declared in the grave,
Your faithfulness in •Abaddon?
12 Will Your wonders be known in the darkness
or Your righteousness in the land of oblivion?

13 But I call to You for help, LORD;
in the morning my prayer meets You.

14 LORD, why do You reject me?
Why do You hide Your face from me?
15† From my youth,
I have been afflicted and near death.
I suffer Your horrors; I am desperate.
16 Your wrath sweeps over me;
Your terrors destroy me.
17 They surround me like water all day long;
they close in on me from every side.
18 You have distanced loved one and neighbor from me;
darkness is my only friend. C

PSALMS

Perplexity about God’s Promises

89 I will sing about the LORD's faithful love forever;
I will proclaim Your faithfulness to all generations
with my mouth.
2 For I will declare,
"Faithful love is built up forever;
You establish Your faithfulness in the heavens."

3 The LORD said,
"I have made a covenant with My chosen one;
I have sworn an oath to David My servant:
4 'I will establish your offspring forever
and build up your throne for all generations.' "

•*Selah*

5 LORD, the heavens praise Your wonders —
Your faithfulness also —
in the assembly of the holy ones.
6 For who in the skies can compare with the LORD?
Who among the heavenly beings [A] is like the LORD?
7 God is greatly •feared in the council of the holy ones,
more awe-inspiring than [B] all who surround Him.
8 LORD God of •Hosts,
who is strong like You, LORD?
Your faithfulness surrounds You.
9 You rule the raging sea;
when its waves surge, You still them.
10† You crushed •Rahab like one who is slain;
You scattered Your enemies with Your powerful arm.
11 The heavens are Yours; the earth also is Yours.
The world and everything in it — You founded them.
12 North and south — You created them.
Tabor and Hermon shout for joy at Your name.
13 You have a mighty arm;
Your hand is powerful;
Your right hand is lifted high.

14 Righteousness and justice are the foundation
of Your throne;
faithful love and truth go before You.
15 Happy are the people who know the joyful shout;
•Yahweh, they walk in the light of Your presence.
16 They rejoice in Your name all day long,
and they are exalted by Your righteousness.
17 For You are their magnificent strength;
by Your favor our •horn is exalted.
18 Surely our shield belongs to the LORD,
our king to the Holy One of Israel.

19 You once spoke in a vision to Your loyal ones
and said: "I have granted help to a warrior;
I have exalted one chosen [C] from the people.
20 I have found David My servant;
I have anointed him with My sacred oil.
21 My hand will always be with him,
and My arm will strengthen him.
22 The enemy will not afflict [D] him;
no wicked man will oppress him.
23 I will crush his foes before him
and strike those who hate him.
24 My faithfulness and love will be with him,
and through My name
his horn will be exalted.
25 I will extend his power to the sea
and his right hand to the rivers.
26† He will call to Me, 'You are my Father,
my God, the rock of my salvation.'
27 I will also make him My firstborn,
greatest of the kings of the earth.
28 I will always preserve My faithful love for him,
and My covenant with him will endure.
29 I will establish his line forever,

his throne as long as heaven lasts. [E]
30 If his sons forsake My instruction
and do not live by My ordinances,
31 if they dishonor My statutes
and do not keep My commands,
32 then I will call their rebellion
to account with the rod,
their sin with blows.
33 But I will not withdraw
My faithful love from him
or betray My faithfulness.
34 I will not violate My covenant
or change what My lips have said.
35 Once and for all
I have sworn an oath by My holiness;
I will not lie to David.
36 His offspring will continue forever,
his throne like the sun before Me,
37 like the moon, established forever,
a faithful witness in the sky."

Selah

38 But You have spurned and rejected him;
You have become enraged with Your anointed.
39 You have repudiated the covenant with Your servant;
You have completely dishonored his crown. [F],
40 You have broken down all his walls;
You have reduced his fortified cities to ruins.
41 All who pass by plunder him;
he has become an object of ridicule
to his neighbors.
42 You have lifted high the right hand of his foes;
You have made all his enemies rejoice.
43 You have also turned back his sharp sword
and have not let him stand in battle.

44 You have made his splendor [G] cease
and have overturned his throne.
45 You have shortened the days of his youth;
You have covered him with shame.

Selah

46 How long, LORD? Will You hide Yourself forever?
Will Your anger keep burning like fire?
47 Remember how short my life is.
Have You created •everyone for nothing?
48 What man can live and never see death?
Who can save himself from the power of •Sheol?

Selah

49 Lord, where are the former acts of Your faithful love
that You swore to David in Your faithfulness?
50 Remember, Lord, the ridicule against Your servants —
in my heart I carry abuse from all the peoples —
51 how Your enemies have ridiculed, LORD,
how they have ridiculed every step of Your anointed.

52[†] May the LORD be praised forever.
•Amen and amen.

PSALMS

BOOK IV

(Psalms 90–106)

Eternal God and Mortal Man

90 Lord, You have been our refuge
in every generation.
2 Before the mountains were born,
before You gave birth to the earth and the world,
from eternity to eternity, You are God.

3 You return mankind to the dust,
saying, “Return, descendants of Adam.”
4 For in Your sight a thousand years
are like yesterday that passes by,
like a few hours of the night.
5 You end their lives; [A] they sleep.
They are like grass that grows in the morning —
6 in the morning it sprouts and grows;
by evening it withers and dries up.

7 For we are consumed by Your anger;
we are terrified by Your wrath.
8 You have set our unjust ways before You,
our secret sins in the light of Your presence.
9 For all our days ebb away under Your wrath;
we end our years like a sigh.
10 Our lives last [B] seventy years
or, if we are strong, eighty years.
Even the best of them are struggle and sorrow;
indeed, they pass quickly and we fly away.
11 Who understands the power of Your anger?
Your wrath matches the fear that is due You.
12† Teach us to number our days carefully
so that we may develop wisdom in our hearts. [C]

13 LORD — how long?
Turn and have compassion on Your servants.
14 Satisfy us in the morning with Your faithful love
so that we may shout with joy and be glad all our days.
15 Make us rejoice for as many days as You have humbled us,

for as many years as we have seen adversity.
16 Let Your work be seen by Your servants,
and Your splendor by their children.
17 Let the favor of the Lord our God be on us;
establish for us the work of our hands —
establish the work of our hands!

PSALMS

The Protection of the Most High

91 † The one who lives under the protection of the •Most High
dwells in the shadow of the •Almighty.

2 I will say to the LORD, "My refuge and my fortress,
my God, in whom I trust."

3 He Himself will deliver you from the hunter's net,
from the destructive plague.
4† He will cover you with His feathers;
you will take refuge under His wings.
His faithfulness will be a protective shield.
5 You will not fear the terror of the night,
the arrow that flies by day,
6 the plague that stalks in darkness,
or the pestilence that ravages at noon.
7 Though a thousand fall at your side
and ten thousand at your right hand,
the pestilence will not reach you.
8 You will only see it with your eyes
and witness the punishment of the wicked.

9 Because you have made the LORD — my refuge,
the Most High — your dwelling place,
10 no harm will come to you;
no plague will come near your tent.
11† For He will give His angels orders concerning you,
to protect you in all your ways.
12 They will support you with their hands
so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.
13 You will tread on the lion and the cobra;
you will trample the young lion and the serpent.

14 Because he is lovingly devoted to Me,
I will deliver him;
I will protect him because he knows My name.
15 When he calls out to Me, I will answer him;
I will be with him in trouble.

I will rescue him and give him honor.
16† I will satisfy him with a long life
and show him My salvation.

PSALMS

God's Love and Faithfulness

92 It is good to praise •Yahweh,
to sing praise to Your name, •Most High,
2 to declare Your faithful love in the morning
and Your faithfulness at night,
3 with a ten-stringed harp
and the music of a lyre.

4 For You have made me rejoice, LORD,
by what You have done;
I will shout for joy
because of the works of Your hands.
5 How magnificent are Your works, LORD,
how profound Your thoughts!
6 A stupid person does not know,
a fool does not understand this:
7 though the wicked sprout like grass
and all evildoers flourish,
they will be eternally destroyed.
8 But You, LORD, are exalted forever.
9 For indeed, LORD, Your enemies —
indeed, Your enemies will perish;
all evildoers will be scattered.
10 You have lifted up my •horn
like that of a wild ox;
I have been anointed with oil.
11 My eyes look down on my enemies;
my ears hear evildoers when they attack me.

12 The righteous thrive like a palm tree
and grow like a cedar tree in Lebanon.
13 Planted in the house of the LORD,
they thrive in the courts of our God.
14 They will still bear fruit in old age,
healthy and green,
15 to declare: "The LORD is just;
He is my rock,

and there is no unrighteousness in Him."

PSALMS

God’s Eternal Reign

93 The LORD reigns! He is robed in majesty;
The LORD is robed, enveloped in strength.
The world is firmly established;
it cannot be shaken.
2 Your throne has been established
from the beginning; [A]
You are from eternity.
3† The floods have lifted up, LORD,
the floods have lifted up their voice;
the floods lift up their pounding waves.
4 Greater than the roar of many waters —
the mighty breakers of the sea —
the LORD on high is majestic.

ARTICLE

If God Made the Universe, Who Made God? ⇒

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5 LORD, Your testimonies are completely reliable;
holiness is the beauty of [B] Your house
for all the days to come.

PSALMS

The Just Judge

94 LORD, God of vengeance —
God of vengeance, appear.
2† Rise up, Judge of the earth;
repay the proud what they deserve.
3 LORD, how long will the wicked —
how long will the wicked gloat?

4 They pour out arrogant words;
all the evildoers boast.
5 LORD, they crush Your people;
they afflict Your heritage.
6 They kill the widow and the foreigner
and murder the fatherless.
7 They say, "The LORD doesn't see it.
The God of Jacob doesn't pay attention."

8 Pay attention, you stupid people!
Fools, when will you be wise?
9 Can the One who shaped the ear not hear,
the One who formed the eye not see?
10 The One who instructs nations,
the One who teaches man knowledge —
does He not discipline?
11 The LORD knows man's thoughts;
they are meaningless.

12† LORD, happy is the man You discipline
and teach from Your law
13 to give him relief from troubled times
until a pit is dug for the wicked.
14† The LORD will not forsake His people
or abandon His heritage,
15 for justice will again be righteous,
and all the upright in heart will follow [A] it.

16 Who stands up for me against the wicked?
Who takes a stand for me against evildoers?

17 If the LORD had not been my helper,
I would soon rest in the silence of death.
18 If I say, "My foot is slipping,"
Your faithful love will support me, LORD.
19 When I am filled with cares,
Your comfort brings me joy.

20 Can a corrupt throne —
one that creates trouble by law —
become Your ally?
21 They band together against the life of the righteous
and condemn the innocent to death.
22 But the LORD is my refuge;
my God is the rock of my protection.
23 He will pay them back for their sins
and destroy them for their evil.
The LORD our God will destroy them.

PSALMS

Worship and Warning

95 Come, let us shout joyfully to the Lord,
shout triumphantly to the rock of our salvation!
2 Let us enter His presence with thanksgiving;
let us shout triumphantly to Him in song.

3† For the Lord is a great God,
a great King above all gods.
4 The depths of the earth are in His hand,
and the mountain peaks are His.
5 The sea is His; He made it.
His hands formed the dry land.

6 Come, let us worship and bow down;
let us kneel before the Lord our Maker.
7 For He is our God,
and we are the people of His pasture,
the sheep under His care. [A]

Today, if you hear His voice:
8† Do not harden your hearts as at Meribah,
as on that day at Massah in the wilderness
9 where your fathers tested Me;
they tried Me, though they had seen what I did.
10 For 40 years I was disgusted with that generation;
I said, “They are a people whose hearts go astray;
they do not know My ways.”
11† So I swore in My anger,
“They will not enter My rest.”

PSALMS

Psalm 96 *King of the Earth*

1 Sing a new song to the LORD;
sing to the LORD, all the earth.
2 Sing to •Yahweh, praise His name;
proclaim His salvation from day to day.
3 Declare His glory among the nations,
His wonderful works among all peoples.

4† For the LORD is great and is highly praised;
He is feared above all gods.
5 For all the gods of the peoples are idols,
but the LORD made the heavens.
6 Splendor and majesty are before Him;
strength and beauty are in His sanctuary.

7 Ascribe to the LORD, you families of the peoples,
ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.
8 Ascribe to Yahweh the glory of His name;
bring an offering and enter His courts.
9 Worship the LORD in the splendor of His holiness;
tremble before Him, all the earth.

10 Say among the nations: "The LORD reigns.
The world is firmly established; it cannot be shaken.
He judges the peoples fairly."
11 Let the heavens be glad and the earth rejoice;
let the sea and all that fills it resound.
12 Let the fields and everything in them exult.
Then all the trees of the forest will shout for joy
13 before the LORD, for He is coming —
for He is coming to judge the earth.
He will judge the world with righteousness
and the peoples with His faithfulness.

PSALMS

The Majestic King

97

[†] The LORD reigns! Let the earth rejoice;
let the many coasts and islands be glad.

2 Clouds and thick darkness surround Him;
righteousness and justice are the foundation of His throne.
3 Fire goes before Him
and burns up His foes on every side.
4 His lightning lights up the world;
the earth sees and trembles.
5 The mountains melt like wax
at the presence of the LORD —
at the presence of the Lord of all the earth.

6 The heavens proclaim His righteousness;
all the peoples see His glory.

7 All who serve carved images,
those who boast in idols, will be put to shame.
All the gods must worship Him.

8 •Zion hears and is glad,
and the towns [A] of Judah rejoice
because of Your judgments, LORD.
9 For You, LORD,
are the •Most High over all the earth;
You are exalted above all the gods.

10 You who love the LORD, hate evil!
He protects the lives of His godly ones;
He rescues them from the power of the wicked.
11 Light dawns for the righteous,
gladness for the upright in heart.
12 Be glad in •Yahweh, you righteous ones,
and praise His holy name. [C]

PSALMS

Praise the King

98 Sing a new song to the LORD,
for He has performed wonders;
His right hand and holy arm
have won Him victory.
2 The LORD has made His victory known;
He has revealed His righteousness
in the sight of the nations.
3 He has remembered His love
and faithfulness to the house of Israel;
all the ends of the earth
have seen our God’s victory.

4 Shout to the LORD, all the earth;
be jubilant, shout for joy, and sing.
5 Sing to the LORD with the lyre,
with the lyre and melodious song.
6 With trumpets and the blast of the ram’s horn
shout triumphantly
in the presence of the LORD, our King.

7 Let the sea and all that fills it,
the world and those who live in it, resound.
8† Let the rivers clap their hands;
let the mountains shout together for joy
9 before the LORD,
for He is coming to judge the earth.
He will judge the world righteously
and the peoples fairly.

PSALMS

The King Is Holy

99 The LORD reigns! Let the peoples tremble.
He is enthroned above the •cherubim.
Let the earth quake.
2 •Yahweh is great in •Zion;
He is exalted above all the peoples.
3 Let them praise Your great
and awe-inspiring name.
He is holy.

4 The mighty King loves justice.
You have established fairness;
You have administered justice
and righteousness in Jacob.
5 Exalt the LORD our God;
bow in worship at His footstool.
He is holy.

6 Moses and Aaron were among His priests;
Samuel also was among those calling on His name.
They called to Yahweh and He answered them.
7 He spoke to them in a pillar of cloud;
they kept His decrees and the statutes He gave them.
8 LORD our God, You answered them.
You were a forgiving God to them,
an avenger of their sinful actions.

9 Exalt the LORD our God;
bow in worship at His holy mountain,
for the LORD our God is holy.

PSALMS

Be Thankful

100 Shout triumphantly to the LORD, all the earth.
2 Serve the LORD with gladness;
come before Him with joyful songs.
3† Acknowledge that •Yahweh is God.
He made us, and we are His —
His people, the sheep of His pasture.
4 Enter His gates with thanksgiving
and His courts with praise.
Give thanks to Him and praise His name.
5 For Yahweh is good, and His love is eternal;
His faithfulness endures through all generations.

PSALMS

A Vow of Integrity

101 I will sing of faithful love and justice;
I will sing praise to You, LORD.
2 I will pay attention to the way of integrity.
When will You come to me?
I will live with a heart of integrity in my house.
3 I will not set anything worthless before my eyes.
I hate the practice of transgression;
it will not cling to me.
4 A devious heart will be far from me;
I will not be involved with [A] evil.

5 I will destroy anyone
who secretly slanders his neighbor;
I cannot tolerate anyone
with haughty eyes or an arrogant heart.
6 My eyes favor the faithful of the land
so that they may sit down with me.
The one who follows the way of integrity
may serve me.
7 No one who acts deceitfully
will live in my palace;
no one who tells lies
will remain in my presence. [B]
8 Every morning I will destroy
all the wicked of the land,
eliminating all evildoers from the LORD's city.

PSALMS

Affliction in Light of Eternity

102 LORD, hear my prayer;
let my cry for help come before You.
2 Do not hide Your face from me in my day of trouble.
Listen closely to me;
answer me quickly when I call.

3 For my days vanish like smoke,
and my bones burn like a furnace.
4 My heart is afflicted, withered like grass;
I even forget to eat my food.
5 Because of the sound of my groaning,
my flesh sticks to my bones.
6 I am like a desert owl, [A]
like an owl among the ruins.
7 I stay awake;
I am like a solitary bird on a roof.
8 My enemies taunt me all day long;
they ridicule and curse me.
9 I eat ashes like bread
and mingle my drinks with tears
10† because of Your indignation and wrath;
for You have picked me up and thrown me aside.
11 My days are like a lengthening shadow,
and I wither away like grass.

12 But You, LORD, are enthroned forever;
Your fame endures to all generations.
13 You will rise up and have compassion on •Zion,
for it is time to show favor to her —
the appointed time has come.
14 For Your servants take delight in its stones
and favor its dust.

15 Then the nations will fear the name of •Yahweh,
and all the kings of the earth Your glory,
16 for the LORD will rebuild Zion;

He will appear in His glory.
17 He will pay attention to the prayer of the destitute
and will not despise their prayer.

18 This will be written for a later generation,
and a newly created people will praise the LORD:
19 He looked down from His holy heights —
the LORD gazed out from heaven to earth —
20 to hear a prisoner's groaning,
to set free those condemned to die, [B]
21 so that they might declare
the name of Yahweh in Zion
and His praise in Jerusalem,
22 when peoples and kingdoms are assembled
to serve the LORD.

23 He has broken my strength in midcourse;
He has shortened my days.
24 I say: "My God, do not take me
in the middle of my life! [C]
Your years continue through all generations.
25[†] Long ago You established the earth,
and the heavens are the work of Your hands.
26 They will perish, but You will endure;
all of them will wear out like clothing.
You will change them like a garment,
and they will pass away.
27 But You are the same,
and Your years will never end.
28 Your servants' children will dwell securely,
and their offspring will be established before You."

PSALMS

The Forgiving God

103 My soul, praise •Yahweh,
and all that is within me, praise His holy name.
2 My soul, praise the LORD,
and do not forget all His benefits.

3 He forgives all your sin;
He heals all your diseases.
4 He redeems your life from the •Pit;
He crowns you with faithful love and compassion.
5 He satisfies you [A] with goodness;
your youth is renewed like the eagle.

6† The LORD executes acts of righteousness
and justice for all the oppressed.
7 He revealed His ways to Moses,
His deeds to the people of Israel.
8 The LORD is compassionate and gracious,
slow to anger and rich in faithful love.
9 He will not always accuse us
or be angry forever.
10 He has not dealt with us as our sins deserve
or repaid us according to our offenses.

11 For as high as the heavens are above the earth,
so great is His faithful love
toward those who •fear Him.
12 As far as the east is from the west,
so far has He removed
our transgressions from us.
13 As a father has compassion on his children,
so the LORD has compassion on those who fear Him.
14 For He knows what we are made of,
remembering that we are dust.

15 As for man, his days are like grass —
he blooms like a flower of the field;
16 when the wind passes over it, it vanishes,

and its place is no longer known. [B]
17 But from eternity to eternity
the LORD's faithful love is toward those who fear Him,
and His righteousness toward the grandchildren
18 of those who keep His covenant,
who remember to observe His precepts.
19 The LORD has established His throne in heaven,
and His kingdom rules over all.

20 Praise the LORD,
all His angels of great strength,
who do His word,
obedient to His command.
21 Praise the LORD, all His armies,
His servants who do His will.
22 Praise the LORD, all His works
in all the places where He rules.
My soul, praise Yahweh!

PSALMS

God the Creator

104 My soul, praise •Yahweh!
LORD my God, You are very great;
You are clothed with majesty and splendor.
2 He wraps Himself in light as if it were a robe,
spreading out the sky like a canopy,
3 laying the beams of His palace
on the waters above,
making the clouds His chariot,
walking on the wings of the wind,
4 and making the winds His messengers, [A]
flames of fire His servants.

5 He established the earth on its foundations;
it will never be shaken.
6 You covered it with the deep
as if it were a garment;
the waters stood above the mountains.
7 At Your rebuke the waters fled;
at the sound of Your thunder they hurried away —
8 mountains rose and valleys sank [B] —
to the place You established for them.
9 You set a boundary they cannot cross;
they will never cover the earth again.

10 He causes the springs to gush into the valleys;
they flow between the mountains.
11 They supply water for every wild beast;
the wild donkeys quench their thirst.
12 The birds of the sky live beside the springs;
they sing among the foliage.
13 He waters the mountains from His palace;
the earth is satisfied by the fruit of Your labor.

14 He causes grass to grow for the livestock
and provides crops for man to cultivate,
producing food from the earth,
15 wine that makes man's heart glad —

making his face shine with oil —
and bread that sustains man's heart.

16 The trees of the LORD flourish, [C]
the cedars of Lebanon that He planted.
17 There the birds make their nests;
the stork makes its home in the pine trees.
18 The high mountains are for the wild goats;
the cliffs are a refuge for hyraxes.

19 He made the moon to mark the [D] festivals; [E]
the sun knows when to set.
20 You bring darkness, and it becomes night,
when all the forest animals stir.
21 The young lions roar for their prey
and seek their food from God.
22 The sun rises; they go back
and lie down in their dens.
23 Man goes out to his work
and to his labor until evening.

24 How countless are Your works, LORD!
In wisdom You have made them all;
the earth is full of Your creatures. [F],
25 Here is the sea, vast and wide,
teeming with creatures beyond number —
living things both large and small.
26† There the ships move about,
and •Leviathan, which You formed to play there.

ARTICLE

How Should a Christian Understand the Age of the Earth Controversy? ⇒

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27 All of them wait for You
to give them their food at the right time.
28 When You give it to them,
they gather it;
when You open Your hand,
they are satisfied with good things.
29 When You hide Your face,
they are terrified;
when You take away their breath,
they die and return to the dust.
30 When You send Your breath, [G]
they are created,
and You renew the face of the earth.

31 May the glory of the Lord endure forever;
may the Lord rejoice in His works.
32 He looks at the earth, and it trembles;
He touches the mountains,
and they pour out smoke.
33 I will sing to the Lord all my life;
I will sing praise to my God while I live.
34 May my meditation be pleasing to Him;
I will rejoice in the Lord.
35 May sinners vanish from the earth
and wicked people be no more.
My soul, praise Yahweh!
•Hallelujah!

PSALMS

God’s Faithfulness to His People

105 Give thanks to •Yahweh, call on His name;
proclaim His deeds among the peoples.
2 Sing to Him, sing praise to Him;
tell about all His wonderful works!
3 Honor His holy name;
let the hearts of those who seek Yahweh rejoice.
4 Search for the LORD and for His strength;
seek His face always.
5 Remember the wonderful works He has done,
His wonders, and the judgments He has pronounced, [A]
6 you offspring of Abraham His servant,
Jacob's descendants — His chosen ones.

7 He is the LORD our God;
His judgments govern the whole earth.
8 He remembers His covenant forever,
the promise He ordained
for a thousand generations —
9 the covenant He made with Abraham,
swore [B] to Isaac,
10 and confirmed to Jacob as a decree
and to Israel as an everlasting covenant:
11 "I will give the land of Canaan to you
as your inherited portion."

12 When they were few in number,
very few indeed,
and temporary residents in Canaan,
13 wandering from nation to nation
and from one kingdom to another,
14 He allowed no one to oppress them;
He rebuked kings on their behalf:
15 "Do not touch My anointed ones,
or harm My prophets."

16 He called down famine against the land

and destroyed the entire food supply.
17 He had sent a man ahead of them —
Joseph, who was sold as a slave.
18 They hurt his feet with shackles;
his neck was put in an iron collar.
19 Until the time his prediction came true,
the word of the LORD tested him.
20 The king sent for him and released him;
the ruler of peoples set him free.
21 He made him master of his household,
ruler over all his possessions —
22 binding his officials at will
and instructing his elders.

23 Then Israel went to Egypt;
Jacob lived as a foreigner in the land of Ham.
24 The LORD [C] made His people very fruitful;
He made them more numerous than their foes,
25 whose hearts He turned to hate His people
and to deal deceptively with His servants.
26 He sent Moses His servant,
and Aaron, whom He had chosen.
27 They performed His miraculous signs among them,
and wonders in the land of Ham.
28 He sent darkness, and it became dark —
for did they not defy His commands?
29 He turned their water into blood
and caused their fish to die.
30 Their land was overrun with frogs,
even in their royal chambers.
31 He spoke, and insects came —
gnats throughout their country.
32 He gave them hail for rain,
and lightning throughout their land.
33 He struck their vines and fig trees

and shattered the trees of their territory.
34 He spoke, and locusts came —
young locusts without number.
35 They devoured all the vegetation in their land
and consumed the produce of their land.
36 He struck all the firstborn in their land,
all their first progeny.

37 Then He brought Israel out with silver and gold,
and no one among His tribes stumbled.
38 Egypt was glad when they left,
for the dread of Israel [D] had fallen on them.
39 He spread a cloud as a covering
and gave a fire to light up the night.
40 They asked, and He brought quail
and satisfied them with bread from heaven.
41 He opened a rock, and water gushed out;
it flowed like a stream in the desert.
42 For He remembered His holy promise
to Abraham His servant.
43 He brought His people out with rejoicing,
His chosen ones with shouts of joy.
44 He gave them the lands of the nations,
and they inherited
what other peoples had worked for.

45 All this happened
so that they might keep His statutes
and obey His instructions.
•Hallelujah!

PSALMS

Israel's Unfaithfulness to God

106 •Hallelujah!
Give thanks to the LORD, for He is good;
His faithful love endures forever.
2 Who can declare the LORD's mighty acts
or proclaim all the praise due Him?
3 How happy are those who uphold justice,
who practice righteousness at all times.

4 Remember me, LORD,
when You show favor to Your people.
Come to me with Your salvation
5 so that I may enjoy the prosperity
of Your chosen ones,
rejoice in the joy of Your nation,
and boast about Your heritage.

6 Both we and our fathers have sinned;
we have done wrong and have acted wickedly.
7 Our fathers in Egypt did not grasp
the significance of Your wonderful works
or remember Your many acts of faithful love;
instead, they rebelled by the sea — the •Red Sea.
8 Yet He saved them because of His name,
to make His power known.
9 He rebuked the Red Sea, and it dried up;
He led them through the depths as through a desert.
10 He saved them from the hand of the adversary;
He redeemed them from the hand of the enemy.
11 Water covered their foes;
not one of them remained.
12 Then they believed His promises
and sang His praise.

13 They soon forgot His works
and would not wait for His counsel.
14 They were seized with craving in the wilderness
and tested God in the desert.

15 He gave them what they asked for,
but sent a wasting disease among them.

16 In the camp they were envious of Moses
and of Aaron, the LORD's holy one.
17 The earth opened up and swallowed Dathan;
it covered the assembly of Abiram.
18 Fire blazed throughout their assembly;
flames consumed the wicked.

19 At Horeb they made a calf
and worshiped the cast metal image.
20 They exchanged their glory
for the image of a grass-eating ox.
21 They forgot God their Savior,
who did great things in Egypt,
22 wonderful works in the land of Ham,
awe-inspiring acts at the Red Sea.
23 So He said He would have destroyed them —
if Moses His chosen one
had not stood before Him in the breach
to turn His wrath away from destroying them.

24 They despised the pleasant land
and did not believe His promise.
25 They grumbled in their tents
and did not listen to the LORD's voice.
26 So He raised His hand against them with an oath
that He would make them fall in the desert
27 and would disperse their descendants
among the nations,
scattering them throughout the lands.

28 They aligned themselves with •Baal of Peor
and ate sacrifices offered to lifeless gods. [A]
29 They provoked the LORD with their deeds,
and a plague broke out against them.

30 But Phinehas stood up and intervened,
and the plague was stopped.
31 It was credited to him as righteousness
throughout all generations to come.

32 They angered the LORD at the waters of Meribah,
and Moses suffered [B] because of them;
33 for they embittered his spirit,
and he spoke rashly with his lips.

34 They did not destroy the peoples
as the LORD had commanded them
35 but mingled with the nations
and adopted their ways.
36 They served their idols,
which became a snare to them.
37 They sacrificed their sons and daughters to demons.
38 They shed innocent blood —
the blood of their sons and daughters
whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan;
so the land became polluted with blood.
39 They defiled themselves by their actions
and prostituted themselves by their deeds.

40 Therefore the LORD's anger burned against His people,
and He abhorred His own inheritance.
41 He handed them over to the nations;
those who hated them ruled them.
42 Their enemies oppressed them,
and they were subdued under their power.
43 He rescued them many times,
but they continued to rebel deliberately
and were beaten down by their sin.

44 When He heard their cry,
He took note of their distress,
45 remembered His covenant with them,

and relented according to the riches
of His faithful love.
46 He caused them to be pitied
before all their captors.

47 Save us, •Yahweh our God,
and gather us from the nations,
so that we may give thanks to Your holy name
and rejoice in Your praise.

48† May Yahweh, the God of Israel, be praised
from everlasting to everlasting.
Let all the people say, "•Amen! "
Hallelujah!

PSALMS

BOOK V

(Psalms 107–150)

Thanksgiving for God’s Deliverance

107 Give thanks to the LORD, for He is good;
His faithful love endures forever.
2 Let the redeemed of the LORD proclaim
that He has redeemed them from the hand of the foe
3 and has gathered them from the lands —
from the east and the west,
from the north and the south.

4 Some [A] wandered in the desolate wilderness,
finding no way to a city where they could live.
5 They were hungry and thirsty;
their spirits failed [B] within them.
6 Then they cried out to the LORD in their trouble;
He rescued them from their distress.
7 He led them by the right path
to go to a city where they could live.
8 Let them give thanks to the LORD
for His faithful love
and His wonderful works for all •humanity.
9 For He has satisfied the thirsty
and filled the hungry with good things.

10 Others [C] sat in darkness and gloom [D] —
prisoners in cruel chains —
11 because they rebelled against God's commands
and despised the counsel of the •Most High.
12 He broke their spirits [E] with hard labor;
they stumbled, and there was no one to help.
13 Then they cried out to the LORD in their trouble;
He saved them from their distress.
14 He brought them out of darkness and gloom [F]
and broke their chains apart.
15 Let them give thanks to the LORD
for His faithful love
and His wonderful works for all humanity.
16 For He has broken down the bronze gates

and cut through the iron bars.

17 Fools suffered affliction
because of their rebellious ways and their sins.
18 They loathed all food
and came near the gates of death.
19 Then they cried out to the LORD in their trouble;
He saved them from their distress.
20 He sent His word and healed them;
He rescued them from the •Pit.
21 Let them give thanks to the LORD
for His faithful love
and His wonderful works for all humanity.
22 Let them offer sacrifices of thanksgiving
and announce His works with shouts of joy.

23 Others [G] went to sea in ships,
conducting trade on the vast waters.
24 They saw the LORD's works,
His wonderful works in the deep.
25 He spoke and raised a tempest
that stirred up the waves of the sea. [H],
26 Rising up to the sky, sinking down to the depths,
their courage [I] melting away in anguish,
27 they reeled and staggered like drunken men,
and all their skill was useless.
28 Then they cried out to the LORD in their trouble,
and He brought them out of their distress.
29 He stilled the storm to a murmur,
and the waves of the sea [J] were hushed.
30 They rejoiced when the waves [K] grew quiet.
Then He guided them to the harbor they longed for.
31 Let them give thanks to the LORD
for His faithful love
and His wonderful works for all humanity.

[32] Let them exalt Him in the assembly of the people
and praise Him in the council of the elders.

[33] He turns rivers into desert,
springs of water into thirsty ground,
[34] and fruitful land into salty wasteland,
because of the wickedness of its inhabitants.
[35] He turns a desert into a pool of water,
dry land into springs of water.
[36] He causes the hungry to settle there,
and they establish a city where they can live.
[37] They sow fields and plant vineyards
that yield a fruitful harvest.
[38] He blesses them, and they multiply greatly;
He does not let their livestock decrease.

[39] When they are diminished and are humbled
by cruel oppression and sorrow,
[40] He pours contempt on nobles
and makes them wander in a trackless wasteland.
[41] But He lifts the needy out of their suffering
and makes their families multiply like flocks.
[42] The upright see it and rejoice,
and all injustice shuts its mouth.

[43] Let whoever is wise pay attention to these things
and consider [L] the LORD's acts of faithful love.

PSALMS

A Plea for Victory

108 My heart is confident, God;
I will sing; I will sing praises
with the whole of my being. [A],
2 Wake up, harp and lyre!
I will wake up the dawn.
3 I will praise You, LORD, among the peoples;
I will sing praises to You among the nations.
4 For Your faithful love is higher than the heavens,
and Your faithfulness reaches to the clouds.
5 God, be exalted above the heavens,
and let Your glory be over the whole earth.
6[†] Save with Your right hand and answer me
so that those You love may be rescued.

7 God has spoken in His sanctuary: [B]
“I will triumph!
I will divide up Shechem.
I will apportion the Valley of Succoth.
8 Gilead is Mine, Manasseh is Mine,
and Ephraim is My helmet;
Judah is My scepter.
9 Moab is My washbasin;
I throw My sandal on Edom.
I shout in triumph over Philistia.”

10 Who will bring me to the fortified city?
Who will lead me to Edom?
11 God, haven’t You rejected us?
God, You do not march out with our armies.
12 Give us aid against the foe,
for human help is worthless.
13 With God we will perform valiantly;
He will trample our foes.

PSALMS

Prayer against an Enemy

109 God of my praise, do not be silent.
[2] For wicked and deceitful mouths open against me;
they speak against me with lying tongues.
[3] They surround me with hateful words
and attack me without cause.
[4] In return for my love they accuse me,
but I continue to pray. [A]
[5] They repay me evil for good,
and hatred for my love.

[6†] Set a wicked person over him;
let an accuser [B] stand at his right hand.
[7†] When he is judged, let him be found •guilty,
and let his prayer be counted as sin.
[8†] Let his days be few;
let another take over his position.
[9] Let his children be fatherless
and his wife a widow.
[10] Let his children wander as beggars,
searching for food far from their demolished homes.
[11] Let a creditor seize all he has;
let strangers plunder what he has worked for.
[12] Let no one show him kindness,
and let no one be gracious to his fatherless children.
[13] Let the line of his descendants be cut off;
let their name be blotted out in the next generation.
[14] Let his ancestors' guilt
be remembered before the LORD,
and do not let his mother's sin be blotted out.
[15] Let their sins [C] always remain before the LORD,
and let Him erase [D] all memory of them from the earth.

[16†] For he did not think to show kindness,
but pursued the afflicted, poor, and brokenhearted
in order to put them to death.

[17] He loved cursing — let it fall on him;
he took no delight in blessing — let it be far from him.
[18] He wore cursing like his coat —
let it enter his body like water
and go into his bones like oil.
[19] Let it be like a robe he wraps around himself,
like a belt he always wears.
[20] Let this be the LORD's payment to my accusers,
to those who speak evil against me.

[21] But You, •Yahweh my Lord,
deal kindly with me because of Your name;
deliver me because of the goodness of Your faithful love.
[22] For I am afflicted and needy;
my heart is wounded within me.
[23] I fade away like a lengthening shadow;
I am shaken off like a locust.
[24] My knees are weak from fasting,
and my body is emaciated. [E],
[25] I have become an object of ridicule to my accusers; [F]
when they see me, they shake their heads in scorn.

[26] Help me, LORD my God;
save me according to Your faithful love
[27] so they may know that this is Your hand
and that You, LORD, have done it.
[28] Though they curse, You will bless.
When they rise up, they will be put to shame,
but Your servant will rejoice.
[29] My accusers will be clothed with disgrace;
they will wear their shame like a cloak.
[30] I will fervently thank the LORD with my mouth;
I will praise Him in the presence of many.
[31] For He stands at the right hand of the needy
to save him from those who would condemn him.

PSALMS

The Priestly King

110 This is the declaration of the LORD
to my Lord:
“Sit at My right hand
until I make Your enemies Your footstool.”
2 The LORD will extend Your mighty scepter from •Zion.
Rule over Your surrounding [A] enemies.
3† Your people will volunteer
on Your day of battle. [B],
In holy splendor, from the womb of the dawn,
the dew of Your youth belongs to You. [C]
4† The LORD has sworn an oath and will not take it back:
“Forever, You are a priest
like Melchizedek.”

5 The Lord is at Your right hand;
He will crush kings on the day of His anger.
6 He will judge the nations, heaping up corpses;
He will crush leaders over the entire world.
7† He will drink from the brook by the road;
therefore, He will lift up His head.

PSALMS

Praise for the LORD's Works

111 •Hallelujah!

I will praise the LORD with all my heart
in the assembly of the upright and in the congregation.

2 The LORD's works are great,
studied by all who delight in them.
3 All that He does is splendid and majestic;
His righteousness endures forever.
4 He has caused His wonderful works to be remembered.
The LORD is gracious and compassionate.
5 He has provided food for those who fear Him;
He remembers His covenant forever.
6 He has shown His people the power of His works
by giving them the inheritance of the nations.
7 The works of His hands are truth and justice;
all His instructions are trustworthy.
8 They are established forever and ever,
enacted in truth and in what is right.
9 He has sent redemption to His people.
He has ordained His covenant forever.
His name is holy and awe-inspiring.

10† The •fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom;
all who follow His instructions [A] have good insight.
His praise endures forever.

PSALMS

The Traits of the Righteous

112 •Hallelujah!
Happy is the man who •fears the LORD,
taking great delight in His commands.

2 His descendants will be powerful in the land;
the generation of the upright will be blessed.
3 Wealth and riches are in his house,
and his righteousness endures forever.
4 Light shines in the darkness for the upright.
He is gracious, compassionate, and righteous.
5 Good will come to a man who lends generously
and conducts his business fairly.
6 He will never be shaken.
The righteous man will be remembered forever.
7 He will not fear bad news;
his heart is confident, trusting in the LORD.
8 His heart is assured; he will not fear.
In the end he will look in triumph on his foes.
9 He distributes freely to the poor;
his righteousness endures forever.
His •horn will be exalted in honor.

10 The wicked man will see it and be angry;
he will gnash his teeth in despair.
The desire of the wicked man will come to nothing.

PSALMS

Praise to the Merciful God

113

•Hallelujah!
Give praise, servants of •Yahweh;
praise the name of Yahweh.
2 Let the name of Yahweh be praised
both now and forever.
3 From the rising of the sun to its setting,
let the name of Yahweh be praised.

4 Yahweh is exalted above all the nations,
His glory above the heavens.
5 Who is like Yahweh our God —
the One enthroned on high,
6 who stoops down to look
on the heavens and the earth?
7† He raises the poor from the dust
and lifts the needy from the garbage pile
8 in order to seat them with nobles —
with the nobles of His people.
9 He gives the childless woman a household,
making her the joyful mother of children.
Hallelujah!

PSALMS

God's Deliverance of Israel

114 When Israel came out of Egypt —
the house of Jacob from a people
who spoke a foreign language —
2 Judah became His sanctuary,
Israel, His dominion.

3 The sea looked and fled;
the Jordan turned back.
4 The mountains skipped like rams,
the hills, like lambs.
5† Why was it, sea, that you fled?
Jordan, that you turned back?
6 Mountains, that you skipped like rams?
Hills, like lambs?

7 Tremble, earth, at the presence of the Lord,
at the presence of the God of Jacob,
8 who turned the rock into a pool of water,
the flint into a spring of water.

PSALMS

Glory to God Alone

115 Not to us, •Yahweh, not to us,
but to Your name give glory
because of Your faithful love, because of Your truth.
2 Why should the nations say,
“Where is their God? ”
3 Our God is in heaven
and does whatever He pleases.

4 Their idols are silver and gold,
made by human hands.
5 They have mouths but cannot speak,
eyes, but cannot see.
6 They have ears but cannot hear,
noses, but cannot smell.
7 They have hands but cannot feel,
feet, but cannot walk.
They cannot make a sound with their throats.
8† Those who make them are [A] just like them,
as are all who trust in them.

9 Israel, trust in the Lord!
He is their help and shield.
10 House of Aaron, trust in the Lord!
He is their help and shield.
11 You who •fear the Lord, trust in the Lord!
He is their help and shield.
12 The Lord remembers us and will bless us.
He will bless the house of Israel;
He will bless the house of Aaron;
13 He will bless those who fear the Lord —
small and great alike.

14 May the Lord add to your numbers,
both yours and your children’s.
15 May you be blessed by the Lord,
the Maker of heaven and earth.

16 The heavens are the LORD’s, [B]
but the earth He has given to the •human race.
17 It is not the dead who praise the LORD,
nor any of those descending into the silence of death.
18 But we will praise the LORD,
both now and forever.
•Hallelujah!

PSALMS

Thanks to God for Deliverance

116 I love the LORD because He has heard
my appeal for mercy.
2 Because He has turned His ear to me,
I will call out to Him as long as I live.

3 The ropes of death were wrapped around me,
and the torments of •Sheol overcame me;
I encountered trouble and sorrow.
4 Then I called on the name of •Yahweh:
"Yahweh, save me! "

5 The LORD is gracious and righteous;
our God is compassionate.
6 The LORD guards the inexperienced;
I was helpless, and He saved me.
7 Return to your rest, my soul,
for the LORD has been good to you.
8 For You, LORD, rescued me from death,
my eyes from tears,
my feet from stumbling.
9 I will walk before the LORD
in the land of the living.
10 I believed, even when I said,
"I am severely afflicted."
11 In my alarm I said,
"Everyone is a liar."

12 How can I repay the LORD
for all the good He has done for me?
13† I will take the cup of salvation
and call on the name of Yahweh.
14 I will fulfill my vows to the LORD
in the presence of all His people.

15† The death of His faithful ones
is valuable in the LORD's sight.
16 LORD, I am indeed Your servant;

I am Your servant, the son of Your female servant.
You have loosened my bonds.

17 I will offer You a sacrifice of thanksgiving
and call on the name of Yahweh.
18 I will fulfill my vows to the LORD
in the presence of all His people,
19 in the courts of the LORD's house —
within you, Jerusalem.
•Hallelujah!

PSALMS

Universal Call to Praise

117 Praise the LORD, all nations!
Glorify Him, all peoples!
2 For His faithful love to us is great;
the LORD's faithfulness endures forever.
•Hallelujah!

PSALMS

Thanksgiving for Victory

118 Give thanks to the LORD, for He is good;
His faithful love endures forever.
2† Let Israel say,
"His faithful love endures forever."
3 Let the house of Aaron say,
"His faithful love endures forever."
4 Let those who fear the LORD say,
"His faithful love endures forever."

5† I called to the LORD in distress;
the LORD answered me
and put me in a spacious place. [A]
6 The LORD is for me; I will not be afraid.
What can man do to me?
7 The LORD is my helper,
Therefore, I will look in triumph on those who hate me.

8 It is better to take refuge in the LORD
than to trust in man.
9 It is better to take refuge in the LORD
than to trust in nobles.

10 All the nations surrounded me;
in the name of •Yahweh I destroyed them.
11 They surrounded me, yes, they surrounded me;
in the name of Yahweh I destroyed them.
12 They surrounded me like bees;
they were extinguished like a fire among thorns;
in the name of Yahweh I destroyed them.
13 You pushed me hard to make me fall,
but the LORD helped me.
14 The LORD is my strength and my song;
He has become my salvation.

15 There are shouts of joy and victory
in the tents of the righteous:
"The LORD's right hand performs valiantly!

[16] The LORD's right hand is raised.
The LORD's right hand performs valiantly! ”
[17] I will not die, but I will live
and proclaim what the LORD has done.
[18] The LORD disciplined me severely
but did not give me over to death.

[19†] Open the gates of righteousness for me;
I will enter through them
and give thanks to the LORD.
[20] This is the gate of the LORD;
the righteous will enter through it.
[21] I will give thanks to You
because You have answered me
and have become my salvation.
[22†] The stone that the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone.
[23] This came from the LORD;
it is wonderful in our eyes.
[24†] This is the day the LORD has made;
let us rejoice and be glad in it.

[25†] LORD, save us!
LORD, please grant us success!
[26†] He who comes in the name
of the LORD is blessed.
From the house of the LORD we bless you.
[27†] The LORD is God and has given us light.
Bind the festival sacrifice with cords
to the horns of the altar.
[28] You are my God, and I will give You thanks.
You are my God; I will exalt You.
[29] Give thanks to the LORD, for He is good;
His faithful love endures forever.

PSALMS

Delight in God’s Word

Alef

119 How happy are those whose way is blameless,
who live according to the LORD's instruction!
2 Happy are those who keep His decrees
and seek Him with all their heart.
3 They do nothing wrong;
they follow His ways.
4 You have commanded that Your precepts
be diligently kept.
5 If only my ways were committed
to keeping Your statutes!
6 Then I would not be ashamed
when I think about all Your commands.
7 I will praise You with a sincere heart
when I learn Your righteous judgments.
8 I will keep Your statutes;
never abandon me.

Bet

9 How can a young man keep his way pure?
By keeping Your [A] word.
10 I have sought You with all my heart;
don't let me wander from Your commands.
11 I have treasured Your word in my heart
so that I may not sin against You.
12 LORD, may You be praised;
teach me Your statutes.
13 With my lips I proclaim
all the judgments from Your mouth.
14 I rejoice in the way revealed by Your decrees
as much as in all riches.
15 I will meditate on Your precepts
and think about Your ways.
16 I will delight in Your statutes;
I will not forget Your word.

TWISTED SCRIPTURE

Psalm 119:15

There is a distinct difference between Christian and New Age forms of meditation. In Christian meditation, the believer's mind is actively engaged and focuses on the Word of God. The believer is always conscious and never seeks a mystical experience of direct contact with God. New Age meditators, on the other hand, attempt to empty their minds through repetitious chanting or yogic breathing exercises. For them the goal is to experience oneness with the universe or attain God-consciousness.

Gimel

17 Deal generously with Your servant
so that I might live;
then I will keep Your word.
18 Open my eyes so that I may contemplate
wonderful things from Your instruction.
19 I am a stranger on earth;
do not hide Your commands from me.
20 I am continually overcome
with longing for Your judgments.
21 You rebuke the proud,
the ones under a curse,
who wander from Your commands.
22 Take insult and contempt away from me,
for I have kept Your decrees.
23 Though princes sit together speaking against me,
Your servant will think about Your statutes;
24 Your decrees are my delight
and my counselors.

Dalet

25 My life is down in the dust;

give me life through Your word.
26 I told You about my life,
and You listened to me;
teach me Your statutes.
27 Help me understand
the meaning of Your precepts
so that I can meditate on Your wonders.
28 I am weary [B] from grief;
strengthen me through Your word.
29 Keep me from the way of deceit
and graciously give me Your instruction.
30 I have chosen the way of truth;
I have set Your ordinances before me.
31 I cling to Your decrees;
LORD, do not put me to shame.
32 I pursue the way of Your commands,
for You broaden my understanding. [C]

He

33 Teach me, LORD, the meaning [D] of Your statutes,
and I will always keep them. [E]
34 Help me understand Your instruction,
and I will obey it
and follow it with all my heart.
35 Help me stay on the path of Your commands,
for I take pleasure in it.
36 Turn my heart to Your decrees
and not to material gain.
37 Turn my eyes
from looking at what is worthless;
give me life in Your ways.
38 Confirm what You said to Your servant,
for it produces reverence for You.
39 Turn away the disgrace I dread;
indeed, Your judgments are good.

40 How I long for Your precepts!
Give me life through Your righteousness.

Vav

41 Let Your faithful love come to me, LORD,
Your salvation, as You promised.
42 Then I can answer the one who taunts me,
for I trust in Your word.
43 Never take the word of truth from my mouth,
for I hope in Your judgments.
44 I will always obey Your instruction,
forever and ever.
45 I will walk freely in an open place
because I seek Your precepts.
46 I will speak of Your decrees before kings
and not be ashamed.
47 I delight in Your commands,
which I love.
48 I will lift up my hands to Your commands,
which I love,
and will meditate on Your statutes.

Zayin

49 Remember Your word to Your servant;
You have given me hope through it.
50 This is my comfort in my affliction:
Your promise has given me life.
51 The arrogant constantly ridicule me,
but I do not turn away from Your instruction.
52 LORD, I remember Your judgments from long ago
and find comfort.
53 Rage seizes me because of the wicked
who reject Your instruction.
54 Your statutes are the theme of my song
during my earthly life. [F]

55 •Yahweh, I remember Your name in the night,
and I obey Your instruction.
56 This is my practice:
I obey Your precepts.

Khet

57 The LORD is my portion; G,
I have promised to keep Your words.
58 I have sought Your favor with all my heart;
be gracious to me according to Your promise.
59 I thought about my ways
and turned my steps back to Your decrees.
60 I hurried, not hesitating
to keep Your commands.
61 Though the ropes of the wicked
were wrapped around me,
I did not forget Your instruction.
62 I rise at midnight to thank You
for Your righteous judgments.
63 I am a friend to all who •fear You,
to those who keep Your precepts.
64 LORD, the earth is filled with Your faithful love;
teach me Your statutes.

Tet

65 LORD, You have treated Your servant well,
just as You promised.
66 Teach me good judgment and discernment,
for I rely on Your commands.
67 Before I was afflicted I went astray,
but now I keep Your word.
68 You are good, and You do what is good;
teach me Your statutes.
69 The arrogant have smeared me with lies,
but I obey Your precepts with all my heart.

70 Their hearts are hard and insensitive,
but I delight in Your instruction.
71 It was good for me to be afflicted
so that I could learn Your statutes.
72 Instruction from Your lips is better for me
than thousands of gold and silver pieces.

Yod

73 Your hands made me and formed me;
give me understanding
so that I can learn Your commands.
74 Those who fear You will see me and rejoice,
for I put my hope in Your word.
75 I know, LORD, that Your judgments are just
and that You have afflicted me fairly.
76 May Your faithful love comfort me
as You promised Your servant.
77 May Your compassion come to me
so that I may live,
for Your instruction is my delight.
78 Let the arrogant be put to shame
for slandering me with lies;
I will meditate on Your precepts.
79 Let those who fear You,
those who know Your decrees, turn to me.
80 May my heart be blameless regarding Your statutes
so that I will not be put to shame.

Kaf

81 I long for Your salvation;
I put my hope in Your word.
82 My eyes grow weary
looking for what You have promised;
I ask, "When will You comfort me? "
83 Though I have become like a wineskin dried by smoke,

I do not forget Your statutes.
84 How many days must Your servant wait?
When will You execute judgment on my persecutors?
85 The arrogant have dug pits for me;
they violate Your instruction.
86 All Your commands are true;
people persecute me with lies — help me!
87 They almost ended my life on earth,
but I did not abandon Your precepts.
88 Give me life in accordance with Your faithful love,
and I will obey the decree You have spoken.

Lamed

89 LORD, Your word is forever;
it is firmly fixed in heaven.
90 Your faithfulness is for all generations;
You established the earth, and it stands firm.
91 They stand today in accordance with Your judgments,
for all things are Your servants.
92 If Your instruction had not been my delight,
I would have died in my affliction.
93 I will never forget Your precepts,
for You have given me life through them.
94 I am Yours; save me,
for I have sought Your precepts.
95 The wicked hope to destroy me,
but I contemplate Your decrees.
96 I have seen a limit to all perfection,
but Your command is without limit.

Mem

97 How I love Your instruction!
It is my meditation all day long.
98 Your commands make me wiser than my enemies,
for they are always with me.

99 I have more insight than all my teachers
because Your decrees are my meditation.
100 I understand more than the elders
because I obey Your precepts.
101 I have kept my feet from every evil path
to follow Your word.
102 I have not turned from Your judgments,
for You Yourself have instructed me.
103 How sweet Your word is to my taste —
sweeter than honey in my mouth.
104 I gain understanding from Your precepts;
therefore I hate every false way.

Nun

105 Your word is a lamp for my feet
and a light on my path.
106 I have solemnly sworn
to keep Your righteous judgments.
107 I am severely afflicted;
LORD, give me life through Your word.
108 LORD, please accept my willing offerings of praise,
and teach me Your judgments.
109 My life is constantly in danger, [H]
yet I do not forget Your instruction.
110 The wicked have set a trap for me,
but I have not wandered from Your precepts.
111 I have Your decrees as a heritage forever;
indeed, they are the joy of my heart.
112 I am resolved to obey Your statutes
to the very end. [I]

Samek

113 I hate those who are double-minded,
but I love Your instruction.
114 You are my shelter and my shield;

I put my hope in Your word.
115 Depart from me, you evil ones,
so that I may obey my God's commands.
116 Sustain me as You promised, and I will live;
do not let me be ashamed of my hope.
117 Sustain me so that I can be safe
and always be concerned about Your statutes.
118 You reject all who stray from Your statutes,
for their deceit is a lie.
119 You remove all the wicked on earth
as if they were dross;
therefore, I love Your decrees.
120 I tremble [J] in awe of You;
I fear Your judgments.

Ayin

121 I have done what is just and right;
do not leave me to my oppressors.
122 Guarantee Your servant's well-being;
do not let the arrogant oppress me.
123 My eyes grow weary looking for Your salvation
and for Your righteous promise.
124 Deal with Your servant based on Your faithful love;
teach me Your statutes.
125 I am Your servant; give me understanding
so that I may know Your decrees.
126 It is time for the LORD to act,
for they have violated Your instruction.
127 Since I love Your commands
more than gold, even the purest gold,
128 I carefully follow [K] all Your precepts
and hate every false way.

Pe

129 Your decrees are wonderful;

therefore I obey them.
130 The revelation of Your words brings light
and gives understanding to the inexperienced.
131 I open my mouth and pant
because I long for Your commands.
132 Turn to me and be gracious to me,
as is Your practice toward those who love Your name.
133 Make my steps steady through Your promise;
don’t let any sin dominate me.
134 Redeem me from human oppression,
and I will keep Your precepts.
135 Show favor to Your servant,
and teach me Your statutes.
136 My eyes pour out streams of tears
because people do not follow Your instruction.

Tsade

137 You are righteous, LORD,
and Your judgments are just.
138 The decrees You issue are righteous
and altogether trustworthy.
139 My anger overwhelms me
because my foes forget Your words.
140 Your word is completely pure,
and Your servant loves it.
141 I am insignificant and despised,
but I do not forget Your precepts.
142 Your righteousness is an everlasting righteousness,
and Your instruction is true.
143 Trouble and distress have overtaken me,
but Your commands are my delight.
144 Your decrees are righteous forever.
Give me understanding, and I will live.

Qof

145 I call with all my heart; answer me, LORD.
I will obey Your statutes.
146 I call to You; save me,
and I will keep Your decrees.
147 I rise before dawn and cry out for help;
I put my hope in Your word.
148 I am awake through each watch of the night
to meditate on Your promise.
149 In keeping with Your faithful love, hear my voice.
LORD, give me life in keeping with Your justice.
150 Those who pursue evil plans come near;
they are far from Your instruction.
151 You are near, LORD,
and all Your commands are true.
152 Long ago I learned from Your decrees
that You have established them forever.

Resh

153 Consider my affliction and rescue me,
for I have not forgotten Your instruction.
154 Defend my cause and redeem me;
give me life as You promised.
155 Salvation is far from the wicked
because they do not seek Your statutes.
156 Your compassions are many, LORD;
give me life according to Your judgments.
157 My persecutors and foes are many.
I have not turned from Your decrees.
158 I have seen the disloyal and feel disgust
because they do not keep Your word.
159 Consider how I love Your precepts;
LORD, give me life according to Your faithful love.
160 The entirety of Your word is truth,
and all Your righteous judgments endure forever.

Sin / ש *Shin*

161 Princes have persecuted me without cause,
but my heart fears only Your word.
162 I rejoice over Your promise
like one who finds vast treasure.
163 I hate and abhor falsehood,
but I love Your instruction.
164 I praise You seven times a day
for Your righteous judgments.
165 Abundant peace belongs to those
who love Your instruction;
nothing makes them stumble.
166 LORD, I hope for Your salvation
and carry out Your commands.
167 I obey Your decrees
and love them greatly.
168 I obey Your precepts and decrees,
for all my ways are before You.

Tav

169 Let my cry reach You, LORD;
give me understanding according to Your word.
170 Let my plea reach You;
rescue me according to Your promise.
171 My lips pour out praise,
for You teach me Your statutes.
172 My tongue sings about Your promise,
for all Your commands are righteous.
173 May Your hand be ready to help me,
for I have chosen Your precepts.
174 I long for Your salvation, LORD,
and Your instruction is my delight.
175 Let me live, and I will praise You;
may Your judgments help me.
176 I wander like a lost sheep;

seek Your servant,
for I do not forget Your commands.

PSALMS

A Cry for Truth and Peace

120 In my distress I called to the LORD,
and He answered me.
2 “LORD, deliver me from lying lips
and a deceitful tongue.”

3 What will He give you,
and what will He do to you,
you deceitful tongue?
4 A warrior’s sharp arrows
with burning charcoal! [A]

5† What misery that I have stayed in Meshech,
that I have lived among the tents of Kedar!
6 I have lived too long
with those who hate peace.
7 I am for peace; but when I speak,
they are for war.

PSALMS

The LORD Our Protector

121 I lift my eyes toward the mountains.
Where will my help come from?
2 My help comes from the LORD,
the Maker of heaven and earth.

3[†] He will not allow your foot to slip;
your Protector will not slumber.
4 Indeed, the Protector of Israel
does not slumber or sleep.

5 The LORD protects you;
the LORD is a shelter right by your side. [A],
6[†] The sun will not strike you by day
or the moon by night.

7[†] The LORD will protect you from all harm;
He will protect your life.
8 The LORD will protect your coming and going
both now and forever.

PSALMS

A Prayer for Jerusalem

122 I rejoiced with those who said to me,
“Let us go to the house of the LORD.”
2 Our feet are standing
within your gates, Jerusalem —

3 Jerusalem, built as a city should be,
solidly joined together,
4† where the tribes, •Yahweh’s tribes, go up
to give thanks to the name of Yahweh.
(This is an ordinance for Israel.)
5† There, thrones for judgment are placed,
thrones of the house of David.

6 Pray for the peace of Jerusalem:
“May those who love you prosper;
7 may there be peace within your walls,
prosperity within your fortresses.”
8 Because of my brothers and friends,
I will say, “Peace be with you.”
9 Because of the house of the LORD our God,
I will seek your good.

PSALMS

Looking for God's Favor

123 I lift my eyes to You,
the One enthroned in heaven.
2 Like a servant's eyes on his master's hand,
like a servant girl's eyes on her mistress's hand,
so our eyes are on the LORD our God
until He shows us favor.

3 Show us favor, LORD, show us favor,
for we've had more than enough contempt.
4 We've had more than enough
scorn from the arrogant
and contempt from the proud.

PSALMS

The LORD Is on Our Side

124 If the LORD had not been on our side —
let Israel say —
2 If the LORD had not been on our side
when men attacked us,
3 then they would have swallowed us alive
in their burning anger against us.
4† Then the waters would have engulfed us;
the torrent would have swept over us;
5 the raging waters would have swept over us.

6 Praise the LORD,
who has not let us be ripped apart by their teeth.
7 We have escaped like a bird from the hunter's net;
the net is torn, and we have escaped.
8 Our help is in the name of •Yahweh,
the Maker of heaven and earth.

PSALMS

Israel's Stability

125 Those who trust in the LORD are like Mount •Zion.
It cannot be shaken; it remains forever.
2 Jerusalem — the mountains surround her.
And the LORD surrounds His people,
both now and forever.

3† The scepter of the wicked will not remain
over the land allotted to the righteous,
so that the righteous will not apply their hands to injustice.
4 Do what is good, LORD, to the good,
to those whose hearts are upright.
5 But as for those who turn aside to crooked ways,
the LORD will banish them with the evildoers.

Peace be with Israel.

PSALMS

Zion's Restoration

126 When the LORD restored the fortunes of •Zion, [A]
we were like those who dream.
2 Our mouths were filled with laughter then,
and our tongues with shouts of joy.
Then they said among the nations,
“The LORD has done great things for them.”
3 The LORD had done great things for us;
we were joyful.

4† Restore our fortunes, [B] LORD,
like watercourses in the •Negev.
5 Those who sow in tears
will reap with shouts of joy.
6 Though one goes along weeping,
carrying the bag of seed,
he will surely come back with shouts of joy,
carrying his sheaves.

PSALMS

The Blessing of the LORD

127 Unless the LORD builds a house,
its builders labor over it in vain;
unless the LORD watches over a city,
the watchman stays alert in vain.
2† In vain you get up early and stay up late,
working hard to have enough food —

yes, He gives sleep to the one He loves. [A]

3† Sons are indeed a heritage from the LORD,
children, a reward.
4 Like arrows in the hand of a warrior
are the sons born in one's youth.
5 Happy is the man who has filled his quiver with them.
Such men will never be put to shame
when they speak with their enemies at the city •gate.

PSALMS

Blessings for Those Who Fear God

128 How happy is everyone who •fears the LORD,
who walks in His ways!
2 You will surely eat
what your hands have worked for.
You will be happy,
and it will go well for you.
3 Your wife will be like a fruitful vine
within your house,
your sons, like young olive trees
around your table.
4 In this very way
the man who fears the LORD
will be blessed.

5 May the LORD bless you from •Zion,
so that you will see the prosperity of Jerusalem
all the days of your life
6 and will see your children's children!

Peace be with Israel.

PSALMS

Protection of the Oppressed

129 Since my youth they have often attacked me —
let Israel say —
2 Since my youth they have often attacked me,
but they have not prevailed against me.
3† Plowmen plowed over my back;
they made their furrows long.
4 The LORD is righteous;
He has cut the ropes of the wicked.

ARTICLE

Does the Bible Provide Guidance Regarding Human Cloning? ⇒

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5 Let all who hate •Zion
be driven back in disgrace.
6† Let them be like grass on the rooftops,
which withers before it grows up [A]
7 and can’t even fill the hands of the reaper
or the arms of the one who binds sheaves.
8 Then none who pass by will say,
“May the LORD’s blessing be on you.”

We bless you in the name of •Yahweh.

PSALMS

Awaiting Redemption

130

Out of the depths I call to You, •Yahweh!
2 Lord, listen to my voice;
let Your ears be attentive
to my cry for help.

3† Yahweh, if You considered sins,
Lord, who could stand?
4 But with You there is forgiveness,
so that You may be revered.

5 I wait for Yahweh; I wait
and put my hope in His word.
6† I wait for the Lord
more than watchmen for the morning —
more than watchmen for the morning.

7 Israel, put your hope in the LORD.
For there is faithful love with the LORD,
and with Him is redemption in abundance.
8 And He will redeem Israel
from all its sins.

PSALMS

A Childlike Spirit

131 LORD, my heart is not proud;
my eyes are not haughty.
I do not get involved with things
too great or too difficult for me.
2 Instead, I have calmed and quieted myself
like a little weaned child with its mother;
I am like a little child.

3 Israel, put your hope in the LORD,
both now and forever.

PSALMS

David and Zion Chosen

132

LORD, remember David
and all the hardships he endured,
2 and how he swore an oath to the LORD,
making a vow to the Mighty One of Jacob:
3 "I will not enter my house [A]
or get into my bed, [B]
4 I will not allow my eyes to sleep
or my eyelids to slumber
5 until I find a place for the LORD,
a dwelling for the Mighty One of Jacob."

6† We heard of the ark in Ephrathah;
we found it in the fields of Jaar.
7 Let us go to His dwelling place;
let us worship at His footstool.
8 Rise up, LORD, come to Your resting place,
You and Your powerful ark.
9 May Your priests be clothed with righteousness,
and may Your godly people shout for joy.
10 Because of Your servant David,
do not reject Your anointed one.

11 The LORD swore an oath to David,
a promise He will not abandon:
"I will set one of your descendants [C]
on your throne.
12 If your sons keep My covenant
and My decrees that I will teach them,
their sons will also sit on your throne forever."

13 For the LORD has chosen •Zion;
He has desired it for His home:
14 "This is My resting place forever;
I will make My home here
because I have desired it.
15 I will abundantly bless its food;

I will satisfy its needy with bread.
16 I will clothe its priests with salvation,
and its godly people will shout for joy.
17† There I will make a •horn grow for David;
I have prepared a lamp for My anointed one.
18 I will clothe his enemies with shame,
but the crown he wears [D] will be glorious.”

PSALMS

Living in Harmony

133 How good and pleasant it is
when brothers live together in harmony!
2 It is like fine oil on the head,
running down on the beard,
running down Aaron's beard
onto his robes.
3 It is like the dew of Hermon
falling on the mountains of •Zion.
For there the LORD has appointed the blessing —
life forevermore.

PSALMS

Call to Evening Worship

134 Now praise the LORD,
all you servants of the LORD
who stand in the LORD's house at night!
2 Lift up your hands in the holy place
and praise the LORD!

3 May the LORD,
Maker of heaven and earth,
bless you from •Zion.

PSALMS

Yahweh Is Great

135 •Hallelujah!
Praise the name of •Yahweh.
Give praise, you servants of Yahweh
2 who stand in the house of Yahweh,
in the courts of the house of our God.
3 Praise Yahweh, for Yahweh is good;
sing praise to His name, for it is delightful.
4 For Yahweh has chosen Jacob for Himself,
Israel as His treasured possession.

5 For I know that Yahweh is great;
our Lord is greater than all gods.
6 Yahweh does whatever He pleases
in heaven and on earth,
in the seas and all the depths.
7 He causes the clouds to rise from the ends of the earth.
He makes lightning for the rain
and brings the wind from His storehouses.

8 He struck down the firstborn of Egypt,
both man and beast.
9 He sent signs and wonders against you, Egypt,
against Pharaoh and all his officials.
10 He struck down many nations
and slaughtered mighty kings:
11 Sihon king of the Amorites,
Og king of Bashan,
and all the kings of Canaan.
12 He gave their land as an inheritance,
an inheritance to His people Israel.

13 Yahweh, Your name endures forever,
Your reputation, Yahweh,
through all generations.
14 For Yahweh will vindicate His people
and have compassion on His servants.

[15] The idols of the nations are of silver and gold,
made by human hands.
[16] They have mouths but cannot speak,
eyes, but cannot see.
[17] They have ears but cannot hear;
indeed, there is no breath in their mouths.
[18] Those who make them are just like them,
as are all who trust in them.

[19] House of Israel, praise Yahweh!
House of Aaron, praise Yahweh!
[20] House of Levi, praise Yahweh!
You who revere the LORD, praise the LORD!
[21] May the LORD be praised from •Zion;
He dwells in Jerusalem.
Hallelujah!

PSALMS

God’s Love Is Eternal

136 Give thanks to the LORD, for He is good.
His love is eternal.
2 Give thanks to the God of gods.
His love is eternal.
3 Give thanks to the Lord of lords.
His love is eternal.
4 He alone does great wonders.
His love is eternal.
5 He made the heavens skillfully.
His love is eternal.
6 He spread the land on the waters.
His love is eternal.
7 He made the great lights:
His love is eternal.
8 the sun to rule by day,
His love is eternal.
9 the moon and stars to rule by night.
His love is eternal.
10 He struck the firstborn of the Egyptians
His love is eternal.
11 and brought Israel out from among them
His love is eternal.
12 with a strong hand and outstretched arm.
His love is eternal.
13 He divided the •Red Sea
His love is eternal.
14 and led Israel through,
His love is eternal.
15 but hurled Pharaoh and his army
into the Red Sea.
His love is eternal.
16 He led His people in the wilderness.
His love is eternal.
17 He struck down great kings
His love is eternal.

18 and slaughtered famous kings —
His love is eternal.
19 Sihon king of the Amorites
His love is eternal.
20 and Og king of Bashan —
His love is eternal.
21 and gave their land as an inheritance,
His love is eternal.
22 an inheritance to Israel His servant.
His love is eternal.
23 He remembered us in our humiliation
His love is eternal.
24 and rescued us from our foes.
His love is eternal.
25 He gives food to every creature.
His love is eternal.
26 Give thanks to the God of heaven!
His love is eternal.

PSALMS

Lament of the Exiles

137 By the rivers of Babylon —
there we sat down and wept
when we remembered •Zion.
2† There we hung up our lyres
on the poplar trees,
3 for our captors there asked us for songs,
and our tormentors, for rejoicing:
"Sing us one of the songs of Zion."

4 How can we sing the LORD's song
on foreign soil?
5† If I forget you, Jerusalem,
may my right hand forget its skill.
6 May my tongue stick to the roof of my mouth
if I do not remember you,
if I do not exalt Jerusalem as my greatest joy!

7† Remember, LORD, what the Edomites said
that day at Jerusalem:
"Destroy it! Destroy it
down to its foundations! "
8 Daughter Babylon, doomed to destruction,
happy is the one who pays you back
what you have done to us.
9 Happy is he who takes your little ones
and dashes them against the rocks.

PSALMS

A Thankful Heart

138 I will give You thanks with all my heart;
I will sing Your praise before the heavenly beings. [A]
2 I will bow down toward Your holy temple
and give thanks to Your name
for Your constant love and truth.
You have exalted Your name
and Your promise above everything else.
3 On the day I called, You answered me;
You increased strength within me. [B]

4 All the kings on earth will give You thanks, LORD,
when they hear what You have promised. [C]
5 They will sing of the LORD's ways,
for the LORD's glory is great.
6 Though the LORD is exalted,
He takes note of the humble;
but He knows the haughty from a distance.

7 If I walk into the thick of danger,
You will preserve my life
from the anger of my enemies.
You will extend Your hand;
Your right hand will save me.
8 The LORD will fulfill His purpose for me.
LORD, Your love is eternal;
do not abandon the work of Your hands.

PSALMS

The All-Knowing, Ever-Present God

139 LORD, You have searched me and known me.
2† You know when I sit down and when I stand up;
You understand my thoughts from far away.
3 You observe my travels and my rest;
You are aware of all my ways.
4 Before a word is on my tongue,
You know all about it, LORD.
5† You have encircled me;
You have placed Your hand on me.
6 This extraordinary knowledge is beyond me.
It is lofty; I am unable to reach it.

7† Where can I go to escape Your Spirit?
Where can I flee from Your presence?
8 If I go up to heaven, You are there;
if I make my bed in •Sheol, You are there.
9 If I live at the eastern horizon
or settle at the western limits, [A]
10 even there Your hand will lead me;
Your right hand will hold on to me.
11 If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me,
and the light around me will be night" —
12 even the darkness is not dark to You.
The night shines like the day;
darkness and light are alike to You.

13 For it was You who created my inward parts; [B]
You knit me together in my mother's womb.
14 I will praise You
because I have been remarkably and wonderfully made.
Your works are wonderful,
and I know this very well.
15† My bones were not hidden from You
when I was made in secret,
when I was formed in the depths of the earth.
16† Your eyes saw me when I was formless;

all my days were written in Your book and planned
before a single one of them began.

17 God, how difficult [D] Your thoughts are
for me to comprehend;
how vast their sum is!
18 If I counted them,
they would outnumber the grains of sand;
when I wake up, I am still with You.

19 God, if only You would kill the wicked —
you bloodthirsty men, stay away from me —
20 who invoke You deceitfully.
Your enemies swear by You falsely.
21[†] LORD, don't I hate those who hate You,
and detest those who rebel against You?
22 I hate them with extreme hatred;
I consider them my enemies.

23 Search me, God, and know my heart;
test me and know my concerns.
24 See if there is any offensive [E] way in me;
lead me in the everlasting way.

PSALMS

Prayer for Rescue

140 Rescue me, Lord, from evil men.
Keep me safe from violent men
2 who plan evil in their hearts.
They stir up wars all day long.
3 They make their tongues
as sharp as a snake's bite;
viper's venom is under their lips.

ARTICLE

What Does the Bible Say About Abortion? ⇒

•*Selah*

4 Protect me, Lord,
from the clutches of the wicked.
Keep me safe from violent men
who plan to make me stumble. [A]
5 The proud hide a trap with ropes for me;
they spread a net along the path
and set snares for me.

Selah

6 I say to the Lord, "You are my God."
Listen, Lord, to my cry for help.
7 Lord God, my strong Savior,
You shield my head on the day of battle.
8 Lord, do not grant the desires of the wicked;
do not let them achieve their goals.
Otherwise, they will become proud.

Selah

9 When those who surround me rise up, [B]
may the trouble their lips cause overwhelm them.

10 Let hot coals fall on them.
Let them be thrown into the fire,
into the abyss, never again to rise.
11 Do not let a slanderer stay in the land.
Let evil relentlessly [C] hunt down a violent man.

12 I know that the LORD upholds
the just cause of the poor,
justice for the needy.
13 Surely the righteous will praise Your name;
the upright will live in Your presence.

PSALMS

Protection from Sin and Sinners

141 LORD, I call on You; hurry to help me.
Listen to my voice when I call on You.
2 May my prayer be set before You as incense,
the raising of my hands as the evening offering.

3 LORD, set up a guard for my mouth;
keep watch at the door of my lips.
4 Do not let my heart turn to any evil thing
or perform wicked acts
with men who commit sin.
Do not let me feast on their delicacies.
5 Let the righteous one strike me —
it is an act of faithful love;
let him rebuke me —
it is oil for my head;
let me [A] not refuse it.
Even now my prayer is against
the evil acts of the wicked. [B],
6 When their rulers [C] will be thrown off
the sides of a cliff,
the people [D] will listen to my words,
for they are pleasing.

7 As when one plows and breaks up the soil,
turning up rocks,
so our bones have been scattered
at the mouth of •Sheol.

8 But my eyes look to You, Lord GOD.
I seek refuge in You; do not let me die. [E],
9 Protect me from [F] the trap they have set for me,
and from the snares of evildoers.
10 Let the wicked fall into their own nets,
while I pass by safely.

PSALMS

A Cry of Distress

142 I cry aloud to the LORD;
I plead aloud to the LORD for mercy.
2 I pour out my complaint before Him;
I reveal my trouble to Him.
3 Although my spirit is weak within me,
You know my way.

Along this path I travel
they have hidden a trap for me.
4 Look to the right and see:
no one stands up for me;
there is no refuge for me;
no one cares about me.

5 I cry to You, LORD;
I say, “You are my shelter,
my portion in the land of the living.”
6 Listen to my cry,
for I am very weak.
Rescue me from those who pursue me,
for they are too strong for me.
7 Free me from prison
so that I can praise Your name.
The righteous will gather around me
because You deal generously with me.

PSALMS

A Cry for Help

143 LORD, hear my prayer.
In Your faithfulness listen to my plea,
and in Your righteousness answer me.
2 Do not bring Your servant into judgment,
for no one alive is righteous in Your sight.

3 For the enemy has pursued me,
crushing me to the ground,
making me live in darkness
like those long dead.
4 My spirit is weak within me;
my heart is overcome with dismay.

5 I remember the days of old;
I meditate on all You have done;
I reflect on the work of Your hands.
6 I spread out my hands to You;
I am like parched land before You.

•*Selah*

7 Answer me quickly, LORD;
my spirit fails.
Don’t hide Your face from me,
or I will be like those
going down to the •Pit.
8 Let me experience
Your faithful love in the morning,
for I trust in You.
Reveal to me the way I should go
because I long for You.
9 Rescue me from my enemies, LORD;
I come to You for protection.
10 Teach me to do Your will,
for You are my God.
May Your gracious Spirit
lead me on level ground.

11 Because of Your name, •Yahweh,
let me live.
In Your righteousness deliver me from trouble,
12† and in Your faithful love destroy my enemies.
Wipe out all those who attack me,
for I am Your servant.

PSALMS

A King’s Prayer

144 May the LORD, my rock, be praised,
who trains my hands for battle
and my fingers for warfare.
2 He is my faithful love and my fortress,
my stronghold and my deliverer.
He is my shield, and I take refuge in Him;
He subdues my people under me.

3 LORD, what is man, that You care for him,
the son of man, that You think of him?
4 Man is like a breath;
his days are like a passing shadow.

5 LORD, part Your heavens and come down.
Touch the mountains, and they will smoke.
6 Flash Your lightning and scatter the foe; [A]
shoot Your arrows and rout them.
7 Reach down [B] from heaven;
rescue me from deep water, and set me free
from the grasp of foreigners
8 whose mouths speak lies,
whose right hands are deceptive.

9 God, I will sing a new song to You;
I will play on a ten-stringed harp for You —
10 the One who gives victory to kings,
who frees His servant David
from the deadly sword.
11 Set me free and rescue me
from the grasp of foreigners
whose mouths speak lies,
whose right hands are deceptive.

12 Then our sons will be like plants
nurtured in their youth,
our daughters, like corner pillars
that are carved in the palace style.
13 Our storehouses will be full,

supplying all kinds of produce;
our flocks will increase by thousands
and tens of thousands in our open fields.
14 Our cattle will be well fed. [C]
There will be no breach in the walls,
no going into captivity, [D]
and no cry of lament in our public squares.
15 Happy are the people with such blessings.
Happy are the people whose God is •Yahweh.

PSALMS

Praising God's Greatness

145 I exalt You, my God the King,
and praise Your name forever and ever.
2 I will praise You every day;
I will honor Your name forever and ever.

3 •Yahweh is great and is highly praised;
His greatness is unsearchable.
4 One generation will declare Your works to the next
and will proclaim Your mighty acts.
5 I will speak of Your splendor and glorious majesty
and Your wonderful works.
6 They will proclaim the power of Your awe-inspiring acts,
and I will declare Your greatness.
7 They will give a testimony of Your great goodness
and will joyfully sing of Your righteousness.

8 The LORD is gracious and compassionate,
slow to anger and great in faithful love.
9 The LORD is good to everyone;
His compassion rests on all He has made.
10 All You have made will thank You, LORD;
the [A] godly will praise You.
11 They will speak of the glory of Your kingdom
and will declare Your might,
12 informing all •people of Your mighty acts
and of the glorious splendor of Your kingdom.
13 Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom;
Your rule is for all generations.
The LORD is faithful in all His words
and gracious in all His actions.

14 The LORD helps all who fall;
He raises up all who are oppressed. [B]
15 All eyes look to You,
and You give them their food at the proper time.
16 You open Your hand

and satisfy the desire of every living thing.

17 The LORD is righteous in all His ways
and gracious in all His acts.
18 The LORD is near all who call out to Him,
all who call out to Him with integrity.
19 He fulfills the desires of those who •fear Him;
He hears their cry for help and saves them.
20 The LORD guards all those who love Him,
but He destroys all the wicked.
21 My mouth will declare Yahweh's praise;
let every living thing
praise His holy name forever and ever.

PSALMS

The God of Compassion

146

•Hallelujah!
My soul, praise the Lord.
2 I will praise the Lord all my life;
I will sing to my God as long as I live.

3 Do not trust in nobles,
in man, who cannot save.
4 When his breath [A] leaves him,
he returns to the ground;
on that day his plans die.

5 Happy is the one whose help is the God of Jacob,
whose hope is in the Lord his God,
6 the Maker of heaven and earth,
the sea and everything in them.
He remains faithful forever,
7 executing justice for the exploited
and giving food to the hungry.
The Lord frees prisoners.
8 The Lord opens the eyes of the blind.
The Lord raises up those who are oppressed. [B]
The Lord loves the righteous.
9 The Lord protects foreigners
and helps the fatherless and the widow,
but He frustrates the ways of the wicked.

10 The Lord reigns forever;
•Zion, your God reigns for all generations.
Hallelujah!

PSALMS

God Restores Jerusalem

147 •Hallelujah!
How good it is to sing to our God,
for praise is pleasant and lovely.

2 The LORD rebuilds Jerusalem;
He gathers Israel's exiled people.
3 He heals the brokenhearted
and binds up their wounds.
4 He counts the number of the stars;
He gives names to all of them.
5 Our Lord is great, vast in power;
His understanding is infinite. [A]
6 The LORD helps the afflicted
but brings the wicked to the ground.

7 Sing to the LORD with thanksgiving;
play the lyre to our God,
8 who covers the sky with clouds,
prepares rain for the earth,
and causes grass to grow on the hills.
9 He provides the animals with their food,
and the young ravens, what they cry for.

10 He is not impressed by the strength of a horse;
He does not value the power [B] of a man.
11 The LORD values those who fear Him,
those who put their hope in His faithful love.

12 Exalt the LORD, Jerusalem;
praise your God, •Zion!
13 For He strengthens the bars of your gates
and blesses your children within you.
14† He endows your territory with prosperity; [C]
He satisfies you with the finest wheat.

15 He sends His command throughout the earth;
His word runs swiftly.

[16] He spreads snow like wool;
He scatters frost like ashes;
[17] He throws His hailstones like crumbs.
Who can withstand His cold?
[18] He sends His word and melts them;
He unleashes His winds, [D] and the waters flow.

[19] He declares His word to Jacob,
His statutes and judgments to Israel.
[20] He has not done this for any nation;
they do not know His judgments.
Hallelujah!

PSALMS

Creation's Praise of the Lord

148

•Hallelujah!
Praise the Lord from the heavens;
praise Him in the heights.
2 Praise Him, all His angels;
praise Him, all His •hosts.
3 Praise Him, sun and moon;
praise Him, all you shining stars.
4† Praise Him, highest heavens,
and you waters above the heavens.
5 Let them praise the name of •Yahweh,
for He commanded, and they were created.
6 He set them in position forever and ever;
He gave an order that will never pass away.

7 Praise the Lord from the earth,
all sea monsters and ocean depths,
8 lightning [A] and hail, snow and cloud,
powerful wind that executes His command,
9 mountains and all hills,
fruit trees and all cedars,
10 wild animals and all cattle,
creatures that crawl and flying birds,
11 kings of the earth and all peoples,
princes and all judges of the earth,
12 young men as well as young women,
old and young together.
13 Let them praise the name of Yahweh,
for His name alone is exalted.
His majesty covers heaven and earth.
14 He has raised up a •horn for His people,
resulting in praise to all His godly ones,
to the Israelites, the people close to Him.
Hallelujah!

PSALMS

Praise for God’s Triumph

149

•Hallelujah!
Sing to the LORD a new song,
His praise in the assembly of the godly.
2 Let Israel celebrate its Maker;
let the children of •Zion rejoice in their King.
3† Let them praise His name with dancing
and make music to Him with tambourine and lyre.
4 For •Yahweh takes pleasure in His people;
He adorns the humble with salvation.
5 Let the godly celebrate in triumphal glory;
let them shout for joy on their beds.

6† Let the exaltation of God be in their mouths [A]
and a double-edged sword in their hands,
7 inflicting vengeance on the nations
and punishment on the peoples,
8 binding their kings with chains
and their dignitaries with iron shackles,
9 carrying out the judgment decreed against them.
This honor is for all His godly people.
Hallelujah!

PSALMS

Praise the LORD

150 •Hallelujah!
Praise God in His sanctuary.
Praise Him in His mighty heavens.
2 Praise Him for His powerful acts;
praise Him for His abundant greatness.

3 Praise Him with trumpet blast;
praise Him with harp and lyre.
4 Praise Him with tambourine and dance;
praise Him with flute and strings.
5 Praise Him with resounding cymbals;
praise Him with clashing cymbals.

6 Let everything that breathes praise the Lord.
Hallelujah!

PROVERBS

Introduction to Proverbs

PROVERBS

The Purpose of Proverbs

1

The proverbs of Solomon son of David, king of Israel:
2 For learning what wisdom and discipline are;
for understanding insightful sayings;
3 for receiving wise instruction
in righteousness, justice, and integrity;
4 for teaching shrewdness to the inexperienced, [A],
knowledge and discretion to a young man —
5 a wise man will listen and increase his learning,
and a discerning man will obtain guidance —
6 for understanding a proverb or a parable, [B]
the words of the wise, and their riddles.

7† The •fear of the LORD
is the beginning of knowledge;
fools despise wisdom and discipline.

Avoid the Path of the Violent

8† Listen, my son, to your father's instruction,
and don't reject your mother's teaching,
9 for they will be a garland of grace on your head
and a gold chain around your neck.
10† My son, if sinners entice you,
don't be persuaded.
11 If they say — "Come with us!
Let's set an ambush and kill someone. [C]
Let's attack some innocent person just for fun! [D]
12 Let's swallow them alive, like •Sheol,
still healthy as they go down to the •Pit.
13 We'll find all kinds of valuable property
and fill our houses with plunder.
14 Throw in your lot with us,
and we'll all share our money" [E] —
15 my son, don't travel that road with them
or set foot on their path,

16 because their feet run toward trouble
and they hurry to commit murder. [F],
17 It is foolish to spread a net
where any bird can see it,
18 but they set an ambush to kill themselves; [G]
they attack their own lives.
19† Such are the paths of all who make profit dishonestly;
it takes the lives of those who receive it. [H]

Wisdom’s Plea

20† Wisdom calls out in the street;
she raises her voice in the public squares.
21 She cries out above [I] the commotion;
she speaks at the entrance of the city •gates:
22 “How long, foolish ones, will you love ignorance?
How long will you mockers enjoy mocking
and you fools hate knowledge?
23 If you respond to my warning, [J]
then I will pour out my spirit on you
and teach you my words.
24 Since I called out and you refused,
extended my hand and no one paid attention,
25 since you neglected all my counsel
and did not accept my correction,
26 I, in turn, will laugh at your calamity.
I will mock when terror strikes you,
27 when terror strikes you like a storm
and your calamity comes like a whirlwind,
when trouble and stress overcome you.
28 Then they will call me, but I won’t answer;
they will search for me, but won’t find me.
29 Because they hated knowledge,
didn’t choose to fear the Lord,
30 were not interested in my counsel,

and rejected all my correction,
31 they will eat the fruit of their way
and be glutted with their own schemes.
32 For the turning away of the inexperienced will kill them,
and the complacency of fools will destroy them.
33 But whoever listens to me will live securely
and be free from the fear of danger.”

PROVERBS

Wisdom's Worth

2 My son, if you accept my words
and store up my commands within you,
2 listening closely [A] to wisdom
and directing your heart to understanding;
3 furthermore, if you call out to insight
and lift your voice to understanding,
4 if you seek it like silver
and search for it like hidden treasure,
5† then you will understand the •fear of the LORD
and discover the knowledge of God.
6 For the LORD gives wisdom;
from His mouth come knowledge and understanding.
7 He stores up success [B] for the upright;
He is a shield for those who live with integrity
8 so that He may guard the paths of justice
and protect the way of His loyal followers.
9 Then you will understand righteousness, justice,
and integrity — every good path.
10 For wisdom will enter your mind,
and knowledge will delight your heart.
11 Discretion will watch over you,
and understanding will guard you,
12† rescuing you from the way of evil —
from the one who says perverse things,
13 from those who abandon the right paths
to walk in ways of darkness,
14 from those who enjoy doing evil
and celebrate perversion,
15 whose paths are crooked,
and whose ways are devious.
16 It will rescue you from a forbidden woman,
from a stranger [C] with her flattering talk,
17 who abandons the companion of her youth
and forgets the covenant of her God;

18 for her house sinks down to death
and her ways to the land of the departed spirits.
19 None return who go to her;
none reach the paths of life.
20 So follow the way of good people,
and keep to the paths of the righteous.
21 For the upright will inhabit the land,
and those of integrity will remain in it;
22 but the wicked will be cut off from the land,
and the treacherous uprooted from it.

PROVERBS

Trust the LORD

3 My son, don't forget my teaching,
but let your heart keep my commands;
2 for they will bring you
many days, a full life, [A], and well-being.
3† Never let loyalty and faithfulness leave you.
Tie them around your neck;
write them on the tablet of your heart.
4 Then you will find favor and high regard
in the sight of God and man.

5† Trust in the LORD with all your heart,
and do not rely on your own understanding;
6 think about Him in all your ways,
and He will guide you on the right paths. [B],
7 Don't consider yourself to be wise;
•fear the LORD and turn away from evil.
8 This will be healing for your body [C],
and strengthening for your bones.
9† Honor the LORD with your possessions
and with the first produce of your entire harvest;
10† then your barns will be completely filled,
and your vats will overflow with new wine.
11 Do not despise the LORD's instruction, my son,
and do not loathe His discipline;
12 for the LORD disciplines the one He loves,
just as a father, the son he delights in.

ARTICLE
What Is A Worldview? ⇒

Wisdom Brings Happiness

13† Happy is a man who finds wisdom
and who acquires understanding,
14 for she is more profitable than silver,
and her revenue is better than gold.
15 She is more precious than jewels;
nothing you desire compares with her.
16 Long life [D] is in her right hand;
in her left, riches and honor.
17† Her ways are pleasant,
and all her paths, peaceful.
18 She is a tree of life to those who embrace her,
and those who hold on to her are happy.

19 The LORD founded the earth by wisdom
and established the heavens by understanding.
20 By His knowledge the watery depths broke open,
and the clouds dripped with dew.

21† Maintain your competence and discretion.
My son, don't lose sight of them.
22 They will be life for you [E], ,
and adornment [F] for your neck.
23 Then you will go safely on your way;
your foot will not stumble.
24 When you lie down, you will not be afraid;
you will lie down, and your sleep will be pleasant.
25 Don't fear sudden danger
or the ruin of the wicked when it comes,
26 for the LORD will be your confidence [G]
and will keep your foot from a snare.

Treat Others Fairly

27 When it is in your power, [H]
don't withhold good from the one it belongs to.
28 Don't say to your neighbor, "Go away! Come back later.

I'll give it tomorrow" — when it is there with you.
29 Don't plan any harm against your neighbor,
for he trusts you and lives near you.
30 Don't accuse anyone without cause,
when he has done you no harm.
31 Don't envy a violent man
or choose any of his ways;
32 for the devious are detestable to the LORD,
but He is a friend [I] to the upright.
33 The LORD's curse is on the household of the wicked,
but He blesses the home of the righteous;
34 He mocks those who mock,
but gives grace to the humble.
35 The wise will inherit honor,
but He holds up fools to dishonor. [J]

PROVERBS

A Father's Example

4 Listen, my sons, to a father’s discipline,
and pay attention so that you may gain understanding,
2 for I am giving you good instruction.
Don’t abandon my teaching.
3 When I was a son with my father,
tender and precious to my mother,
4 he taught me and said:
“Your heart must hold on to my words.
Keep my commands and live.
5 Get wisdom, get understanding;
don’t forget or turn away from the words of my mouth.
6 Don’t abandon wisdom, and she will watch over you;
love her, and she will guard you.
7 Wisdom is supreme — so get wisdom.
And whatever else you get, get understanding.
8 Cherish her, and she will exalt you;
if you embrace her, she will honor you.
9 She will place a garland of grace on your head;
she will give you a crown of beauty.”

Two Ways of Life

10 Listen, my son. Accept my words,
and you will live many years.
11 I am teaching you the way of wisdom;
I am guiding you on straight paths.
12 When you walk, your steps will not be hindered;
when you run, you will not stumble.
13 Hold on to instruction; don’t let go.
Guard it, for it is your life.
14 Don’t set foot on the path of the wicked;
don’t proceed in the way of evil ones.
15 Avoid it; don’t travel on it.
Turn away from it, and pass it by.
16 For they can’t sleep

unless they have done what is evil;
they are robbed of sleep
unless they make someone stumble.
17 They eat the bread of wickedness
and drink the wine of violence.
18 The path of the righteous is like the light of dawn,
shining brighter and brighter until midday.
19 But the way of the wicked is like the darkest gloom;
they don't know what makes them stumble.

The Straight Path

20 My son, pay attention to my words;
listen closely to my sayings.
21 Don't lose sight of them;
keep them within your heart.
22 For they are life to those who find them,
and health to one's whole body.
23† Guard your heart above all else, [A]
for it is the source of life.
24 Don't let your mouth speak dishonestly,
and don't let your lips talk deviously.
25 Let your eyes look forward;
fix your gaze [B] straight ahead.
26 Carefully consider the path [C] for your feet,
and all your ways will be established.
27 Don't turn to the right or to the left;
keep your feet away from evil.

PROVERBS

Avoid Seduction

5 My son, pay attention to my wisdom;
listen closely [A] to my understanding
2 so that you may maintain discretion
and your lips safeguard knowledge.
3 Though the lips of the forbidden woman drip honey
and her words are [B] smoother than oil,
4 in the end she's as bitter as •wormwood
and as sharp as a double-edged sword.
5 Her feet go down to death;
her steps head straight for •Sheol.
6 She doesn't consider the path of life;
she doesn't know that her ways are unstable.

7 So now, my sons, listen to me,
and don't turn away from the words of my mouth.
8 Keep your way far from her.
Don't go near the door of her house.
9 Otherwise, you will give up your vitality to others
and your years to someone cruel;
10 strangers will drain your resources,
and your earnings will end up in a foreigner's house.
11 At the end of your life, you will lament
when your physical body has been consumed,
12 and you will say, "How I hated discipline,
and how my heart despised correction.
13 I didn't obey my teachers
or listen closely [C] to my mentors.
14 I am on the verge of complete ruin
before the entire community."

Enjoy Marriage

15† Drink water from your own cistern,
water flowing from your own well.
16 Should your springs flow in the streets,

streams of water in the public squares?
[17] They should be for you alone
and not for you to share with strangers.
[18] Let your fountain be blessed,
and take pleasure in the wife of your youth.
[19] A loving doe, a graceful fawn —
let her breasts always satisfy you;
be lost in her love forever.
[20] Why, my son, would you be infatuated
with a forbidden woman
or embrace the breast of a stranger?
[21] For a man's ways are before the LORD's eyes,
and He considers all his paths.
[22] A wicked man's iniquities entrap him;
he is entangled in the ropes of his own sin.
[23] He will die because there is no discipline,
and be lost because of his great stupidity.

PROVERBS

Financial Entanglements

6

My son, if you have put up security for your neighbor [A]
or entered into an agreement with [B] a stranger,
2 you have been trapped by the words of your lips [C] —
ensnared by the words of your mouth.
3 Do this, then, my son, and free yourself,
for you have put yourself in your neighbor’s power:
Go, humble yourself, and plead with your neighbor.
4 Don’t give sleep to your eyes
or slumber to your eyelids.
5 Escape like a gazelle from a hunter, [D]
like a bird from a fowler’s trap. [E]

Laziness

6 Go to the ant, you slacker!
Observe its ways and become wise.
7 Without leader, administrator, or ruler,
8 it prepares its provisions in summer;
it gathers its food during harvest.
9 How long will you stay in bed, you slacker?
When will you get up from your sleep?
10 A little sleep, a little slumber,
a little folding of the arms to rest,
11 and your poverty will come like a robber,
your need, like a bandit.

The Malicious Man

12 A worthless person, a wicked man
goes around speaking dishonestly,
13 winking his eyes, signaling with his feet,
and gesturing with his fingers.
14 He always plots evil with perversity in his heart —
he stirs up trouble.
15† Therefore calamity will strike him suddenly;

he will be shattered instantly — beyond recovery.

What the LORD Hates

16 The LORD hates six things;
in fact, seven are detestable to Him:
17 arrogant eyes, a lying tongue,
hands that shed innocent blood,
18 a heart that plots wicked schemes,
feet eager to run to evil,
19 a lying witness who gives false testimony,
and one who stirs up trouble among brothers.

Warning against Adultery

20† My son, keep your father's command,
and don't reject your mother's teaching.
21 Always bind them to your heart;
tie them around your neck.
22 When you walk here and there, they will guide you;
when you lie down, they will watch over you;
when you wake up, they will talk to you.
23 For a command is a lamp, teaching is a light,
and corrective discipline is the way to life.
24 They will protect you from an evil woman,
from the flattering [F] tongue of a stranger.
25 Don't lust in your heart for her beauty
or let her captivate you with her eyelashes.
26 For a prostitute's fee is only a loaf of bread, [G]
but an adulteress [H] goes after a precious life.
27 Can a man embrace fire [I]
and his clothes not be burned?
28† Can a man walk on burning coals
without scorching his feet?
29 So it is with the one who sleeps with
another man's wife;

no one who touches her will go unpunished.
30 People don't despise the thief if he steals
to satisfy himself when he is hungry.
31 Still, if caught, he must pay seven times as much;
he must give up all the wealth in his house.
32 The one who commits adultery [J] lacks sense;
whoever does so destroys himself.
33 He will get a beating [K] and dishonor,
and his disgrace will never be removed.
34 For jealousy enrages a husband,
and he will show no mercy when he takes revenge.
35 He will not be appeased by anything
or be persuaded by lavish gifts.

PROVERBS

7 My son, obey my words,
and treasure my commands.
2 Keep my commands and live;
protect my teachings
as the pupil of your eye.
3 Tie them to your fingers;
write them on the tablet of your heart.
4 Say to wisdom, "You are my sister,"
and call understanding your relative.
5 She will keep you from a forbidden woman,
a stranger with her flattering talk.

A Story of Seduction

6 At the window of my house
I looked through my lattice.
7 I saw among the inexperienced, [A]
I noticed among the youths,
a young man lacking sense.
8 Crossing the street near her corner,
he strolled down the road to her house
9 at twilight, in the evening,
in the dark of the night.
10 A woman came to meet him
dressed like a prostitute,
having a hidden agenda. [B]
11 She is loud and defiant;
her feet do not stay at home.
12 Now in the street, now in the squares,
she lurks at every corner.
13 She grabs him and kisses him;
she brazenly says [C] to him,
14 "I've made •fellowship offerings;
today I've fulfilled my vows.
15 So I came out to meet you,

to search for you, and I’ve found you.
16 I’ve spread coverings on my bed —
richly colored linen from Egypt.
17 I’ve perfumed my bed
with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon.
18 Come, let’s drink deeply of lovemaking until morning.
Let’s feast on each other’s love!
19 My husband isn’t home;
he went on a long journey.
20 He took a bag of money with him
and will come home at the time of the full moon.”
21 She seduces him with her persistent pleading;
she lures with her flattering [D] talk.
22 He follows her impulsively
like an ox going to the slaughter,
like a deer bounding toward a trap
23 until an arrow pierces its [E] liver,
like a bird darting into a snare —
he doesn’t know it will cost him his life.

24 Now, my sons, listen to me,
and pay attention to the words of my mouth.
25 Don’t let your heart turn aside to her ways;
don’t stray onto her paths.
26 For she has brought many down to death;
her victims are countless. [F]
27 Her house is the road to •Sheol,
descending to the chambers of death.

PROVERBS

Wisdom's Appeal

8 Doesn't Wisdom call out?
Doesn't Understanding make her voice heard?
2 At the heights overlooking the road,
at the crossroads, she takes her stand.
3 Beside the gates at the entry to [A] the city,
at the main entrance, she cries out:
4 "People, I call out to you;
my cry is to mankind.
5 Learn to be shrewd, you who are inexperienced;
develop common sense, you who are foolish.
6 Listen, for I speak of noble things,
and what my lips say is right.
7 For my mouth tells the truth,
and wickedness is detestable to my lips.
8 All the words of my mouth are righteous;
none of them are deceptive or perverse.
9 All of them are clear to the perceptive,
and right to those who discover knowledge.
10 Accept my instruction instead of silver,
and knowledge rather than pure gold.
11 For wisdom is better than jewels,
and nothing desirable can compare with it.
12 I, Wisdom, share a home with shrewdness
and have knowledge and discretion.
13 To •fear the LORD is to hate evil.
I hate arrogant pride, evil conduct,
and perverse speech.
14 I possess good advice and competence; [B]
I have understanding and strength.
15 It is by me that kings reign
and rulers enact just law;
16 by me, princes lead,
as do nobles and all righteous judges.
17† I love those who love me,
and those who search for me find me.

18 With me are riches and honor,
lasting wealth and righteousness.
19 My fruit is better than solid gold,
and my harvest than pure silver.
20 I walk in the way of righteousness,
along the paths of justice,
21 giving wealth as an inheritance to those who love me,
and filling their treasuries.

ARTICLE
Is Logic Arbitrary? ⇒

22† The LORD made [C] me
at the beginning of His creation, [D]
before His works of long ago.
23 I was formed before ancient times,
from the beginning, before the earth began.
24 I was born
when there were no watery depths
and no springs filled with water.
25 I was delivered
before the mountains and hills were established,
26 before He made the land, the fields,
or the first soil on earth.
27 I was there when He established the heavens,
when He laid out the horizon on the surface of the ocean,
28 when He placed the skies above,
when the fountains of the ocean gushed out,
29 when He set a limit for the sea
so that the waters would not violate His command,
when He laid out the foundations of the earth.
30 I was a skilled craftsman [E] beside Him.

I was His delight every day,
always rejoicing before Him.
31 I was rejoicing in His inhabited world,
delighting in the •human race.

32† And now, my sons, listen to me;
those who keep my ways are happy.
33 Listen to instruction and be wise;
don't ignore it.
34 Anyone who listens to me is happy,
watching at my doors every day,
waiting by the posts of my doorway.
35 For the one who finds me finds life
and obtains favor from the LORD,
36 but the one who misses me [F] harms himself;
all who hate me love death."

PROVERBS

Wisdom versus Foolishness

9 Wisdom has built her house;
she has carved out her seven pillars.
2 She has prepared her meat; she has mixed her wine;
she has also set her table.
3 She has sent out her female servants;
she calls out from the highest points of the city:
4 “Whoever is inexperienced, enter here! ”
To the one who lacks sense, she says,
5 “Come, eat my bread,
and drink the wine I have mixed.
6 Leave inexperience behind, and you will live;
pursue the way of understanding.
7† The one who corrects a mocker
will bring dishonor on himself;
the one who rebukes a wicked man will get hurt. [A]
8 Don’t rebuke a mocker, or he will hate you;
rebuke a wise man, and he will love you.
9 Instruct a wise man, and he will be wiser still;
teach a righteous man, and he will learn more.

10 “The •fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom,
and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.
11† For by Wisdom your days will be many,
and years will be added to your life.
12 If you are wise, you are wise for your own benefit;
if you mock, you alone will bear the consequences.”
13† The woman Folly is rowdy;
she is gullible and knows nothing.
14 She sits by the doorway of her house,
on a seat at the highest point of the city,
15 calling to those who pass by,
who go straight ahead on their paths:
16 “Whoever is inexperienced, enter here! ”
To the one who lacks sense, she says,
17 “Stolen water is sweet,

and bread eaten secretly is tasty! ”
18 But he doesn’t know that the departed spirits are there,
that her guests are in the depths of •Sheol.

PROVERBS

A Collection of Solomon’s Proverbs

10 Solomon's proverbs:

A wise son brings joy to his father,
but a foolish son, heartache to his mother.

2 Ill-gotten gains do not profit anyone,
but righteousness rescues from death.

3† The LORD will not let the righteous go hungry,
but He denies the wicked what they crave.

4 Idle hands make one poor,
but diligent hands bring riches.

5 The son who gathers during summer is prudent;
the son who sleeps during harvest is disgraceful.

6† Blessings are on the head of the righteous,
but the mouth of the wicked conceals violence.

7 The remembrance of the righteous is a blessing,
but the name of the wicked will rot.

8 A wise heart accepts commands,
but foolish lips will be destroyed.

9 The one who lives with integrity lives securely,
but whoever perverts his ways will be found out.

10 A sly wink of the eye causes grief,
and foolish lips will be destroyed.

11 The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life,
but the mouth of the wicked conceals violence.

12 Hatred stirs up conflicts,
but love covers all offenses.

13 Wisdom is found on the lips of the discerning,
but a rod is for the back of the one who lacks sense.

14 The wise store up knowledge,
but the mouth of the fool hastens destruction.

15 A rich man's wealth is his fortified city;
the poverty of the poor is their destruction.

16 The labor of the righteous leads to life;
the activity of the wicked leads to sin.

17 The one who follows instruction is on the path to life,
but the one who rejects correction goes astray.

18† The one who conceals hatred has lying lips,
and whoever spreads slander is a fool.

19 When there are many words, sin is unavoidable,
but the one who controls his lips is wise.

20 The tongue of the righteous is pure silver;
the heart of the wicked is of little value.

21 The lips of the righteous feed many,
but fools die for lack of sense.

22 The LORD's blessing enriches,
and struggle adds nothing to it. [A]

23 As shameful conduct is pleasure for a fool,
so wisdom is for a man of understanding.

24 What the wicked dreads will come to him,
but what the righteous desire will be given to them.

25 When the whirlwind passes,
the wicked are no more,
but the righteous are secure forever.

26 Like vinegar to the teeth and smoke to the eyes,
so the slacker is to the one who sends him on an errand.

27† The •fear of the LORD prolongs life, [B]
but the years of the wicked are cut short.

28 The hope of the righteous is joy,
but the expectation of the wicked comes to nothing.

29 The way of the LORD is a stronghold for the honorable,
but destruction awaits the malicious.

30† The righteous will never be shaken,
but the wicked will not remain on the earth.

31 The mouth of the righteous produces wisdom,
but a perverse tongue will be cut out.

32 The lips of the righteous know what is appropriate,
but the mouth of the wicked, only what is perverse.

PROVERBS

11 Dishonest scales are detestable to the LORD,
but an accurate weight is His delight.

2 When pride comes, disgrace follows,
but with humility comes wisdom.

3 The integrity of the upright guides them,
but the perversity of the treacherous destroys them.

4 Wealth is not profitable on a day of wrath,
but righteousness rescues from death.

5 The righteousness of the blameless clears his path,
but the wicked person will fall because of his wickedness.

6 The righteousness of the upright rescues them,
but the treacherous are trapped by their own desires.

7 When the wicked man dies,
his expectation comes to nothing,
and hope placed in wealth vanishes.

8 The righteous one is rescued from trouble;
in his place, the wicked one goes in.

9 With his mouth the ungodly destroys his neighbor,
but through knowledge the righteous are rescued.

10 When the righteous thrive, a city rejoices,
and when the wicked die, there is joyful shouting.

11 A city is built up by the blessing of the upright,
but it is torn down by the mouth of the wicked.

12 Whoever shows contempt for his neighbor lacks sense,
but a man with understanding keeps silent.

13 A gossip goes around revealing a secret,
but a trustworthy person keeps a confidence.

14 Without guidance, people fall,
but with many counselors there is deliverance.

15 If someone puts up security for a stranger,
he will suffer for it,
but the one who hates such agreements is protected.

16 A gracious woman gains honor,
but violent [B] men gain only riches.

17 A kind man benefits himself,
but a cruel man brings disaster on himself.

18 The wicked man earns an empty wage,
but the one who sows righteousness, a true reward.

19† Genuine righteousness leads to life,
but pursuing evil leads to death.

20 Those with twisted minds are detestable to the LORD,
but those with blameless conduct are His delight.

21 Be assured [C] that the wicked
will not go unpunished,
but the offspring of the righteous will escape.

22† A beautiful woman who rejects good sense
is like a gold ring in a pig's snout.

23 The desire of the righteous turns out well,
but the hope of the wicked leads to wrath.

24 One person gives freely,
yet gains more;
another withholds what is right,
only to become poor.

25 A generous person will be enriched,
and the one who gives a drink of water
will receive water.

26 People will curse anyone who hoards grain,
but a blessing will come to the one who sells it.

27 The one who searches for what is good finds favor,

but if someone looks for trouble, it will come to him.

28 Anyone trusting in his riches will fall,
but the righteous will flourish like foliage.

29 The one who brings ruin on his household
will inherit the wind,
and a fool will be a slave
to someone whose heart is wise.

30 The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life,
but violence takes lives.

31 If the righteous will be repaid on earth,
how much more the wicked and sinful.

PROVERBS

12 Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge,
but one who hates correction is stupid.

2 The good person obtains favor from the LORD,
but He condemns a man who schemes.

3 Man cannot be made secure by wickedness,
but the root of the righteous is immovable.

4 A capable wife [A] is her husband's crown,
but a wife who causes shame
is like rottenness in his bones.

5 The thoughts of the righteous are just,
but guidance from the wicked leads to deceit.

6 The words of the wicked are a deadly ambush,
but the speech of the upright rescues them.

7 The wicked are overthrown and perish,
but the house of the righteous will stand.

8 A man is praised for his insight,
but a twisted mind is despised.

9 Better to be dishonored, yet have a servant,
than to act important but have no food.

10 A righteous man cares about his animal's health,
but even the merciful acts of the wicked are cruel.

11 The one who works his land will have plenty of food,
but whoever chases fantasies lacks sense.

12 The wicked desire what evil men have, [B]
but the root of the righteous produces fruit.

13 An evil man is trapped by his rebellious speech,
but a righteous one escapes from trouble.

14 A man will be satisfied with good
by the words of his mouth,

and the work of a man's hands will reward him.

15 A fool's way is right in his own eyes,
but whoever listens to counsel is wise.

16 A fool's displeasure is known at once,
but whoever ignores an insult is sensible.

17 Whoever speaks the truth declares what is right,
but a false witness, deceit.

18 There is one who speaks rashly,
like a piercing sword;
but the tongue of the wise brings healing.

19 Truthful lips endure forever,
but a lying tongue, only a moment.

20 Deceit is in the hearts of those who plot evil,
but those who promote peace have joy.

21† No disaster overcomes the righteous,
but the wicked are full of misery.

22 Lying lips are detestable to the LORD,
but faithful people are His delight.

23 A shrewd person conceals knowledge,
but a foolish heart publicizes stupidity.

24 The diligent hand will rule,
but laziness will lead to forced labor.

25 Anxiety in a man's heart weighs it down,
but a good word cheers it up.

26 A righteous man is careful in dealing with his neighbor, [C]
but the ways of the wicked lead them astray.

27 A lazy man doesn't roast his game,
but to a diligent man, his wealth is precious.

28 There is life in the path of righteousness,

but another path leads to death. [D]

PROVERBS

13 A wise son responds to his father's discipline,
but a mocker doesn't listen to rebuke.

2 From the words of his mouth,
a man will enjoy good things,
but treacherous people have an appetite for violence.

3 The one who guards his mouth protects his life;
the one who opens his lips invites his own ruin.

4 The slacker craves, yet has nothing,
but the diligent is fully satisfied.

5 The righteous hate lying,
but the wicked act disgustingly and disgracefully.

6 Righteousness guards people of integrity, [A]
but wickedness undermines the sinner.

7 One man pretends to be rich but has nothing;
another pretends to be poor but has great wealth.

8 Riches are a ransom for a man's life,
but a poor man hears no threat.

9 The light of the righteous shines brightly,
but the lamp of the wicked is put out.

10 Arrogance leads to nothing but strife,
but wisdom is gained by those who take advice.

11 Wealth obtained by fraud will dwindle,
but whoever earns it through labor [B] will multiply it.

12 Delayed hope makes the heart sick,
but fulfilled desire is a tree of life.

13 The one who has contempt for instruction will pay the penalty,
but the one who respects a command will be rewarded.

14 A wise man's instruction is a fountain of life,
turning people away from the snares of death.

15 Good sense wins favor,
but the way of the treacherous never changes.

16 Every sensible person acts knowledgeably,
but a fool displays his stupidity.

17 A wicked messenger falls into trouble,
but a trustworthy courier brings healing.

18 Poverty and disgrace come to those
who ignore discipline,
but the one who accepts correction will be honored.

19 Desire fulfilled is sweet to the taste,
but to turn from evil
is an abomination to fools.

20 The one who walks with the wise will become wise,
but a companion of fools will suffer harm.

21 Disaster pursues sinners,
but good rewards the righteous.

22 A good man leaves an inheritance to his [C] grandchildren,
but the sinner's wealth is stored up for the righteous.

23 The uncultivated field of the poor yields abundant food,
but without justice, it is swept away.

24† The one who will not use the rod hates his son,
but the one who loves him disciplines him diligently.

25† A righteous man eats until he is satisfied,
but the stomach of the wicked is empty.

PROVERBS

14 Every wise woman builds her house,
but a foolish one tears it down with her own hands.

2 Whoever lives with integrity •fears the LORD,
but the one who is devious in his ways despises Him.

3 The proud speech of a fool brings a rod of discipline,
but the lips of the wise protect them.

4 Where there are no oxen, the feeding trough is empty, [A]
but an abundant harvest comes
through the strength of an ox.

5 An honest witness does not deceive,
but a dishonest witness utters lies.

6 A mocker seeks wisdom and doesn’t find it,
but knowledge comes easily to the perceptive.

7 Stay away from a foolish man;
you will gain no knowledge from his speech.

8 The sensible man’s wisdom is to consider his way,
but the stupidity of fools deceives them.

9 Fools mock at making restitution, [B]
but there is goodwill among the upright.

10 The heart knows its own bitterness,
and no outsider shares in its joy.

11 The house of the wicked will be destroyed,
but the tent of the upright will stand. [C]

12 There is a way that seems right to a man,
but its end is the way to death.

13 Even in laughter a heart may be sad,
and joy may end in grief.

14 The disloyal one will get what his conduct deserves,
and a good man, what his deeds deserve.

15[†] The inexperienced one believes anything,
but the sensible one watches [D] his steps.

16 A wise man is cautious and turns from evil,
but a fool is easily angered and is careless. [E]

17 A quick-tempered man acts foolishly,
and a man who schemes is hated.

18 The inexperienced inherit foolishness,
but the sensible are crowned with knowledge.

19 The evil bow before those who are good,
the wicked, at the gates of the righteous.

20 A poor man is hated even by his neighbor,
but there are many who love the rich.

21 The one who despises his neighbor sins,
but whoever shows kindness to the poor will be happy.

22 Don’t those who plan evil go astray?
But those who plan good find loyalty and faithfulness.

23 There is profit in all hard work,
but endless talk [F] leads only to poverty.

24 The crown of the wise is their wealth,
but the foolishness of fools produces foolishness.

25 A truthful witness rescues lives,
but one who utters lies is deceitful.

26 In the fear of the LORD one has strong confidence
and his children have a refuge.

27 The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life,
turning people away from the snares of death.

28 A large population is a king’s splendor,
but a shortage of people is a ruler’s devastation.

29 A patient person shows great understanding,
but a quick-tempered one promotes foolishness.

30 A tranquil heart is life to the body,
but jealousy is rottenness to the bones.

31 The one who oppresses the poor person insults his Maker,
but one who is kind to the needy honors Him.

32 The wicked one is thrown down by his own sin,
but the righteous one has a refuge in his death.

33 Wisdom resides in the heart of the discerning;
she is known even among fools.

34 Righteousness exalts a nation,
but sin is a disgrace to any people.

35 A king favors a wise servant,
but his anger falls on a disgraceful one.

PROVERBS

15 A gentle answer turns away anger,
but a harsh word stirs up wrath.

2 The tongue of the wise makes knowledge attractive,
but the mouth of fools blurts out foolishness.

3 The eyes of the LORD are everywhere,
observing the wicked and the good.

4 The tongue that heals is a tree of life,
but a devious tongue [A] breaks the spirit.

5 A fool despises his father's discipline,
but a person who accepts correction is sensible.

6 The house of the righteous has great wealth,
but trouble accompanies the income of the wicked.

7 The lips of the wise broadcast knowledge,
but not so the heart of fools.

8 The sacrifice of the wicked is detestable to the LORD,
but the prayer of the upright is His delight.

9 The LORD detests the way of the wicked,
but He loves the one who pursues righteousness.

10 Discipline is harsh for the one who leaves the path;
the one who hates correction will die.

11 •Sheol and •Abaddon lie open before the LORD —
how much more, human hearts.

12 A mocker doesn't love one who corrects him;
he will not consult the wise.

13 A joyful heart makes a face cheerful,
but a sad heart produces a broken spirit.

14 A discerning mind seeks knowledge,
but the mouth of fools feeds on foolishness.

15 All the days of the oppressed are miserable,

but a cheerful heart has a continual feast.

16 Better a little with the •fear of the LORD
than great treasure with turmoil.

17 Better a meal of vegetables where there is love
than a fattened ox with hatred.

18 A hot-tempered man stirs up conflict,
but a man slow to anger calms strife.

19 A slacker's way is like a thorny hedge,
but the path of the upright is a highway.

20 A wise son brings joy to his father,
but a foolish man despises his mother.

21 Foolishness brings joy to one without sense,
but a man with understanding walks a straight path.

22 Plans fail when there is no counsel,
but with many advisers they succeed.

23 A man takes joy in giving an answer; [B]
and a timely word — how good that is!

24 For the discerning the path of life leads upward,
so that he may avoid going down to Sheol.

25 The LORD destroys the house of the proud,
but He protects the widow's territory.

26 The LORD detests the plans of an evil man,
but pleasant words are pure.

27 The one who profits dishonestly troubles his household,
but the one who hates bribes will live.

28 The mind of the righteous person thinks before answering,
but the mouth of the wicked blurts out evil things.

29[†] The LORD is far from the wicked,
but He hears the prayer of the righteous.

30 Bright eyes cheer the heart;
good news strengthens [C] the bones.

31 One who [D] listens to life-giving rebukes
will be at home among the wise.

32 Anyone who ignores discipline despises himself,
but whoever listens to correction acquires good sense. [E]

33 The fear of the LORD is what wisdom teaches,
and humility comes before honor.

PROVERBS

16 The reflections of the heart belong to man,
but the answer of the tongue is from the LORD.

2 All a man's ways seem right to him,
but the LORD evaluates the motives. [A]

3 Commit your activities to the LORD,
and your plans will be achieved.

4† The LORD has prepared everything for His purpose —
even the wicked for the day of disaster.

5 Everyone with a proud heart is detestable to the LORD;
be assured, [B] he will not go unpunished.

6 Wickedness is •atoned for by loyalty and faithfulness,
and one turns from evil by the •fear of the LORD.

7† When a man's ways please the LORD,
He [C] makes even his enemies to be at peace with him.

8 Better a little with righteousness
than great income with injustice.

9† A man's heart plans his way,
but the LORD determines his steps.

10 God's verdict is on the lips of a king; [D]
his mouth should not give an unfair judgment.

11 Honest balances and scales are the LORD's;
all the weights in the bag are His concern.

12 Wicked behavior is detestable to kings,
since a throne is established through righteousness.

13 Righteous lips are a king's delight,
and he loves one who speaks honestly.

14 A king's fury is a messenger of death,
but a wise man appeases it.

15 When a king's face lights up, there is life;
his favor is like a cloud with spring rain.

16 Get wisdom —
how much better it is than gold!
And get understanding —
it is preferable to silver.

17 The highway of the upright avoids evil;
the one who guards his way protects his life.

18 Pride comes before destruction,
and an arrogant spirit before a fall.

19 Better to be lowly of spirit with the humble
than to divide plunder with the proud.

20 The one who understands a matter finds success,
and the one who trusts in the LORD will be happy.

21 Anyone with a wise heart is called discerning,
and pleasant speech [E] increases learning.

22 Insight is a fountain of life for its possessor,
but the discipline of fools is folly.

23 A wise heart instructs its mouth
and increases learning with its speech. [F]

24 Pleasant words are a honeycomb:
sweet to the taste [G] and health to the body. [H]

25 There is a way that seems right to a man,
but its end is the way to death.

26 A worker's appetite works for him
because his hunger [I] urges him on.

27 A worthless man digs up evil,
and his speech is like a scorching fire.

28 A contrary man spreads conflict,

and a gossip separates close friends.

29 A violent man lures his neighbor,
leading him in a way that is not good.

30 The one who narrows his eyes is planning deceptions;
the one who compresses his lips brings about evil.

31 Gray hair is a glorious crown;
it is found in the way of righteousness.

32† Patience is better than power,
and controlling one's temper, [J] than capturing a city.

33† The lot is cast into the lap,
but its every decision is from the LORD.

PROVERBS

17 Better a dry crust with peace
than a house full of feasting with strife.

2 A wise servant will rule over a disgraceful son
and share an inheritance among brothers.

3 A crucible for silver, and a smelter for gold,
and the LORD is the tester of hearts.

4 A wicked person listens to malicious talk; [A]
a liar pays attention to a destructive tongue.

5 The one who mocks the poor insults his Maker,
and one who rejoices over calamity
will not go unpunished.

6 Grandchildren are the crown of the elderly,
and the pride of sons is their fathers.

7 Eloquent words are not appropriate on a fool's lips;
how much worse are lies for a ruler.

8 A bribe seems like a magic stone to its owner;
wherever he turns, he succeeds.

9 Whoever conceals an offense promotes love,
but whoever gossips about it separates friends.

10 A rebuke cuts into a perceptive person
more than a hundred lashes into a fool.

11 An evil man seeks only rebellion;
a cruel messenger [B] will be sent against him.

12 Better for a man to meet a bear robbed of her cubs
than a fool in his foolishness.

13 If anyone returns evil for good,
evil will never depart from his house.

14 To start a conflict is to release a flood;
stop the dispute before it breaks out.

15 Acquitting the •guilty and condemning the just —
both are detestable to the LORD.

16 Why does a fool have money in his hand
with no intention of buying wisdom?

17 A friend loves at all times,
and a brother is born for a difficult time.

18 One without sense enters an agreement [C]
and puts up security for his friend.

19 One who loves to offend loves strife;
one who builds a high threshold invites injury.

20 One with a twisted mind will not succeed,
and one with deceitful speech will fall into ruin.

21 A man fathers a fool to his own sorrow;
the father of a fool has no joy.

22 A joyful heart is good medicine,
but a broken spirit dries up the bones.

23 A wicked man secretly takes a bribe
to subvert the course of justice.

24 Wisdom is the focus of the perceptive,
but a fool's eyes roam to the ends of the earth.

25 A foolish son is grief to his father
and bitterness to the one who bore him.

26 It is certainly not good to fine an innocent person
or to beat a noble for his honesty. [D]

27 The intelligent person restrains his words,
and one who keeps a cool head [E]
is a man of understanding.

28 Even a fool is considered wise when he keeps silent,
discerning when he seals his lips.

PROVERBS

18 One who isolates himself pursues selfish desires;
he rebels against all sound judgment.

2 A fool does not delight in understanding,
but only wants to show off his opinions. [A]

3 When a wicked man comes, contempt also does,
and along with dishonor, disgrace.

4 The words of a man's mouth are deep waters,
a flowing river, a fountain of wisdom. [B]

5 It is not good to show partiality to the •guilty
by perverting the justice due the innocent.

6 A fool's lips lead to strife,
and his mouth provokes a beating.

7 A fool's mouth is his devastation,
and his lips are a trap for his life.

8 A gossip's words are like choice food
that goes down to one's innermost being. [C]

9 The one who is truly lazy in his work
is brother to a vandal. [D]

10 The name of •Yahweh is a strong tower;
the righteous run to it and are protected. [E]

11 A rich man's wealth is his fortified city;
in his imagination it is like a high wall.

12 Before his downfall a man's heart is proud,
but humility comes before honor.

13 The one who gives an answer before he listens —
this is foolishness and disgrace for him.

14 A man's spirit can endure sickness,
but who can survive a broken spirit?

15 The mind of the discerning acquires knowledge,
and the ear of the wise seeks it.

16 A gift opens doors [F] for a man
and brings him before the great.

17 The first to state his case seems right
until another comes and cross-examines him.

18 Casting the lot ends quarrels
and separates powerful opponents.

19 An offended brother is harder to reach
than a fortified city,
and quarrels are like the bars of a fortress.

20 From the fruit of his mouth a man's stomach is satisfied;
he is filled with the product of his lips.

21 Life and death are in the power of the tongue,
and those who love it will eat its fruit.

22[†] A man who finds a wife finds a good thing
and obtains favor from the LORD.

23 The poor man pleads,
but the rich one answers roughly.

24 A man with many friends may be harmed,
but there is a friend who stays closer than a brother.

PROVERBS

19 Better a poor man who lives with integrity
than someone who has deceitful lips and is a fool.

2 Even zeal is not good without knowledge,
and the one who acts hastily [A] sins.

3 A man's own foolishness leads him astray,
yet his heart rages against the LORD.

4 Wealth attracts many friends,
but a poor man is separated from his friend.

5[†] A false witness will not go unpunished,
and one who utters lies will not escape.

6 Many seek a ruler's favor,
and everyone is a friend of one who gives gifts.

7 All the brothers of a poor man hate him;
how much more do his friends
keep their distance from him!
He may pursue them with words,
but they are not there. [B]

8 The one who acquires good sense [C] loves himself;
one who safeguards understanding finds success.

9 A false witness will not go unpunished,
and one who utters lies perishes.

10 Luxury is not appropriate for a fool —
how much less for a slave to rule over princes!

11 A person's insight gives him patience,
and his virtue is to overlook an offense.

12 A king's rage is like the roaring of a lion,
but his favor is like dew on the grass.

13 A foolish son is his father's ruin,
and a wife's nagging is an endless dripping.

14 A house and wealth are inherited from fathers,
but a sensible wife is from the LORD.

15 Laziness induces deep sleep,
and a lazy person will go hungry.

16 The one who keeps commands preserves himself;
one who disregards [D] his ways will die.

17 Kindness to the poor is a loan to the LORD,
and He will give a reward to the lender. [E]

18† Discipline your son while there is hope;
don't be intent on killing him. [F]

19 A person with great anger bears the penalty;
if you rescue him, you'll have to do it again.

20 Listen to counsel and receive instruction
so that you may be wise later in life. [G]

21† Many plans are in a man's heart,
but the LORD's decree will prevail.

22 What is desirable in a man is his fidelity;
better to be a poor man than a liar.

23† The •fear of the LORD leads to life;
one will sleep at night [H] without danger.

24 The slacker buries his hand in the bowl;
he doesn't even bring it back to his mouth.

25 Strike a mocker, and the inexperienced learn a lesson;
rebuke the discerning, and he gains knowledge.

26 The one who assaults his father and evicts his mother
is a disgraceful and shameful son.

27 If you stop listening to correction, my son,
you will stray from the words of knowledge.

28 A worthless witness mocks justice,
and a wicked mouth swallows iniquity.

29 Judgments are prepared for mockers,
and beatings for the backs of fools.

PROVERBS

20 Wine is a mocker, beer is a brawler,
and whoever staggers because of them is not wise.

2 A king's terrible wrath is like the roaring of a lion;
anyone who provokes him endangers himself.

ARTICLE

How Should A Christian Relate to a Scientific Naturalist? ⇒

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3 It is honorable for a man to resolve a dispute,
but any fool can get himself into a quarrel.

4 The slacker does not plow during planting season; [A]
at harvest time he looks, [B] and there is nothing.

5 Counsel in a man's heart is deep water;
but a man of understanding draws it out.

6 Many a man proclaims his own loyalty,
but who can find a trustworthy man?

7 The one who lives with integrity is righteous;
his children [C] who come after him will be happy.

8 A king sitting on a throne to judge
sifts out all evil with his eyes.

9† Who can say, "I have kept my heart pure;
I am cleansed from my sin"?

10 Differing weights and varying measures [D] —
both are detestable to the LORD.

11 Even a young man is known by his actions —
if his behavior is pure and upright.

12 The hearing ear and the seeing eye —

the LORD made them both.

13 Don’t love sleep, or you will become poor;
open your eyes, and you’ll have enough to eat.

14 “It’s worthless, it’s worthless! ” the buyer says,
but after he is on his way, he gloats.

15 There is gold and a multitude of jewels,
but knowledgeable lips are a rare treasure.

16 Take his garment,
for he has put up security for a stranger;
get collateral if it is for foreigners.

17 Food gained by fraud is sweet to a man,
but afterward his mouth is full of gravel.

18 Finalize plans with counsel,
and wage war with sound guidance.

19 The one who reveals secrets is a constant gossip;
avoid someone with a big mouth.

20 Whoever curses his father or mother —
his lamp will go out in deep darkness.

21 An inheritance gained prematurely
will not be blessed ultimately.

22 Don’t say, “I will avenge this evil! ”
Wait on the LORD, and He will rescue you.

23 Differing weights [E] are detestable to the LORD,
and dishonest scales are unfair.

24† A man’s steps are determined by the LORD,
so how can anyone understand his own way?

25 It is a trap for anyone to dedicate something rashly
and later to reconsider his vows.

26 A wise king separates out the wicked

and drives the threshing wheel over them.

27 The LORD's lamp sheds light on a person's life, [F]
searching the innermost parts. [G]

28 Loyalty and faithfulness deliver a king;
through loyalty he maintains his throne.

29 The glory of young men is their strength,
and the splendor of old men is gray hair.

30† Lashes and wounds purge away evil,
and beatings cleanse the innermost parts. [H]

PROVERBS

21 A king’s heart is like streams of water in the LORD’s hand:
He directs it wherever He chooses.

[2] All a man’s ways seem right to him,
but the LORD evaluates the motives. [A]

[3] Doing what is righteous and just
is more acceptable to the LORD than sacrifice.

[4] The lamp that guides the wicked —
haughty eyes and an arrogant heart — is sin.

[5] The plans of the diligent certainly lead to profit,
but anyone who is reckless certainly becomes poor.

[6] Making a fortune through a lying tongue
is a vanishing mist, [B] a pursuit of death. ,

[7] The violence of the wicked sweeps them away
because they refuse to act justly.

[8] A •guilty man’s conduct is crooked,
but the behavior of the innocent is upright.

[9] Better to live on the corner of a roof
than to share a house with a nagging wife.

[10] A wicked person desires evil;
he has no consideration [D] for his neighbor.

[11] When a mocker is punished,
the inexperienced become wiser;
when one teaches a wise man,
he acquires knowledge.

[12†] The Righteous One considers the house of the wicked;
He brings the wicked to ruin.

[13] The one who shuts his ears to the cry of the poor
will himself also call out and not be answered.

[14] A secret gift soothes anger,

and a covert bribe, [E] fierce rage.

15 Justice executed is a joy to the righteous
but a terror to those who practice iniquity.

16 The man who strays from the way of wisdom
will come to rest
in the assembly of the departed spirits.

17 The one who loves pleasure will become a poor man;
whoever loves wine and oil will not get rich.

18 The wicked are a ransom for the righteous,
and the treacherous, for [F] the upright.

19 Better to live in a wilderness
than with a nagging and hot-tempered wife.

20 Precious treasure and oil are in the dwelling of a wise person,
but a foolish man consumes them. [G]

21 The one who pursues righteousness and faithful love
will find life, righteousness, and honor.

22 A wise person went up against a city of warriors
and brought down its secure fortress.

23 The one who guards his mouth and tongue
keeps himself out of trouble.

24 The proud and arrogant person, named “Mocker,”
acts with excessive pride.

25 A slacker’s craving will kill him
because his hands refuse to work.
26 He is filled with craving [H] all day long,
but the righteous give and don’t hold back.

27 The sacrifice of a wicked person is detestable —
how much more so
when he brings it with ulterior motives!

28 A lying witness will perish,
but the one who listens will speak successfully.

29 A wicked man puts on a bold face,
but the upright man considers his way.

30 No wisdom, no understanding, and no counsel
will prevail against the LORD.

31 A horse is prepared for the day of battle,
but victory comes from the LORD.

PROVERBS

22 A good name is to be chosen over great wealth;
favor is better than silver and gold.

2 The rich and the poor have this in common: [A]
the LORD made them both. [B]

3 A sensible person sees danger and takes cover,
but the inexperienced keep going and are punished.

4 The result of humility is •fear of the LORD,
along with wealth, honor, and life.

5 There are thorns and snares on the path of the crooked;
the one who guards himself stays far from them.

6† Teach a youth about the way he should go;
even when he is old he will not depart from it.

7 The rich rule over the poor,
and the borrower is a slave to the lender.

8 The one who sows injustice will reap disaster,
and the rod of his fury will be destroyed.

9 A generous person [C] will be blessed,
for he shares his food with the poor.

10† Drive out a mocker, and conflict goes too;
then quarreling and dishonor will cease.

11 The one who loves a pure heart
and gracious lips — the king is his friend.

12 The LORD's eyes keep watch over knowledge,
but He overthrows the words of the treacherous.

13 The slacker says, "There's a lion outside!
I'll be killed in the public square! "

14 The mouth of the forbidden woman is a deep pit;
a man cursed by the LORD will fall into it.

15† Foolishness is tangled up in the heart of a youth;

the rod of discipline will drive it away from him.

16 Oppressing the poor to enrich oneself,
and giving to the rich — both lead only to poverty.

Words of the Wise

17† Listen closely, [D] pay attention to the words of the wise,
and apply your mind to my knowledge.
18 For it is pleasing if you keep them within you
and if [E] they are constantly on your lips.
19 I have instructed you today — even you —
so that your confidence may be in the LORD.
20 Haven't I written for you thirty sayings
about counsel and knowledge,
21 in order to teach you true and reliable words,
so that you may give a dependable report [F]
to those who sent you?

22 Don't rob a poor man because he is poor,
and don't crush the oppressed at the •gate,
23 for the LORD will take up their case
and will plunder those who plunder them.

24 Don't make friends with an angry man, [G]
and don't be a companion of a hot-tempered man,
25 or you will learn his ways
and entangle yourself in a snare.

26 Don't be one of those who enter agreements, [H]
who put up security for loans.
27 If you have no money to pay,
even your bed will be taken from under you.

28 Don't move an ancient boundary marker,
that your fathers set up.

29 Do you see a man skilled in his work?
He will stand in the presence of kings.

He will not stand in the presence of unknown men.

PROVERBS

23 When you sit down to dine with a ruler,
consider carefully what [A] is before you,
2 and put a knife to your throat
if you have a big [B] appetite;
3 don’t desire his choice food,
for that food is deceptive.

4 Don’t wear yourself out to get rich;
stop giving your attention to it.
5 As soon as your eyes fly to it, it disappears,
for it makes wings for itself
and flies like an eagle to the sky.

6 Don’t eat a stingy person’s bread, [C]
and don’t desire his choice food,
7 for it’s like someone calculating inwardly.
“Eat and drink,” he says to you,
but his heart is not with you.
8 You will vomit the little you’ve eaten
and waste your pleasant words.

9 Don’t speak to [D] a fool,
for he will despise the insight of your words.

10 Don’t move an ancient boundary marker,
and don’t encroach on the fields of the fatherless,
11 for their Redeemer is strong,
and He will take up their case against you.

12 Apply yourself to discipline
and listen to words of knowledge.

13† Don’t withhold discipline from a youth;
if you beat him with a rod, he will not die.
14 Strike him with a rod,
and you will rescue his life from •Sheol.

15 My son, if your heart is wise,
my heart will indeed rejoice.

16 My innermost being will cheer
when your lips say what is right.

17 Don't let your heart envy sinners;
instead, always •fear the LORD.
18 For then you will have a future,
and your hope will never fade.

19 Listen, my son, and be wise;
keep your mind on the right course.
20 Don't associate with those who drink too much wine
or with those who gorge themselves on meat.
21 For the drunkard and the glutton will become poor,
and grogginess will clothe them in rags.

22 Listen to your father who gave you life,
and don't despise your mother when [E] she is old.
23 Buy — and do not sell — truth,
wisdom, instruction, and understanding.
24 The father of a righteous son will rejoice greatly,
and one who fathers a wise son will delight in him.
25 Let your father and mother have joy,
and let her who gave birth to you rejoice.

26 My son, give me your heart,
and let your eyes observe my ways.
27 For a prostitute is a deep pit,
and a stranger is a narrow well;
28 indeed, she sets an ambush like a robber
and increases those among men who are unfaithful.

29† Who has woe? Who has sorrow?
Who has conflicts? Who has complaints?
Who has wounds for no reason?
Who has red eyes?
30 Those who linger over wine,
those who go looking for mixed wine.

31 Don’t gaze at wine because it is red,
when it gleams in the cup
and goes down smoothly.
32 In the end it bites like a snake
and stings like a viper.
33 Your eyes will see strange things,
and you will say absurd things. [F]
34 You’ll be like someone sleeping out at sea
or lying down on the top of a ship’s mast.
35 “They struck me, but I feel no pain!
They beat me, but I didn’t know it!
When will I wake up?
I’ll look for another drink.”

PROVERBS

24 Don't envy evil men
or desire to be with them,
[2] for their hearts plan violence,
and their words stir up trouble.

[3] A house is built by wisdom,
and it is established by understanding;
[4] by knowledge the rooms are filled
with every precious and beautiful treasure.

[5] A wise warrior is better than a strong one,
and a man of knowledge than one of strength;
[6] for you should wage war with sound guidance —
victory comes with many counselors.

[7] Wisdom is inaccessible to [A] a fool;
he does not open his mouth at the •gate.

[8] The one who plots evil
will be called a schemer.
[9] A foolish scheme is sin,
and a mocker is detestable to people.

[10] If you do nothing in a difficult time,
your strength is limited.
[11†] Rescue those being taken off to death,
and save those stumbling toward slaughter.
[12] If you say, "But we didn't know about this,"
won't He who weighs hearts consider it?
Won't He who protects your life know?
Won't He repay a person according to his work?

[13] Eat honey, my son, for it is good,
and the honeycomb is sweet to your palate;
[14] realize that wisdom is the same for you.
If you find it, you will have a future,
and your hope will never fade.

[15] Wicked man, don't set an ambush,

at the camp of the righteous man;
don’t destroy his dwelling.
16 Though a righteous man falls seven times,
he will get up,
but the wicked will stumble into ruin.

17 Don’t gloat when your enemy falls,
and don’t let your heart rejoice when he stumbles,
18 or the LORD will see, be displeased,
and turn His wrath away from him.

19 Don’t be agitated by evildoers,
and don’t envy the wicked.
20 For the evil have no future;
the lamp of the wicked will be put out.

21 My son, •fear the LORD, as well as the king,
and don’t associate with rebels, [B]
22 for destruction from them will come suddenly;
who knows what distress these two can bring?

23 These sayings also belong to the wise:

It is not good to show partiality in judgment.
24 Whoever says to the •guilty, “You are innocent” —
people will curse him, and tribes will denounce him;
25 but it will go well with those who convict the guilty,
and a generous blessing will come to them.

26 He who gives an honest answer
gives a kiss on the lips.

27 Complete your outdoor work, and prepare your field;
afterward, build your house.

28 Don’t testify against your neighbor without cause.
Don’t deceive with your lips.
29 Don’t say, “I’ll do to him what he did to me;
I’ll repay the man for what he has done.”

30 I went by the field of a slacker
and by the vineyard of a man lacking sense.
31 Thistles had come up everywhere,
weeds covered the ground,
and the stone wall was ruined.
32 I saw, and took it to heart;
I looked, and received instruction:
33 a little sleep, a little slumber,
a little folding of the arms to rest,
34 and your poverty will come like a robber,
your need, like a bandit.

PROVERBS

Hezekiah's Collection

25 These too are proverbs of Solomon,
which the men of Hezekiah, king of Judah, copied.

2 It is the glory of God to conceal a matter
and the glory of kings to investigate a matter.
3 As the heaven is high and the earth is deep,
so the hearts of kings cannot be investigated.

4 Remove impurities from silver,
and a vessel will be produced [A] for a silversmith.
5 Remove the wicked from the king's presence,
and his throne will be established in righteousness.

6 Don't brag about yourself before the king,
and don't stand in the place of the great;
7 for it is better for him to say to you, "Come up here! "
than to demote you in plain view of a noble. [B]

8 Don't take a matter to court hastily.
Otherwise, what will you do afterward
if your opponent [C] humiliates you?
9 Make your case with your opponent [D]
without revealing another's secret;
10 otherwise, the one who hears will disgrace you,
and you'll never live it down. [E]

11 A word spoken at the right time
is like gold apples on a silver tray. [F]
12 A wise correction to a receptive ear
is like a gold ring or an ornament of gold.

13 To those who send him, a trustworthy messenger
is like the coolness of snow on a harvest day;
he refreshes the life of his masters.

14 The man who boasts about a gift that does not exist
is like clouds and wind without rain.
15 A ruler can be persuaded through patience,

and a gentle tongue can break a bone.
16 If you find honey, eat only what you need;
otherwise, you'll get sick from it and vomit.
17 Seldom set foot in your neighbor's house;
otherwise, he'll get sick of you and hate you.

18 A man giving false testimony against his neighbor
is like a club, a sword, or a sharp arrow.
19 Trusting an unreliable person in a difficult time
is like a rotten tooth or a faltering foot.

20 Singing songs to a troubled heart
is like taking off clothing on a cold day
or like pouring vinegar on soda. [G]

21 If your enemy is hungry, give him food to eat,
and if he is thirsty, give him water to drink;
22 for you will heap burning coals on his head,
and the LORD will reward you.

23 The north wind produces rain,
and a backbiting tongue, angry looks.
24 Better to live on the corner of a roof
than to share a house with a nagging wife.
25 Good news from a distant land
is like cold water to a parched throat. [H]
26 A righteous person who yields to the wicked
is like a muddied spring or a polluted well.
27 It is not good to eat too much honey
or to seek glory after glory. [I]
28 A man who does not control his temper
is like a city whose wall is broken down.

PROVERBS

26 Like snow in summer and rain at harvest,
honor is inappropriate for a fool.
2 Like a flitting sparrow or a fluttering swallow,
an undeserved curse goes nowhere.
3† A whip for the horse, a bridle for the donkey,
and a rod for the backs of fools.
4 Don't answer a fool according to his foolishness
or you'll be like him yourself.
5 Answer a fool according to his foolishness
or he'll become wise in his own eyes.
6 The one who sends a message by a fool's hand
cuts off his own feet and drinks violence.
7 A proverb in the mouth of a fool
is like lame legs that hang limp.
8 Giving honor to a fool
is like binding a stone in a sling.
9 A proverb in the mouth of a fool
is like a stick with thorns,
brandished by [A] the hand of a drunkard.
10† The one who hires a fool or who hires those passing by
is like an archer who wounds everyone.
11 As a dog returns to its vomit,
so a fool repeats his foolishness.
12 Do you see a man who is wise in his own eyes?
There is more hope for a fool than for him.

13 The slacker says, "There's a lion in the road —
a lion in the public square! "
14 A door turns on its hinges,
and a slacker, on his bed.
15 The slacker buries his hand in the bowl;
he is too weary to bring it to his mouth.
16 In his own eyes, a slacker is wiser
than seven men who can answer sensibly.

17 A person who is passing by and meddles in a quarrel that's not his

is like one who grabs a dog by the ears.
[18] Like a madman who throws flaming darts and deadly arrows,
[19] so is the man who deceives his neighbor
and says, “I was only joking! ”

[20] Without wood, fire goes out;
without a gossip, conflict dies down.
[21] As charcoal for embers and wood for fire,
so is a quarrelsome man for kindling strife.
[22] A gossip’s words are like choice food
that goes down to one’s innermost being. [B]

[23] Smooth lips with an evil heart
are like glaze on an earthen vessel.
[24] A hateful person disguises himself with his speech
and harbors deceit within.
[25] When he speaks graciously, don’t believe him,
for there are seven abominations in his heart.
[26] Though his hatred is concealed by deception,
his evil will be revealed in the assembly.
[27] The one who digs a pit will fall into it,
and whoever rolls a stone —
it will come back on him.
[28] A lying tongue hates those it crushes,
and a flattering mouth causes ruin.

PROVERBS

27 Don’t boast about tomorrow,
for you don’t know what a day might bring.

2 Let another praise you, and not your own mouth —
a stranger, and not your own lips.

3 A stone is heavy and sand, a burden,
but aggravation from a fool outweighs them both.

4 Fury is cruel, and anger a flood,
but who can withstand jealousy?

5 Better an open reprimand
than concealed love.

6 The wounds of a friend are trustworthy,
but the kisses of an enemy are excessive.

7 A person who is full tramples on a honeycomb,
but to a hungry person, any bitter thing is sweet.

8 A man wandering from his home
is like a bird wandering from its nest.

9 Oil and incense bring joy to the heart,
and the sweetness of a friend is better than self-counsel.

10 Don’t abandon your friend or your father’s friend,
and don’t go to your brother’s house
in your time of calamity;
better a neighbor nearby than a brother far away.

11 Be wise, my son, and bring my heart joy,
so that I can answer anyone who taunts me.

12 A sensible person sees danger and takes cover;
the inexperienced keep going and are punished.

13 Take his garment,
for he has put up security for a stranger;
get collateral if it is for foreigners. [A]

14 If one blesses his neighbor
with a loud voice early in the morning,
it will be counted as a curse to him.

15 An endless dripping on a rainy day
and a nagging wife are alike.
16 The one who controls her controls the wind
and grasps oil with his right hand.

17 Iron sharpens iron,
and one man sharpens another. [B]

18 Whoever tends a fig tree will eat its fruit,
and whoever looks after his master will be honored.

19 As water reflects the face,
so the heart reflects the person.

20 •Sheol and •Abaddon are never satisfied,
and people's eyes are never satisfied.

21 A crucible for silver, and a smelter for gold,
and a man for the words of his praise. [C]

22 Though you grind a fool
in a mortar with a pestle along with grain,
you will not separate his foolishness from him.

23 Know well the condition of your flock,
and pay attention to your herds,
24 for wealth is not forever;
not even a crown lasts for all time.
25 When hay is removed and new growth appears
and the grain from the hills is gathered in,

ARTICLE

Notable Christian Apologist: Thomas Aquinas ⇒

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26 lambs will provide your clothing,
and goats, the price of a field;
27 there will be enough goat’s milk for your food —
food for your household
and nourishment for your female servants.

PROVERBS

28 The wicked flee when no one is pursuing them,
but the righteous are as bold as a lion.

2 When a land is in rebellion, it has many rulers,
but with a discerning and knowledgeable person, it endures.

3† A destitute leader who oppresses the poor
is like a driving rain that leaves no food.

4 Those who reject the law praise the wicked,
but those who keep the law battle against them.

5 Evil men do not understand justice,
but those who seek the LORD understand everything.

6 Better a poor man who lives with integrity
than a rich man who distorts right and wrong. [A]

7 A discerning son keeps the law,
but a companion of gluttons humiliates his father.

8 Whoever increases his wealth through excessive interest
collects it for one who is kind to the poor.

9 Anyone who turns his ear away from hearing the law —
even his prayer is detestable.

10 The one who leads the upright into an evil way
will fall into his own pit,
but the blameless will inherit what is good.

11 A rich man is wise in his own eyes,
but a poor man who has discernment sees through him.

12 When the righteous triumph,
there is great rejoicing, [B]
but when the wicked come to power,
people hide themselves.

13 The one who conceals his sins
will not prosper,
but whoever confesses and renounces them

will find mercy.

14 Happy is the one who is always reverent,
but one who hardens his heart falls into trouble.

15 A wicked ruler over a helpless people
is like a roaring lion or a charging bear.

16† A leader who lacks understanding
is very oppressive,
but one who hates dishonest profit
prolongs his life.

17 A man burdened by bloodguilt [C]
will be a fugitive until death.
Let no one help him.

18 The one who lives with integrity will be helped,
but one who distorts right and wrong [D]
will suddenly fall.

19 The one who works his land
will have plenty of food,
but whoever chases fantasies
will have his fill of poverty.

20 A faithful man will have many blessings,
but one in a hurry to get rich
will not go unpunished.

21† It is not good to show partiality —
yet a man may sin for a piece of bread.

22 A greedy man [E] is in a hurry for wealth;
he doesn't know that poverty will come to him.

23 One who rebukes a person will later find more favor
than one who flatters [F] with his tongue.

24 The one who robs his father or mother
and says, "That's no sin,"

is a companion to a man who destroys.

25 A greedy person provokes conflict,
but whoever trusts in the LORD will prosper.

26 The one who trusts in himself [G] is a fool,
but one who walks in wisdom will be safe.

27 The one who gives to the poor
will not be in need,
but one who turns his eyes away [H]
will receive many curses.

28 When the wicked come to power,
people hide,
but when they are destroyed,
the righteous flourish.

PROVERBS

29 One who becomes stiff-necked,
after many reprimands
will be shattered instantly —
beyond recovery.

2 When the righteous flourish, the people rejoice,
but when the wicked rule, people groan.

3 A man who loves wisdom brings joy to his father,
but one who consorts with prostitutes destroys his wealth.

4 By justice a king brings stability to a land,
but a man who demands "contributions"
demolishes it.

5 A man who flatters [A] his neighbor
spreads a net for his feet.

6 An evil man is caught by sin,
but the righteous one sings and rejoices.

7 The righteous person knows the rights [B] of the poor,
but the wicked one does not understand these concerns.

8 Mockers inflame a city,
but the wise turn away anger.

9 If a wise man goes to court with a fool,
there will be ranting and raving but no resolution. [C]

10 Bloodthirsty men hate an honest person,
but the upright care about him. [D]

11 A fool gives full vent to his anger, [E]
but a wise man holds it in check.

12 If a ruler listens to lies,
all his officials will be wicked.

13 The poor and the oppressor have this in common: [F]
the LORD gives light to the eyes of both.

14 A king who judges the poor with fairness —
his throne will be established forever.

15† A rod of correction imparts wisdom,
but a youth left to himself [G]
is a disgrace to his mother.

16 When the wicked increase, rebellion increases,
but the righteous will see their downfall.

17 Discipline your son, and it will bring you peace of mind
and give you delight.

18 Without revelation [H] people run wild,
but one who listens to instruction will be happy.

19† A slave cannot be disciplined by words;
though he understands, he doesn't respond.

20 Do you see a man who speaks too soon?
There is more hope for a fool than for him.

21 A slave pampered from his youth
will become arrogant [I] later on.

22 An angry man stirs up conflict,
and a hot-tempered man [J] increases rebellion.

23 A person's pride will humble him,
but a humble spirit will gain honor.

24 To be a thief's partner is to hate oneself;
he hears the curse but will not testify.

25 The fear of man is a snare,
but the one who trusts in the Lord is protected. [K]

26 Many seek a ruler's favor,
but a man receives justice from the Lord.

27 An unjust man is detestable to the righteous,
and one whose way is upright

is detestable to the wicked.

PROVERBS

The Words of Agur

30 The words of Agur son of Jakeh. The oracle. [A]
The man's oration to Ithiel, to Ithiel and Ucal:

2 I am more stupid than any other man, [B]
and I lack man's ability to understand.
3 I have not gained wisdom,
and I have no knowledge of the Holy One.
4 Who has gone up to heaven and come down?
Who has gathered the wind in His hands?
Who has bound up the waters in a cloak?
Who has established all the ends of the earth?
What is His name,
and what is the name of His Son —
if you know?
5 Every word of God is pure; [C]
He is a shield to those who take refuge in Him.
6 Don't add to His words,
or He will rebuke you, and you will be proved a liar.

7 Two things I ask of You;
don't deny them to me before I die:
8 Keep falsehood and deceitful words far from me.
Give me neither poverty nor wealth;
feed me with the food I need.
9 Otherwise, I might have too much
and deny You, saying, "Who is the LORD? "
or I might have nothing and steal,
profaning [D] the name of my God.

10 Don't slander a servant to his master
or he will curse you, and you will become •guilty.

11 There is a generation that curses its father
and does not bless its mother.
12 There is a generation that is pure in its own eyes,
yet is not washed from its filth.
13 There is a generation — how haughty its eyes

and pretentious its looks. [E]
14 There is a generation whose teeth are swords,
whose fangs are knives,
devouring the oppressed from the land
and the needy from among mankind.

15 The leech has two daughters: “Give, Give!”
Three things are never satisfied;
four never say, “Enough! ”:
16 •Sheol; a childless womb;
earth, which is never satisfied with water;
and fire, which never says, “Enough! ”

17 As for the eye that ridicules a father
and despises obedience to a mother,
may ravens of the valley pluck it out
and young vultures eat it.

18 Three things are beyond me;
four I can’t understand:
19 the way of an eagle in the sky,
the way of a snake on a rock,
the way of a ship at sea,
and the way of a man with a young woman.

20 This is the way of an adulteress:
she eats and wipes her mouth
and says, “I’ve done nothing wrong.”

21[†] The earth trembles under three things;
it cannot bear up under four:
22 a servant when he becomes king,
a fool when he is stuffed with food,
23 an unloved woman when she marries,
and a servant girl when she ousts her queen.

24 Four things on earth are small,
yet they are extremely wise:

[25] the ants are not a strong people,
yet they store up their food in the summer;
[26] hyraxes are not a mighty people,
yet they make their homes in the cliffs;
[27] locusts have no king,
yet all of them march in ranks;
[28] a lizard [F] can be caught in your hands,
yet it lives in kings' palaces.

[29] Three things are stately in their stride,
even four are stately in their walk:
[30] a lion, which is mightiest among beasts
and doesn't retreat before anything,
[31] a strutting rooster, [G] a goat,
and a king at the head of his army.

[32] If you have been foolish by exalting yourself
or if you've been scheming,
put your hand over your mouth.
[33] For the churning of milk produces butter,
and twisting a nose draws blood,
and stirring up anger produces strife.

PROVERBS

The Words of Lemuel

31 The words of King Lemuel,
an oracle [A] that his mother taught him:

2 What should I say, my son?
What, son of my womb?
What, son of my vows?
3 Don't spend your energy on women
or your efforts on those who destroy kings.
4 It is not for kings, Lemuel,
it is not for kings to drink wine
or for rulers to desire beer.
5 Otherwise, they [B] will drink,
forget what is decreed,
and pervert justice for all the oppressed. [C],
6† Give beer to one who is dying
and wine to one whose life is bitter.
7 Let him drink so that he can forget his poverty
and remember his trouble no more.
8 Speak up [D] for those who have no voice, [E],
for the justice of all who are dispossessed. [F]
9 Speak up, [G] judge righteously,
and defend the cause of [H] the oppressed and needy.

In Praise of a Capable Wife

10 Who can find a capable wife? [I],
She is far more precious than jewels.
11 The heart of her husband trusts in her,
and he will not lack anything good.
12† She rewards him with good, not evil,
all the days of her life.
13 She selects wool and flax
and works with willing hands.
14 She is like the merchant ships,
bringing her food from far away.

[15] She rises while it is still night
and provides food for her household
and portions [J] for her female servants.
[16] She evaluates a field and buys it;
she plants a vineyard with her earnings. [K],
[17] She draws on her strength [L]
and reveals that her arms are strong.
[18] She sees that her profits are good,
and her lamp never goes out at night.
[19] She extends her hands to the spinning staff,
and her hands hold the spindle.
[20] Her hands reach [M] out to the poor,
and she extends her hands to the needy.
[21] She is not afraid for her household when it snows,
for all in her household are doubly clothed.
[22] She makes her own bed coverings;
her clothing is fine linen and purple.
[23] Her husband is known at the city •gates,
where he sits among the elders of the land.
[24] She makes and sells linen garments;
she delivers belts [N] to the merchants.
[25] Strength and honor are her clothing,
and she can laugh at the time to come.
[26] She opens her mouth with wisdom
and loving instruction [O] is on her tongue.
[27] She watches over the activities of her household
and is never idle. [P]
[28] Her sons rise up and call her blessed.
Her husband also praises her:
[29] "Many women [Q] are capable,
but you surpass them all! "
[30] Charm is deceptive and beauty is fleeting,
but a woman who •fears the LORD will be praised.
[31] Give her the reward of her labor, [R]

and let her works praise her at the city gates.

ECCLESIASTES

Introduction to Ecclesiastes

ECCLESIASTES

Everything is Futile

1 The words of the Teacher, [A] son of David, king in Jerusalem.

2† "Absolute futility," says the Teacher.
"Absolute futility. Everything is futile."
3 What does a man gain for all his efforts
that he labors at under the sun?
4 A generation goes and a generation comes,
but the earth remains forever.
5 The sun rises and the sun sets;
panting, it returns to its place
where it rises.
6 Gusting to the south,
turning to the north,
turning, turning, goes the wind,
and the wind returns in its cycles.
7 All the streams flow to the sea,
yet the sea is never full.
The streams are flowing to the place,
and they flow there again.
8† All things [B] are wearisome;
man is unable to speak.
The eye is not satisfied by seeing
or the ear filled with hearing.
9 What has been is what will be,
and what has been done is what will be done;
there is nothing new under the sun.
10 Can one say about anything,
"Look, this is new"?
It has already existed in the ages before us.
11 There is no remembrance of those who [C] came before;
and of those who [D] will come after
there will also be no remembrance
by those who follow them.

The Limitations of Wisdom

[12] I, the Teacher, have been [E] king over Israel in Jerusalem. [13] I applied
my mind to seek and explore through wisdom all that is done under
heaven. God has given •people this miserable task to keep them occupied.
[14] I have seen all the things that are done under the sun and have found
everything to be futile, a pursuit of the wind. [F]

[15] What is crooked cannot be straightened;
what is lacking cannot be counted.

[16] I said to myself, [G] "Look, I have amassed wisdom far beyond all those
who were over Jerusalem before me, and my mind has thoroughly
grasped [H] wisdom and knowledge." [17] I applied my mind to know wisdom
and knowledge, madness and folly; I learned that this too is a pursuit of
the wind. [I]

[18] For with much wisdom is much sorrow;
as knowledge increases, grief increases.

ECCLESIASTES

The Emptiness of Pleasure

2 I said to myself, “Go ahead, I will test you with pleasure; enjoy what is
good.” But it turned out to be futile. 2 I said about laughter, “It is
madness,” and about pleasure, “What does this accomplish? ” 3[†] I explored
with my mind how to let my body enjoy life [A] with wine and how to grasp
folly — my mind still guiding me with wisdom — until I could see what is
good for •people to do under heaven during the few days of their lives.

The Emptiness of Possessions

4 I increased my achievements. I built houses and planted vineyards for
myself. 5 I made gardens and parks for myself and planted every kind of
fruit tree in them. 6 I constructed reservoirs of water for myself from which
to irrigate a grove of flourishing trees. 7 I acquired male and female
servants and had slaves who were born in my house. I also owned many
herds of cattle and flocks, more than all who were before me in Jerusalem.
8 I also amassed silver and gold for myself, and the treasure of kings and
provinces. I gathered male and female singers for myself, and many
concubines, the delights of men. 9 So I became great and surpassed all who
were before me in Jerusalem; my wisdom also remained with me. 10 All
that my eyes desired, I did not deny them. I did not refuse myself any
pleasure, for I took pleasure in all my struggles. This was my reward for all
my struggles. 11 When I considered all that I had accomplished [C] and what
I had labored to achieve, I found everything to be futile and a pursuit of the
wind. There was nothing to be gained under the sun.

The Relative Value of Wisdom

12 Then I turned to consider wisdom, madness, and folly, for what will
the man be like who comes after the king? He will do what has already
been done. 13 And I realized that there is an advantage to wisdom over
folly, like the advantage of light over darkness.

14 The wise man has eyes in his head,
but the fool walks in darkness.

Yet I also knew that one fate comes to them both. 15 So I said to myself,
"What happens to the fool will also happen to me. Why then have I been
overly wise? " And I said to myself that this is also futile. 16 For, just like
the fool, there is no lasting remembrance of the wise man, since in the days
to come both will be forgotten. How is it that the wise man dies just like the
fool? 17 Therefore, I hated life because the work that was done under the
sun was distressing to me. For everything is futile and a pursuit of the wind.

The Emptiness of Work

18 I hated all my work that I labored at under the sun because I must
leave it to the man who comes after me. 19 And who knows whether he will
be a wise man or a fool? Yet he will take over all my work that I labored at
skillfully under the sun. This too is futile. 20 So I began to give myself
over [D] to despair concerning all my work that I had labored at under the
sun. 21 When there is a man whose work was done with wisdom,
knowledge, and skill, and he must give his portion to a man who has not
worked for it, this too is futile and a great wrong. 22 For what does a man
get with all his work and all his efforts that he labors at under the sun?
23 For all his days are filled with grief, and his occupation is sorrowful;
even at night, his mind does not rest. This too is futile.

24 There is nothing better for man than to eat, drink, and enjoy his work.
I have seen that even this is from God's hand, 25 because who can eat and
who can enjoy life apart from Him? 26 For to the man who is pleasing in
His sight, He gives wisdom, knowledge, and joy, but to the sinner He gives
the task of gathering and accumulating in order to give to the one who is
pleasing in God's sight. This too is futile and a pursuit of the wind.

ECCLESIASTES

The Mystery of Time

3 There is an occasion for everything,
and a time for every activity under heaven:
2 a time to give birth and a time to die;
a time to plant and a time to uproot; [A]
3 a time to kill and a time to heal;
a time to tear down and a time to build;
4 a time to weep and a time to laugh;
a time to mourn and a time to dance;
5 a time to throw stones and a time to gather stones;
a time to embrace and a time to avoid embracing;
6 a time to search and a time to count as lost;
a time to keep and a time to throw away;
7 a time to tear and a time to sew;
a time to be silent and a time to speak;
8 a time to love and a time to hate;
a time for war and a time for peace.

9 What does the worker gain from his struggles? 10 I have seen the task
that God has given •people to keep them occupied. 11 He has made
everything appropriate [B] in its time. He has also put eternity in their
hearts, [C] but man cannot discover the work God has done from beginning to
end. 12 I know that there is nothing better for them than to rejoice and
enjoy the [D] good life. 13 It is also the gift of God whenever anyone eats,
drinks, and enjoys all his efforts. 14 I know that all God does will last
forever; there is no adding to it or taking from it. God works so that people
will be in awe of Him. 15 Whatever is, has already been, and whatever will
be, already is. God repeats what has passed. [E]

The Mystery of Injustice and Death

16 I also observed under the sun: there is wickedness at the place of
judgment and there is wickedness at the place of righteousness. 17 I said to
myself, "God will judge the righteous and the wicked, since there is a time
for every activity and every work." 18 I said to myself, "This happens

concerning people, so that God may test them and they may see for themselves that they are like animals." [19†] For the fate of people and the fate of animals is the same. As one dies, so dies the other; they all have the same breath. People have no advantage over animals since everything is futile. [20] All are going to the same place; all come from dust, and all return to dust. [21] Who knows if the spirit of people rises upward and the spirit of animals goes downward to the earth? [22] I have seen that there is nothing better than for a person to enjoy his activities because that is his reward. For who can enable him to see what will happen after he dies? [F]

ECCLESIASTES

4 Again, I observed all the acts of oppression being done under the sun.
Look at the tears of those who are oppressed; they have no one to
comfort them. Power is with those who oppress them; they have no one to
comfort them. 2† So I admired the dead, who have already died, more than
the living, who are still alive. 3 But better than either of them is the one who
has not yet existed, who has not seen the evil activity that is done under the
sun.

The Loneliness of Wealth

4 I saw that all labor and all skillful work is due to a man's jealousy of his
friend. This too is futile and a pursuit of the wind.

5† The fool folds his arms
and consumes his own flesh.
6 Better one handful with rest
than two handfuls with effort and a pursuit of the wind.

7 Again, I saw futility under the sun: 8 There is a person without a
companion, [A] without even a son or brother, and though there is no end to
all his struggles, his eyes are still not content with riches. "So who am I
struggling for," he asks, "and depriving myself from good? " This too is
futile and a miserable task.

9 Two are better than one because they have a good reward for their
efforts. 10 For if either falls, his companion can lift him up; but pity the one
who falls without another to lift him up. 11 Also, if two lie down together,
they can keep warm; but how can one person alone keep warm? 12 And if
someone overpowers one person, two can resist him. A cord of three
strands is not easily broken.

13 Better is a poor but wise youth than an old but foolish king who no
longer pays attention to warnings. 14 For he came from prison to be king,
even though he was born poor in his kingdom. 15 I saw all the living, who
move about under the sun, follow [B] a second youth who succeeds him.

16 There is no limit to all the •people who were before them, yet those who come later will not rejoice in him. This too is futile and a pursuit of the wind.

ECCLESIASTES

Chapter 5 *Caution in God's Presence*

[1]Guard your steps when you go to the house of God. Better to draw near in
obedience than to offer the sacrifice as fools do, for they ignorantly do
wrong. [2] Do not be hasty to speak, and do not be impulsive to make a
speech before God. God is in heaven and you are on earth, so let your
words be few. [3] For dreams result from much work and a fool's voice from
many words. [4] When you make a vow to God, don't delay fulfilling it,
because He does not delight in fools. Fulfill what you vow. [5] Better that you
do not vow than that you vow and not fulfill it. [6] Do not let your mouth
bring •guilt on you, and do not say in the presence of the messenger that it
was a mistake. Why should God be angry with your words and destroy the
work of your hands? [7] For many dreams bring futility, so do many words.
Therefore, •fear God.

The Realities of Wealth

[8†] If you see oppression of the poor and perversion of justice and
righteousness in the province, don't be astonished at the situation, because
one official protects another official, and higher officials protect them.
[9] The profit from the land is taken by all; the king is served by the field. [A]

[10] The one who loves money is never satisfied with money, and whoever
loves wealth is never satisfied with income. This too is futile. [11] When good
things increase, the ones who consume them multiply; what, then, is the
profit to the owner, except to gaze at them with his eyes? [12] The sleep of the
worker is sweet, whether he eats little or much, but the abundance of the
rich permits him no sleep.

[13] There is a sickening tragedy I have seen under the sun: wealth kept by
its owner to his harm. [14] That wealth was lost in a bad venture, so when he
fathered a son, he was empty-handed. [15] As he came from his mother's
womb, so he will go again, naked as he came; he will take nothing for his
efforts that he can carry in his hands. [16] This too is a sickening tragedy:
exactly as he comes, so he will go. What does the one gain who struggles

for the wind? [17] What is more, he eats in darkness all his days, with much
sorrow, sickness, and anger.

[18]† Here is what I have seen to be good: it is appropriate to eat, drink,
and experience good in all the labor one does under the sun during the few
days of his life God has given him, because that is his reward. [19] God has
also given riches and wealth to every man, and He has allowed him to
enjoy them, take his reward, and rejoice in his labor. This is a gift of God,
[20] for he does not often consider the days of his life because God keeps him
occupied with the joy of his heart.

ECCLESIASTES

6 Here is a tragedy I have observed under the sun, and it weighs heavily
on humanity: [A] 2 God gives a man riches, wealth, and honor so that he
lacks nothing of all he desires for himself, but God does not allow him to
enjoy them. Instead, a stranger will enjoy them. This is futile and a
sickening tragedy. 3 A man may father a hundred children and live many
years. No matter how long he lives, [B] if he is not satisfied by good things
and does not even have a proper burial, I say that a stillborn child is better
off than he. 4[†] For he comes in futility and he goes in darkness, and his
name is shrouded in darkness. 5 Though a stillborn child does not see the
sun and is not conscious, it has more rest than he. 6 And if he lives a
thousand years twice, but does not experience happiness, do not both go to
the same place?

7 All man's labor is for his stomach, [C]
yet the appetite is never satisfied.

8 What advantage then does the wise man have over the fool? What
advantage is there for the poor person who knows how to conduct himself
before others? 9 Better what the eyes see than wandering desire. This too is
futile and a pursuit of the wind.

10 Whatever exists was given its name long ago, [D] and it is known what
man is. But he is not able to contend with the One stronger than he. 11 For
when there are many words, they increase futility. What is the advantage
for man? 12 For who knows what is good for man in life, in the few days of
his futile life that he spends like a shadow? Who can tell man what will
happen after him under the sun?

ECCLESIASTES

Wise Sayings

7 A good name is better than fine perfume,
and the day of one's death than the day of one's birth.
2 It is better to go to a house of mourning
than to go to a house of feasting,
since that is the end of all mankind,
and the living should take it to heart.
3 Grief is better than laughter,
for when a face is sad, a heart may be glad.
4 The heart of the wise is in a house of mourning,
but the heart of fools is in a house of pleasure.
5 It is better to listen to rebuke from a wise person
than to listen to the song of fools,
6 for like the crackling of burning thorns under the pot,
so is the laughter of the fool.
This too is futile.
7 Surely, the practice of extortion turns a wise person into a fool,
and a bribe destroys the mind.
8 The end of a matter is better than its beginning;
a patient spirit is better than a proud spirit.
9 Don't let your spirit rush to be angry,
for anger abides in the heart of fools.
10 Don't say, "Why were the former days better than these? "
since it is not wise of you to ask this.
11 Wisdom is as good as an inheritance
and an advantage to those who see the sun,
12 because wisdom is protection as money is protection,
and the advantage of knowledge
is that wisdom preserves the life of its owner.
13 Consider the work of God,
for who can straighten out
what He has made crooked?

14 In the day of prosperity be joyful, but in the day of adversity, consider: God has made the one as well as the other, so that man cannot discover anything that will come after him.

Avoiding Extremes

15 In my futile life [A] I have seen everything: there is a righteous man who perishes in spite of his righteousness, and there is a wicked man who lives long in spite of his evil. 16† Don't be excessively righteous, and don't be overly wise. Why should you destroy yourself? 17 Don't be excessively wicked, and don't be foolish. Why should you die before your time? 18 It is good that you grasp the one and do not let the other slip from your hand. For the one who •fears God will end up with both of them.

19 Wisdom makes the wise man stronger
than ten rulers of a city.
20 There is certainly no righteous man on the earth
who does good and never sins.

21 Don't pay attention [B] to everything •people say, or you may hear your servant cursing you, 22 for you know that many times you yourself have cursed others.

What the Teacher Found

23 I have tested all this by wisdom. I resolved, "I will be wise," but it was beyond me. 24 What exists is beyond reach and very deep. Who can discover it? 25 I turned my thoughts to know, explore, and seek wisdom and an explanation for things, and to know that wickedness is stupidity and folly is madness. 26† And I find more bitter than death the woman who is a trap, her heart a net, and her hands chains. The one who pleases God will escape her, but the sinner will be captured by her. 27 "Look," says the Teacher, "I have discovered this by adding one thing to another to find out the explanation, 28 which my soul continually searches for but does not find: among a thousand people I have found one true man, but among all these I have not found a true woman. 29 Only see this: I have discovered that God made people upright, but they pursued many schemes."

ECCLESIASTES

Wisdom, Authorities, and Inequities

8 Who is like the wise person, and who knows the interpretation of a
matter? A man's wisdom brightens his face, and the sternness of his face
is changed.

2 Keep the king's command because of your oath made before God.
3 Do not be in a hurry; leave his presence, and don't persist in a bad cause,
since he will do whatever he wants. 4 For the king's word is authoritative,
and who can say to him, "What are you doing? " 5 The one who keeps a
command will not experience anything harmful, and a wise heart knows
the right time and procedure. 6 For every activity there is a right time and
procedure, even though man's troubles are heavy on him. 7 Yet no one
knows what will happen because who can tell him what will happen? 8 No
one has authority over the wind [A] to restrain it, and there is no authority
over the day of death; there is no furlough in battle, and wickedness will
not allow those who practice it to escape. 9 All this I have seen, applying
my mind to all the work that is done under the sun, at a time when one man
has authority over another to his harm.

10 In such circumstances, I saw the wicked buried. They came and went
from the holy place, and they were praised in the city where they did so.
This too is futile. 11 Because the sentence against a criminal act is not
carried out quickly, the heart of •people is filled with the desire to commit
crime. 12 Although a sinner commits crime a hundred times and prolongs
his life, yet I also know that it will go well with God-fearing people, for
they are reverent before Him. 13 However, it will not go well with the
wicked, and they will not lengthen their days like a shadow, for they are
not reverent before God.

14 There is a futility that is done on the earth: there are righteous people
who get what the actions of the wicked deserve, and there are wicked
people who get what the actions of the righteous deserve. I say that this too
is futile. 15 So I commended enjoyment because there is nothing better for
man under the sun than to eat, drink, and enjoy himself, for this will
accompany him in his labor during the days of his life that God gives him
under the sun.

16 When I applied my mind to know wisdom and to observe the activity
that is done on the earth (even though one's eyes do not close in sleep day
or night), 17 I observed all the work of God and concluded that man is
unable to discover the work that is done under the sun. Even though a man
labors hard to explore it, he cannot find it; even if the wise man claims to
know it, he is unable to discover it.

ECCLESIASTES

Enjoy Life Despite Death

9 Indeed, I took all this to heart and explained it all: the righteous, the
wise, and their works are in God’s hands. •People don’t know whether
to expect love or hate. Everything lies ahead of them. [2†] Everything is the
same for everyone: there is one fate for the righteous and the wicked, for
the good and the bad, for the •clean and the •unclean, for the one who
sacrifices and the one who does not sacrifice. As it is for the good, so it is
for the sinner; as for the one who takes an oath, so for the one who fears an
oath. [3] This is an evil in all that is done under the sun: there is one fate for
everyone. In addition, the hearts of people are full of evil, and madness is in
their hearts while they live — after that they go to the dead. [4] But there is
hope for whoever is joined with all the living, since a live dog is better than
a dead lion. [5] For the living know that they will die, but the dead don’t
know anything. There is no longer a reward for them because the memory
of them is forgotten. [6] Their love, their hate, and their envy have already
disappeared, and there is no longer a portion for them in all that is done
under the sun.

[7] Go, eat your bread with pleasure, and drink your wine with a cheerful
heart, for God has already accepted your works. [8†] Let your clothes be
white all the time, and never let oil be lacking on your head. [9] Enjoy life
with the wife you love all the days of your fleeting [A] life, which has been
given to you under the sun, all your fleeting days. For that is your portion in
life and in your struggle under the sun. [10] Whatever your hands find to do,
do with all your strength, because there is no work, planning, knowledge,
or wisdom in •Sheol where you are going.

The Limitations of Wisdom

[11] Again I saw under the sun that the race is not to the swift, or the battle
to the strong, or bread to the wise, or riches to the discerning, or favor to
the skillful; rather, time and chance happen to all of them. [12] For man
certainly does not know his time: like fish caught in a cruel net or like birds
caught in a trap, so people are trapped in an evil time as it suddenly falls
on them.

[13] I have observed that this also is wisdom under the sun, and it is
significant to me: [14] There was a small city with few men in it. A great king
came against it, surrounded it, and built large siege works against it. [15] Now
a poor wise man was found in the city, and he delivered the city by his
wisdom. Yet no one remembered that poor man. [16] And I said, “Wisdom is
better than strength, but the wisdom of the poor man is despised, and his
words are not heeded.”

[17] The calm words of the wise are heeded
more than the shouts of a ruler over fools.
[18] Wisdom is better than weapons of war,
but one sinner can destroy much good.

ECCLESIASTES

The Burden of Folly

10 Dead flies make a perfumer's oil ferment and stink;
so a little folly outweighs wisdom and honor.
2 A wise man's heart goes to the [A] right,
but a fool's heart to the [B] left.
3 Even when the fool walks along the road, his heart lacks sense,
and he shows everyone he is a fool.
4 If the ruler's anger rises against you, don't leave your place,
for calmness puts great offenses to rest.

5 There is an evil I have seen under the sun, an error proceeding from the
presence of the ruler:

6 The fool is appointed to great heights,
but the rich remain in lowly positions.
7† I have seen slaves on horses,
but princes walking on the ground like slaves.

8 The one who digs a pit may fall into it,
and the one who breaks through a wall may be bitten by a snake.
9 The one who quarries stones may be hurt by them;
the one who splits trees may be endangered by them.
10 If the ax is dull, and one does not sharpen its edge,
then one must exert more strength;
however, the advantage of wisdom is that it brings success.
11 If the snake bites before it is charmed,
then there is no advantage for the charmer. [C]
12 The words from the mouth of a wise man are gracious,
but the lips of a fool consume him.
13 The beginning of the words of his mouth is folly,
but the end of his speaking is evil madness.
14 Yet the fool multiplies words.
No one knows what will happen,
and who can tell anyone what will happen after him?
15 The struggles of fools weary them,
for they don't know how to go to the city.

16 Woe to you, land, when your king is a youth
and your princes feast in the morning.
17 Blessed are you, land, when your king is a son of nobles
and your princes feast at the proper time —
for strength and not for drunkenness.

ARTICLE
Intellectuals Who Found God ⇒

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18 Because of laziness the roof caves in,
and because of negligent hands the house leaks.
19† A feast is prepared for laughter,
and wine makes life happy,
and money is the answer for everything.
20 Do not curse the king even in your thoughts,
and do not curse a rich person even in your bedroom,
for a bird of the sky may carry the message,
and a winged creature may report the matter.

ECCLESIASTES

Invest in Life

11 Send your bread on the surface of the waters,
for after many days you may find it.
2 Give a portion to seven or even to eight,
for you don’t know what disaster may happen on earth.
3 If the clouds are full, they will pour out rain on the earth;
whether a tree falls to the south or the north,
the place where the tree falls, there it will lie.
4 One who watches the wind will not sow,
and the one who looks at the clouds will not reap.
5 Just as you don’t know the path of the wind,
or how bones develop in [A] the womb of a pregnant woman,
so you don’t know the work of God who makes everything.
6 In the morning sow your seed,
and at evening do not let your hand rest,
because you don’t know which will succeed,
whether one or the other,
or if both of them will be equally good.
7 Light is sweet,
and it is pleasing for the eyes to see the sun.
8 Indeed, if a man lives many years,
let him rejoice in them all,
and let him remember the days of darkness, since they will be many.
All that comes is futile.
9 Rejoice, young man, while you are young,
and let your heart be glad in the days of your youth.
And walk in the ways of your heart
and in the sight of your eyes;
but know that for all of these things God will bring you to judgment.
10 Remove sorrow from your heart,
and put away pain from your flesh,
because youth and the prime of life are fleeting.

ECCLESIASTES

The Twilight of Life

12 So remember your Creator in the days of your youth:

Before the days of adversity come,
and the years approach when you will say,
“I have no delight in them”;
2 before the sun and the light are darkened,
and the moon and the stars,
and the clouds return after [A] the rain;
3 on the day when the guardians of the house tremble,
and the strong men stoop,
the women who grind cease because they are few,
and the ones who watch through the windows see dimly,
4 the doors at the street are shut
while the sound of the mill fades;
when one rises at the sound of a bird,
and all the daughters of song grow faint.
5 Also, they are afraid of heights and dangers on the road;
the almond tree blossoms,
the grasshopper loses its spring, [B]
and the caper berry has no effect;
for man is headed to his eternal home,
and mourners will walk around in the street;
6 before the silver cord is snapped,
and the gold bowl is broken,
and the jar is shattered at the spring,
and the wheel is broken into the well;
7 and the dust returns to the earth as it once was,
and the spirit returns to God who gave it.

8 “Absolute futility,” says the Teacher. “Everything is futile.”

The Teacher’s Objectives and Conclusion

9 In addition to the Teacher being a wise man, he constantly taught the
•people knowledge; he weighed, explored, and arranged many proverbs.
10 The Teacher sought to find delightful sayings and write words of truth

accurately. 11 The sayings of the wise are like goads, and those from
masters of collections are like firmly embedded nails. The sayings are
given by one Shepherd. [C]

12 But beyond these, my son, be warned: there is no end to the making of
many books, and much study wearies the body. 13[†] When all has been
heard, the conclusion of the matter is: •fear God and keep His commands,
because this is for all humanity. 14 For God will bring every act to
judgment, including every hidden thing, whether good or evil.

SONG OF SONGS

Introduction to Song of Songs

SONG OF SONGS

Solomon's Finest Song.[A]

1

W 2 Oh, that he would kiss me
with the kisses of his mouth!
For your [B] love is [C] more delightful than wine.
3 The fragrance of your perfume is intoxicating;
your name is perfume poured out.
No wonder young women [D] adore you.
4† Take me with you — let us hurry.
Oh, that the king would bring [E] me to his chambers.

Y We will rejoice and be glad for you;
we will praise your love more than wine.

W It is only right that they adore you.
5† Daughters of Jerusalem,
I am dark like the tents of Kedar,
yet lovely like the curtains of Solomon.
6 Do not stare at me because I am dark,
for the sun has gazed on me.
My mother's sons were angry with me;
they made me a keeper of the vineyards.
I have not kept my own vineyard. [F]
7 Tell me, you, the one I love:
Where do you pasture your sheep?
Where do you let them rest at noon?
Why should I be like one who veils herself [G]
beside the flocks of your companions?

M 8 If you do not know,
most beautiful of women,
follow [H] the tracks of the flock,

and pasture your young goats
near the shepherds' tents.
9 I compare you, my darling,
to a [I] mare among Pharaoh's chariots.
10 Your cheeks are beautiful with jewelry,
your neck with its necklace.
11 We will make gold jewelry for you,
accented with silver.
W 12 While the king is on his couch, [J]
my perfume [K] releases its fragrance.
13 My love is a sachet of myrrh to me,
spending the night between my breasts.
14 My love is a cluster of henna blossoms to me,
in the vineyards of En-gedi.
M 15 How beautiful you are, my darling.
How very beautiful!
Your eyes are doves.
W 16 How handsome you are, my love.
How delightful!
Our bed is lush with foliage;
17 the beams of our house are cedars,
and our rafters are cypresses. [L]

2 I am a rose [A], of Sharon,
a lily [B] of the valleys.
M 2 Like a lily among thorns,
so is my darling among the young women.
W 3 Like an apricot [C] tree among the trees of the forest,
so is my love among the young men.
I delight to sit in his shade,
and his fruit is sweet to my taste.
4 He brought me to the banquet hall, [D],
and he looked on me with love. [E]
5 Sustain me with raisins;
refresh me with apricots, [F]
for I am lovesick.
6 His left hand is under my head,
and his right arm embraces me. [G]
7† Young women of Jerusalem, I charge you
by the gazelles and the wild does of the field:
do not stir up or awaken love
until the appropriate time. [H]
8 Listen! My love is approaching.
Look! Here he comes,
leaping over the mountains,
bounding over the hills.
9 My love is like a gazelle
or a young stag.
Look, he is standing behind our wall,
gazing through the windows,
peering through the lattice.
10 My love calls to me:
M Arise, my darling.
Come away, my beautiful one.
For now the winter is past;

11
the rain has ended and gone away.
12 The blossoms appear in the countryside.
The time of singing [I] has come,
and the turtledove's cooing is heard in our land.
13 The fig tree ripens its figs;
the blossoming vines give off their fragrance.
Arise, my darling.
Come away, my beautiful one.
14† My dove, in the clefts of the rock,
in the crevices of the cliff,
let me see your face, [J]
let me hear your voice;
for your voice is sweet,
and your face is lovely.

(W) 15† Catch the foxes for us —
the little foxes that ruin the vineyards —
for our vineyards are in bloom.

W 16† My love is mine and I am his;
he feeds among the lilies.
17 Before the day breaks [K]
and the shadows flee,
turn to me, my love, and be like a gazelle
or a young stag on the divided mountains. [L]

3

In my bed at night [A]
I sought the one I love;
I sought him, but did not find him.
2 I will arise now and go about the city,
through the streets and the plazas.
I will seek the one I love.
I sought him, but did not find him.
3 The guards who go about the city found me.
I asked them, "Have you seen the one
I love? "
4 I had just passed them
when I found the one I love.
I held on to him and would not let him go
until I brought him to my mother's house —
to the chamber of the one who conceived
me.
5 Young women of Jerusalem, I charge you
by the gazelles and the wild does of the
field:
do not stir up or awaken love
until the appropriate time. [B]

N 6 What is this coming up from the wilderness
like columns of smoke,
scented with myrrh and frankincense
from every fragrant powder of the
merchant?
7† It is Solomon's royal litter
surrounded by 60 warriors
from the mighty of Israel.
8 All of them are skilled with swords
and trained in warfare.
Each has his sword at his side
to guard against the terror of the night.
9 King Solomon made a sedan chair for
himself

with wood from Lebanon.
10[†] He made its posts of silver,
its back [C] of gold,
and its seat of purple.
Its interior is inlaid with love [D]
by the young women of Jerusalem.
11 Come out, young women of •Zion,
and gaze at King Solomon,
wearing the crown his mother placed on him
the day of his wedding —
the day of his heart’s rejoicing.

4

M How beautiful you are, my darling.
How very beautiful!
Behind your veil,
your eyes are doves.
Your hair is like a flock of goats
streaming down Mount Gilead.
2 Your teeth are like a flock of newly shorn sheep
coming up from washing,
each one having a twin,
and not one missing. [A],
3 Your lips are like a scarlet cord,
and your mouth [B] is lovely.
Behind your veil,
your brow [C] is like a slice of pomegranate.
4 Your neck is like the tower of David,
constructed in layers.
A thousand bucklers are hung on it —
all of them shields of warriors.
5† Your breasts are like two fawns,
twins of a gazelle, that feed among the lilies.
6 Before the day breaks [D]
and the shadows flee,
I will make my way to the mountain of myrrh
and the hill of frankincense.
7 You are absolutely beautiful, my darling,
with no imperfection in you.
8 Come with me from Lebanon, my bride —
with me from Lebanon!
Descend from the peak of Amana,
from the summit of Senir and Hermon,
from the dens of the lions,

from the mountains of the leopards.
9 You have captured my heart, my sister, my bride.
You have captured my heart with one glance of your eyes,
with one jewel of your necklace.
10 How delightful your love is, my sister, my bride.
Your love is much better than wine,
and the fragrance of your perfume than any balsam.
11 Your lips drip sweetness like the honeycomb, my bride.
Honey and milk are under your tongue.
The fragrance of your garments is like the fragrance of Lebanon.
12† My sister, my bride, you are a locked garden —
a locked garden and a sealed spring.
13 Your branches are a paradise [E] of pomegranates
with choicest fruits,
henna with nard —
14 nard and saffron, calamus and cinnamon,
with all the trees of frankincense,
myrrh and aloes,
with all the best spices.
15 You are a garden spring,
a well of flowing water
streaming from Lebanon.
W 16 Awaken, north wind —
come, south wind.
Blow on my garden,
and spread the fragrance of its spices.
Let my love come to his garden
and eat its choicest fruits.

5

M I have come to my garden — my sister, my bride.
I gather [A] my myrrh with my spices.
I eat my honeycomb with my honey.
I drink my wine with my milk.

N Eat, friends!
Drink, be intoxicated with love! [B]

W 2 I sleep, but my heart is awake.
A sound! My love is knocking!

M Open to me, my sister, my darling,
my dove, my perfect one.
For my head is drenched with dew,
my hair with droplets of the night.

W 3 I have taken off my clothing.
How can I put it back on?
I have washed my feet.
How can I get them dirty?

4 My love thrust his hand through the opening,
and my feelings were stirred for him.

5 I rose to open for my love.
My hands dripped with myrrh,
my fingers with flowing myrrh
on the handles of the bolt.

6 I opened to my love,
but my love had turned and gone away.
I was crushed [C] that he had left. [D]
I sought him, but did not find him.
I called him, but he did not answer.

7 The guards who go about the city found me.
They beat and wounded me;
they took my cloak [E] from me —
the guardians of the walls.

8 Young women of Jerusalem, I charge you:
if you find my love,
tell him that I am lovesick.

Y 9 What makes the one you love better than another,
most beautiful of women?
What makes him better than another,
that you would give us this charge?

W 10 My love is fit and strong, [F],
notable among ten thousand.
11 His head is purest gold.
His hair is wavy [G]
and black as a raven.
12 His eyes are like doves
beside streams of water,
washed in milk
and set like jewels. [H]
13 His cheeks are like beds of spice,
towers of perfume.
His lips are lilies,
dripping with flowing myrrh.
14 His arms [I] are rods of gold
set [J] with topaz.
His body [K] is an ivory panel
covered with sapphires.
15 His legs are alabaster pillars
set on pedestals of pure gold.
His presence is like Lebanon,
as majestic as the cedars.
16 His mouth is sweetness.
He is absolutely desirable.
This is my love, and this is my friend,
young women of Jerusalem.

6

Y Where has your love gone,
most beautiful of women?
Which way has he [A] turned?
We will seek him with you.

W 2 My love has gone down to his garden,
to beds of spice,
to feed in the gardens
and gather lilies.
3 I am my love's and my love is mine;
he feeds among the lilies.

M 4 You are as beautiful as Tirzah, my darling,
lovely as Jerusalem,
awe-inspiring as an army with banners.
5 Turn your eyes away from me,
for they captivate me.
Your hair is like a flock of goats
streaming down from Gilead.
6 Your teeth are like a flock of ewes
coming up from washing,
each one having a twin,
and not one missing. [B],
7 Behind your veil,
your brow [C] is like a slice of pomegranate.
8† There are 60 queens
and 80 concubines
and young women [D] without number.
9 But my dove, my virtuous one, is unique;
she is the favorite of her mother,
perfect to the one who gave her birth.
Women see her and declare her fortunate;
queens and concubines also, and they sing her praises:

Y 10 Who is this who shines like the dawn —

as beautiful as the moon,
bright as the sun,
awe-inspiring as an army with banners?
W

ARTICLE
Is the Bible Sexually Oppressive?
⇒

11† I came down to the walnut grove
to see the blossoms of the valley,
to see if the vines were budding
and the pomegranates blooming.
12† Before I knew it,
my desire put me
among the chariots of my noble people. [E]
Y 13 Come back, come back, Shulammite! [F]
Come back, come back, that we may look at you!

M Why are you looking at the Shulammite,
as you look at the dance of the two
camps? [G]

7

How beautiful are your sandaled feet,
princess! [A],
The curves of your thighs are like jewelry,
the handiwork of a master.
2 Your navel is a rounded bowl;
it never lacks mixed wine.
Your waist [B] is a mound of wheat
surrounded by lilies.
3 Your breasts are like two fawns,
twins of a gazelle.
4 Your neck is like a tower of ivory,
your eyes like pools in Heshbon
by the gate of Bath-rabbim.
Your nose is like the tower of Lebanon
looking toward Damascus.
5 Your head crowns you [C] like Mount Carmel,
the hair of your head like purple cloth —
a king could be held captive in your tresses.
6 How beautiful you are and how pleasant,
my love, with such delights!
7 Your stature is like a palm tree;
your breasts are clusters of fruit.
8 I said, “I will climb the palm tree
and take hold of its fruit.”
May your breasts be like clusters of grapes,
and the fragrance of your breath like
apricots.
9 Your mouth [D] is like fine wine —
W flowing smoothly for my love,
gliding past my lips and teeth!
10 I belong to my love,
and his desire is for me.
11 Come, my love,
let’s go to the field;

let’s spend the night among the henna
blossoms. [E]
12 Let’s go early to the vineyards;
let’s see if the vine has budded,
if the blossom has opened,
if the pomegranates are in bloom.
There I will give you my love.
13 The mandrakes give off a fragrance,
and at our doors is every delicacy —
new as well as old.
I have treasured them up for you, my love.

8 If only I could treat you like my brother, [A]
one who nursed at my mother's breasts,
I would find you in public and kiss you,
and no one would scorn me.
2 I would lead you, I would take you,
to the house of my mother who taught me.
I would give you spiced wine to drink
from my pomegranate juice.
3 His left hand is under my head,
and his right arm embraces me.
4 Young women of Jerusalem, I charge you:
do not stir up or awaken love
until the appropriate time.
Y 5 Who is this coming up from the wilderness,
leaning on the one she loves?
W I awakened you under the apricot tree.
There your mother conceived you;
there she conceived and gave you birth.
6† Set me as a seal on your heart,
as a seal on your arm.
For love is as strong as death;
ardent love is as unrelenting as •Sheol.
Love's flames are fiery flames —
the fiercest of all. [B]
7 Mighty waters cannot extinguish love;
rivers cannot sweep it away.
If a man were to give all his wealth [C] for love,
it would be utterly scorned.
B 8 Our sister is young;
she has no breasts.
What will we do for our sister
on the day she is spoken for?

9 If she is a wall,
we will build a silver parapet on it.
If she is a door,
we will enclose it with cedar planks.

W 10 I am [D] a wall
and my breasts like towers.
So in his eyes I have become
like one who finds peace.
11 Solomon owned a vineyard in Baal-hamon.
He leased the vineyard to tenants.
Each was to bring for his fruit
1,000 pieces of silver.
12 I have my own vineyard. [E]
The 1,000 are for you, Solomon,
but 200 for those who guard its fruits.

M 13 You who dwell in the gardens —
companions are listening for your voice —
let me hear you!

W 14 Hurry to me, my love,
and be like a gazelle
or a young stag
on the mountains of spices.

ISAIAH

Introduction to Isaiah

ISAIAH

1 The vision concerning Judah and Jerusalem that Isaiah son of Amoz
saw during the reigns [A] of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah,
kings of Judah.

Judah on Trial

2 Listen, heavens, and pay attention, earth,
for the LORD has spoken:
"I have raised children [B] and brought them up,
but they have rebelled against Me.
3 The ox knows its owner,
and the donkey its master's feeding trough,
but Israel does not know;
My people do not understand."

4 Oh sinful nation,
people weighed down with iniquity,
brood of evildoers,
depraved children! [C]
They have abandoned the LORD;
they have despised the Holy One of Israel;
they have turned their backs on Him.

5 Why do you want more beatings?
Why do you keep on rebelling?
The whole head is hurt,
and the whole heart is sick.
6 From the sole of the foot even to the head,
no spot is uninjured —
wounds, welts, and festering sores
not cleansed, bandaged,
or soothed with oil.

7 Your land is desolate,
your cities burned with fire;
foreigners devour your fields
before your very eyes —
a desolation demolished by foreigners.

8 Daughter •Zion is abandoned
like a shelter in a vineyard,
like a shack in a cucumber field,
like a besieged city.
9 If the LORD of •Hosts
had not left us a few survivors,
we would be like Sodom,
we would resemble Gomorrah.

10 Hear the word of the LORD,
you rulers of Sodom!
Listen to the instruction of our God,
you people of Gomorrah!
11† "What are all your sacrifices to Me? "
asks the LORD.
"I have had enough of •burnt offerings and rams
and the fat of well-fed cattle;
I have no desire for the blood of bulls,
lambs, or male goats.
12 When you come to appear before Me,
who requires this from you —
this trampling of My courts?
13 Stop bringing useless offerings.
Your incense is detestable to Me.
New Moons and Sabbaths,
and the calling of solemn assemblies —
I cannot stand iniquity with a festival.
14 I hate your New Moons and prescribed festivals.
They have become a burden to Me;
I am tired of putting up with them.
15 When you lift up your hands in prayer,
I will refuse to look at you;
even if you offer countless prayers,
I will not listen.
Your hands are covered with blood.

Purification of Jerusalem

16[†] “Wash yourselves. Cleanse yourselves.
Remove your evil deeds from My sight.
Stop doing evil.
17 Learn to do what is good.
Seek justice.
Correct the oppressor. [D]
Defend the rights of the fatherless.
Plead the widow’s cause.

18 “Come, let us discuss this,”
says the LORD.
“Though your sins are like scarlet,
they will be as white as snow;
though they are as red as crimson,
they will be like wool.
19 If you are willing and obedient,
you will eat the good things of the land.
20 But if you refuse and rebel,
you will be devoured by the sword.”
For the mouth of the LORD has spoken.

21 The faithful city —
what an adulteress [E] she has become!
She was once full of justice.
Righteousness once dwelt in her —
but now, murderers!
22 Your silver has become dross, [F]
your beer [G] is diluted with water.
23 Your rulers are rebels,
friends of thieves.
They all love graft
and chase after bribes.
They do not defend the rights of the fatherless,
and the widow’s case never comes before them.

24 Therefore the Lord GOD of Hosts,
the Mighty One of Israel, declares:

“Ah, I will gain satisfaction from My foes;
I will take revenge against My enemies.
25 I will turn My hand against you
and will burn away your dross [H] completely; [I]
I will remove all your impurities.
26 I will restore your judges to what they once were, [J]
and your advisers to their former state. [K]
Afterward you will be called the Righteous City,
a Faithful City.”

27 Zion will be redeemed by justice,
her repentant ones by righteousness.
28 But both rebels and sinners will be destroyed,
and those who abandon the LORD will perish.
29 Indeed, they will be ashamed of the sacred trees
you desired,
and you will be embarrassed because of the gardens
you have chosen.
30 For you will become like an oak
whose leaves are withered,
and like a garden without water.

ARTICLE

Does the Bible Support a Just War? ⇒

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31 The strong one will become tinder,
and his work a spark;
both will burn together,
with no one to quench the flames.

The City of Peace

2 The vision that Isaiah son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem:

2† In the last days
the mountain of the LORD's house will be established
at the top of the mountains
and will be raised above the hills.
All nations will stream to it,
3 and many peoples will come and say,
"Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD,
to the house of the God of Jacob.
He will teach us about His ways
so that we may walk in His paths."
For instruction will go out of •Zion
and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.
4 He will settle disputes among the nations
and provide arbitration for many peoples.
They will turn their swords into plows
and their spears into pruning knives.
Nations will not take up the sword against other nations,
and they will never again train for war.

The Day of the LORD

5 House of Jacob,
come and let us walk in the LORD's light.
6 For You have abandoned Your people,
the house of Jacob,
because they are full of •divination from the East
and of fortune-tellers like the Philistines.
They are in league [A] with foreigners.
7 Their [B], land is full of silver and gold,
and there is no limit to their treasures;
their land is full of horses,
and there is no limit to their chariots.
8 Their land is full of idols;

they bow down to the work of their hands,
to what their fingers have made.
9† So humanity is brought low,
and man is humbled.
Do not forgive them!
10 Go into the rocks
and hide in the dust
from the terror of the LORD
and from His majestic splendor.
11 Human pride C will be humbled,
and the loftiness of men will be brought low;
the LORD alone will be exalted on that day.

12 For a day belonging to the LORD of •Hosts is coming
against all that is proud and lofty,
against all that is lifted up — it will be humbled —
13 against all the cedars of Lebanon,
lofty and lifted up,
against all the oaks of Bashan,
14 against all the high mountains,
against all the lofty hills,
15 against every high tower,
against every fortified wall,
16 against every ship of Tarshish,
and against every splendid sea vessel.
17 So human pride will be brought low,
and the loftiness of men will be humbled;
the LORD alone will be exalted on that day.
18 The idols will vanish completely.

19 People will go into caves in the rocks
and holes in the ground,
away from the terror of the LORD
and from His majestic splendor,
when He rises to terrify the earth.
20 On that day people will throw

their silver and gold idols,
which they made to worship,
to the moles and the bats.
21 They will go into the caves of the rocks
and the crevices in the cliffs,
away from the terror of the LORD
and from His majestic splendor,
when He rises to terrify the earth.
22† Put no more trust in man,
who has only the breath in his nostrils.
What is he really worth?

Judah's Leaders Judged

3 Observe this: The Lord God of •Hosts
is about to remove from Jerusalem and from Judah
every kind of security:
the entire supply of bread and water,
2 the hero and warrior,
the judge and prophet,
the fortune-teller and elder,
3 the commander of 50 and the dignitary,
the counselor, cunning magician, [A] and necromancer. [B]
4 “I will make youths their leaders,
and the unstable [C] will govern them.”
5 The people will oppress one another,
man against man, neighbor against neighbor;
the youth will act arrogantly toward the elder,
and the worthless toward the honorable.
6 A man will even seize his brother
in his father’s house, saying:
“You have a cloak — you be our leader!
This heap of rubble will be under your control.”
7 On that day he will cry out, saying:
“I’m not a healer.
I don’t even have food or clothing in my house.
Don’t make me the leader of the people! ”
8 For Jerusalem has stumbled
and Judah has fallen
because they have spoken and acted against the Lord,
defying His glorious presence.
9 The look on their faces testifies against them,
and like Sodom, they flaunt their sin.
They do not conceal it.
Woe to them,
for they have brought evil on themselves.
10† Tell the righteous that it will go well for them,
for they will eat the fruit of their labor.
11 Woe to the wicked — it will go badly for them,

for what they have done will be done to them.
12 Youths oppress My people,
and women rule over them.
My people, your leaders mislead you;
they confuse the direction of your paths.

13 The LORD rises to argue the case
and stands to judge the people.
14 The LORD brings this charge
against the elders and leaders of His people:
"You have devastated the vineyard.
The plunder from the poor is in your houses.
15 Why do you crush My people
and grind the faces of the poor? "
of the Lord GOD of Hosts.This is the declaration

Jerusalem's Women Judged

16† The LORD also says:

Because the daughters of •Zion are haughty,
walking with heads held high
and seductive eyes,
going along with prancing steps,
jingling their ankle bracelets,
17 the Lord will put scabs on the heads
of the daughters of Zion,
and the LORD will shave their foreheads bare.

18 On that day the Lord will strip their finery: ankle bracelets,
headbands, crescents, 19 pendants, bracelets, veils, 20 headdresses, ankle
jewelry, sashes, perfume bottles, amulets, 21 signet rings, nose rings,
22 festive robes, capes, cloaks, purses, 23 garments, linen clothes, turbans,
and veils.

24 Instead of perfume there will be a stench;
instead of a belt, a rope;
instead of beautifully styled hair, baldness;

instead of fine clothes, •sackcloth;
instead of beauty, branding.
25 Your men will fall by the sword,
your warriors in battle.
26 Then her gates will lament and mourn;
deserted, she will sit on the ground.

4 †On that day seven women
will seize one man, saying,
"We will eat our own bread
and provide our own clothing.
Just let us be called by your name.
Take away our disgrace."

Zion's Future Glory

2† On that day the Branch of [A] the LORD will be beautiful and glorious,
and the fruit of the land will be the pride and glory of Israel's survivors.
3 Whoever remains in •Zion and whoever is left in Jerusalem will be called
holy — all in Jerusalem who are destined to live — 4 when the Lord has
washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion and cleansed the bloodguilt
from the heart of Jerusalem by a spirit of judgment and a spirit of burning.
5 Then the LORD will create a cloud of smoke by day and a glowing flame
of fire by night over the entire site of Mount Zion and over its assemblies.
For there will be a canopy over all the glory, [B] 6 and there will be a booth
for shade from heat by day, and a refuge and shelter from storm and rain.

Song of the Vineyard

5 I will sing about the one I love,
a song about my loved one's vineyard:
The one I love had a vineyard
on a very fertile hill.
2 He broke up the soil, cleared it of stones,
and planted it with the finest vines.
He built a tower in the middle of it
and even dug out a winepress there.
He expected it to yield good grapes,
but it yielded worthless grapes.

3 So now, residents of Jerusalem
and men of Judah,
please judge between Me
and My vineyard.
4 What more could I have done for My vineyard
than I did?
Why, when I expected a yield of good grapes,
did it yield worthless grapes?
5 Now I will tell you
what I am about to do to My vineyard:
I will remove its hedge,
and it will be consumed;
I will tear down its wall,
and it will be trampled.
6 I will make it a wasteland.
It will not be pruned or weeded;
thorns and briers will grow up.
I will also give orders to the clouds
that rain should not fall on it.
7 For the vineyard of the LORD of •Hosts
is the house of Israel,
and the men [A] of Judah,
the plant He delighted in.
He looked for justice
but saw injustice,
for righteousness,

but heard cries of wretchedness.

Judah's Sins Denounced

8 Woe to those who add house to house
and join field to field
until there is no more room
and you alone are left in the land.

9 I heard the LORD of Hosts say:

Indeed, many houses will become desolate,
grand and lovely ones without inhabitants.
10 For a ten-acre [B] vineyard will yield
only six gallons, [C]
and 10 bushels [D] of seed will yield
only one bushel. [E]

11 Woe to those who rise early in the morning
in pursuit of beer,
who linger into the evening,
inflamed by wine.
12† At their feasts they have lyre, harp,
tambourine, flute, and wine.
They do not perceive the LORD's actions,
and they do not see the work of His hands.

13 Therefore My people will go into exile
because they lack knowledge;
her [F] dignitaries are starving,
and her [G] masses are parched with thirst.
14 Therefore •Sheol enlarges its throat
and opens wide its enormous jaws,
and down go •Zion's dignitaries, her masses,
her crowds, and those who carouse in her!
15 Humanity is brought low, man is humbled,
and haughty eyes are humbled.

16 But the LORD of Hosts is exalted by His justice,
and the holy God is distinguished by righteousness.
17 Lambs will graze
as if in their own pastures,
and strangers will eat
among the ruins of the rich.

18 Woe to those who drag wickedness
with cords of deceit
and pull sin along with cart ropes,
19 to those who say:
“Let Him hurry up and do His work quickly
so that we can see it!
Let the plan of the Holy One of Israel take place
so that we can know it! ”
20 Woe to those who call evil good
and good evil,
who substitute darkness for light
and light for darkness,
who substitute bitter for sweet
and sweet for bitter.
21 Woe to those who are wise in their own opinion
and clever in their own sight. [H],
22 Woe to those who are heroes at drinking wine,
who are fearless at mixing beer,
23 who acquit the •guilty for a bribe
and deprive the innocent of justice.

24 Therefore, as a tongue of fire consumes straw
and as dry grass shrivels in the flame,
so their roots will become like something rotten
and their blossoms will blow away like dust,
for they have rejected
the instruction of the LORD of Hosts,
and they have despised
the word of the Holy One of Israel.
25 Therefore the LORD’s anger burns against His people.

He raised His hand against them and struck them;
the mountains quaked,
and their corpses were like garbage in the streets.
In all this, His anger is not removed,
and His hand is still raised to strike.

26 He raises a signal flag for the distant nations
and whistles for them from the ends of the earth.
Look — how quickly and swiftly they come!
27 None of them grows weary or stumbles;
no one slumbers or sleeps.
No belt is loose
and no sandal strap broken.
28 Their arrows are sharpened,
and all their bows strung.
Their horses' hooves are like flint;
their chariot wheels are like a whirlwind.
29 Their roaring is like a lion's;
they roar like young lions;
they growl and seize their prey
and carry it off,
and no one can rescue it.
30 On that day they will roar over it,
like the roaring of the sea.
When one looks at the land,
there will be darkness and distress;
light will be obscured by clouds. [I]

Isaiah's Call and Mission

6 [†]In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a high and
lofty throne, and His robe [A] filled the temple. 2 Seraphim were
standing above Him; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face,
with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. 3 And one called to
another:

Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of •Hosts;
His glory fills the whole earth.

4 The foundations of the doorways shook at the sound of their voices, and
the temple was filled with smoke.

5 Then I said:

Woe is me for I am ruined [B]
because I am a man of •unclean lips
and live among a people of unclean lips,
and because my eyes have seen the King,
the LORD of Hosts.

6 Then one of the seraphim flew to me, and in his hand was a glowing
coal that he had taken from the altar with tongs. 7 He touched my mouth
with it and said:

Now that this has touched your lips,
your wickedness is removed
and your sin is atoned for.

8 Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying:

Who should I send?
Who will go for Us?

I said:

Here I am. Send me.

9[†] And He replied:

Go! Say to these people:
Keep listening, but do not understand;
keep looking, but do not perceive.
10 Dull the minds [C] of these people;
deafen their ears and blind their eyes;
otherwise they might see with their eyes
and hear with their ears,
understand with their minds,
turn back, and be healed.

11 Then I said, “Until when, Lord? ” And He replied:

Until cities lie in ruins without inhabitants,
houses are without people,
the land is ruined and desolate,
12 and the LORD drives the people far away,
leaving great emptiness in the land.
13 Though a tenth will remain in the land,
it will be burned again.
Like the terebinth or the oak
that leaves a stump when felled,
the holy •seed is the stump.

The Message to Ahaz

7 This took place during the reign of Ahaz, son of Jotham, son of Uzziah
king of Judah: Rezin king of Aram, along with Pekah, son of Remaliah,
king of Israel, waged war against Jerusalem, but he could not succeed.
2 When it became known to the house of David that Aram had occupied
Ephraim, the heart of Ahaz [A] and the hearts of his people trembled like
trees of a forest shaking in the wind.

3[†] Then the LORD said to Isaiah, “Go out with your son Shear-jashub to
meet Ahaz at the end of the conduit of the upper pool, by the road to the
Fuller’s Field. 4 Say to him: Calm down and be quiet. Don’t be afraid or
cowardly because of these two smoldering stubs of firebrands, the fierce
anger of Rezin and Aram, and the son of Remaliah. 5 For Aram, along with
Ephraim and the son of Remaliah, has plotted harm against you. They say,
6 ‘Let us go up against Judah, terrorize it, and conquer it for ourselves. Then
we can install Tabeel’s son as king in it.’ ”

7 This is what the Lord GOD says:

It will not happen; it will not occur.
8 The [B] head of Aram is Damascus,
the head of Damascus is Rezin
(within 65 years
Ephraim will be too shattered to be a people),
9 the head of Ephraim is Samaria,
and the head of Samaria is the son of Remaliah.
If you do not stand firm in your faith,
then you will not stand at all.

The Immanuel Prophecy

10 Then the LORD spoke again to Ahaz: 11 “Ask for a sign from the LORD
your God — from the depths of •Sheol to the heights of heaven.”

12 But Ahaz replied, “I will not ask. I will not test the LORD.”

13 Isaiah said, “Listen, house of David! Is it not enough for you to try the
patience of men? Will you also try the patience of my God? 14[†] Therefore,
the Lord Himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive, [C] have a
son, and name him Immanuel. 15 By the time he learns to reject what is bad
and choose what is good, he will be eating butter [D] and honey. 16 For
before the boy knows to reject what is bad and choose what is good, the
land of the two kings you dread will be abandoned. 17 The LORD will bring
on you, your people, and the house of your father, such a time as has never
been since Ephraim separated from Judah — the king of Assyria is
coming.”

ARTICLE

Can God's Actions Be Detected Scientifically? ⇒

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18 On that day
the LORD will whistle to the fly
that is at the farthest streams of the Nile
and to the bee that is in the land of Assyria.
19 All of them will come and settle
in the steep ravines, in the clefts of the rocks,
in all the thornbushes, and in all the water holes.

20 On that day the Lord will use a razor hired from beyond the Euphrates
River — the king of Assyria — to shave the head, the hair on the legs, and
to remove the beard as well.

21 On that day
a man will raise a young cow and two sheep,
22 and from the abundant milk they give
he will eat butter,
for every survivor in the land will eat butter and honey.

23 And on that day

every place where there were 1,000 vines,
worth 1,000 pieces of silver,
will become thorns and briers.
24 A man will go there with bow and arrows
because the whole land will be thorns and briers.
25 You will not go to all the hills
that were once tilled with a hoe,
for fear of the thorns and briers.
Those hills will be places for oxen to graze
and for sheep to trample.

The Coming Assyrian Invasion

8 Then the LORD said to me, “Take a large piece of parchment [A] and write
on it with an ordinary pen: [B] Maher-shalal-hash-baz. 2 I have
appointed trustworthy witnesses — Uriah the priest and Zechariah son of
Jeberechiah.”

3 I was then intimate with the prophetess, and she conceived and gave
birth to a son. The LORD said to me, “Name him Maher-shalal-hash-baz,
4 for before the boy knows how to call out father or mother, the wealth of
Damascus and the spoils of Samaria will be carried off to the king of
Assyria.”

5 The LORD spoke to me again:

6† Because these people rejected
the slowly flowing waters of Shiloah
and rejoiced with [C] Rezin
and the son of Remaliah,
7 the Lord will certainly bring against them
the mighty rushing waters of the Euphrates River —
the king of Assyria and all his glory.
It will overflow its channels
and spill over all its banks.
8 It will pour into Judah,
flood over it, and sweep through,
reaching up to the neck;
and its spreading streams [D]
will fill your entire land, Immanuel!

9 Band together, peoples, and be broken;
pay attention, all you distant lands;
prepare for war, and be broken;
prepare for war, and be broken.
10 Devise a plan; it will fail.
Make a prediction; it will not happen.
For God is with us. [E]

The LORD of Hosts, the Only Refuge

[11] For this is what the LORD said to me with great power, to keep me from going the way of this people:

[12] Do not call everything an alliance
these people say is an alliance.
Do not fear what they fear;
do not be terrified.
[13] You are to regard only the LORD of •Hosts as holy.
Only He should be •feared;
only He should be held in awe.
[14†] He will be a sanctuary;
but for the two houses of Israel,
He will be a stone to stumble over
and a rock to trip over,
and a trap and a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.
[15] Many will stumble over these;
they will fall and be broken;
they will be snared and captured.

[16] Bind up the •testimony.
Seal up the instruction among my disciples.
[17] I will wait for the LORD,
who is hiding His face from the house of Jacob.
I will wait for Him.

[18] Here I am with the children the LORD has given me to be signs and
wonders in Israel from the LORD of Hosts who dwells on Mount •Zion.
[19] When they say to you, "Consult the spirits of the dead and the spiritists
who chirp and mutter," shouldn't a people consult their God? [F] Should they
consult the dead on behalf of the living? [20] To the law and to the
testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, there will be no
dawn for them.

[21] They will wander through the land, dejected and hungry. When they
are famished, they will become enraged, and, looking upward, will curse
their king and their God. [22] They will look toward the earth and see only
distress, darkness, and the gloom of affliction, and they will be driven into
thick darkness.

Chapter 9 *Birth of the Prince of Peace*

1 Nevertheless, the gloom of the distressed land will not be like that of the
former times when He humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of
Naphtali. But in the future He will bring honor to the Way of the Sea, to the
land east of the Jordan, and to Galilee of the nations.

2 The people walking in darkness
have seen a great light;
a light has dawned
on those living in the land of darkness.
3 You have enlarged the nation
and increased its joy.
The people have rejoiced before You
as they rejoice at harvest time
and as they rejoice when dividing spoils.
4 For You have shattered their oppressive yoke
and the rod on their shoulders,
the staff of their oppressor,
just as You did on the day of Midian.
5 For the trampling boot of battle
and the bloodied garments of war
will be burned as fuel for the fire.
6† For a child will be born for us,
a son will be given to us,
and the government will be on His shoulders.
He will be named
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.
7 The dominion will be vast,
and its prosperity will never end.
He will reign on the throne of David
and over his kingdom,
to establish and sustain it
with justice and righteousness from now on and forever.
The zeal of the LORD of •Hosts will accomplish this.

The Hand Raised against Israel

8 The Lord sent a message against Jacob;
it came against Israel.
9 All the people —
Ephraim and the inhabitants of Samaria — will know it.
They will say with pride and arrogance:
10 “The bricks have fallen,
but we will rebuild with cut stones;
the sycamores have been cut down,
but we will replace them with cedars.”
11 The LORD has raised up Rezin’s adversaries against him
and stirred up his enemies.
12 Aram from the east and Philistia from the west
have consumed Israel with open mouths.
In all this, His anger is not removed,
and His hand is still raised to strike.

13 The people did not turn to Him who struck them;
they did not seek the LORD of Hosts.
14 So the LORD cut off Israel’s head and tail,
palm branch and reed in a single day.
15 The head is the elder, the honored one;
the tail is the prophet, the lying teacher.
16 The leaders of the people mislead them,
and those they mislead are swallowed up. [A]
17 Therefore the Lord does not rejoice
over Israel’s young men
and has no compassion
on its fatherless and widows,
for everyone is a godless evildoer,
and every mouth speaks folly.
In all this, His anger is not removed,
and His hand is still raised to strike.

18 For wickedness burns like a fire
that consumes thorns and briers

and kindles the forest thickets
so that they go up in a column of smoke.
19 The land is scorched
by the wrath of the LORD of Hosts,
and the people are like fuel for the fire.
No one has compassion on his brother.
20 They carve meat on the right,
but they are still hungry;
they have eaten on the left,
but they are still not satisfied.
Each one eats the flesh of his own arm.
21 Manasseh is with Ephraim,
and Ephraim with Manasseh;
together, both are against Judah.
In all this, His anger is not removed,
and His hand is still raised to strike.

10 Woe to those enacting crooked statutes
and writing oppressive laws
2 to keep the poor from getting a fair trial
and to deprive the afflicted among my people of justice,
so that widows can be their spoil
and they can plunder the fatherless.
3 What will you do on the day of punishment
when devastation comes from far away?
Who will you run to for help?
Where will you leave your wealth?
4 There will be nothing to do
except crouch among the prisoners
or fall among the slain.
In all this, His anger is not removed,
and His hand is still raised to strike.

Assyria, the Instrument of Wrath

5† Woe to Assyria, the rod of My anger —
the staff in their hands is My wrath.
6 I will send him against a godless nation;
I will command him to go
against a people destined for My rage,
to take spoils, to plunder,
and to trample them down like clay in the streets.
7 But this is not what he intends;
this is not what he plans.
It is his intent to destroy
and to cut off many nations.
8 For he says,
“Aren’t all my commanders kings?
9 Isn’t Calno like Carchemish?
Isn’t Hamath like Arpad?
Isn’t Samaria like Damascus?
10 As my hand seized the idolatrous kingdoms,
whose idols exceeded those of Jerusalem and Samaria,

11 and as I did to Samaria and its idols
will I not also do to Jerusalem and its idols?"

Judgment on Assyria

12 But when the Lord finishes all His work against Mount •Zion and
Jerusalem, He will say, "I will punish the king of Assyria for his arrogant
acts and the proud look in his eyes." 13 For he said:

I have done this by my own strength
and wisdom, for I am clever.
I abolished the borders of nations
and plundered their treasures;
like a mighty warrior, I subjugated the inhabitants. [A]
14 My hand has reached out, as if into a nest,
to seize the wealth of the nations.
Like one gathering abandoned eggs,
I gathered the whole earth.
No wing fluttered;
no beak opened or chirped.

15 Does an ax exalt itself
above the one who chops with it?
Does a saw magnify itself
above the one who saws with it?
It would be like a staff waving the one who lifts it!
It would be like a rod lifting a man who isn't wood!
16 Therefore the Lord God of •Hosts
will inflict an emaciating disease
on the well-fed of Assyria,
and He will kindle a burning fire
under its glory.
17 Israel's Light will become a fire,
and its Holy One, a flame.
In one day it will burn up Assyria's thorns and thistles.
18 He will completely destroy
the glory of its forests and orchards

as a sickness consumes a person.
19 The remaining trees of its forest
will be so few in number
that a child could count them.

The Remnant Will Return

20 On that day the remnant of Israel and the survivors of the house of
Jacob will no longer depend on the one who struck them, but they will
faithfully depend on the LORD, the Holy One of Israel.

21 The remnant will return, the remnant of Jacob,
to the Mighty God.
22 Israel, even if your people were as numerous
as the sand of the sea,
only a remnant of them will return.
Destruction has been decreed;
justice overflows.
23 For throughout the land
the Lord GOD of Hosts
is carrying out a destruction that was decreed.

24 Therefore, the Lord GOD of Hosts says this: "My people who dwell in
Zion, do not fear Assyria, though he strikes you with a rod and raises his
staff over you as the Egyptians did. 25 In just a little while My wrath will be
spent and My anger will turn to their destruction." 26 And the LORD of Hosts
will brandish a whip against him as He did when He struck Midian at the
rock of Oreb; and He will raise His staff over the sea as He did in Egypt.

God Will Judge Assyria

27 On that day
his burden will fall from your shoulders,
and his yoke from your neck.
The yoke will be broken because of fatness. [B]
28 Assyria has come to Aiath

and has gone through Migron,
storing his equipment at Michmash.
29 They crossed over at the ford, saying,
“We will spend the night at Geba.”
The people of Ramah are trembling;
those at Gibeah of Saul have fled.
30 Cry aloud, daughter of Gallim!
Listen, Laishah!
Anathoth is miserable.
31 Madmenah has fled.
The inhabitants of Gebim have sought refuge.
32 Today he will stand at Nob,
shaking his fist at the mountain of Daughter Zion,
the hill of Jerusalem.
33 Look, the Lord GOD of Hosts
will chop off the branches with terrifying power,
and the tall trees will be cut down,
the high trees felled.
34 He is clearing the thickets of the forest with an ax,
and Lebanon with its majesty will fall.

Reign of the Davidic King

11 Then a shoot will grow from the stump of Jesse,
and a branch from his roots will bear fruit.
2 The Spirit of the LORD will rest on Him —
a Spirit of wisdom and understanding,
a Spirit of counsel and strength,
a Spirit of knowledge and of the •fear of the LORD.
3 His delight will be in the fear of the LORD.
He will not judge
by what He sees with His eyes,
He will not execute justice
by what He hears with His ears,
4 but He will judge the poor righteously
and execute justice for the oppressed of the land.
He will strike the land
with discipline [A] from His mouth,
and He will kill the wicked
with a command [B] from His lips.
5 Righteousness will be a belt around His loins;
faithfulness will be a belt around His waist.
6† The wolf will live with the lamb,
and the leopard will lie down with the goat.
The calf, the young lion, and the fatling will be together,
and a child will lead them.
7 The cow and the bear will graze,
their young ones will lie down together,
and the lion will eat straw like the ox.
8 An infant will play beside the cobra's pit,
and a toddler will put his hand into a snake's den.
9 None will harm or destroy another
on My entire holy mountain,
for the land will be as full
of the knowledge of the LORD
as the sea is filled with water.

Israel Regathered

10 On that day the root of Jesse
will stand as a banner for the peoples.
The nations will seek Him,
and His resting place will be glorious.

11 On that day the Lord will extend His hand a second time to recover — from Assyria, Egypt, Pathros, •Cush, Elam, •Shinar, Hamath, and the coasts and islands of the west — the remnant of His people who survive.

12 He will lift up a banner for the nations
and gather the dispersed of Israel;
He will collect the scattered of Judah
from the four corners of the earth.
13 Ephraim's envy will cease;
Judah's harassment will end.
Ephraim will no longer be envious of Judah,
and Judah will not harass Ephraim.
14 But they will swoop down
on the Philistine flank to the west.
Together they will plunder the people of the east.
They will extend their power over Edom and Moab,
and the Ammonites will be their subjects.
15 The LORD will divide the Gulf of Suez. [D]
He will wave His hand over the Euphrates
with His mighty wind
and will split it into seven streams,
letting people walk through on foot.
16 There will be a highway for the remnant of His people
who will survive from Assyria,
as there was for Israel
when they came up from the land of Egypt.

A Song of Praise

12 On that day you will say:
"I will praise You, LORD,
although You were angry with me.
Your anger has turned away,
and You have had compassion on me.
2 Indeed, God is my salvation;
I will trust Him and not be afraid,
for •Yah, the LORD,
is my strength and my song.
He has become my salvation."
3 You will joyfully draw water
from the springs of salvation,
4 and on that day you will say:
"Give thanks to Yahweh; proclaim His name!
Celebrate His works among the peoples.
Declare that His name is exalted.
5 Sing to Yahweh, for He has done glorious things.
Let this be known throughout the earth.
6 Cry out and sing, citizen of •Zion,
for the Holy One of Israel is among you
in His greatness."

An Oracle against Babylon

13 An •oracle against Babylon that Isaiah son of Amoz saw:

2 Lift up a banner on a barren mountain.
Call out to them.
Wave your hand, and they will go
through the gates of the nobles.
3 I have commanded My chosen ones;
I have also called My warriors,
who exult in My triumph,
to execute My wrath.
4 Listen, a tumult on the mountains,
like that of a mighty people!
Listen, an uproar among the kingdoms,
like nations being gathered together!
The LORD of •Hosts is mobilizing an army for war.
5 They are coming from a far land,
from the distant horizon —
the LORD and the weapons of His wrath —
to destroy the whole country. [A]

6 Wail! For the day of the LORD is near.
It will come like destruction from the •Almighty.
7 Therefore everyone's hands will become weak,
and every man's heart will melt.
8† They will be horrified;
pain and agony will seize them;
they will be in anguish like a woman in labor.
They will look at each other,
their faces flushed with fear.
9 Look, the day of the LORD is coming —
cruel, with rage and burning anger —
to make the earth a desolation
and to destroy the sinners on it.
10 Indeed, the stars of the sky and its constellations [B]
will not give their light.
The sun will be dark when it rises,

and the moon will not shine.
11 I will bring disaster on the world,
and their own iniquity, on the wicked.
I will put an end to the pride of the arrogant
and humiliate the insolence of tyrants.
12 I will make man scarcer than gold,
and mankind more rare than the gold of Ophir.
13 Therefore I will make the heavens tremble,
and the earth will shake from its foundations
at the wrath of the LORD of Hosts,
on the day of His burning anger.
14 Like wandering gazelles
and like sheep without a shepherd,
each one will turn to his own people,
each one will flee to his own land.
15 Whoever is found will be stabbed,
and whoever is caught will die by the sword.
16 Their children will be smashed to death before their eyes;
their houses will be looted,
and their wives raped.
17† Look! I am stirring up the Medes against them,
who cannot be bought off with [C] silver
and who have no desire for gold.
18 Their bows will cut young men to pieces.
They will have no compassion on little ones;
they will not look with pity on children.

19 And Babylon, the jewel of the kingdoms,
the glory of the pride of the Chaldeans,
will be like Sodom and Gomorrah
when God overthrew them.
20 It will never be inhabited
or lived in from generation to generation;
a nomad will not pitch his tent there,
and shepherds will not let their flocks rest there.
21 But desert creatures will lie down there,

and owls will fill the houses.
Ostriches will dwell there,
and wild goats will leap about.
22 Hyenas will howl in the fortresses,
and jackals, in the luxurious palaces.
Babylon’s time is almost up;
her days are almost over.

Israel's Return

14 For the LORD will have compassion on Jacob and will choose Israel
again. He will settle them on their own land. The foreigner will join
them and be united with the house of Jacob. 2 The nations will escort Israel
and bring it to its homeland. Then the house of Israel will possess them as
male and female slaves in the LORD's land. They will make captives of their
captors and will rule over their oppressors.

Downfall of the King of Babylon

3 When the LORD gives you rest from your pain, torment, and the hard
labor you were forced to do, 4† you will sing this song of contempt about
the king of Babylon and say:

How the oppressor has quieted down,
and how the raging has become quiet!
5 The LORD has broken the staff of the wicked,
the scepter of the rulers.
6 It struck the peoples in anger
with unceasing blows.
It subdued the nations in rage
with relentless persecution.
7 All the earth is calm and at rest;
people shout with a ringing cry.
8 Even the cypresses and the cedars of Lebanon
rejoice over you:
"Since you have been laid low,
no woodcutter has come against us."

9 •Sheol below is eager to greet your coming.
He stirs up the spirits of the departed for you —
all the rulers [A] of the earth.
He makes all the kings of the nations
rise from their thrones.
10 They all respond to you, saying:
"You too have become as weak as we are;
you have become like us!

11 Your splendor has been brought down to Sheol,
along with the music of your harps.
Maggots are spread out under you,
and worms cover you."

12 Shining morning star, [B],
how you have fallen from the heavens!
You destroyer of nations,
you have been cut down to the ground.
13 You said to yourself:
"I will ascend to the heavens;
I will set up my throne
above the stars of God.
I will sit on the mount of the gods' assembly,
in the remotest parts of the North. [C]
14 I will ascend above the highest clouds;
I will make myself like the •Most High."
15 But you will be brought down to Sheol
into the deepest regions of the •Pit.

16 Those who see you will stare at you;
they will look closely at you:
"Is this the man who caused the earth to tremble,
who shook the kingdoms,
17 who turned the world into a wilderness,
who destroyed its cities
and would not release the prisoners to return home? "
18 All the kings of the nations
lie in splendor, each in his own tomb.
19 But you are thrown out without a grave,
like a worthless branch,
covered by those slain with the sword
and dumped into a rocky pit like a trampled corpse.
20 You will not join them in burial,
because you destroyed your land
and slaughtered your own people.
The offspring of evildoers

will never be remembered.
21 Prepare a place of slaughter for his sons,
because of the iniquity of their fathers.
They will never rise up to possess a land
or fill the surface of the earth with cities.

22 “I will rise up against them” — this is the declaration of the LORD of
•Hosts — “and I will cut off from Babylon her reputation, remnant,
offspring, and posterity” — this is the LORD’s declaration.
23 “I will make
her a swampland and a region for screech owls, [D] and I will sweep her away
with a broom of destruction.”

This is the declaration of the LORD of Hosts.

Assyria Will Be Destroyed

24 The LORD of Hosts has sworn:

As I have purposed, so it will be;
as I have planned it, so it will happen.
25 I will break Assyria in My land;
I will tread him down on My mountain.
Then his yoke will be taken from them,
and his burden will be removed from their shoulders.
26 This is the plan prepared
for the whole earth,
and this is the hand stretched out
against all the nations.
27 The LORD of Hosts Himself has planned it;
therefore, who can stand in its way?
It is His hand that is outstretched,
so who can turn it back?

An Oracle against Philistia

28 In the year that King Ahaz died, this •oracle came:

29 Don’t rejoice, all of you in Philistia,
because the rod of the one who struck you is broken.
For a viper will come from the root [E] of a snake,
and from its egg comes a flying serpent.
30 Then the firstborn of the poor will be well fed,
and the impoverished will lie down in safety,
but I will kill your root with hunger,
and your remnant will be slain.
31 Wail, you gates! Cry out, city!
Tremble with fear, all Philistia!
For a cloud of dust is coming from the north,
and there is no one missing from the invader’s ranks.
32 What answer will be given to the messengers from that nation?
The LORD has founded •Zion,
and His afflicted people find refuge in her.

An Oracle against Moab

15 [†]An •oracle against Moab:

Ar in Moab is devastated,
destroyed in a night.
Kir in Moab is devastated,
destroyed in a night.
2 Dibon went up to its temple
to weep at its •high places.
Moab wails on Nebo and at [A] Medeba.
Every head is shaved;
every beard is cut off.
3 In its streets they wear •sackcloth;
on its rooftops and in its public squares everyone wails,
falling down and weeping.
4 Heshbon and Elealeh cry out;
their voices are heard as far away as Jahaz.
Therefore the soldiers of Moab cry out,
and they tremble. [B]
5 My heart cries out over Moab,
whose fugitives flee as far as Zoar,
to Eglath-shelishiyah;
they go up the slope of Luhith weeping;
they raise a cry of destruction
on the road to Horonaim.
6 The waters of Nimrim are desolate;
the grass is withered, the foliage is gone,
and the vegetation has vanished.
7 So they carry their wealth and belongings
over the •Wadi of the Willows.
8 For their cry echoes
throughout the territory of Moab.
Their wailing reaches Eglaim;
their wailing reaches Beer-elim.
9 The waters of Dibon are full of blood,
but I will bring on Dibon even more than this —
a lion for those who escape from Moab,

and for the survivors in the land.

16 Send lambs to the ruler of the land,
from Sela in the desert
to the mountain of Daughter •Zion.
2 Like a bird fleeing,
forced from the nest,
the daughters of Moab
will be at the fords of the Arnon.

3 Give us counsel and make a decision.
Shelter us at noonday
with shade that is as dark as night.
Hide the refugees;
do not betray the one who flees.
4 Let my refugees stay with you;
be a refuge for Moab [A] from the aggressor.

When the oppressor has gone,
destruction has ended,
and marauders have vanished from the land.
5† Then in the tent of David
a throne will be established by faithful love.
A judge who seeks what is right
and is quick to execute justice
will sit on the throne forever.

6 We have heard of Moab's pride —
how very proud he is —
his haughtiness, his pride, his arrogance,
and his empty boasting.
7 Therefore let Moab wail;
let every one of them wail for Moab.
Mourn, you who are completely devastated,
for the raisin cakes of Kir-hareseth.
8 For Heshbon's terraced vineyards
and the grapevines of Sibmah have withered.
The rulers of the nations
have trampled its choice vines

that reached as far as Jazer
and spread to the desert.
Their shoots spread out
and reached the Dead Sea.
9 So I join with Jazer
to weep for the vines of Sibmah;
I drench Heshbon and Elealeh with my tears.
Triumphant shouts have fallen silent [B]
over your summer fruit and your harvest.
10 Joy and rejoicing have been removed from the orchard;
no one is singing or shouting for joy in the vineyards.
No one tramples grapes [C] in the winepresses.
I have put an end to the shouting.
11 Therefore I moan like the sound of a lyre for Moab,
as does my innermost being for Kir-heres.
12 When Moab appears on the •high place,
when he tires himself out
and comes to his sanctuary to pray,
it will do him no good.

13 This is the message that the LORD previously announced about Moab.
14 And now the LORD says, "In three years, as a hired worker counts years, Moab's splendor will become an object of contempt, in spite of a very large population. And those who are left will be few and weak."

An Oracle against Damascus

17 [†]An •oracle against Damascus:

Look, Damascus is no longer a city.
It has become a ruined heap.
2 The cities of Aroer are forsaken;
they will be places for flocks.
They will lie down without fear.
3 The fortress disappears from Ephraim,
and a kingdom from Damascus.
The remnant of Aram will be
like the splendor of the Israelites.

This is the declaration of the LORD of •Hosts.

Judgment against Israel

4 On that day
the splendor of Jacob will fade,
and his healthy body [A] will become emaciated.
5 It will be as if a reaper had gathered standing grain —
his arm harvesting the heads of grain —
and as if one had gleaned heads of grain
in the Valley of Rephaim.
6 Only gleanings will be left in Israel,
as if an olive tree had been beaten —
two or three berries at the very top of the tree,
four or five on its fruitful branches.

This is the declaration of the LORD,
the God of Israel.

7 On that day people will look to their Maker and will turn their eyes to
the Holy One of Israel. 8 They will not look to the altars they made with
their hands or to the •Asherahs and incense altars they made with their
fingers.

9 On that day their strong cities will be
like the abandoned woods and mountaintops

that were abandoned because of the Israelites;
there will be desolation.
10 For you have forgotten the God of your salvation,
and you have failed to remember
the rock of your strength;
therefore you will plant beautiful plants
and set out cuttings from exotic vines.
11 On the day that you plant,
you will help them to grow,
and in the morning
you will help your seed to sprout,
but the harvest will vanish
on the day of disease and incurable pain.

Judgment against the Nations

12 Ah! The roar of many peoples —
they roar like the roaring of the seas.
The raging of the nations —
they rage like the raging of mighty waters.
13 The nations rage like the raging of many waters.
He rebukes them, and they flee far away,
driven before the wind like chaff on the hills
and like tumbleweeds before a gale.
14 In the evening — sudden terror!
Before morning — it is gone!
This is the fate of those who plunder us
and the lot of those who ravage us.

The LORD's Message to Cush

18 Ah! The land of buzzing insect wings [A]
beyond the rivers of •Cush
2 sends couriers by sea,
in reed vessels on the waters.

Go, swift messengers,
to a nation tall and smooth-skinned,
to a people feared far and near,
a powerful nation with a strange language, [B]
whose land is divided by rivers.
3 All you inhabitants of the world
and you who live on the earth,
when a banner is raised on the mountains, look!
When a trumpet sounds, listen!

4 For, the LORD said to me:

I will quietly look out from My place,
like shimmering heat in sunshine,
like a rain cloud in harvest heat.
5 For before the harvest, when the blossoming is over
and the blossom becomes a ripening grape,
He will cut off the shoots with a pruning knife,
and tear away and remove the branches.
6 They will all be left for the birds of prey on the hills
and for the wild animals of the land.
The birds will spend the summer on them,
and all the animals, the winter on them.

7† At that time a gift will be brought to •Yahweh of •Hosts from a people
tall and smooth-skinned, a people feared far and near, a powerful nation
with a strange language, whose land is divided by rivers — to Mount •Zion,
the place of the name of Yahweh of Hosts.

An Oracle against Egypt

19 An •oracle against Egypt:

Look, the LORD rides on a swift cloud
and is coming to Egypt.
Egypt's idols will tremble before Him,
and Egypt's heart will melt within it.
2 I will provoke Egypt against Egypt;
each will fight against his brother
and each against his friend,
city against city, kingdom against kingdom.
3 Egypt's spirit will be disturbed within it,
and I will frustrate its plans.
Then they will seek idols, ghosts,
spirits of the dead, and spiritists.
4 I will deliver Egypt into the hands of harsh masters,
and a strong king will rule it.

This is the declaration of the Lord GOD of •Hosts.

5 The waters of the sea will dry up,
and the river will be parched and dry.
6 The channels will stink;
they will dwindle, and Egypt's canals will be parched.
Reed and rush will die. [A]
7 The reeds by the Nile, by the mouth of the river,
and all the cultivated areas of the Nile
will wither, blow away, and vanish.
8 Then the fishermen will mourn.
All those who cast hooks into the Nile will lament,
and those who spread nets on the water will shrivel up.
9 Those who work with flax will be dismayed;
the combers and weavers will turn pale.
10 Egypt's weavers [B] will be dejected;
all her wage earners will be demoralized.

11 The princes of Zoan are complete fools;
Pharaoh's wisest advisers give stupid advice!

How can you say to Pharaoh,
“I am one [C] of the wise,
a student of eastern [D] kings”?
12 Where then are your wise men?
Let them tell you and reveal
what the LORD of Hosts has planned against Egypt.
13 The princes of Zoan have been fools;
the princes of Memphis are deceived.
Her tribal chieftains have led Egypt astray.
14 The LORD has mixed within her a spirit of confusion.
The leaders have made Egypt stagger in all she does,
as a drunkard staggers in his vomit.
15 No head or tail, palm or reed,
will be able to do anything for Egypt.

Egypt Will Know the LORD

16 On that day Egypt will be like women. She will tremble with fear
because of the threatening hand of the LORD of Hosts when He raises it
against her. 17 The land of Judah will terrify Egypt; whenever Judah is
mentioned, Egypt will tremble because of what the LORD of Hosts has
planned against it.

18[†] On that day five cities in the land of Egypt will speak the language of
Canaan and swear loyalty to the LORD of Hosts. One of the cities will be
called the City of the Sun.

19 On that day there will be an altar to the LORD in the center of the land
of Egypt and a pillar to the LORD near her border. 20 It will be a sign and
witness to the LORD of Hosts in the land of Egypt. When they cry out to the
LORD because of their oppressors, He will send them a savior and leader,
and he will rescue them. 21 The LORD will make Himself known to Egypt,
and Egypt will know the LORD on that day. They will offer sacrifices and
offerings; they will make vows to the LORD and fulfill them. 22 The LORD
will strike Egypt, striking and healing. Then they will return to the LORD
and He will hear their prayers and heal them.

23 On that day there will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria. Assyria
will go to Egypt, Egypt to Assyria, and Egypt will worship with Assyria.

24 On that day Israel will form a triple alliance with Egypt and
Assyria — a blessing within the land. 25 The LORD of Hosts will bless them,
saying, “Egypt My people, Assyria My handiwork, and Israel My
inheritance are blessed.”

No Help from Cush or Egypt

20 In the year that the chief commander, sent by Sargon king of Assyria,
came to Ashdod and attacked and captured it — 2[†] during that time
the LORD had spoken through Isaiah son of Amoz, saying, “Go, take off
your •sackcloth [A] and remove the sandals from your feet,” and he did so,
going naked and barefoot — 3 the LORD said, “As My servant Isaiah has
gone naked and barefoot three years as a sign and omen against Egypt and
•Cush, 4 so the king of Assyria will lead the captives of Egypt and the
exiles of Cush, young and old alike, naked and barefoot, with bared
buttocks — to Egypt’s shame. 5 Those who made Cush their hope and
Egypt their boast will be dismayed and ashamed. 6 And the inhabitants of
this coastland will say on that day, ‘Look, this is what has happened to
those we relied on and fled to for help to rescue us from the king of
Assyria! Now, how will we escape? ’ ”

A Judgment on Babylon

21 An •oracle against the desert by the sea:

Like storms that pass over the •Negev,
it comes from the desert, from the land of terror.
2† A troubling vision is declared to me:
"The treacherous one acts treacherously,
and the destroyer destroys.
Advance, Elam! Lay siege, you Medes!
I will put an end to all her groaning."

3 Therefore I am [A] filled with anguish.
Pain grips me, like the pain of a woman in labor.
I am too perplexed to hear,
too dismayed to see.
4 My heart staggers;
horror terrifies me.
He has turned my last glimmer of hope [B]
into sheer terror.
5 Prepare a table, and spread out a carpet!
Eat and drink!
Rise up, you princes, and oil the shields!

6 For the Lord has said to me,
"Go, post a lookout;
let him report what he sees.
7 When he sees riders —
pairs of horsemen,
riders on donkeys,
riders on camels —
he must pay close attention."
8 Then the lookout reported,
"Lord, I stand on the watchtower all day,
and I stay at my post all night.
9 Look, riders come —
horsemen in pairs."
And he answered, saying,
"Babylon has fallen, has fallen.

All the images of her gods
have been shattered on the ground."

10 My people who have been crushed
on the threshing floor,
I have declared to you
what I have heard from the LORD of •Hosts,
the God of Israel.

An Oracle against Dumah

11 An oracle against Dumah:

One calls to me from Seir,
"Watchman, what is left of the night?
Watchman, what is left of the night? "
12 The watchman said,
"Morning has come, and also night.
If you want to ask, ask!
Come back again."

An Oracle against Arabia

13 An oracle against Arabia:

In the desert brush
you will camp for the night,
you caravans of Dedanites.
14 Bring water for the thirsty.
The inhabitants of the land of Tema
meet the refugees with food.
15 For they have fled from swords,
from the drawn sword,
from the bow that is strung,
and from the stress of battle.

16 For the Lord said this to me: "Within one year, as a hired worker
counts years, all the glory of Kedar will be gone. 17 The remaining

Kedarite archers will be few in number." For the LORD, the God of Israel, has spoken.

An Oracle against Jerusalem

22 An •oracle against the Valley of Vision:

What's the matter with you?
Why have all of you gone up to the rooftops?
2 The noisy city, the jubilant town,
is filled with revelry.
Your dead did not die by the sword;
they were not killed in battle.
3 All your rulers have fled together,
captured without a bow.
All your fugitives were captured together;
they had fled far away.
4 Therefore I said,
"Look away from me! Let me weep bitterly!
Do not try to comfort me
about the destruction of my dear [A] people."
5 For the Lord GOD of •Hosts
had a day of tumult, trampling, and confusion
in the Valley of Vision —
people shouting [B] and crying to the mountains;
6 Elam took up a quiver
with chariots and horsemen, [C]
and Kir uncovered the shield.
7 Your best valleys were full of chariots,
and horsemen were positioned at the gates.
8 He removed the defenses of Judah.

On that day you looked to the weapons in the House of the Forest. 9 You
saw that there were many breaches in the walls of the city of David. You
collected water from the lower pool. 10 You counted the houses of
Jerusalem so that you could tear them down to fortify the wall. 11 You made
a reservoir between the walls for the waters of the ancient pool, but you
did not look to the One who made it, or consider the One who created it
long ago.

12† On that day the Lord GOD of Hosts
called for weeping, for wailing, for shaven heads,
and for the wearing of •sackcloth.
13 But look: joy and gladness,
butchering of cattle, slaughtering of sheep,
eating of meat, and drinking of wine —
"Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die! "
14 The LORD of Hosts has directly revealed to me:
"This sin of yours will never [D] be wiped out."
The Lord GOD of Hosts has spoken.

An Oracle against Shebna

15† The Lord GOD of Hosts said: "Go to Shebna, that steward who is in
charge of the palace, and say to him: 16 What are you doing here? Who
authorized you to carve out a tomb for yourself here, carving your tomb on
the height and cutting a crypt for yourself out of rock? 17 Look, you strong
man! The LORD is about to shake you violently. He will take hold of you,
18 wind you up into a ball, and sling you into a wide land. [E] There you will
die, and there your glorious chariots will be — a disgrace to the house of
your lord. 19 I will remove you from your office; you will be ousted from
your position.

20 "On that day I will call for my servant, Eliakim son of Hilkiah. 21 I
will clothe him with your robe and tie your sash around him. I will put your
authority into his hand, and he will be like a father to the inhabitants of
Jerusalem and to the House of Judah. 22 I will place the key of the House
of David on his shoulder; what he opens, no one can close; what he closes,
no one can open. 23 I will drive him, like a peg, into a firm place. He will
be a throne of honor for his father's house. 24 They will hang on him the
whole burden of his father's house: the descendants and the offshoots — all
the small vessels, from bowls to every kind of jar. 25 On that day" — the
declaration of the LORD of Hosts — "the peg that was driven into a firm
place will give way, be cut off, and fall, and the load on it will be
destroyed." Indeed, the LORD has spoken.

An Oracle against Tyre

23 An •oracle against Tyre:

Wail, ships of Tarshish,
for your haven has been destroyed.
Word has reached them from the land of Cyprus. [A],
2 Mourn, inhabitants of the coastland,
you merchants of Sidon;
your agents have crossed the sea
3 on many waters.
Tyre’s revenue was the grain from Shihor —
the harvest of the Nile.
She was the merchant among the nations.
4 Be ashamed Sidon, the stronghold of the sea,
for the sea has spoken:
“I have not been in labor or given birth.
I have not raised young men
or brought up young women.”
5 When the news reaches Egypt,
they will be in anguish over the news about Tyre.
6 Cross over to Tarshish;
wail, inhabitants of the coastland!
7 Is this your jubilant city,
whose origin was in ancient times,
whose feet have taken her
to settle far away?
8† Who planned this against Tyre,
the bestower of crowns,
whose traders are princes,
whose merchants are the honored ones of the earth?
9 The Lord of •Hosts planned it,
to desecrate all its glorious beauty,
to disgrace all the honored ones of the earth.
10 Overflow your land like the Nile, daughter of Tarshish;
there is no longer anything to restrain you. [B]
11 He stretched out His hand over the sea;

He made kingdoms tremble.
The LORD has commanded
that the Canaanite fortresses be destroyed.
12 He said,
“You will not rejoice anymore,
ravished young woman, daughter of Sidon.
Get up and cross over to Cyprus —
even there you will have no rest! ”
13 Look at the land of the Chaldeans —
a people who no longer exist.
Assyria destined it for desert creatures.
They set up their siege towers
and stripped its palaces.
They made it a ruin.
14 Wail, ships of Tarshish,
because your fortress is destroyed!

15† On that day Tyre will be forgotten for 70 years — the life span of one king. At the end of 70 years, what the song says about the prostitute will happen to Tyre:

16 Pick up your lyre,
stroll through the city,
prostitute forgotten by men.
Play skillfully,
sing many a song,
and you will be thought of again.

17 And at the end of the 70 years, the LORD will restore Tyre and she will go back into business, prostituting herself with all the kingdoms of the world on the face of the earth. 18 But her profits and wages will be dedicated to the LORD. They will not be stored or saved, for her profit will go to those who live in the LORD’s presence, to provide them with ample food and sacred clothing.

The Earth Judged

24 Look, the LORD is stripping the earth bare
and making it desolate.
He will twist its surface and scatter its inhabitants:
2 people and priest alike,
servant and master,
female servant and mistress,
buyer and seller,
lender and borrower,
creditor and debtor.
3 The earth will be stripped completely bare
and will be totally plundered,
for the LORD has spoken this message.

4 The earth mourns and withers;
the world wastes away and withers;
the exalted people of the earth waste away.
5 The earth is polluted by its inhabitants,
for they have transgressed teachings,
overstepped decrees,
and broken the everlasting covenant.
6 Therefore a curse has consumed the earth,
and its inhabitants have become •guilty;
the earth's inhabitants have been burned,
and only a few survive.
7 The new wine mourns;
the vine withers.
All the carousers now groan.
8 The joyful tambourines have ceased.
The noise of the jubilant has stopped.
The joyful lyre has ceased.
9 They no longer sing and drink wine;
beer is bitter to those who drink it.
10 The city of chaos is shattered;
every house is closed to entry.
11 In the streets they cry [A] for wine.
All joy grows dark;

earth's rejoicing goes into exile.
12 Only desolation remains in the city;
its gate has collapsed in ruins.
13 For this is how it will be on earth
among the nations:
like a harvested olive tree,
like a gleaning after a grape harvest.

14† They raise their voices, they sing out;
they proclaim in the west
the majesty of the LORD.
15 Therefore, in the east honor the LORD!
In the islands of the west
honor the name of •Yahweh,
the God of Israel.
16 From the ends of the earth we hear songs:
The Splendor of the Righteous One.

But I said, "I waste away! I waste away! [B]
Woe is me."
The treacherous act treacherously;
the treacherous deal very treacherously.

17 Panic, pit, and trap await you
who dwell on the earth.
18 Whoever flees at the sound of panic
will fall into a pit,
and whoever escapes from the pit
will be caught in a trap.
For the windows are opened from heaven,
and the foundations of the earth are shaken.
19 The earth is completely devastated;
the earth is split open;
the earth is violently shaken.
20 The earth staggers like a drunkard
and sways like a hut.
Earth's rebellion weighs it down,

and it falls, never to rise again.

21 On that day the LORD will punish
the host of heaven above
and kings of the earth below.
22 They will be gathered together
like prisoners in a pit.
They will be confined to a dungeon;
after many days they will be punished.
23 The moon will be put to shame
and the sun disgraced,
because the LORD of •Hosts will reign as king
on Mount •Zion in Jerusalem,
and He will display His glory
in the presence of His elders.

Salvation and Judgment on That Day

25 •Yahweh, You are my God;
I will exalt You. I will praise Your name,
for You have accomplished wonders,
plans formed long ago, with perfect faithfulness.
2 For You have turned the city into a pile of rocks,
a fortified city, into ruins;
the fortress of barbarians is no longer a city;
it will never be rebuilt.
3 Therefore, a strong people will honor You.
The cities of violent nations will •fear You.
4 For You have been a stronghold for the poor,
a stronghold for the needy person in his distress,
a refuge from the rain, a shade from the heat.
When the breath of the violent
is like rain against a wall,
5 like heat in a dry land,
You subdue the uproar of barbarians.
As [A] the shade of a cloud cools the heat of the day,
so He silences the song of the violent.

6† The LORD of •Hosts will prepare a feast
for all the peoples on this mountain —
a feast of aged wine, choice meat, [B] finely aged wine.
7† On this mountain
He will destroy the burial shroud,
the shroud over all the peoples,
the sheet covering all the nations;
8 He will destroy death forever.
The Lord GOD will wipe away the tears
from every face
and remove His people's disgrace
from the whole earth,
for the LORD has spoken.

9 On that day it will be said,
"Look, this is our God;
we have waited for Him, and He has saved us.

This is the LORD; we have waited for Him.
Let us rejoice and be glad in His salvation."
10 For the LORD's power will rest on this mountain.

But Moab will be trampled in his place [C]
as straw is trampled in a dung pile.
11 He will spread out his arms in the middle of it,
as a swimmer spreads out his arms to swim.
His pride will be brought low,
along with the trickery of his hands.
12 The high-walled fortress will be brought down,
thrown to the ground, to the dust.

The Song of Judah

26 On that day this song will be sung in the land of Judah:

We have a strong city.
Salvation is established as walls and ramparts.
2 Open the gates
so a righteous nation can come in —
one that remains faithful.
3 You will keep the mind that is dependent on You
in perfect peace,
for it is trusting in You.
4 Trust in the LORD forever,
because in •Yah, the LORD, is an everlasting rock!
5 For He has humbled those who live in lofty places —
an inaccessible city.
He brings it down; He brings it down to the ground;
He throws it to the dust.
6 Feet trample it,
the feet of the humble,
the steps of the poor.

God's People Vindicated

7 The path of the righteous is level;
You clear a straight path for the righteous.
8 Yes, Yahweh, we wait for You
in the path of Your judgments.
Our desire is for Your name and renown.
9 I long for You in the night;
yes, my spirit within me diligently seeks You,
for when Your judgments are in the land,
the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.
10 But if the wicked man is shown favor,
he does not learn righteousness.
In a righteous land he acts unjustly
and does not see the majesty of the LORD.

11 LORD, Your hand is lifted up to take action,

but they do not see it.
They will see Your zeal for Your people,
and they will be put to shame.
The fire for Your adversaries will consume them!
12 LORD, You will establish peace for us,
for You have also done all our work for us.
13 Yahweh our God, lords other than You have ruled over us,
but we remember Your name alone.

14† The dead do not live;
departed spirits do not rise up.
Indeed, You have visited and destroyed them;
You have wiped out all memory of them.
15 You have added to the nation, LORD.
You have added to the nation; You are honored.
You have expanded all the borders of the land.
16 LORD, they went to You in their distress;
they poured out whispered prayers
because Your discipline fell on them. [A]
17 As a pregnant woman about to give birth
writhes and cries out in her pains,
so we were before You, LORD.
18 We became pregnant, we writhed in pain;
we gave birth to wind.
We have won no victories on earth,
and the earth's inhabitants have not fallen.

19 Your dead will live; their bodies [B] will rise.
Awake and sing, you who dwell in the dust!
For you will be covered with the morning dew, [C]
and the earth will bring out the departed spirits.

20 Go, my people, enter your rooms
and close your doors behind you.
Hide for a little while until the wrath has passed.
21 For look, the LORD is coming from His place
to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity.

The earth will reveal the blood shed on it
and will no longer conceal her slain.

Leviathan Slain

27 [†]On that day the LORD with His harsh, great, and strong sword, will
bring judgment on •Leviathan, the fleeing serpent — Leviathan, the
twisting serpent. He will slay the monster that is in the sea.

The LORD's Vineyard

2 On that day
sing about a desirable vineyard:
3 I, •Yahweh, watch over it;
I water it regularly.
I guard it night and day
so that no one disturbs it.
4 I am not angry,
but if it produces thorns and briers for Me,
I will fight against it, trample it,
and burn it to the ground.
5 Or let it take hold of My strength;
let it make peace with Me —
make peace with Me.
6 In days to come, Jacob will take root.
Israel will blossom and bloom
and fill the whole world with fruit.

7 Did the LORD strike Israel
as He struck the one who struck Israel?
Was he killed like those killed by Him?
8 You disputed with her
by banishing and driving her away. [A]
He removed her with His severe storm
on the day of the east wind.
9 Therefore Jacob's iniquity will be purged in this way,
and the result of the removal of his sin will be this:
when he makes all the altar stones
like crushed bits of chalk,
no •Asherah poles or incense altars will remain standing.
10 For the fortified city will be deserted,

pastures abandoned and forsaken like a wilderness.
Calves will graze there,
and there they will spread out and strip its branches.
11 When its branches dry out, they will be broken off.
Women will come and make fires with them,
for they are not a people with understanding.
Therefore their Maker will not have compassion on them,
and their Creator will not be gracious to them.

12 On that day
the LORD will thresh grain from the Euphrates River
as far as the •Wadi of Egypt,
and you Israelites will be gathered one by one.
13 On that day
a great trumpet will be blown,
and those lost in the land of Assyria will come,
as well as those dispersed in the land of Egypt;
and they will worship the LORD
at Jerusalem on the holy mountain.

Woe to Samaria

28 Woe to the majestic crown of Ephraim's drunkards,
and to the fading flower of its beautiful splendor,
which is on the summit above the rich valley.
Woe to those overcome with wine.
2 Look, the Lord has a strong and mighty one —
like a devastating hail storm,
like a storm with strong flooding waters.
He will bring it across the land with His hand.
3 The majestic crown of Ephraim's drunkards
will be trampled underfoot.
4 The fading flower of his beautiful splendor,
which is on the summit above the rich valley,
will be like a ripe fig before the summer harvest.
Whoever sees it will swallow it
while it is still in his hand.
5 On that day
the LORD of •Hosts will become a crown of beauty
and a diadem of splendor
to the remnant of His people,
6 a spirit of justice
to the one who sits in judgment,
and strength
to those who turn back the battle at the gate.

7† These also stagger because of wine
and stumble under the influence of beer:
priest and prophet stagger because of beer,
they are confused by wine.
They stumble because of beer,
they are muddled in their visions,
they stumble in their judgments.
8 Indeed, all their tables are covered with vomit;
there is no place without a stench.
9 Who is he [A] trying to teach?
Who is he [B] trying to instruct?
Infants [C] just weaned from milk?

Babies [D] removed from the breast?
10 For he says: “Law after law, law after law,
line after line, line after line,
a little here, a little there.” [E]
11 So He will speak to this people
with stammering speech
and in a foreign language.
12 He had said to them:
“This is the place of rest,
let the weary rest;
this is the place of repose.”
But they would not listen.

13 Then the word of the LORD came to them:
“Law after law, law after law,
line after line, line after line,
a little here, a little there,” [F]
so they go stumbling backward,
to be broken, trapped, and captured.

A Deal with Death

14 Therefore hear the word of the LORD, you mockers
who rule this people in Jerusalem.
15† For you said, “We have cut a deal with Death,
and we have made an agreement with •Sheol;
when the overwhelming scourge passes through,
it will not touch us,
because we have made falsehood our refuge
and have hidden behind treachery.”
16† Therefore the Lord GOD said:
“Look, I have laid a stone in •Zion,
a tested stone,
a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation;
the one who believes will be unshakable. [G],
17 And I will make justice the measuring line

and righteousness the mason’s level.”
Hail will sweep away the false refuge,
and water will flood your hiding place.
18 Your deal with Death will be dissolved,
and your agreement with Sheol will not last.
When the overwhelming scourge passes through,
you will be trampled.
19 Every time it passes through,
it will carry you away;
it will pass through every morning —
every day and every night.
Only terror will cause you
to understand the message. [H]
20 Indeed, the bed is too short to stretch out on,
and its cover too small to wrap up in.
21 For the Lord will rise up as He did at Mount Perazim.
He will rise in wrath, as at the Valley of Gibeon,
to do His work, His strange work,
and to perform His task, His disturbing task.
22 So now, do not mock,
or your shackles will become stronger.
Indeed, I have heard from the Lord God of Hosts
a decree of destruction for the whole land.

God’s Wonderful Advice

23 Listen and hear my voice.
Pay attention and hear what I say.
24 Does the plowman plow every day to plant seed?
Does he continuously break up and cultivate the soil?
25 When he has leveled its surface,
does he not then scatter black cumin and sow cumin?
He plants wheat in rows and barley in plots,
with spelt as their border.
26 His God teaches him order;
He instructs him.

27 Certainly black cumin is not threshed
with a threshing board,
and a cart wheel is not rolled over the cumin.
But black cumin is beaten out with a stick,
and cumin with a rod.
28 Bread grain is crushed,
but is not threshed endlessly.
Though the wheel of the farmer’s cart rumbles,
his horses do not crush it.
29 This also comes from the LORD of Hosts.
He gives wonderful advice;
He gives great wisdom.

Woe to Jerusalem

29 Woe to Ariel, [A] Ariel,
the city where David camped!
Continue year after year;
let the festivals recur.
2 I will oppress Ariel,
and there will be mourning and crying,
and she will be to Me like an Ariel. [B]
3 I will camp in a circle around you;
I will besiege you with earth ramps,
and I will set up my siege towers against you.
4 You will be brought down;
you will speak from the ground,
and your words will come from low in the dust.
Your voice will be like that of a spirit from the ground;
your speech will whisper from the dust.

5 Your many foes [C] will be like fine dust,
and many of the ruthless, like blowing chaff.
Then suddenly, in an instant,
6 you will be visited by the LORD of •Hosts
with thunder, earthquake, and loud noise,
storm, tempest, and a flame of consuming fire.
7 All the many nations
going out to battle against Ariel —
all the attackers, the siege works against her,
and those who oppress her —
will then be like a dream, a vision in the night.
8 It will be like a hungry one who dreams he is eating,
then wakes and is still hungry;
and like a thirsty one who dreams he is drinking,
then wakes and is still thirsty, longing for water.
So it will be for all the many nations
who go to battle against Mount •Zion.

9† Stop and be astonished;
blind yourselves and be blind!
They are drunk, but not with wine;

they stagger, but not with beer.
[10] For the LORD has poured out on you
an overwhelming urge to [D] sleep;
He has shut your eyes — the prophets,
and covered your heads — the seers.

[11] For you the entire vision will be like the words of a sealed document. If
it is given to one who can read and he is asked to read it, [E] he will say, "I
can't read it, because it is sealed." [12] And if the document is given to one
who cannot read and he is asked to read it, [F] he will say, "I can't read."

[13] The Lord said:

Because these people approach Me with their mouths
to honor Me with lip-service [G] —
yet their hearts are far from Me,
and their worship consists of man-made rules
learned by rote —
[14] therefore I will again confound these people
with wonder after wonder.
The wisdom of their wise men will vanish,
and the understanding of the perceptive will be hidden.

[15†] Woe to those who go to great lengths
to hide their plans from the LORD.
They do their works in darkness,
and say, "Who sees us? Who knows us? "
[16] You have turned things around,
as if the potter were the same as the clay.
How can what is made say about its maker,
"He didn't make me"?
How can what is formed
say about the one who formed it,
"He doesn't understand what he's doing"?

[17] Isn't it true that in just a little while
Lebanon will become an orchard,

and the orchard will seem like a forest?
18 On that day the deaf will hear
the words of a document,
and out of a deep darkness
the eyes of the blind will see.
19 The humble will have joy
after joy in the LORD,
and the poor people will rejoice
in the Holy One of Israel.
20 For the ruthless one will vanish,
the scorner will disappear,
and all those who lie in wait with evil intent
will be killed —
21 those who, with their speech,
accuse a person of wrongdoing,
who set a trap at the •gate for the mediator,
and without cause deprive the righteous of justice.

22 Therefore, the LORD who redeemed Abraham says this about the house of Jacob:

Jacob will no longer be ashamed
and his face will no longer be pale.
23 For when he sees his children,
the work of My hands within his nation,
they will honor My name,
they will honor the Holy One of Jacob
and stand in awe of the God of Israel.
24 Those who are confused will gain understanding,
and those who grumble will accept instruction.

Condemnation of the Egyptian Alliance

30 Woe to the rebellious children!
They carry out a plan, but not Mine; This is the LORD's declaration.
they make an alliance,
but against My will,
piling sin on top of sin.
2 They set out to go down to Egypt
without asking My advice,
in order to seek shelter under Pharaoh's protection
and take refuge in Egypt's shadow.
3 But Pharaoh's protection will become your shame,
and refuge in Egypt's shadow your disgrace.
4 For though his [A] princes are at Zoan
and his messengers reach as far as Hanes,
5 everyone will be ashamed
because of a people who can't help.
They are of no benefit, they are no help;
they are good for nothing but shame and reproach.

6 An •oracle about the animals of the •Negev: [B]

Through a land of trouble and distress,
of lioness and lion,
of viper and flying serpent,
they carry their wealth on the backs of donkeys
and their treasures on the humps of camels,
to a people who will not help them.
7† Egypt's help is completely worthless;
therefore, I call her:
•Rahab Who Just Sits.

8 Go now, write it on a tablet in their presence
and inscribe it on a scroll;
it will be for the future,
forever and ever.
9 They are a rebellious people,
deceptive children,
children who do not want to obey the LORD's instruction.

10 They say to the seers, “Do not see,”
and to the prophets,
“Do not prophesy the truth to us.
Tell us flattering things.
Prophesy illusions.
11 Get out of the way!
Leave the pathway.
Rid us of the Holy One of Israel.”
12 Therefore the Holy One of Israel says:
“Because you have rejected this message
and have trusted in oppression and deceit,
and have depended on them,
13 this iniquity of yours will be
like a spreading breach,
a bulge in a high wall
whose collapse will come in an instant — suddenly!
14 Its collapse will be like the shattering
of a potter’s jar, crushed to pieces,
so that not even a fragment of pottery
will be found among its shattered remains —
no fragment large enough to take fire from a hearth
or scoop water from a cistern.”
15 For the Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel, has said:
“You will be delivered by returning and resting;
your strength will lie in quiet confidence.
But you are not willing.”
16 You say, “No!
We will escape on horses” —
therefore you will escape! —
and, “We will ride on fast horses” —
but those who pursue you will be faster.
17 One thousand will flee at the threat of one,
at the threat of five you will flee,
until you alone remain
like a solitary pole on a mountaintop
or a banner on a hill.

The LORD's Mercy to Israel

18† Therefore the LORD is waiting to show you mercy,
and is rising up to show you compassion,
for the LORD is a just God.
All who wait patiently for Him are happy.

19 For you people will live on •Zion in Jerusalem and will never cry
again. He will show favor to you at the sound of your cry; when He hears,
He will answer you. 20 The Lord will give you meager bread and water
during oppression, but your Teacher [C] will not hide Himself [D] any longer.
Your eyes will see your Teacher, [E] 21 and whenever you turn to the right or
to the left, your ears will hear this command behind you: "This is the way.
Walk in it." 22 Then you will defile your silver-plated idols and your gold-
plated images. You will throw them away like menstrual cloths, and call
them filth.

23 Then He will send rain for your seed that you have sown in the ground,
and the food, the produce of the ground, will be rich and plentiful. On that
day your cattle will graze in open pastures. 24 The oxen and donkeys that
work the ground will eat salted fodder scattered with winnowing shovel
and fork. 25 Streams flowing with water will be on every high mountain and
every raised hill on the day of great slaughter when the towers fall. 26† The
moonlight will be as bright as the sunlight, and the sunlight will be seven
times brighter — like the light of seven days — on the day that the LORD
bandages His people's injuries and heals the wounds He inflicted.

Annihilation of the Assyrians

27 Look, •Yahweh [F] comes from far away,
His anger burning and heavy with smoke. [G]
His lips are full of fury,
and His tongue is like a consuming fire.
28† His breath is like an overflowing torrent
that rises to the neck.
He comes to sift the nations in a sieve of destruction

and to put a bridle on the jaws of the peoples
to lead them astray.
29 Your singing will be like that
on the night of a holy festival,
and your heart will rejoice
like one who walks to the music of a flute,
going up to the mountain of the LORD,
to the Rock of Israel.
30 And the LORD will make the splendor of His voice heard
and reveal His arm striking in angry wrath
and a flame of consuming fire,
in driving rain, a torrent, and hailstones.
31 Assyria will be shattered by the voice of the LORD.
He will strike with a rod.
32 And every stroke of the appointed staff
that the LORD brings down on him
will be to the sound of tambourines and lyres;
He will fight against him with brandished weapons.
33 Indeed! •Topheth has been ready
for the king for a long time now.
Its funeral pyre is deep and wide,
with plenty of fire and wood.
The breath of the LORD, like a torrent of brimstone,
kindles it.

The Lord, the Only Help

31 Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help
and who depend on horses!
They trust in the abundance of chariots
and in the large number of horsemen.
They do not look to the Holy One of Israel
and they do not seek the LORD's help.
2 But He also is wise and brings disaster.
He does not go back on what He says;
He will rise up against the house of wicked men
and against the allies of evildoers.
3 Egyptians are men, not God;
their horses are flesh, not spirit.
When the LORD raises His hand to strike,
the helper will stumble
and the one who is helped will fall;
both will perish together.

4 For this is what the LORD said to me:

As a lion or young lion growls over its prey
when a band of shepherds is called out against it,
and is not terrified by their shouting
or subdued by their noise,
so the LORD of •Hosts will come down
to fight on Mount •Zion
and on its hill.

5 Like hovering birds,
so the LORD of Hosts will protect Jerusalem —
by protecting it, He will rescue it,
by sparing it, He will deliver it.

6 Return to the One the Israelites have greatly rebelled against. 7 For on
that day, every one of you will reject the silver and gold idols that your own
hands have sinfully made.

8† Then Assyria will fall,

but not by human sword;
a sword will devour him,
but not one made by man.
He will flee from the sword;
his young men will be put to forced labor.
9 His rock will pass away because of fear,
and his officers will be afraid because of the signal flag.

This is the LORD's declaration — whose fire is in Zion and whose furnace is in Jerusalem.

The Righteous Kingdom Announced

32 †Indeed, a king will reign righteously,
and rulers will rule justly.
2 Each will be like a shelter from the wind,
a refuge from the rain,
like streams of water in a dry land
and the shade of a massive rock in an arid land.
3 Then the eyes of those who see will not be closed,
and the ears of those who hear will listen.
4 The reckless mind will gain knowledge,
and the stammering tongue will speak clearly and fluently.
5 A fool will no longer be called a noble,
nor a scoundrel said to be important.
6 For a fool speaks foolishness
and his mind plots iniquity.
He lives in a godless way
and speaks falsely about the LORD.
He leaves the hungry empty
and deprives the thirsty of drink.
7 The scoundrel's weapons are destructive;
he hatches plots to destroy the needy with lies,
even when the poor says what is right.
8 But a noble person plans noble things;
he stands up for noble causes.

9 Stand up, you complacent women;
listen to me.
Pay attention to what I say,
you overconfident daughters.
10 In a little more than a year
you overconfident ones will shudder,
for the vintage will fail
and the harvest will not come.
11 Shudder, you complacent ones;
tremble, you overconfident ones!
Strip yourselves bare
and put •sackcloth around your waists.

[12] Beat your breasts in mourning
for the delightful fields and the fruitful vines,
[13] for the ground of my people
growing thorns and briers,
indeed, for every joyous house in the joyful city.
[14] For the palace will be forsaken,
the busy city abandoned.
The hill and the watchtower will become
barren places forever,
the joy of wild donkeys,
and a pasture for flocks,
[15] until the Spirit from heaven is poured out on us.
Then the desert will become an orchard,
and the orchard will seem like a forest.
[16] Then justice will inhabit the wilderness,
and righteousness will dwell in the orchard.
[17] The result of righteousness will be peace;
the effect of righteousness
will be quiet confidence forever.
[18] Then my people will dwell in a peaceful place,
in safe and secure dwellings.
[19] But hail will level the forest, [A]
and the city will sink into the depths.
[20] Those who sow seed are happy
beside abundant waters;
they let ox and donkey range freely.

The LORD Rises Up

33 Woe, you destroyer never destroyed,
you traitor never betrayed!
When you have finished destroying,
you will be destroyed.
When you have finished betraying,
they will betray you.

2 Lord, be gracious to us! We wait for You.
Be our strength every morning
and our salvation in time of trouble.
3 The peoples flee at the thunderous noise;
the nations scatter when You rise in Your majesty.
4 Your spoil will be gathered as locusts are gathered;
people will swarm over it like an infestation of locusts.
5 The Lord is exalted, for He dwells on high;
He has filled •Zion with justice and righteousness.
6 There will be times of security for you —
a storehouse of salvation, wisdom, and knowledge.
The •fear of the Lord is Zion's treasure.

7 Listen! Their warriors cry loudly in the streets;
the messengers of peace weep bitterly.
8 The highways are deserted;
travel has ceased.
An agreement has been broken,
cities despised,
and human life disregarded.
9 The land mourns and withers;
Lebanon is ashamed and decayed.
Sharon is like a desert;
Bashan and Carmel shake off their leaves.
10 "Now I will rise up," says the Lord.
"Now I will lift Myself up.
Now I will be exalted.
11 You will conceive chaff;
you will give birth to stubble.
Your breath is fire that will consume you.

12 The peoples will be burned to ashes,
like thorns cut down and burned in a fire.
13 You who are far off, hear what I have done;
you who are near, know My strength."

14 The sinners in Zion are afraid;
trembling seizes the ungodly:
"Who among us can dwell with a consuming fire?
Who among us can dwell with ever-burning flames? "
15 The one who lives righteously
and speaks rightly,
who refuses gain from extortion,
whose hand never takes a bribe,
who stops his ears from listening to murderous plots [A]
and shuts his eyes to avoid endorsing evil [B] —
16 he will dwell on the heights;
his refuge will be the rocky fortresses,
his food provided, his water assured.

17 Your eyes will see the King in His beauty;
you will see a vast land.
18 Your mind will meditate on the past terror:
"Where is the accountant? [C]
Where is the tribute collector? [D]
Where is the one who spied out our defenses? " [E]
19 You will no longer see the barbarians,
a people whose speech is difficult to comprehend —
who stammer in a language that is not understood.
20 Look at Zion, the city of our festival times.
Your eyes will see Jerusalem,
a peaceful pasture, a tent that does not wander;
its tent pegs will not be pulled up
nor will any of its cords be loosened.
21 For the majestic One, our LORD, will be there,
a place of rivers and broad streams
where ships that are rowed will not go,

and majestic vessels will not pass.
22 For the LORD is our Judge,
the LORD is our lawgiver,
the LORD is our King.
He will save us.
23 Your ropes are slack;
they cannot hold the base of the mast
or spread out the flag.
Then abundant spoil will be divided,
the lame will plunder it,
24 and none there will say, “I am sick.”
The people who dwell there
will be forgiven their iniquity.

The Judgment of the Nations

34 [†]You nations, come here and listen;
you peoples, pay attention!
Let the earth hear, and all that fills it,
the world and all that comes from it.
2 The LORD is angry with all the nations —
furious with all their armies.
He will set them apart for destruction,
giving them over to slaughter.
3 Their slain will be thrown out,
and the stench of their corpses will rise;
the mountains will flow [A] with their blood.
4 All the heavenly bodies will dissolve.
The skies will roll up like a scroll,
and their stars will all wither
as leaves wither on the vine,
and foliage on the fig tree.

The Judgment of Edom

5 When My sword has drunk its fill in the heavens,
it will then come down on Edom
and on the people I have •set apart for destruction.
6 The LORD's sword is covered with blood.
It drips with fat,
with the blood of lambs and goats,
with the fat of the kidneys of rams.
For the LORD has a sacrifice in Bozrah,
a great slaughter in the land of Edom.
7 The wild oxen will be struck [B] down with them,
and young bulls with the mighty bulls.
Their land will be soaked with [C] blood,
and their soil will be saturated with fat.

8 For the LORD has a day of vengeance,
a time of paying back Edom
for its hostility against •Zion.

[9] Edom's streams will be turned into pitch,
her soil into sulfur;
her land will become burning pitch.
[10] It will never go out — day or night.
Its smoke will go up forever.
It will be desolate, from generation to generation;
no one will pass through it forever and ever.
[11] The desert owl [D] and the screech owl [E] will possess it,
and the great owl and the raven will dwell there.
The LORD will stretch out a measuring line
and a plumb line over her
for her destruction and chaos.
[12] No nobles will be left to proclaim a king,
and all her princes will come to nothing.
[13] Her palaces will be overgrown with thorns;
her fortified cities, with thistles and briers.
She will become a dwelling for jackals,
an abode for ostriches.
[14] The desert creatures will meet hyenas,
and one wild goat will call to another.
Indeed, the screech owl will stay there
and will find a resting place for herself.
[15] The sand partridge [F] will make her nest there;
she will lay and hatch her eggs
and will gather her brood under her shadow.
Indeed, the birds of prey will gather there,
each with its mate.
[16] Search and read the scroll of the LORD:
Not one of them will be missing,
none will be lacking its mate,
because He has ordered it by my mouth,
and He will gather them by His Spirit.
[17] He has ordained a lot for them;
His hand allotted their portion with a measuring line.
They will possess it forever;
they will dwell in it from generation to generation.

The Ransomed Return to Zion

35 [†]The wilderness and the dry land will be glad;
the desert will rejoice and blossom like a rose. [A], ,
2 It will blossom abundantly
and will also rejoice with joy and singing.
The glory of Lebanon will be given to it,
the splendor of Carmel and Sharon.
They will see the glory of the LORD,
the splendor of our God.
3 Strengthen the weak hands,
steady the shaking knees!
4 Say to the cowardly:
"Be strong; do not fear!
Here is your God; vengeance is coming.
God's retribution is coming; He will save you."
5 Then the eyes of the blind will be opened,
and the ears of the deaf unstopped.
6 Then the lame will leap like a deer,
and the tongue of the mute will sing for joy,
for water will gush in the wilderness,
and streams in the desert;
7 the parched ground will become a pool of water,
and the thirsty land springs of water.
In the haunt of jackals, in their lairs,
there will be grass, reeds, and papyrus.
8 A road will be there and a way;
it will be called the Holy Way.
The •unclean will not travel on it,
but it will be for the one who walks the path.
Even the fool will not go astray.
9 There will be no lion there,
and no vicious beast will go up on it;
they will not be found there.
But the redeemed will walk on it,
10 and the redeemed of the LORD will return
and come to •Zion with singing,

crowned with unending joy.
Joy and gladness will overtake them,
and sorrow and sighing will flee.

Sennacherib's Invasion

36 †In the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah, Sennacherib king of
Assyria attacked all the fortified cities of Judah and captured them.
2 Then the king of Assyria sent the •Rabshakeh, along with a massive army,
from Lachish to King Hezekiah at Jerusalem. The Assyrian stood near the
conduit of the upper pool, by the road to the Fuller's Field. 3 Eliakim son of
Hilkiah, who was in charge of the palace, Shebna the court secretary, and
Joah son of Asaph, the court historian, came out to him.

4 The Rabshakeh said to them, "Tell Hezekiah:

> The great king, the king of Assyria, says this: What are you
> relying on? [A] 5 I say that your strategy and military preparedness
> are mere words. What are you now relying on that you have
> rebelled against me? 6 Look, you are trusting in Egypt, that
> splintered reed of a staff that will enter and pierce the hand of
> anyone who leans on it. This is how Pharaoh king of Egypt is to
> all who trust in him. 7† Suppose you say to me, 'We trust in the
> LORD our God.' Isn't He the One whose •high places and altars
> Hezekiah has removed, saying to Judah and Jerusalem, 'You are
> to worship at this altar'?
>
> 8 Now make a deal with my master, the king of Assyria. I'll give
> you 2,000 horses if you're able to supply riders for them! 9 How
> then can you drive back a single officer among the weakest of my
> master's officers and trust in Egypt for chariots and horsemen?
> 10 Have I attacked this land to destroy it without the LORD's
> approval? The LORD said to me, 'Attack this land and destroy it.' "

11 Then Eliakim, Shebna, and Joah said to the Rabshakeh, "Please speak
to your servants in Aramaic, since we understand it. Don't speak to us in
Hebrew [B] within earshot of the people who are on the wall."

12 But the Rabshakeh replied, "Has my master sent me to speak these
words to your master and to you, and not to the men who are sitting on the
wall, who are destined with you to eat their own excrement and drink their
own urine? "

[13] Then the Rabshakeh stood and called out loudly in Hebrew: [C]

> Listen to the words of the great king, the king of Assyria! [14] This is what the king says: "Don't let Hezekiah deceive you, for he cannot deliver you. [15] Don't let Hezekiah persuade you to trust in the LORD, saying, 'The LORD will certainly deliver us! This city will not be handed over to the king of Assyria.' "
>
> [16] Don't listen to Hezekiah, for this is what the king of Assyria says: "Make peace [D] with me and surrender to me. Then every one of you may eat from his own vine and his own fig tree and drink water from his own cistern [17] until I come and take you away to a land like your own land — a land of grain and new wine, a land of bread and vineyards. [18] Beware that Hezekiah does not mislead you by saying, 'The LORD will deliver us.' Has any one of the gods of the nations delivered his land from the power of the king of Assyria? [19] Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim? Have they delivered Samaria from my power? [20] Who among all the gods of these lands ever delivered his land from my power? So will the LORD deliver Jerusalem."

[21] But they kept silent; they didn't say anything, for the king's command was, "Don't answer him." [22] Then Eliakim son of Hilkiah, who was in charge of the palace, Shebna the court secretary, and Joah son of Asaph, the court historian, came to Hezekiah with their clothes torn and reported to him the words of the Rabshakeh.

Hezekiah Seeks Isaiah’s Counsel

37 When King Hezekiah heard their report, he tore his clothes, put on
•sackcloth, and went to the LORD's temple. 2 Then he sent Eliakim,
who was in charge of the palace, Shebna the court secretary, and the leading
priests, who were wearing sackcloth, to the prophet Isaiah son of Amoz.
3 They said to him, "This is what Hezekiah says: 'Today is a day of distress,
rebuke, and disgrace, for children have come to the point of birth, and there
is no strength to deliver them. 4 Perhaps •Yahweh your God will hear all
the words of the •Rabshakeh, whom his master the king of Assyria sent to
mock the living God, and will rebuke him for the words that Yahweh your
God has heard. Therefore offer a prayer for the surviving remnant.' "

5 So the servants of King Hezekiah went to Isaiah, 6 who said to them,
"Tell your master this, 'The LORD says: Don't be afraid because of the
words you have heard, which the king of Assyria's attendants have
blasphemed Me with. 7† I am about to put a spirit in him and he will hear a
rumor and return to his own land, where I will cause him to fall by the
sword.' "

Sennacherib's Letter

8 When the Rabshakeh heard that the king of Assyria had left Lachish,
he returned and found him fighting against Libnah. 9† The king had heard
this about Tirhakah king of •Cush: "He has set out to fight against you." So
when he heard this, he sent messengers to Hezekiah, saying, 10 "Say this to
Hezekiah king of Judah: 'Don't let your God, whom you trust, deceive you
by promising that Jerusalem won't be handed over to the king of Assyria.
11 Look, you have heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all the
countries: they •completely destroyed them. Will you be rescued? 12 Did the
gods of the nations that my predecessors destroyed rescue them — Gozan,
Haran, Rezeph, and the Edenites in Telassar? 13 Where is the king of
Hamath, the king of Arpad, the king of the city of Sepharvaim, Hena, or
Ivvah? ' "

Hezekiah's Prayer

[14] Hezekiah took the letter from the messengers, read it, then went up to
the LORD's temple and spread it out before the LORD. [15] Then Hezekiah
prayed to the LORD:

> [16] LORD of •Hosts, God of Israel, who is enthroned above the
> •cherubim, You are God — You alone — of all the kingdoms of
> the earth. You made the heavens and the earth. [17] Listen closely,
> LORD, and hear; open Your eyes, LORD, and see. Hear all the
> words that Sennacherib has sent to mock the living God. [18] LORD,
> it is true that the kings of Assyria have devastated all these
> countries and their lands. [19] They have thrown their gods into the
> fire, for they were not gods but made by human hands — wood
> and stone. So they have destroyed them. [20] Now, LORD our God,
> save us from his power so that all the kingdoms of the earth may
> know that You are the LORD — You alone.

God's Answer through Hezekiah

[21] Then Isaiah son of Amoz sent a message to Hezekiah: "The LORD, the
God of Israel, says: 'Because you prayed to Me about Sennacherib king of
Assyria, [22] this is the word the LORD has spoken against him:

Virgin Daughter •Zion
despises you and scorns you:
Daughter Jerusalem shakes her head
behind your back. [A]
[23] Who is it you have mocked and blasphemed?
Who have you raised your voice against
and lifted your eyes in pride?
Against the Holy One of Israel!
[24] You have mocked the LORD through [B] your servants.
You have said, "With my many chariots
I have gone up to the heights of the mountains,
to the far recesses of Lebanon.
I cut down its tallest cedars,
its choice cypress trees.

I came to its distant heights,
its densest forest.
25 I dug wells and drank water.
I dried up all the streams of Egypt
with the soles of my feet."

26† Have you not heard?
I designed it long ago;
I planned it in days gone by.
I have now brought it to pass,
and you have crushed fortified cities
into piles of rubble.
27 Their inhabitants have become powerless,
dismayed, and ashamed.
They are plants of the field,
tender grass,
grass on the rooftops,
blasted by the east wind.

28 But I know your sitting down,
your going out and your coming in,
and your raging against Me.
29 Because your raging against Me
and your arrogance have reached My ears,
I will put My hook in your nose
and My bit in your mouth;
I will make you go back
the way you came.

30 " 'This will be the sign for you: This year you will eat what grows on
its own, and in the second year what grows from that. But in the third year
sow and reap, plant vineyards and eat their fruit. 31 The surviving remnant
of the house of Judah will again take root downward and bear fruit upward.
32 For a remnant will go out from Jerusalem and survivors, from Mount
Zion. The zeal of the LORD of Hosts will accomplish this.'

33 "Therefore, this is what the LORD says about the king of Assyria:

He will not enter this city
or shoot an arrow there
or come before it with a shield
or build up an assault ramp against it.
34 He will go back
the way he came,
and he will not enter this city.

This is the Lord's declaration.

35 I will defend this city and rescue it
because of Me
and because of My servant David."

Defeat and Death of Sennacherib

36† Then the angel of the Lord went out and struck down 185,000 in the
camp of the Assyrians. When the people got up the next morning — there
were all the dead bodies! 37 So Sennacherib king of Assyria broke camp
and left. He returned home and lived in Nineveh.

38 One day, while he was worshiping in the temple of his god Nisroch,
his sons Adrammelech and Sharezer struck him down with the sword and
escaped to the land of Ararat. Then his son Esar-haddon became king in
his place.

Hezekiah's Illness and Recovery

38 [†] In those days Hezekiah became terminally ill. The prophet Isaiah son of Amoz came and said to him, "This is what the LORD says: 'Put your affairs in order, [A], for you are about to die; you will not recover.' " [B]

[2] Then Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and prayed to the LORD. [3] He said, "Please, LORD, remember how I have walked before You faithfully and wholeheartedly, and have done what pleases You." [C] And Hezekiah wept bitterly.

[4] Then the word of the LORD came to Isaiah: [5] "Go and tell Hezekiah that this is what the LORD God of your ancestor David says: I have heard your prayer; I have seen your tears. Look, I am going to add 15 years to your life. [D],
[6] And I will deliver you and this city from the power of the king of Assyria; I will defend this city.
[7] This is the sign to you from the LORD that He will do what [E] He has promised: [F]
[8†] I am going to make the sun's shadow that goes down on Ahaz's stairway go back by 10 steps." So the sun's shadow [G] went back the 10 steps it had descended.

[9] A poem by Hezekiah king of Judah after he had been sick and had recovered from his illness:

[10] I said: In the prime [H] of my life [I],
I must go to the gates of •Sheol;
I am deprived of the rest of my years.
[11] I said: I will never see the LORD,
the LORD in the land of the living;
I will not look on humanity any longer
with the inhabitants of what is passing away.
[12] My dwelling is plucked up and removed from me
like a shepherd's tent.
I have rolled up my life like a weaver;
He cuts me off from the loom. [J]
You make an end of me from day until night.
[13] I thought until the morning:
He will break all my bones like a lion;

You make an end of me day and night.
[14] I chirp like a swallow or a crane;
I moan like a dove.
My eyes grow weak looking upward.
Lord, I am oppressed; support me.

[15] What can I say?
He has spoken to me,
and He Himself has done it.
I walk along slowly all my years
because of the bitterness of my soul,
[16] Lord, because of these promises people live,
and in all of them is the life of my spirit as well;
You have restored me to health
and let me live.
[17] Indeed, it was for my own welfare
that I had such great bitterness;
but Your love has delivered me
from the •Pit of destruction,
for You have thrown all my sins behind Your back.
[18] For Sheol cannot thank You;
Death cannot praise You.
Those who go down to the Pit
cannot hope for Your faithfulness.
[19] The living, only the living can thank You,
as I do today;
a father will make Your faithfulness known to children.
[20] The LORD will [K] save me;
we will play stringed instruments
all the days of our lives
at the house of the LORD.

[21†] Now Isaiah had said, "Let them take a lump of pressed figs and apply it to his infected skin, so that he may recover." [22] And Hezekiah had asked, "What is the sign that I will go up to the LORD's temple? "

Hezekiah's Folly

39 †At that time Merodach-baladan son of Baladan, king of Babylon,
sent letters and a gift to Hezekiah since he heard that he had been sick
and had recovered. 2 Hezekiah was pleased with them, and showed them his
treasure house — the silver, the gold, the spices, and the precious oil — and
all his armory, and everything that was found in his treasuries. There was
nothing in his palace and in all his realm that Hezekiah did not show them.

3 Then the prophet Isaiah came to King Hezekiah and asked him, “Where
did these men come from and what did they say to you? ”

Hezekiah replied, “They came to me from a distant country, from
Babylon.”

4 Isaiah asked, “What have they seen in your palace? ”

Hezekiah answered, “They have seen everything in my palace. There
isn’t anything in my treasuries that I didn’t show them.”

5 Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, “Hear the word of the LORD of •Hosts:
6 ‘The time will certainly come when everything in your palace and all that
your fathers have stored up until this day will be carried off to Babylon;
nothing will be left,’ says the LORD. 7† ‘Some of your descendants who
come from you will be taken away, and they will become eunuchs in the
palace of the king of Babylon.’ ”

8† Then Hezekiah said to Isaiah, “The word of the LORD that you have
spoken is good,” for he thought: There will be peace and security during my
lifetime.

God's People Comforted

40 “Comfort, comfort My people,”
says your God.
2† “Speak tenderly to [A] Jerusalem,
and announce to her
that her time of forced labor is over,
her iniquity has been pardoned,
and she has received from the LORD’s hand
double for all her sins.”

3† A voice of one crying out:

Prepare the way of the LORD in the wilderness;
make a straight highway for our God in the desert.
4 Every valley will be lifted up,
and every mountain and hill will be leveled;
the uneven ground will become smooth
and the rough places, a plain.
5 And the glory of the LORD will appear,
and all humanity [B] together will see it,
for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.

6 A voice was saying, “Cry out! ”
Another said, “What should I cry out? ”
“All humanity is grass,
and all its goodness is like the flower of the field.
7 The grass withers, the flowers fade
when the breath [C] of the LORD blows on them; [D]
indeed, the people are grass.
8 The grass withers, the flowers fade,
but the word of our God remains forever.”

9 •Zion, herald of good news,
go up on a high mountain.
Jerusalem, herald of good news,
raise your voice loudly.
Raise it, do not be afraid!
Say to the cities of Judah,

"Here is your God! "
10† See, the Lord GOD comes with strength,
and His power establishes His rule.
His reward is with Him,
and His gifts accompany Him.
11 He protects His flock like a shepherd;
He gathers the lambs in His arms
and carries them in the fold of His garment.
He gently leads those that are nursing.

12† Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand
or marked off the heavens with the span of his hand?
Who has gathered the dust of the earth in a measure
or weighed the mountains in a balance
and the hills in the scales?
13 Who has directed [E] the Spirit of the LORD,
or who gave Him His counsel?
14 Who did He consult with?
Who gave Him understanding
and taught Him the paths of justice?
Who taught Him knowledge
and showed Him the way of understanding?
15 Look, the nations are like a drop in a bucket;
they are considered as a speck of dust in the scales;
He lifts up the islands like fine dust.
16 Lebanon is not enough for fuel,
or its animals enough for a •burnt offering.
17 All the nations are as nothing before Him;
they are considered by Him
as nothingness and emptiness.

18 Who will you compare God with?
What likeness will you compare Him to?
19 To an idol? — something that a smelter casts,
and a metalworker plates with gold
and makes silver welds for it?
20 To one who shapes a pedestal,

choosing wood that does not rot? [F]
He looks for a skilled craftsman
to set up an idol that will not fall over.

21 Do you not know?
Have you not heard?
Has it not been declared to you
from the beginning?
Have you not considered
the foundations of the earth?
22† God is enthroned above the circle of the earth;
its inhabitants are like grasshoppers.
He stretches out the heavens like thin cloth
and spreads them out like a tent to live in.
23 He reduces princes to nothing
and makes judges of the earth irrational.
24 They are barely planted, barely sown,
their stem hardly takes root in the ground
when He blows on them and they wither,
and a whirlwind carries them away like stubble.

25 "Who will you compare Me to,
or who is My equal? " asks the Holy One.
26 Look up [G] and see:
who created these?
He brings out the starry host by number;
He calls all of them by name.
Because of His great power and strength,
not one of them is missing.

27 Jacob, why do you say,
and Israel, why do you assert:
"My way is hidden from the LORD,
and my claim is ignored by my God"?
28 Do you not know?
Have you not heard?
•Yahweh is the everlasting God,

the Creator of the whole earth.
He never grows faint or weary;
there is no limit to His understanding.
29 He gives strength to the weary
and strengthens the powerless.
30 Youths may faint and grow weary,
and young men stumble and fall,
31 but those who trust in the LORD
will renew their strength;
they will soar on wings like eagles;
they will run and not grow weary;
they will walk and not faint.

The LORD versus the Nations' Gods

41 "Be silent before Me, islands!
And let peoples renew their strength.
Let them approach, then let them testify;
let us come together for the trial.
2 Who has stirred him up from the east?
He calls righteousness to his feet. [A],
The LORD hands nations over to him,
and he subdues kings.
He makes them like dust with his sword,
like wind-driven stubble with his bow.
3 He pursues them, going on safely,
hardly touching the path with his feet.
4 Who has performed and done this,
calling the generations from the beginning?
I, •Yahweh, am the first,
and with the last — I am He."

5 The islands see and are afraid,
the whole earth trembles.
They approach and arrive.
6 Each one helps the other,
and says to another, "Take courage! "
7 The craftsman encourages the metalworker;
the one who flattens with the hammer
supports the one who strikes the anvil,
saying of the soldering, "It is good."
He fastens it with nails so that it will not fall over.

8† But you, Israel, My servant,
Jacob, whom I have chosen,
descendant of Abraham, My friend —
9 I brought [B] you from the ends of the earth
and called you from its farthest corners.
I said to you: You are My servant;
I have chosen you and not rejected you.
10 Do not fear, for I am with you;
do not be afraid, for I am your God.

I will strengthen you; I will help you;
I will hold on to you with My righteous right hand.

11 Be sure that all who are enraged against you
will be ashamed and disgraced;
those who contend with you
will become as nothing and will perish.
12 You will look for those who contend with you,
but you will not find them.
Those who war against you
will become absolutely nothing.
13 For I, Yahweh your God,
hold your right hand
and say to you: Do not fear,
I will help you.
14† Do not fear, you worm Jacob,
you men of Israel:
I will help you —
Your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel. this is the LORD's declaration.
15 See, I will make you into a sharp threshing board,
new, with many teeth.
You will thresh mountains and pulverize them
and make hills into chaff.
16 You will winnow them
and a wind will carry them away,
a gale will scatter them.
But you will rejoice in the LORD;
you will boast in the Holy One of Israel.

17† The poor and the needy seek water, but there is none;
their tongues are parched with thirst.
I, Yahweh, will answer them;
I, the God of Israel, will not forsake them.
18 I will open rivers on the barren heights,
and springs in the middle of the plains.
I will turn the desert into a pool of water
and dry land into springs of water.

19 I will plant cedars in the desert,
acacias, myrtles, and olive trees.
I will put juniper trees in the desert,
elms and cypress trees together,
20 so that all may see and know,
consider and understand,
that the hand of the LORD has done this,
the Holy One of Israel has created it.

21 “Submit your case,” says the LORD.
“Present your arguments,” says Jacob’s King.
22† “Let them come and tell us
what will happen.
Tell us the past events,
so that we may reflect on them
and know the outcome,
or tell us the future.
23 Tell us the coming events,
then we will know that you are gods.
Indeed, do something good or bad,
then we will be in awe and perceive.
24 Look, you are nothing
and your work is worthless.
Anyone who chooses you is detestable.

25 “I have raised up one from the north, and he has come,
one from the east who invokes My name.
He will march over rulers as if they were mud,
like a potter who treads the clay.
26 Who told about this from the beginning,
so that we might know,
and from times past,
so that we might say: He is right?
No one announced it,
no one told it,
no one heard your words.
27 I was the first to say to •Zion: [C]

Look! Here they are!
And I gave a herald of good news to Jerusalem.
28 When I look, there is no one;
there is no counselor among them;
when I ask them, they have nothing to say.
29 Look, all of them are a delusion;
their works are nonexistent;
their images are wind and emptiness.

The Servant's Mission

42 [†]"This is My Servant; I strengthen Him,
this is My Chosen One; I delight in Him.
I have put My Spirit on Him;
He will bring justice to the nations.
2 He will not cry out or shout
or make His voice heard in the streets.
3 He will not break a bruised reed,
and He will not put out a smoldering wick;
He will faithfully bring justice.
4 He will not grow weak or be discouraged
until He has established justice on earth.
The islands will wait for His instruction."

5 This is what God •Yahweh says —
who created the heavens and stretched them out,
who spread out the earth and what comes from it,
who gives breath to the people on it
and life [A] to those who walk on it —
6 "I, Yahweh, have called You
for a righteous purpose, [B]
and I will hold You by Your hand.
I will keep You and appoint You
to be a covenant for the people
and a light to the nations,
7 in order to open blind eyes,
to bring out prisoners from the dungeon,
and those sitting in darkness from the prison house.
8 I am Yahweh, that is My name;
I will not give My glory to another
or My praise to idols.
9 The past events have indeed happened.
Now I declare new events;
I announce them to you before they occur."

A Song of Praise

10 Sing a new song to the LORD;
sing His praise from the ends of the earth,
you who go down to the sea with all that fills it,
you islands with your [C] inhabitants.
11 Let the desert and its cities shout,
the settlements where Kedar dwells cry aloud.
Let the inhabitants of Sela sing for joy;
let them cry out from the mountaintops.
12 Let them give glory to the LORD
and declare His praise in the islands.
13 The LORD advances like a warrior;
He stirs up His zeal like a soldier.
He shouts, He roars aloud,
He prevails over His enemies.

14 "I have kept silent from ages past;
I have been quiet and restrained Myself.
But now, I will groan like a woman in labor,
gasping breathlessly.
15 I will lay waste mountains and hills
and dry up all their vegetation.
I will turn rivers into islands
and dry up marshes.
16 I will lead the blind by a way they did not know;
I will guide them on paths they have not known.
I will turn darkness to light in front of them
and rough places into level ground.
This is what I will do for them,
and I will not forsake them.
17 They will be turned back and utterly ashamed —
those who trust in idols
and say to metal-plated images:
You are our gods!

Israel's Blindness and Deafness

18 "Listen, you deaf!

Look, you blind, so that you may see.
19 Who is blind but My servant,
or deaf like My messenger I am sending?
Who is blind like My dedicated one, [D]
or blind like the servant of the LORD?
20 Though seeing many things, you do not obey.
Though his ears are open, he does not listen."

21† The LORD was pleased, because of His righteousness,
to magnify His instruction and make it glorious.
22 But this is a people plundered and looted,
all of them trapped in holes
or imprisoned in dungeons.
They have become plunder
with no one to rescue them
and loot, with no one saying, "Give it back! "
23 Who among you will pay attention to this?
Let him listen and obey in the future.
24 Who gave Jacob to the robber, [E]
and Israel to the plunderers?
Was it not the LORD?
Have we not sinned against Him?
They were not willing to walk in His ways,
and they would not listen to His instruction.
25 So He poured out on Jacob His furious anger
and the power of war.
It surrounded him with fire, but he did not know it;
it burned him, but he paid no attention. [F]

Restoration of Israel

43 Now this is what the LORD says —
the One who created you, Jacob,
and the One who formed you, Israel —
"Do not fear, for I have redeemed you;
I have called you by your name; you are Mine.
2 I will be with you
when you pass through the waters,
and when you pass through the rivers,
they will not overwhelm you.
You will not be scorched
when you walk through the fire,
and the flame will not burn you.
3† For I •Yahweh your God,
the Holy One of Israel, and your Savior,
give Egypt as a ransom for you,
•Cush and Seba in your place.
4 Because you are precious in My sight
and honored, and I love you,
I will give people in exchange for you
and nations instead of your life.
5 Do not fear, for I am with you;
I will bring your descendants from the east,
and gather you from the west.
6 I will say to the north: Give them up!
and to the south: Do not hold them back!
Bring My sons from far away,
and My daughters from the ends of the earth —
7 everyone called by My name
and created for My glory.
I have formed him; indeed, I have made him."

8 Bring out a people who are blind, yet have eyes,
and are deaf, yet have ears.
9 All the nations are gathered together,
and the peoples are assembled.
Who among them can declare this,

and tell us the former things?
Let them present their witnesses
to vindicate themselves,
so that people may hear and say, “It is true.”
10 “You are My witnesses” —
“and My servant whom I have chosen, this is the LORD’s declaration —
so that you may know and believe Me
and understand that I am He.
No god was formed before Me,
and there will be none after Me.
11† I, I am Yahweh,
and there is no other Savior but Me.
12 I alone declared, saved, and proclaimed —
and not some foreign god [A] among you.
So you are My witnesses” —
“and [B] I am God. this is the LORD’s declaration —
13 Also, from today on I am He alone,
and none can deliver from My hand.
I act, and who can reverse it? ”

God’s Deliverance of Rebellious Israel

14† This is what the LORD, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel says:

Because of you, I will send to Babylon
and bring all of them as fugitives, [C]
even the Chaldeans in the ships in which they rejoice. [D]
15 I am Yahweh, your Holy One,
the Creator of Israel, your King.

16 This is what the LORD says —
who makes a way in the sea,
and a path through surging waters,
17 who brings out the chariot and horse,
the army and the mighty one together
(they lie down, they do not rise again;

they are extinguished, quenched like a wick) —
18 “Do not remember the past events,
pay no attention to things of old.
19 Look, I am about to do something new;
even now it is coming. Do you not see it?
Indeed, I will make a way in the wilderness,
rivers in the desert.
20† The animals of the field will honor Me,
jackals and ostriches,
because I provide water in the wilderness,
and rivers in the desert,
to give drink to My chosen people.
21 The people I formed for Myself
will declare My praise.

22 “But Jacob, you have not called on Me,
because, Israel, you have become weary of Me.
23† You have not brought Me your sheep for •burnt offerings
or honored Me with your sacrifices.
I have not burdened you with offerings
or wearied you with incense.
24 You have not bought Me aromatic cane with silver,
or satisfied Me with the fat of your sacrifices.
But you have burdened Me with your sins;
you have wearied Me with your iniquities.

25 “It is I who sweep away your transgressions
for My own sake
and remember your sins no more.
26 Take Me to court; let us argue our case together.
State your case, so that you may be vindicated.
27 Your first father sinned,
and your mediators have rebelled against Me.
28 So I defiled the officers of the sanctuary,
and •set Jacob apart for destruction
and Israel for abuse.

Spiritual Blessing

44 “And now listen, Jacob My servant,
Israel whom I have chosen.
2 This is the word of the LORD
your Maker who formed you from the womb;
He [A] will help you:
Do not fear; Jacob is My servant;
I have chosen Jeshurun.
3 For I will pour water on the thirsty land
and streams on the dry ground;
I will pour out My Spirit on your descendants
and My blessing on your offspring.
4 They will sprout among the grass
like poplars by flowing streams.
5 This one will say, ‘I am the LORD’s’;
another will call himself by the name of Jacob;
still another will write on his hand, ‘The LORD’s,’
and name himself by the name of Israel.”

No God Other Than Yahweh

6† This is what the LORD, the King of Israel and its Redeemer, the LORD of •Hosts, says:

I am the first and I am the last.
There is no God but Me.
7 Who, like Me, can announce the future?
Let him say so and make a case before Me,
since I have established an ancient people.
Let these gods declare [B] the coming things,
and what will take place.
8 Do not be startled or afraid.
Have I not told you and declared it long ago?
You are my witnesses!
Is there any God but Me?
There is no other Rock; I do not know any.

9† All who make idols are nothing,

and what they treasure does not profit.
Their witnesses do not see or know anything,
so they will be put to shame.
10 Who makes a god or casts a metal image
for no profit?
11 Look, all its worshipers will be put to shame,
and the craftsmen are humans.
They all will assemble and stand;
they all will be startled and put to shame.

12 The ironworker labors over the coals,
shapes the idol with hammers,
and works it with his strong arm.
Also he grows hungry and his strength fails;
he doesn't drink water and is faint.
13 The woodworker stretches out a measuring line,
he outlines it with a stylus;
he shapes it with chisels
and outlines it with a compass.
He makes it according to a human likeness,
like a beautiful person,
to dwell in a temple.
14 He cuts down [C] cedars for his use,
or he takes a cypress or an oak.
He lets it grow strong among the trees of the forest.
He plants a laurel, and the rain makes it grow.
15 It serves as fuel for man.
He takes some of it and warms himself;
also he kindles a fire and bakes bread;
he even makes it into a god and worships it;
he makes an idol from it and bows down to it.
16 He burns half of it in a fire,
and he roasts meat on that half.
He eats the roast and is satisfied.
He warms himself and says, "Ah!
I am warm, I see the blaze."

17 He makes a god or his idol with the rest of it.
He bows down to it and worships;
He prays to it, "Save me, for you are my god."
18 Such people [D] do not comprehend
and cannot understand,
for He has shut their eyes [E] so they cannot see,
and their minds so they cannot understand.
19 No one reflects,
no one has the perception or insight to say,
"I burned half of it in the fire,
I also baked bread on its coals,
I roasted meat and ate.
I will make something detestable with the rest of it,
and I will bow down to a block of wood."
20 He feeds on [F] ashes.
His deceived mind has led him astray,
and he cannot deliver himself,
or say, "Isn't there a lie in my right hand? "

21 Remember these things, Jacob,
and Israel, for you are My servant;
I formed you, you are My servant;
Israel, you will never be forgotten by Me.
22 I have swept away your transgressions like a cloud,
and your sins like a mist.
Return to Me,
for I have redeemed you.
23 Rejoice, heavens, for the LORD has acted;
shout, depths of the earth.
Break out into singing, mountains,
forest, and every tree in it.
For the LORD has redeemed Jacob,
and glorifies Himself through Israel.

Restoration of Israel through Cyrus

24 This is what •Yahweh, your Redeemer who formed you from the womb, says:

I am Yahweh, who made everything;
who stretched out the heavens by Myself;
who alone spread out the earth;
25 who destroys the omens of the false prophets
and makes fools of diviners;
who confounds the wise
and makes their knowledge foolishness;
26 who confirms the message of His servant
and fulfills the counsel of His messengers;
who says to Jerusalem, “She will be inhabited,”
and to the cities of Judah, “They will be rebuilt,”
and I will restore her ruins;
27 who says to the depths of the sea, “Be dry,”
and I will dry up your rivers;
28† who says to Cyrus, “My shepherd,
he will fulfill all My pleasure”
and says to Jerusalem, “She will be rebuilt,”
and of the temple, “Its foundation will be laid.”

45

† The LORD says this to Cyrus, His anointed,
whose right hand I have grasped
to subdue nations before him,
to disarm [A] kings,
to open the doors before him
and the gates will not be shut:
2 "I will go before you
and level the uneven places;
I will shatter the bronze doors
and cut the iron bars in two.
3 I will give you the treasures of darkness
and riches from secret places,
so that you may know that I, •Yahweh,
the God of Israel call you by your name.
4 I call you by your name,
because of Jacob My servant
and Israel My chosen one.
I give a name to you,
though you do not know Me.
5 I am Yahweh, and there is no other;
there is no God but Me.
I will strengthen [B] you,
though you do not know Me,
6 so that all may know from the rising of the sun to its setting
that there is no one but Me.
I am Yahweh, and there is no other.
7† I form light and create darkness,
I make success and create disaster;
I, Yahweh, do all these things.

8 "Heavens, sprinkle from above,
and let the skies shower righteousness.
Let the earth open up
so that salvation will sprout
and righteousness will spring up with it.
I, Yahweh, have created it.

9 “Woe to the one who argues with his Maker —
one clay pot among many. [C]
Does clay say to the one forming it,
‘What are you making?’
Or does your work say,
‘He has no hands’? [D]
10 How absurd is the one who says to his father,
‘What are you fathering?’
or to his mother,
‘What are you giving birth to? ’ ”
11 This is what the LORD,
the Holy One of Israel and its Maker, says:
“Ask Me what is to happen to [E] My sons,
and instruct Me about the work of My hands.
12 I made the earth,
and created man on it.
It was My hands that stretched out the heavens,
and I commanded all their host.
13 I have raised him up in righteousness,
and will level all roads for him.
He will rebuild My city,
and set My exiles free,
not for a price or a bribe,”
says the LORD of •Hosts.

God Alone is the Savior

14 This is what the LORD says:

The products of Egypt and the merchandise of •Cush
and the Sabeans, men of stature,
will come over to you
and will be yours;
they will follow you,
they will come over in chains
and bow down to you.

They will confess [F] to you:
God is indeed with you, and there is no other;
there is no other God.

15† Yes, You are a God who hides Himself,
God of Israel, Savior.
16 All of them are put to shame, even humiliated;
the makers of idols go in humiliation together.
17 Israel will be saved by the LORD
with an everlasting salvation;
you will not be put to shame or humiliated
for all eternity.

18 For this is what the LORD says —
God is the Creator of the heavens.
He formed the earth and made it.
He established it;
He did not create it to be empty,
but formed it to be inhabited —
"I am Yahweh,
and there is no other.
19 I have not spoken in secret,
somewhere in a land of darkness.
I did not say to the descendants of Jacob:
Seek Me in a wasteland.
I, Yahweh, speak truthfully;
I say what is right.

20† "Come, gather together,
and draw near, you fugitives of the nations.
Those who carry their wooden idols,
and pray to a god who cannot save,
have no knowledge.

ARTICLE

How Can the Bible Affirm Both Divine Sovereignty and Human

21 Speak up and present your case G —
yes, let them take counsel together.
Who predicted this long ago?
Who announced it from ancient times?
Was it not I, Yahweh?
There is no other God but Me,
a righteous God and Savior;
there is no one except Me.
22 Turn to Me and be saved,
all the ends of the earth.
For I am God,
and there is no other.
23 By Myself I have sworn;
Truth has gone from My mouth,
a word that will not be revoked:
Every knee will bow to Me,
every tongue will swear allegiance.
24 It will be said to Me: Righteousness and strength
is only in the LORD."
All who are enraged against Him
will come to Him and be put to shame.
25 All the descendants of Israel
will be justified and find glory through the LORD.

There is No One Like God

46 [†]Bel crouches; Nebo cowers.
Their idols are consigned to beasts and cattle.
The images you carry are loaded,
as a burden for the weary animal.
2 The gods cower; they crouch together;
they are not able to rescue the burden,
but they themselves go into captivity.

3 “Listen to Me, house of Jacob,
all the remnant of the house of Israel,
who have been sustained from the womb,
carried along since birth.
4 I will be the same until your old age,
and I will bear you up when you turn gray.
I have made you, and I will carry you;
I will bear and save you.

5 “Who will you compare Me or make Me equal to?
Who will you measure Me with,
so that we should be like each other?
6 Those who pour out their bags of gold
and weigh out silver on scales —
they hire a goldsmith and he makes it into a god.
Then they kneel and bow down to it.
7 They lift it to their shoulder and bear it along;
they set it in its place, and there it stands;
it does not budge from its place.
They cry out to it but it doesn’t answer;
it saves no one from his trouble.

8 “Remember this and be brave; [A]
take it to heart, you transgressors!
9 Remember what happened long ago,
for I am God, and there is no other;
I am God, and no one is like Me.
10 I declare the end from the beginning,
and from long ago what is not yet done,

saying: My plan will take place,
and I will do all My will.
11 I call a bird of prey from the east,
a man for My purpose from a far country.
Yes, I have spoken; so I will also bring it about.
I have planned it; I will also do it.
12 Listen to me, you hardhearted,
far removed from justice:
13 I am bringing My justice near;
it is not far away,
and My salvation will not delay.
I will put salvation in •Zion,
My splendor in Israel.

The Fall of Babylon

47 "Go down and sit in the dust,
Virgin Daughter Babylon.
Sit on the ground without a throne,
Daughter Chaldea!
For you will no longer be called pampered and spoiled.
2 Take millstones and grind meal;
remove your veil,
strip off your skirt, bare your thigh,
wade through the streams.
3 Your nakedness will be uncovered,
and your shame will be exposed.
I will take vengeance;
I will spare no one. [A]
4 The Holy One of Israel is our Redeemer;
•Yahweh of •Hosts is His name.

5 "Daughter Chaldea,
sit in silence and go into darkness.
For you will no longer be called mistress of kingdoms.
6† I was angry with My people;
I profaned My possession,
and I placed them under your control.
You showed them no mercy;
you made your yoke very heavy on the elderly.
7 You said, 'I will be the mistress forever.'
You did not take these things to heart
or think about their outcome.

8 "So now hear this, lover of luxury,
who sits securely,
who says to herself,
'I exist, and there is no one else.
I will never be a widow
or know the loss of children.'
9 These two things will happen to you
suddenly, in one day:
loss of children and widowhood.

They will happen to you in their entirety,
in spite of your many sorceries
and the potency of your spells.
10 You were secure in your wickedness;
you said, ‘No one sees me.’
Your wisdom and knowledge
led you astray.
You said to yourself,
‘I exist, and there is no one else.’
11 But disaster will happen to you;
you will not know how to avert it.
And it will fall on you,
but you will be unable to ward it off. [B]
Devastation will happen to you suddenly
and unexpectedly.
12 So take your stand with your spells
and your many sorceries,
which you have wearied yourself with from your youth.
Perhaps you will be able to succeed;
perhaps you will inspire terror!

TWISTED SCRIPTURE

Isaiah 47:13-14

God has spoken in no uncertain terms against astrology (Dt 4:19; 18:9-12; Jr 8:1-2; 10:2; Dn 2:2-17). Astrology, in the form of either worshiping the stars or seeking guidance from them, is condemned as idolatry. Those who trust in the heavenly bodies are misguided. Isaiah declared that astrologers cannot save themselves or their clients. God's Word also warns that those who engage in such activities will not inherit the kingdom of God (1 Co 6:9-10; Gl 5:20-21; Rv 21:8).

13† You are worn out with your many consultations.

So let them stand and save you —
the astrologers, [C] who observe the stars,
who predict monthly
what will happen to you.
14 Look, they are like stubble;
fire burns them up.
They cannot deliver themselves
from the power [D] of the flame.
This is not a coal for warming themselves,
or a fire to sit beside!
15 This is what they are to you —
those who have wearied you
and have traded with you from your youth —
each wanders on his own way;
no one can save you.
'

Israel Must Leave Babylon

48 “Listen to this, house of Jacob —
those who are called by the name Israel
and have descended from [A] Judah,
who swear by the name of •Yahweh
and declare the God of Israel,
but not in truth or righteousness.
2 For they are named after the Holy City,
and lean on the God of Israel;
His name is Yahweh of •Hosts.
3 I declared the past events long ago;
they came out of My mouth; I proclaimed them.
Suddenly I acted, and they occurred.
4 Because I know that you are stubborn,
and your neck is iron [B]
and your forehead bronze,
5 therefore I declared to you long ago.
I announced it to you before it occurred,
so you could not claim, ‘My idol caused them;
my carved image and cast idol control them.’
6 You have heard it. Observe it all.
Will you not acknowledge it?
From now on I will announce new things to you,
hidden things that you have not known.
7 They have been created now, and not long ago;
you have not heard of them before today,
so you could not claim, ‘I already knew them! ’
8† You have never heard; you have never known;
For a long time your ears have not been open.
For I knew that you were very treacherous,
and were known as a rebel from birth.
9 I will delay My anger for the honor of My name,
and I will restrain Myself for your benefit and for My praise,
so that you will not be destroyed.
10 Look, I have refined you, but not as silver;
I have tested [C] you in the furnace of affliction.

11 I will act for My own sake, indeed, My own,
for how can I be defiled?
I will not give My glory to another.

12 "Listen to Me, Jacob,
and Israel, the one called by Me:
I am He; I am the first,
I am also the last.
13 My own hand founded the earth,
and My right hand spread out the heavens;
when I summoned them,
they stood up together.
14 All of you, assemble and listen!
Who among the idols [D] has declared these things?
The LORD loves him;
he will accomplish His will against Babylon,
and His arm will be against the Chaldeans.
15 I — I have spoken;
yes, I have called him;
I have brought him,
and he will succeed in his mission.
16 Approach Me and listen to this.
From the beginning I have not spoken in secret;
from the time anything existed, I was there."
And now the Lord GOD
has sent me and His Spirit.

17 This is what Yahweh, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel says:

I am the LORD your God,
who teaches you for your benefit,
who leads you in the way you should go.
18 If only you had paid attention to My commands.
Then your peace would have been like a river,
and your righteousness like the waves of the sea.
19 Your descendants would have been as countless as the sand,

and the offspring of your body like its grains;

their name would not be cut off
or eliminated from My presence.

20 Leave Babylon,
flee from the Chaldeans!
Declare with a shout of joy,
proclaim this,
let it go out to the end of the earth;
announce,
“The LORD has redeemed His servant Jacob! ”
21 They did not thirst
when He led them through the deserts;
He made water flow for them from the rock;
He split the rock, and water gushed out.
22 “There is no peace for the wicked,” says the LORD.

The Servant Brings Salvation

49 [†]Coastlands, [A] listen to me;
distant peoples, pay attention.
The LORD called me before I was born.
He named me while I was in my mother's womb.
2 He made my words like a sharp sword;
He hid me in the shadow of His hand.
He made me like a sharpened arrow;
He hid me in His quiver.
3 He said to me, "You are My Servant, Israel;
I will be glorified in him."
4 But I myself said: I have labored in vain,
I have spent my strength for nothing and futility;
yet my vindication is with the LORD,
and my reward is with my God.
5 And now, says the LORD,
who formed me from the womb to be His Servant,
to bring Jacob back to Him
so that Israel might be gathered to Him;
for I am honored in the sight of the LORD,
and my God is my strength —
6 He says,
"It is not enough for you to be My Servant
raising up the tribes of Jacob
and restoring the protected ones of Israel.
I will also make you a light for the nations,
to be My salvation to the ends of the earth."
7 This is what the LORD,
the Redeemer of Israel, his Holy One, says
to one who is despised,
to one abhorred by people, [B],
to a servant of rulers:
"Kings will see and stand up,
and princes [C] will bow down,
because of the LORD, who is faithful,
the Holy One of Israel — and He has chosen you."

[8] This is what the LORD says:

I will answer you in a time of favor,
and I will help you in the day of salvation.
I will keep you, and I will appoint you
to be a covenant for the people,
to restore the land,
to make them possess the desolate inheritances,
[9] saying to the prisoners: Come out,
and to those who are in darkness: Show yourselves.
They will feed along the pathways,
and their pastures will be on all the barren heights.
[10] They will not hunger or thirst,
the scorching heat or sun will not strike them;
for their compassionate One will guide them,
and lead them to springs of water.
[11] I will make all My mountains into a road,
and My highways will be raised up.
[12] See, these will come from far away,
from the north and from the west, [D]
and from the land of Sinim.

[13] Shout for joy, you heavens!
Earth, rejoice!
Mountains break into joyful shouts!
For the LORD has comforted His people,
and will have compassion on His afflicted ones.

Zion Remembered

[14] •Zion says, "The LORD has abandoned me;
The Lord has forgotten me! "
[15] "Can a woman forget her nursing child,
or lack compassion for the child of her womb?
Even if these forget,
yet I will not forget you.
[16] Look, I have inscribed you on the palms of My hands;

your walls are continually before Me.
17 Your builders hurry;
those who destroy and devastate you will leave you.
18 Look up, and look around.
They all gather together; they come to you.
As I live" —
this is the LORD's declaration —
"you will wear all your children [E] as jewelry,
and put them on as a bride does.
19† For your waste and desolate places
and your land marked by ruins —
will now be indeed too small for the inhabitants,
and those who swallowed you up will be far away.
20 Yet as you listen, the children
that you have been deprived of will say,
'This place is too small for me;
make room for me so that I may settle.'
21 Then you will say within yourself,
'Who fathered these for me?
I was deprived of my children and unable to conceive,
exiled and wandering —
but who brought them up?
See, I was left by myself —
but these, where did they come from? ' " [F]

22 This is what the Lord GOD says:

Look, I will lift up My hand to the nations,
and raise My banner to the peoples.
They will bring your sons in their arms,
and your daughters will be carried on their shoulders.
23 Kings will be your foster fathers,
and their queens [G] your nursing mothers.
They will bow down to you
with their faces to the ground,
and lick the dust at your feet.

Then you will know that I am •Yahweh;
those who put their hope in Me
will not be put to shame.

24 Can the prey be taken from the mighty,
or the captives of the righteous be delivered?
25 For this is what the LORD says:
“Even the captives of a mighty man will be taken,
and the prey of a tyrant will be delivered;
I will contend with the one who contends with you,
and I will save your children.
26† I will make your oppressors eat their own flesh,
and they will be drunk with their own blood
as with sweet wine.
Then all flesh will know
that I, Yahweh, am your Savior,
and your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob.”

50 †This is what the LORD says:

Where is your mother's divorce certificate
that I used to send her away?
Or who were My creditors that I sold you to?
Look, you were sold for your iniquities,
and your mother was put away
because of your transgressions.
2 Why was no one there when I came?
Why was there no one to answer when I called?
Is My hand too short to redeem?
Or do I have no power to deliver?
Look, I dry up the sea by My rebuke;
I turn the rivers into a wilderness;
their fish rot because of lack of water
and die of thirst.
3 I dress the heavens in black
and make •sackcloth their clothing.

The Obedient Servant

4† The Lord GOD has given Me
the tongue of those who are instructed
to know how to sustain the weary with a word.
He awakens Me each morning;
He awakens My ear to listen like those being instructed.
5 The Lord GOD has opened My ear,
and I was not rebellious;
I did not turn back.
6 I gave My back to those who beat Me,
and My cheeks to those who tore out My beard.
I did not hide My face from scorn and spitting.
7 The Lord GOD will help Me;
therefore I have not been humiliated;
therefore I have set My face like flint,
and I know I will not be put to shame.

8 The One who vindicates Me is near;
who will contend with Me?
Let us confront each other. [A]
Who has a case against Me? [B]
Let him come near Me!
9 In truth, the Lord God will help Me;
who will condemn Me?
Indeed, all of them will wear out like a garment;
a moth will devour them.
10 Who among you •fears the LORD,
listening to the voice of His Servant?
Who among you walks in darkness,
and has no light?
Let him trust in the name of •Yahweh;
let him lean on his God.
11 Look, all you who kindle a fire,
who encircle yourselves with firebrands;
walk in the light of your fire
and in the firebrands you have lit!
This is what you'll get from My hand:
you will lie down in a place of torment.

Salvation for Zion

51 Listen to Me, you who pursue righteousness,
you who seek the Lord:
Look to the rock from which you were cut,
and to the quarry from which you were dug.
2 Look to Abraham your father,
and to Sarah who gave birth to you in pain.
When I called him, he was only one;
I blessed him and made him many.
3† For the Lord will comfort •Zion;
He will comfort all her waste places,
and He will make her wilderness like Eden,
and her desert like the garden of the Lord.
Joy and gladness will be found in her,
thanksgiving and melodious song.

4 Pay attention to Me, My people,
and listen to Me, My nation;
for instruction will come from Me,
and My justice for a light to the nations.
I will bring it about quickly.
5 My righteousness is near,
My salvation appears,
and My arms will bring justice to the nations.
The coastlands [A] will put their hope in Me,
and they will look to My strength. [B]
6 Look up to the heavens,
and look at the earth beneath;
for the heavens will vanish like smoke,
the earth will wear out like a garment,
and its inhabitants will die like gnats. [C]
But My salvation will last forever,
and My righteousness will never be shattered.

7 Listen to Me, you who know righteousness,
the people in whose heart is My instruction:
do not fear disgrace by men,
and do not be shattered by their taunts.

[8] For the moth will devour them like a garment,
and the worm will eat them like wool.
But My righteousness will last forever,
and My salvation for all generations.

[9†] Wake up, wake up!
Put on the strength of the LORD's power.
Wake up as in days past,
as in generations of long ago.
Wasn't it You who hacked •Rahab to pieces,
who pierced the sea monster?
[10] Wasn't it You who dried up the sea,
the waters of the great deep,
who made the sea-bed into a road
for the redeemed to pass over?
[11] And the redeemed of the LORD will return
and come to Zion with singing,
crowned with unending joy.
Joy and gladness will overtake them,
and sorrow and sighing will flee.

[12] I — I am the One who comforts you.
Who are you that you should fear man who dies,
or a son of man who is given up like grass?
[13] But you have forgotten the LORD, your Maker,
who stretched out the heavens
and laid the foundations of the earth.
You are in constant dread all day long
because of the fury of the oppressor,
who has set himself to destroy.
But where is the fury of the oppressor?
[14] The prisoner [D] is soon to be set free;
he will not die and go to the •Pit,
and his food will not be lacking.
[15] For I am •Yahweh your God
who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar —
His name is Yahweh of •Hosts.

[16] I have put My words in your mouth,
and covered you in the shadow of My hand,
in order to plant the heavens,
to found the earth,
and to say to Zion, “You are My people.”

[17] Wake yourself, wake yourself up!
Stand up, Jerusalem,
you who have drunk the cup of His fury
from the hand of the LORD;
you who have drunk the goblet to the dregs —
the cup that causes people to stagger.
[18] There is no one to guide her
among all the children she has raised;
there is no one to take hold of her hand
among all the offspring she has brought up.
[19] These two things have happened to you:
devastation and destruction,
famine and sword.
Who will grieve for you?
How can I comfort you?
[20] Your children have fainted;
they lie at the head of every street
like an antelope in a net.
They are full of the LORD’s fury,
the rebuke of your God.

[21] So listen to this, afflicted
and drunken one — but not with wine.
[22†] This is what your Lord says —
Yahweh, even your God,
who defends His people —
“Look, I have removed
the cup of staggering from your hand;
that goblet, the cup of My fury.
You will never drink it again.
[23] I will put it into the hands of your tormentors,

who said to you:
Lie down, so we can walk over you.
You made your back like the ground,
and like a street for those who walk on it.

52 “Wake up, wake up;
put on your strength, •Zion!
Put on your beautiful garments,
Jerusalem, the Holy City!
For the uncircumcised and the •unclean
will no longer enter you.
2 Stand up, shake the dust off yourself!
Take your seat, Jerusalem.
Remove the bonds from your neck,
captive Daughter Zion.”
3† For this is what the LORD says:
“You were sold for nothing,
and you will be redeemed without silver.”
4 For this is what the Lord GOD says:
“At first My people went down to Egypt to live there,
then Assyria oppressed them without cause. [A]
5 So now what have I here” —
“that My people are taken away for nothing? this is the LORD’s declaration —
Its rulers wail” —
“and My name is continually blasphemed all day long. this is the LORD’s declaration —
6 Therefore My people will know My name;
therefore they will know on that day
that I am He who says:
Here I am.”

7 How beautiful on the mountains
are the feet of the herald,
who proclaims peace,
who brings news of good things,
who proclaims salvation,
who says to Zion, “Your God reigns! ”
8 The voices of your watchmen —
they lift up their voices,
shouting for joy together;

for every eye will see
when the LORD returns to Zion.
9 Be joyful, rejoice together,
you ruins of Jerusalem!
For the LORD has comforted His people;
He has redeemed Jerusalem.
10 The LORD has displayed His holy arm
in the sight of all the nations;
all the ends of the earth will see
the salvation of our God.

11 Leave, leave, go out from there!
Do not touch anything unclean;
go out from her, purify yourselves,
you who carry the vessels of the LORD.
12 For you will not leave in a hurry,
and you will not have to take flight;
because the LORD is going before you,
and the God of Israel is your rear guard.

The Servant's Suffering and Exaltation

13† See, My Servant will act wisely; [B]
He will be raised and lifted up and greatly exalted.
14 Just as many were appalled at You —
His appearance was so disfigured
that He did not look like a man,
and His form did not resemble a human being —
15 so He will sprinkle [C] many nations.
Kings will shut their mouths because of Him,
For they will see what had not been told them,
and they will understand what they had not heard.

53 Who has believed what we have heard? [A]
And who has the arm of the LORD been revealed to?
2 He grew up before Him like a young plant
and like a root out of dry ground.
He didn't have an impressive form
or majesty that we should look at Him,
no appearance that we should desire Him.
3† He was despised and rejected by men,
a man of suffering who knew what sickness was.
He was like someone people turned away from; [B]
He was despised, and we didn't value Him.

4 Yet He Himself bore our sicknesses,
and He carried our pains;
but we in turn regarded Him stricken,
struck down by God, and afflicted.
5 But He was pierced because of our transgressions,
crushed because of our iniquities;
punishment for our peace was on Him,
and we are healed by His wounds.
6 We all went astray like sheep;
we all have turned to our own way;
and the LORD has punished Him
for [C] the iniquity of us all.

7† He was oppressed and afflicted,
yet He did not open His mouth.
Like a lamb led to the slaughter
and like a sheep silent before her shearers,
He did not open His mouth.
8 He was taken away because of oppression and judgment;
and who considered His fate? [D]
For He was cut off from the land of the living;
He was struck because of my people's rebellion.
9† They made His grave with the wicked
and with a rich man at His death,

although He had done no violence
and had not spoken deceitfully.

ARTICLE

How Does Christianity Relate to Hinduism? ⇒

10† Yet the LORD was pleased to crush Him severely. [E],
When [F] You make Him a •restitution offering,
He will see His •seed, He will prolong His days,
and by His hand, the LORD's pleasure will be accomplished.
11 He will see it out of His anguish,
and He will be satisfied with His knowledge.
My righteous Servant will justify many,
and He will carry their iniquities.
12 Therefore I will give Him [G] the many as a portion,
and He will receive [H] the mighty as spoil,
because He submitted Himself to death,
and was counted among the rebels;
yet He bore the sin of many
and interceded for the rebels.

Future Glory for Israel

54 †"Rejoice, childless one, who did not give birth;
burst into song and shout,
you who have not been in labor!
For the children of the forsaken one will be more
than the children of the married woman,"
says the LORD.
2 "Enlarge the site of your tent,
and let your tent curtains be stretched out;
do not hold back;
lengthen your ropes,
and drive your pegs deep.
3 For you will spread out to the right and to the left,
and your descendants will dispossess nations
and inhabit the desolate cities.

4 "Do not be afraid, for you will not be put to shame;
don't be humiliated, for you will not be disgraced.
For you will forget the shame of your youth,
and you will no longer remember
the disgrace of your widowhood.
5 Indeed, your husband is your Maker —
His name is •Yahweh of •Hosts —
and the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer;
He is called the God of all the earth.
6 For the LORD has called you,
like a wife deserted and wounded in spirit,
a wife of one's youth when she is rejected,"
says your God.
7 "I deserted you for a brief moment,
but I will take you back with great compassion.
8 In a surge of anger
I hid My face from you for a moment,
but I will have compassion on you
with everlasting love,"
says the LORD your Redeemer.
9 "For this is like the days of Noah to Me:

when I swore that the waters of Noah
would never flood the earth again,
so I have sworn that I will not be angry with you
or rebuke you.
10 Though the mountains move
and the hills shake,
My love will not be removed from you
and My covenant of peace will not be shaken,"
says your compassionate LORD.

11 "Poor Jerusalem, storm-tossed, and not comforted,
I will set your stones in black mortar, [A]
and lay your foundations in sapphires. [B],
12 I will make your fortifications [C] out of rubies,
your gates out of sparkling stones,
and all your walls out of precious stones.
13 Then all your children will be taught by the LORD,
their prosperity will be great,
14 and you will be established
on a foundation of righteousness.
You will be far from oppression,
you will certainly not be afraid;
you will be far from terror,
it will certainly not come near you.
15 If anyone attacks you,
it is not from Me;
whoever attacks you
will fall before you.
16 Look, I have created the craftsman
who blows on the charcoal fire
and produces a weapon suitable for its task;
and I have created the destroyer to cause havoc.
17 No weapon formed against you will succeed,
and you will refute any accusation [D]
raised against you in court.
This is the heritage of the LORD's servants,

and their righteousness is from Me."
This is the LORD's declaration.

Come to the LORD

55 “Come, everyone who is thirsty,
come to the waters;
and you without money,
come, buy, and eat!
Come, buy wine and milk
without money and without cost!
2 Why do you spend money on what is not food,
and your wages on what does not satisfy?
Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good,
and you will enjoy the choicest of foods. [A]
3 Pay attention and come to Me;
listen, so that you will live.
I will make an everlasting covenant with you,
the promises assured to David.
4 Since I have made him a witness to the peoples,
a leader and commander for the peoples,
5 so you will summon a nation you do not know,
and nations who do not know you will run to you.
For the LORD your God,
even the Holy One of Israel,
has glorified you.”

6 Seek the LORD while He may be found;
call to Him while He is near.
7 Let the wicked one abandon his way
and the sinful one his thoughts;
let him return to the LORD,
so He may have compassion on him,
and to our God, for He will freely forgive.

8† “For My thoughts are not your thoughts,
and your ways are not My ways.”
This is the LORD’s declaration.
9 “For as heaven is higher than earth,
so My ways are higher than your ways,
and My thoughts than your thoughts.
10 For just as rain and snow fall from heaven
and do not return there

without saturating the earth
and making it germinate and sprout,
and providing seed to sow
and food to eat,
11 so My word that comes from My mouth
will not return to Me empty,
but it will accomplish what I please
and will prosper in what I send it to do."

12 You will indeed go out with joy
and be peacefully guided;
the mountains and the hills will break into singing before you,
and all the trees of the field will clap their hands.
13 Instead of the thornbush, a cypress will come up,
and instead of the brier, a myrtle will come up;
it will make a name for •Yahweh
as an everlasting sign that will not be destroyed.

A House of Prayer for All

56 This is what the LORD says:

Preserve justice and do what is right,
for My salvation is coming soon,
and My righteousness will be revealed.
2 Happy is the man who does this,
anyone who maintains this,
who keeps the Sabbath without desecrating it,
and keeps his hand from doing any evil.

3† No foreigner who has joined himself to the LORD
should say,
"The LORD will exclude me from His people";
and the eunuch should not say,
"Look, I am a dried-up tree."
4 For the LORD says this:
"For the eunuchs who keep My Sabbaths,
and choose what pleases Me,
and hold firmly to My covenant,
5 I will give them, in My house and within My walls,
a memorial and a name
better than sons and daughters.
I will give each of them an everlasting name
that will never be cut off.
6 And the foreigners who join themselves to the LORD
minister to Him, love the name of •Yahweh
and become His servants,
all who keep the Sabbath without desecrating it
and who hold firmly to My covenant —
7 I will bring them to My holy mountain
and let them rejoice in My house of prayer.
Their •burnt offerings and sacrifices
will be acceptable on My altar,
for My house will be called a house of prayer
for all nations."
8 This is the declaration of the Lord GOD,
who gathers the dispersed of Israel:
"I will gather to them still others
besides those already gathered."

Unrighteous Leaders Condemned

9† All you animals of the field and forest,
come and eat!
10 Israel's [A] watchmen are blind, all of them,
they know nothing;
all of them are mute dogs,
they cannot bark;
they dream, lie down,
and love to sleep.
11 These dogs have fierce appetites;
they never have enough.
And they are shepherds
who have no discernment;
all of them turn to their own way,
every last one for his own gain.
12 "Come, let me get some wine,
let's guzzle some beer;
and tomorrow will be like today,
only far better! "

57 [†]The righteous one perishes,
and no one takes it to heart;
faithful men are swept away,
with no one realizing
that the righteous one is swept away
from the presence [A] of evil.
2 He will enter into peace —
they will rest on their beds —
everyone who lives uprightly.

Pagan Religion Denounced

3 But come here,
you sons of a sorceress,
offspring of an adulterer and a prostitute! [B]
4 Who is it you are mocking?
Who is it you are opening your mouth
and sticking out your tongue at?
Isn't it you, you rebellious children,
you race of liars,
5 who burn with lust among the oaks,
under every green tree,
who slaughter children in the •wadis
below the clefts of the rocks?
6 Your portion is among the smooth stones of the wadi;
indeed, they are your lot.
You have even poured out a •drink offering to them;
you have offered a •grain offering;
should I be satisfied with these?
7 You have placed your bed
on a high and lofty mountain;
you also went up there to offer sacrifice.
8 You have set up your memorial
behind the door and doorpost.
For away from Me, you stripped,
went up, and made your bed wide,

and you have made a bargain [C] for yourself with them.
You have loved their bed;
you have gazed on their genitals. [D],
9 You went to the king with oil
and multiplied your perfumes;
you sent your couriers far away
and sent them down even to •Sheol.
10 You became weary on your many journeys,
but you did not say, “I give up! ”
You found a renewal of your strength; [E]
therefore you did not grow weak.
11 Who was it you dreaded and feared,
so that you lied and didn’t remember Me
or take it to heart?
Have I not kept silent for such a long time
and you do not •fear Me?
12 I will expose your righteousness,
and your works — they will not profit you.
13 When you cry out,
let your collection of idols deliver you!
The wind will carry all of them off,
a breath will take them away.
But whoever takes refuge in Me
will inherit the land
and possess My holy mountain.

Healing and Peace

14 He said,
“Build it up, build it up, prepare the way,
remove every obstacle from My people’s way.”
15 For the High and Exalted One
who lives forever, whose name is Holy says this:
“I live in a high and holy place,
and with the oppressed and lowly of spirit,
to revive the spirit of the lowly

and revive the heart of the oppressed.
16 For I will not accuse you forever,
and I will not always be angry;
for then the spirit would grow weak before Me,
even the breath of man, which I have made.
17† Because of his sinful greed I was angry,
so I struck him; I was angry and hid; [F]
but he went on turning back to the desires of his heart.
18 I have seen his ways, but I will heal him;
I will lead him and restore comfort
to him and his mourners,
19 creating words of praise.” [G]
The LORD says,
“Peace, peace to the one who is far or near,
and I will heal him.
20 But the wicked are like the storm-tossed sea,
for it cannot be still,
and its waters churn up mire and muck.
21 There is no peace for the wicked,”
says my God.

True Fasting

58 [†]“Cry out loudly, [A] don’t hold back!
Raise your voice like a trumpet.
Tell My people their transgression
and the house of Jacob their sins.
2 They seek Me day after day
and delight to know My ways,
like a nation that does what is right
and does not abandon the justice of their God.
They ask Me for righteous judgments;
they delight in the nearness of God.”
3 “Why have we fasted, but You have not seen?
We have denied ourselves, but You haven’t noticed! ”
“Look, you do as you please on the day of your fast,
and oppress all your workers.
4 You fast with contention and strife
to strike viciously with your fist.
You cannot fast as you do today,
hoping to make your voice heard on high.
5 Will the fast I choose be like this:
A day for a person to deny himself,
to bow his head like a reed,
and to spread out •sackcloth and ashes?
Will you call this a fast
and a day acceptable to the LORD?
6 Isn’t the fast I choose:
To break the chains of wickedness,
to untie the ropes of the yoke,
to set the oppressed free,
and to tear off every yoke?
7 Is it not to share your bread with the hungry,
to bring the poor and homeless into your house,
to clothe the naked when you see him,
and not to ignore [B] your own flesh and blood?
8 Then your light will appear like the dawn,
and your recovery will come quickly.
Your righteousness will go before you,

and the LORD's glory will be your rear guard.
9 At that time, when you call, the LORD will answer;
when you cry out, He will say, 'Here I am.'
If you get rid of the yoke among you, [C]
the finger-pointing and malicious speaking,
10 and if you offer yourself to the hungry,
and satisfy the afflicted one,
then your light will shine in the darkness,
and your night will be like noonday.
11 The LORD will always lead you,
satisfy you in a parched land,
and strengthen your bones.
You will be like a watered garden
and like a spring whose waters never run dry.
12 Some of you will rebuild the ancient ruins;
you will restore the foundations laid long ago; [D]
you will be called the repairer of broken walls,
the restorer of streets where people live.

13 "If you keep from desecrating [E] the Sabbath,
from doing whatever you want on My holy day;
if you call the Sabbath a delight,
and the holy day of the LORD honorable;
if you honor it, not going your own ways,
seeking your own pleasure, or talking too much; [F]
14 then you will delight yourself in the LORD,
and I will make you ride over the heights of the land,
and let you enjoy the heritage of your father Jacob."
For the mouth of the LORD has spoken.

Sin and Redemption

59 †Indeed, the LORD's hand is not too short to save,
and His ear is not too deaf to hear.
2 But your iniquities have built barriers
between you and your God,
and your sins have made Him hide His face from you
so that He does not listen.
3 For your hands are defiled with blood
and your fingers, with iniquity;
your lips have spoken lies,
and your tongues mutter injustice.
4 No one makes claims justly;
no one pleads honestly.
They trust in empty and worthless words;
they conceive trouble and give birth to iniquity.
5 They hatch viper's eggs
and weave spider's webs.
Whoever eats their eggs will die;
crack one open, and a viper is hatched.
6 Their webs cannot become clothing,
and they cannot cover themselves with their works.
Their works are sinful works,
and violent acts are in their hands.
7 Their feet run after evil,
and they rush to shed innocent blood.
Their thoughts are sinful thoughts;
ruin and wretchedness are in their paths.
8 They have not known the path of peace,
and there is no justice in their ways.
They have made their roads crooked;
no one who walks on them will know peace.

9 Therefore justice is far from us,
and righteousness does not reach us.
We hope for light, but there is darkness;
for brightness, but we live in the night.
10 We grope along a wall like the blind;

we grope like those without eyes.
We stumble at noon as though it were twilight;
we are like the dead among those who are healthy.
11 We all growl like bears
and moan like doves.
We hope for justice, but there is none;
for salvation, but it is far from us.
12 For our transgressions have multiplied before You,
and our sins testify against us.
For our transgressions are with us,
and we know our iniquities:
13 transgression and deception against the LORD,
turning away from following our God,
speaking oppression and revolt,
conceiving and uttering lying words from the heart.
14 Justice is turned back,
and righteousness stands far off.
For truth has stumbled in the public square,
and honesty cannot enter.
15 Truth is missing,
and whoever turns from evil is plundered.

The LORD saw that there was no justice,
and He was offended.
16† He saw that there was no man —
He was amazed that there was no one interceding;
so His own arm brought salvation,
and His own righteousness supported Him.
17 He put on righteousness like a breastplate,
and a helmet of salvation on His head;
He put on garments of vengeance for clothing,
and He wrapped Himself in zeal as in a cloak.
18 So He will repay according to their deeds:
fury to His enemies,
retribution to His foes,
and He will repay the coastlands.

[19] They will •fear the name of •Yahweh in the west
and His glory in the east;
for He will come like a rushing stream
driven by the wind of the LORD.
[20] "The Redeemer will come to •Zion,
and to those in Jacob who turn from transgression."

This is the LORD's declaration.

[21] "As for Me, this is My covenant with them," says the LORD: "My Spirit who is on you, and My words that I have put in your mouth, will not depart from your mouth, or from the mouth of your children, or from the mouth of your children's children, from now on and forever," says the LORD.

The Lord's Glory in Zion

60 [†]Arise, shine, for your light has come,
and the glory of the LORD shines over you.
2 For look, darkness covers the earth,
and total darkness the peoples;
but the LORD will shine over you,
and His glory will appear over you.
3 Nations will come to your light,
and kings to the brightness of your radiance.
4 Raise your eyes and look around:
they all gather and come to you;
your sons will come from far away,
and your daughters will be carried on the hip.
5 Then you will see and be radiant,
and your heart will tremble and rejoice, [A]
because the riches of the sea will become yours
and the wealth of the nations will come to you.
6 Caravans of camels will cover your land [B] —
young camels of Midian and Ephah —
all of them will come from Sheba.
They will carry gold and frankincense
and proclaim the praises of the LORD.
7 All the flocks of Kedar will be gathered to you;
the rams of Nebaioth will serve you
and go up on My altar as an acceptable sacrifice.
I will glorify My beautiful house.

8 Who are these who fly like a cloud,
like doves to their shelters?
9 Yes, the islands will wait for Me
with the ships of Tarshish in the lead,
to bring your children from far away,
their silver and gold with them,
for the honor of the LORD your God,
the Holy One of Israel,
who has glorified you.
10 Foreigners will build up your walls,

and their kings will serve you.
Although I struck you in My wrath,
yet I will show mercy to you with My favor.
11 Your gates will always be open;
they will never be shut day or night
so that the wealth of the nations
may be brought into you,
with their kings being led in procession.
12 For the nation and the kingdom
that will not serve you will perish;
those nations will be annihilated.
13 The glory of Lebanon will come to you —
its pine, fir, and cypress together —
to beautify the place of My sanctuary,
and I will glorify My dwelling place. [C]
14† The sons of your oppressors
will come and bow down to you;
all who reviled you
will fall facedown at your feet.
They will call you the City of the LORD,
•Zion of the Holy One of Israel.
15 Instead of your being deserted and hated,
with no one passing through,
I will make you an object of eternal pride,
a joy from age to age.
16† You will nurse on the milk of nations,
and nurse at the breast of kings;
you will know that I, •Yahweh, am your Savior
and Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob.

17 I will bring gold instead of bronze;
I will bring silver instead of iron,
bronze instead of wood,
and iron instead of stones.
I will appoint peace as your guard
and righteousness as your ruler.

[18] Violence will never again be heard of in your land;
devastation and destruction
will be gone from your borders.
But you will name your walls salvation
and your gates, praise.
[19]† The sun will no longer be your light by day,
and the brightness of the moon will not shine on you;
but the LORD will be your everlasting light,
and your God will be your splendor.
[20] Your sun will no longer set,
and your moon will not fade;
for the LORD will be your everlasting light,
and the days of your sorrow will be over.
[21] Then all your people will be righteous;
they will possess the land forever;
they are the branch I planted,
the work of My hands,
so that I may be glorified.
[22] The least will become a thousand,
the smallest a mighty nation.
I am Yahweh;
I will accomplish it quickly in its time.

Messiah's Jubilee

61 [†]The Spirit of the Lord God is on Me,
because the Lord has anointed Me
to bring good news to the poor.
He has sent Me to heal [A] the brokenhearted,
to proclaim liberty to the captives
and freedom to the prisoners;
2 to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor,
and the day of our God's vengeance;
to comfort all who mourn,
3 to provide for those who mourn in •Zion;
to give them a crown of beauty instead of ashes,
festive oil instead of mourning,
and splendid clothes instead of despair. [B]
And they will be called righteous trees,
planted by the Lord
to glorify Him.

4 They will rebuild the ancient ruins;
they will restore the former devastations;
they will renew the ruined cities,
the devastations of many generations.
5 Strangers will stand and feed your flocks,
and foreigners will be your plowmen and vinedressers.
6 But you will be called the Lord's priests;
they will speak of you as ministers of our God;
you will eat the wealth of the nations,
and you will boast in their riches.
7 Because your shame was double,
and they cried out, "Disgrace is their portion,"
therefore, they will possess double in their land,
and eternal joy will be theirs.

8 For I •Yahweh love justice;
I hate robbery and injustice;
I will faithfully reward them
and make an everlasting covenant with them.
9 Their descendants will be known among the nations,

and their posterity among the peoples.
All who see them will recognize
that they are a people the LORD has blessed.

10 I greatly rejoice in the LORD,
I exult in my God;
for He has clothed me with the garments of salvation
and wrapped me in a robe of righteousness,
as a groom wears a turban
and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.
11 For as the earth produces its growth,
and as a garden enables what is sown to spring up,
so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise
to spring up before all the nations.

Zion's Restoration

62 I will not keep silent because of •Zion,
and I will not keep still because of Jerusalem,
until her righteousness shines like a bright light
and her salvation, like a flaming torch.
2 Nations will see your righteousness
and all kings, your glory.
You will be called by a new name
that the LORD's mouth will announce.
3 You will be a glorious crown in the LORD's hand,
and a royal diadem in the palm of your God.
4 You will no longer be called Deserted,
and your land will not be called Desolate;
instead, you will be called My Delight is in Her, [A]
and your land Married; [B],
for the LORD delights in you,
and your land will be married.
5 For as a young man marries a young woman,
so your sons will marry you;
and as a groom rejoices [C] over his bride,
so your God will rejoice over you.

6† Jerusalem,
I have appointed watchmen on your walls;
they will never be silent, day or night.
There is no rest for you,
who remind the LORD.
7 Do not give Him rest
until He establishes and makes Jerusalem
the praise of the earth.

8 The LORD has sworn with His right hand
and His strong arm:
I will no longer give your grain
to your enemies for food,
and foreigners will not drink your new wine
you have labored for.
9 For those who gather grain will eat it

and praise the LORD,
and those who harvest the grapes will drink the wine
in My holy courts.

10 Go out, go out through the gates;
prepare a way for the people!
Build it up, build up the highway;
clear away the stones!
Raise a banner for the peoples.
11 Look, the LORD has proclaimed
to the ends of the earth,
"Say to Daughter Zion:
Look, your salvation is coming,
His reward is with Him,
and His gifts accompany Him."
12 And they will be called [D] the Holy People,
the LORD's Redeemed;
and you will be called Cared For,
A City Not Deserted.

The LORD's Day of Vengeance

63 [†]Who is this coming from Edom
in crimson-stained garments from Bozrah —
this One who is splendid in His apparel,
rising up proudly in His great might?

It is I, proclaiming vindication, [A]
powerful to save.

2 Why are Your clothes red,
and Your garments like one who treads a winepress?

3 I trampled the winepress alone,
and no one from the nations was with Me.
I trampled them in My anger
and ground them underfoot in My fury;
their blood spattered My garments,
and all My clothes were stained.
4 For I planned the day of vengeance, [B],
and the year of My redemption [C] came.
5 I looked, but there was no one to help,
and I was amazed that no one assisted;
so My arm accomplished victory for Me,
and My wrath assisted Me.
6 I crushed nations in My anger;
I made them drunk with My wrath
and poured out their blood on the ground.

Remembrance of Grace

7 I will make known the LORD's faithful love
and the LORD's praiseworthy acts,
because of all the LORD has done for us —
even the many good things
He has done for the house of Israel
and has done for them based on His compassion
and the abundance of His faithful love.
8 He said, "They are indeed My people,
children who will not be disloyal,"

and He became their Savior.
9† In all their suffering, He suffered,
and the Angel of His Presence saved them.
He redeemed them
because of His love and compassion;
He lifted them up and carried them
all the days of the past.
10† But they rebelled
and grieved His Holy Spirit.
So He became their enemy
and fought against them.
11† Then He [D] remembered the days of the past,
the days of Moses and his people.
Where is He who brought them out of the sea
with the shepherds of His flock?
Where is He who put His Holy Spirit among the flock?
12 He sent His glorious arm
to be at Moses' right hand,
divided the waters before them
to obtain eternal fame for Himself,
13 and led them through the depths
like a horse in the wilderness,
so that they did not stumble.
14 Like cattle that go down into the valley,
the Spirit of the Lord gave them [E] rest.
You led Your people this way
to make a glorious name for Yourself.

Israel's Prayer

15 Look down from heaven and see
from Your lofty home — holy and beautiful.
Where is Your zeal and Your might?
Your yearning [F] and Your compassion
are withheld from me.
16 Yet You are our Father,

even though Abraham does not know us
and Israel doesn't recognize us.
You, •Yahweh, are our Father;
from ancient times,
Your name is our Redeemer.
17† Why, Yahweh, do You make us stray from Your ways?
You harden our hearts so we do not •fear [G] You.
Return, because of Your servants,
the tribes of Your heritage.
18 Your holy people had a possession [H]
for a little while,
but our enemies have trampled down
Your sanctuary.
19 We have become like those You never ruled over,
like those not called by Your name.

Chapter 64

[1]If only You would tear the heavens open
and come down,
so that mountains would quake at Your presence —
[2] as fire kindles the brushwood,
and fire causes water to boil —
to make Your name known to Your enemies,
so that nations will tremble at Your presence!
[3] When You did awesome works
that we did not expect,
You came down,
and the mountains quaked at Your presence.
[4] From ancient times no one has heard,
no one has listened,
no eye has seen any God except You,
who acts on behalf of the one who waits for Him.
[5] You welcome the one who joyfully does what is right;
they remember You in Your ways.
But we have sinned, and You were angry.
How can we be saved if we remain in our sins? [A]
[6†] All of us have become like something •unclean,
and all our righteous acts are like a polluted [B] garment;
all of us wither like a leaf,
and our iniquities carry us away like the wind.
[7] No one calls on Your name,
striving to take hold of You.
For You have hidden Your face from us
and made us melt because of our iniquity.

[8] Yet LORD, You are our Father;
we are the clay, and You are our potter;
we all are the work of Your hands.
[9] LORD, do not be terribly angry
or remember our iniquity forever.
Please look — all of us are Your people!
[10] Your holy cities have become a wilderness;

•Zion has become a wilderness,
Jerusalem a desolation.
11 Our holy and beautiful [D] temple,
where our fathers praised You,
has been burned with fire,
and all that was dear to us lies in ruins.
12 LORD, after all this, will You restrain Yourself?
Will You keep silent and afflict severely?

The LORD's Response

65 “I was sought by those who did not ask;
I was found by those who did not seek Me.
I said: Here I am, here I am,
to a nation that was not called by My name.
2 I spread out My hands all day long
to a rebellious people
who walk in the wrong path,
following their own thoughts.
3 These people continually provoke Me
to My face,
sacrificing in gardens,
burning incense on bricks,
4 sitting among the graves,
spending nights in secret places,
eating the meat of pigs,
and putting polluted broth in their bowls.
5† They say, ‘Keep to yourself,
don’t come near me, for I am too holy for you! ’
These practices are smoke in My nostrils,
a fire that burns all day long.
6 It is written before Me:
I will not keep silent, but I will repay;
I will repay them fully [A]
7 for your iniquities and the iniquities
of your fathers together,”
says the LORD.
“Because they burned incense on the mountains
and reproached Me on the hills,
I will reward them fully [B]
for their former deeds.”

8 The LORD says this:

As the new wine is found in a bunch of grapes,
and one says, ‘Don’t destroy it,
for there’s some good [C] in it,’

so I will act because of My servants
and not destroy them all.
9 I will produce descendants from Jacob,
and heirs to My mountains from Judah;
My chosen ones will possess it,
and My servants will dwell there.
10 Sharon will be a pasture for flocks,
and the Valley of Achor a place for cattle to lie down,
for My people who have sought Me.
11 But you who abandon the LORD,
who forget My holy mountain,
who prepare a table for Fortune
and fill bowls of mixed wine for Destiny,
12 I will destine you for the sword,
and all of you will kneel down to be slaughtered,
because I called and you did not answer,
I spoke and you did not hear;
you did what was evil in My sight
and chose what I did not delight in.

13 Therefore, this is what the Lord GOD says:

My servants will eat,
but you will be hungry;
My servants will drink,
but you will be thirsty;
My servants will rejoice,
but you will be put to shame.
14 My servants will shout for joy from a glad heart,
but you will cry out from an anguished heart,
and you will lament out of a broken spirit.
15 You will leave your name behind
as a curse for My chosen ones,
and the Lord GOD will kill you;
but He will give His servants another name.
16 Whoever is blessed in the land

will be blessed by the God of truth,
and whoever swears in the land
will swear by the God of truth.
For the former troubles will be forgotten
and hidden from My sight.

A New Creation

17† "For I will create a new heaven and a new earth;
the past events will not be remembered or come to mind.
18 Then be glad and rejoice forever
in what I am creating;
for I will create Jerusalem to be a joy
and its people to be a delight.
19 I will rejoice in Jerusalem
and be glad in My people.
The sound of weeping and crying
will no longer be heard in her.
20 In her, a nursing infant will no longer live
only a few days, [D]
or an old man not live out his days.
Indeed, the youth will die at a hundred years,
and the one who misses a hundred years will be cursed.
21 People will build houses and live in them;
they will plant vineyards and eat their fruit.
22 They will not build and others live in them;
they will not plant and others eat.
For My people's lives will be
like the lifetime of a tree.
My chosen ones will fully enjoy
the work of their hands.
23 They will not labor without success
or bear children destined for disaster,
for they will be a people blessed by the LORD
along with their descendants.
24 Even before they call, I will answer;

while they are still speaking, I will hear.
25 The wolf and the lamb will feed together, E
and the lion will eat straw like the ox,
but the serpent's food will be dust!
They will not do what is evil or destroy
on My entire holy mountain,"
says the LORD.

Final Judgment and Joyous Restoration

66 This is what the LORD says:

Heaven is My throne,
and earth is My footstool.
What house could you possibly build for Me?
And what place could be My home?
2 My hand made all these things,
and so they all came into being.
I will look favorably on this kind of person:This is the LORD's declaration.
one who is humble, submissive [A] in spirit,
and trembles at My word.
3 One slaughters an ox, one kills a man;
one sacrifices a lamb, one breaks a dog's neck;
one offers a •grain offering, one offers pig's blood;
one offers incense, one praises an idol —
all these have chosen their ways
and delight in their detestable practices.
4 So I will choose their punishment,
and I will bring on them what they dread
because I called and no one answered;
I spoke and they didn't hear;
they did what was evil in My sight
and chose what I didn't delight in.

5 You who tremble at His word,
hear the word of the LORD:
"Your brothers who hate and exclude you
because of Me have said,
'Let the LORD be glorified
so that we can see your joy! '
But they will be put to shame."

6 A sound of uproar from the city!
A voice from the temple —
the voice of the LORD,
paying back His enemies what they deserve!

7 Before •Zion was in labor, she gave birth;

before she was in pain, she delivered a boy.
8 Who has heard of such a thing?
Who has seen such things?
Can a land be born in one day
or a nation be delivered in an instant?
Yet as soon as Zion was in labor,
she gave birth to her sons.
9 “Will I bring a baby to the point of birth
and not deliver it? ”
says the LORD;
“or will I who deliver, close the womb? ”
says your God.
10 Be glad for Jerusalem and rejoice over her,
all who love her.
Rejoice greatly with her,
all who mourn over her —
11 so that you may nurse and be satisfied
from her comforting breast
and drink deeply and delight yourselves
from her glorious breasts.

12 For this is what the LORD says:

I will make peace flow to her like a river,
and the wealth [B] of nations like a flood;
you will nurse and be carried on her hip
and bounced on her lap.
13 As a mother comforts her son,
so I will comfort you,
and you will be comforted in Jerusalem.

14 You will see, you will rejoice,
and you [C] will flourish like grass;
then the LORD’s power will be revealed to His servants,
but He will show His wrath against His enemies.
15 Look, the LORD will come with fire —

His chariots are like the whirlwind —
to execute His anger with fury
and His rebuke with flames of fire.
16 For the LORD will execute judgment
on all flesh with His fiery sword,
and many will be slain by the LORD.

17 "Those who dedicate and purify themselves to enter the groves
following their leader, D eating meat from pigs, vermin, and rats, will perish
together."

This is the LORD's declaration.

18 "Knowing their works and their thoughts, I have come to gather all
nations and languages; they will come and see My glory. 19 I will establish
a sign among them, and I will send survivors from them to the nations — to
Tarshish, Put, Lud (who are archers), Tubal, Javan, and the islands far
away — who have not heard of My fame or seen My glory. And they will
proclaim My glory among the nations. 20 They will bring all your brothers
from all the nations as a gift to the LORD on horses and chariots, in litters,
and on mules and camels, to My holy mountain Jerusalem," says the LORD,
"just as the Israelites bring an offering in a •clean vessel to the house of the
LORD. 21† I will also take some of them as priests and Levites," says the
LORD.

22 "For just as the new heavens and the new earth,
which I will make,
will endure before Me" —
this is the LORD's declaration —
"so your offspring and your name will endure.
23 All mankind will come to worship Me
from one New Moon to another
and from one Sabbath to another,"
says the LORD.

24 “As they leave, they will see the dead bodies of the men who have
rebelled against Me; for their worm will never die, their fire will never go
out, and they will be a horror to all mankind.”

JEREMIAH

Introduction to Jeremiah

Chapter 1 (Jeremiah 1:1-3)
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The Depravity of Jerusalem (Jeremiah 5:1-13)

JEREMIAH

1 †The words of Jeremiah, the son of Hilkiah, one of the priests living in
Anathoth in the territory of Benjamin. 2 The word of the LORD came to
him in the thirteenth year of the reign of Josiah son of Amon, king of
Judah. 3 It also came throughout the days of Jehoiakim son of Josiah, king
of Judah, until the fifth month of the eleventh year of Zedekiah son of
Josiah, king of Judah, when the people of Jerusalem went into exile.

The Call of Jeremiah

4 The word of the LORD came to me:

5† I chose you before I formed you in the womb;
I set you apart before you were born.
I appointed you a prophet to the nations.

6 But I protested, "Oh no, Lord, GOD! Look, I don't know how to speak
since I am only a youth."

7 Then the LORD said to me:

Do not say, "I am only a youth,"
for you will go to everyone I send you to
and speak whatever I tell you.
8 Do not be afraid of anyone,
for I will be with you to deliver you.
This is the LORD's declaration.

9 Then the LORD reached out His hand,
touched my mouth, and told me:

I have now filled your mouth with My words.
10 See, I have appointed you today
over nations and kingdoms
to uproot and tear down,
to destroy and demolish,
to build and plant.

Two Visions

[11] Then the word of the LORD came to me, asking, “What do you see, Jeremiah? ”

I replied, “I see a branch of an almond tree.”

[12] The LORD said to me, “You have seen correctly, for I watch over My
word to accomplish it.” [13] Again the word of the LORD came to me
inquiring, “What do you see? ”

And I replied, “I see a boiling pot, its lip tilted from the north to the south.”

[14] Then the LORD said to me, “Disaster will be poured out from the north
on all who live in the land. [15] Indeed, I am about to summon all the clans
and kingdoms of the north.”

This is the LORD’s declaration.

They will come, and each king will set up his throne
at the entrance to Jerusalem’s gates.
They will attack all her surrounding walls
and all the other cities of Judah.

[16] “I will pronounce My judgments against them for all the evil they did when they abandoned Me to burn incense to other gods and to worship the works of their own hands.

[17] “Now, get ready. Stand up and tell them everything that I command
you. Do not be intimidated by them or I will cause you to cower before
them. [18] Today, I am the One who has made you a fortified city, an iron
pillar, and bronze walls against the whole land — against the kings of
Judah, its officials, its priests, and the population. [19] They will fight against
you but never prevail over you, since I am with you to rescue you.”

This is the LORD’s declaration.

Israel Accused of Apostasy

2 The word of the LORD came to me: [2] “Go and announce directly to Jerusalem that this is what the LORD says:

I remember the loyalty of your youth,
your love as a bride —
how you followed Me in the wilderness,
in a land not sown.
3 Israel was holy to the LORD,
the •firstfruits of His harvest.
All who ate of it found themselves •guilty;
disaster came on them.”
This is the LORD’s declaration.

4 Hear the word of the LORD, house of Jacob
and all families of the house of Israel.
5 This is what the LORD says:

What fault did your fathers find in Me
that they went so far from Me,
followed worthless idols,
and became worthless themselves?
6 They stopped asking, “Where is the LORD
who brought us from the land of Egypt,
who led us through the wilderness,
through a land of deserts and ravines,
through a land of drought and darkness, [A]
a land no one traveled through
and where no one lived? ”
7 I brought you to a fertile land
to eat its fruit and bounty,
but after you entered, you defiled My land;
you made My inheritance detestable.
8 The priests quit asking, “Where is the LORD? ”
The experts in the law no longer knew Me,
and the rulers rebelled against Me.
The prophets prophesied by •Baal
and followed useless idols.

9 Therefore, I will bring a case against you again.
I will bring a case against your children's children.
This is the LORD's declaration.
10 Cross over to Cyprus [B], and take a look.
Send someone to Kedar and consider carefully;
see if there has ever been anything like this:
11† Has a nation ever exchanged its gods?
(But they were not gods!)
Yet My people have exchanged their Glory
for useless idols.
12 Be horrified at this, heavens;
be shocked and utterly appalled.
This is the LORD's declaration.
13 For My people have committed a double evil:
They have abandoned Me,
the fountain of living water,
and dug cisterns for themselves,
cracked cisterns that cannot hold water.

Consequences of Apostasy

14 Is Israel a slave?
Was he born into slavery? [C]
Why else has he become a prey?
15 The young lions have roared at him;
they have roared loudly.
They have laid waste his land.
His cities are in ruins, without inhabitants.
16 The men of Memphis and Tahpanhes
have also broken your skull.
17 Have you not brought this on yourself
by abandoning the LORD your God
while He was leading you along the way?
18 Now what will you gain
by traveling along the way to Egypt

to drink the waters of the Nile? [D]
What will you gain
by traveling along the way to Assyria
to drink the waters of the Euphrates?
19 Your own evil will discipline you;
your own apostasies will reprimand you.
Think it over and see how evil and bitter it is
for you to abandon the LORD your God
and to have no •fear of Me.
This is the declaration of the Lord GOD of •Hosts.
20 For long ago I broke your yoke;
I tore off your chains.
You insisted, "I will not serve! "
On every high hill
and under every green tree
you lie down like a prostitute.

21 I planted you, a choice vine
from the very best seed.
How then could you turn into
a degenerate, foreign vine?

22 Even if you wash with lye
and use a great amount of soap,
the stain of your sin is still in front of Me.
This is the Lord GOD's declaration.
23 How can you protest, "I am not defiled;
I have not followed the Baals"?
Look at your behavior in the valley;
acknowledge what you have done.
You are a swift young camel
twisting and turning on her way,
24 a wild donkey at home [E] in the wilderness.
She sniffs the wind in the heat of her desire.
Who can control her passion?
All who look for her will not become tired;
they will find her in her mating season. [F]

25 Keep your feet from going bare
and your throat from thirst.
But you say, "It's hopeless;
I love strangers,
and I will continue to follow them."

26 Like the shame of a thief when he is caught,
so the house of Israel has been put to shame.
They, their kings, their officials,
their priests, and their prophets
27 say to a tree, "You are my father,"
and to a stone, "You gave birth to me."
For they have turned their back to Me
and not their face,
yet in their time of disaster they beg,
"Rise up and save us! "
28 But where are your gods you made for yourself?
Let them rise up and save you
in your time of disaster if they can,
for your gods are as numerous as your cities, Judah.

Judgment Deserved

29 Why do you bring a case against Me?
All of you have rebelled against Me.
This is the LORD's declaration.
30 I have struck down your children in vain;
they would not accept discipline.
Your own sword has devoured your prophets
like a ravaging lion.
31 Evil generation,
pay attention to the word of the LORD!
Have I been a wilderness to Israel
or a land of dense darkness?
Why do My people claim,
"We will go where we want; [G]
we will no longer come to You"?

[32] Can a young woman forget her jewelry
or a bride her wedding sash?
Yet My people have forgotten Me
for countless days.
[33] How skillfully you pursue love;
you also teach evil women your ways.
[34] Moreover, your skirts are stained
with the blood of the innocent poor.
You did not catch them breaking and entering.
But in spite of all these things
[35] you claim, “I am innocent.
His anger is sure to turn away from me.”
But I will certainly judge you
because you have said, “I have not sinned.”
[36] How unstable you are,
constantly changing your ways!
You will be put to shame by Egypt
just as you were put to shame by Assyria.
[37] Moreover, you will be led out from here
with your hands on your head
since the LORD has rejected those you trust;
you will not succeed even with their help. [H]

Wages of Apostasy

3 †If a man divorces his wife
and she leaves him to marry another,
can he ever return to her?
Wouldn’t such a land become totally defiled?
But you!
You have played the prostitute with many partners —
can you return to Me?
This is the LORD’s declaration.
2 Look to the barren heights and see.
Where have you not been immoral?
You sat waiting for them beside the highways
like a nomad in the desert.
You have defiled the land
with your prostitution and wickedness.
3 This is why the showers haven’t come —
why there has been no spring rain.
You have the brazen look of a prostitute [A]
and refuse to be ashamed.
4 Have you not lately called to Me, “My Father.
You were my friend in my youth.
5 Will He bear a grudge forever?
Will He be endlessly infuriated? ”
This is what you have said,
but you have done the evil things
you are capable of.

Unfaithful Israel, Treacherous Judah

6 In the days of King Josiah the LORD asked me, “Have you seen what
unfaithful Israel has done? She has ascended every high hill and gone under
every green tree to prostitute herself there.
7† I thought: After she has done
all these things, she will return to Me. But she didn’t return, and her
treacherous sister Judah saw it.
8 I observed that it was because unfaithful
Israel had committed adultery that I had sent her away and had given her a
certificate of divorce. Nevertheless, her treacherous sister Judah was not
afraid but also went and prostituted herself.
9 Indifferent to [B] her
prostitution, she defiled the land and committed adultery with stones and

trees. [10] Yet in spite of all this, her treacherous sister Judah didn't return to Me with all her heart — only in pretense."

This is the LORD's declaration.

[11] The LORD announced to me, "Unfaithful Israel has shown herself more righteous than treacherous Judah. [12] Go, proclaim these words to the north, and say:

Return, unfaithful Israel.
I will not look on you with anger, [C] This is the LORD's declaration.
for I am unfailing in My love.
I will not be angry forever. This is the LORD's declaration.
[13] Only acknowledge your •guilt —
you have rebelled against the LORD your God.
You have scattered your favors to strangers
under every green tree
and have not obeyed My voice.
This is the LORD's declaration.

[14] "Return, you faithless children" — this is the LORD's declaration — "for I am your master, and I will take you, one from a city and two from a family, and I will bring you to •Zion. [15] I will give you shepherds who are loyal to Me, [D], and they will shepherd you with knowledge and skill. [16] When you multiply and increase in the land, in those days" — the LORD's declaration — "no one will say any longer, 'The ark of the LORD's covenant.' It will never come to mind, and no one will remember or miss it. It will never again be made. [17] At that time Jerusalem will be called, •Yahweh's Throne, and all the nations will be gathered to it, to the name of Yahweh in Jerusalem. They will cease to follow the stubbornness of their evil hearts. [18] In those days the house of Judah will join with the house of Israel, and they will come together from the land of the north to the land I have given your ancestors to inherit."

True Repentance

[19†] I thought: How I long to make you My sons

and give you a desirable land,
the most beautiful inheritance of all the nations.
I thought: You will call Me, my Father,
and never turn away from Me.
20 However, as a woman may betray her lover, [E]
so you have betrayed Me, house of Israel.
This is the LORD's declaration.
21 A sound is heard on the barren heights,
the children of Israel weeping and begging for mercy,
for they have perverted their way;
they have forgotten the LORD their God.
22 Return, you faithless children.
I will heal your unfaithfulness.
"Here we are, coming to You,
for You are the LORD our God.
23 Surely, falsehood comes from the hills,
commotion from the mountains,
but the salvation of Israel
is only in the LORD our God.
24 From the time of our youth
the shameful one has consumed
what our fathers have worked for —
their flocks and their herds,
their sons and their daughters.
25 Let us lie down in our shame;
let our disgrace cover us.
We have sinned against the LORD our God,
both we and our fathers,
from the time of our youth even to this day.
We have not obeyed the voice of the LORD our God."

Blessing or Curse

4 If you return, [A] Israel —
you will return to Me, this is the LORD's declaration —
if you remove your detestable idols
from My presence
and do not waver,
2† then you can swear, "As the LORD lives,"
in truth, in justice, and in righteousness,
then the nations will be blessed [B] by Him
and will pride themselves in Him.

3 For this is what the LORD says to the men of Judah and Jerusalem:

Break up the unplowed ground;
do not sow among the thorns.
4 Circumcise yourselves to the LORD;
remove the foreskin of your hearts,
men of Judah and residents of Jerusalem.
Otherwise, My wrath will break out like fire
and burn with no one to extinguish it
because of your evil deeds.

Judgment from the North

5 Declare in Judah, proclaim in Jerusalem, and say:

Blow the ram's horn throughout the land.
Cry out loudly and say:
Assemble yourselves,
and let's flee to the fortified cities.
6 Lift up a signal flag toward •Zion.
Run for cover! Don't stand still!
For I am bringing disaster from the north —
a great destruction.
7 A lion has gone up from his thicket;
a destroyer of nations has set out.
He has left his lair
to make your land a waste.

Your cities will be reduced to uninhabited ruins.
8 Because of this, put on •sackcloth;
mourn and wail,
for the LORD's burning anger
has not turned away from us.

9 "On that day" — this is the LORD's declaration — "the king and the officials will lose their courage. The priests will tremble in fear, and the prophets will be scared speechless."

10† I said, "Oh no, Lord GOD, You have certainly deceived this people and Jerusalem, by announcing, 'You will have peace,' while a sword is at [C] our throats."

11 "At that time it will be said to this people and to Jerusalem, 'A searing wind blows from the barren heights in the wilderness on the way to My dear [D] people. It comes not to winnow or to sift;
12 a wind too strong for this comes at My call. [E] Now I will also pronounce judgments against them.' "

13 Look, he advances like clouds;
his chariots are like a storm.
His horses are swifter than eagles.
Woe to us, for we are ruined!
14 Wash the evil from your heart, Jerusalem,
so that you will be delivered.
How long will you harbor
malicious thoughts within you?
15 For a voice announces from Dan,
proclaiming malice from Mount Ephraim.
16 Warn the nations: Look!
Proclaim to Jerusalem:
Those who besiege are coming
from a distant land;
they raise their voices
against the cities of Judah.

17 They have her surrounded
like those who guard a field,
because she has rebelled against Me.
This is the LORD's declaration.
18 Your way of life and your actions
have brought this on you.
This is your punishment. It is very bitter,
because it has reached your heart!

Jeremiah's Lament

19 My anguish, my anguish! [F] I writhe in agony!
Oh, the pain in [G] my heart!
My heart pounds;
I cannot be silent.
For you, my soul,
have heard the sound of the ram's horn —
the shout of battle.
20 Disaster after disaster is reported
because the whole land is destroyed.
Suddenly my tents are destroyed,
my tent curtains, in a moment.
21 How long must I see the signal flag
and hear the sound of the ram's horn?

22 "For My people are fools;
they do not know Me.
They are foolish children,
without understanding.
They are skilled in doing what is evil,
but they do not know how to do what is good."

23 I looked at the earth,
and it was formless and empty.
I looked to the heavens,
and their light was gone.
24 I looked at the mountains,
and they were quaking;

all the hills shook.
25 I looked, and no man was left;
all the birds of the sky had fled.
26 I looked, and the fertile field was a wilderness.
All its cities were torn down
because of the LORD
and His burning anger.

27 For this is what the LORD says:

The whole land will be a desolation,
but I will not finish it off.
28† Because of this, the earth will mourn;
the skies above will grow dark.
I have spoken; I have planned,
and I will not relent or turn back from it.

29 Every city flees
at the sound of the horseman and the archer.
They enter the thickets
and climb among the rocks.
Every city is abandoned;
no inhabitant is left.
30 And you, devastated one, what are you doing
that you dress yourself in scarlet,
that you adorn yourself with gold jewelry,
that you enlarge your eyes with paint?
You beautify yourself for nothing.
Your lovers reject you;
they want to take your life.
31 I hear a cry like a woman in labor,
a cry of anguish like one bearing her first child.
The cry of Daughter Zion gasping for breath,
stretching out her hands:
Woe is me, for my life is weary
because of the murderers!

The Depravity of Jerusalem

5 Roam through the streets of Jerusalem.
Look and take note;
search in her squares.
If you find one person,
any who acts justly,
who seeks to be faithful,
then I will forgive her.
2 When they say, “As the LORD lives,”
they are swearing falsely.
3 LORD, don’t Your eyes look for faithfulness?
You have struck them, but they felt no pain.
You finished them off,
but they refused to accept discipline.
They made their faces harder than rock,
and they refused to return.

4 Then I thought:

They are just the poor;
they have played the fool.
For they don’t understand the way of the LORD,
the justice of their God.
5 I will go to the powerful
and speak to them.
Surely they know the way of the LORD,
the justice of their God.
However, these also had broken the yoke
and torn off the chains.
6 Therefore, a lion from the forest will strike them down.
A wolf from an arid plain will ravage them.
A leopard keeps watch over their cities.
Anyone who leaves them will be torn to pieces
because their rebellious acts are many,
their unfaithful deeds numerous.

7 Why should I forgive you?
Your children have abandoned Me

and sworn by those who are not gods.
I satisfied their needs, yet they committed adultery;
they gashed themselves at the [A] prostitute's house.
8 They are well-fed, [B] eager [C] stallions,
each neighing after someone else's wife.
9 Should I not punish them for these things?
Should I not avenge Myself This is the LORD's declaration.
on such a nation as this?

10 Go up among her vineyard terraces and destroy them,
but do not finish them off.
Prune away her shoots,
for they do not belong to the LORD.
11 They, the house of Israel and the house of Judah,
have dealt very treacherously with Me.
12 They have contradicted the LORD This is the LORD's declaration.
and insisted, "It won't happen. [D]
Harm won't come to us;
we won't see sword or famine."
13 The prophets become only wind,
for the LORD's word is not in them.
This will in fact happen to them.

Coming Judgment

14 Therefore, this is what the Lord GOD of •Hosts says:

Because you have spoken this word,
I am going to make My words
become fire in your mouth.
These people are the wood,
and the fire will consume them.
15 I am about to bring a nation
from far away against you,
house of Israel.
It is an established nation, This is the LORD's declaration.
an ancient nation,

a nation whose language you do not know
and whose speech you do not understand.
16 Their quiver is like an open grave;
they are all mighty warriors.
17 They will consume your harvest and your food.
They will consume your sons and your daughters.
They will consume your flocks and your herds.
They will consume your vines and your fig trees.
They will destroy with the sword
your fortified cities in which you trust.

18 "But even in those days" — this is the LORD's declaration — "I will
not finish you off. 19 When people ask, 'For what offense has the LORD our
God done all these things to us? ' You will respond to them: Just as you
abandoned Me and served foreign gods in your land, so will you serve
strangers in a land that is not yours.

20 "Declare this in the house of Jacob; proclaim it in Judah, saying:

21 Hear this,
you foolish and senseless [E] people.
They have eyes, but they don't see.
They have ears, but they don't hear.
22† Do you not •fear Me?
Do you not tremble before Me, This is the LORD's declaration.
the One who set the sand as the boundary of the sea,
an enduring barrier that it cannot cross?
The waves surge, but they cannot prevail.
They roar but cannot pass over it.
23 But these people have stubborn and rebellious hearts.
They have turned aside and have gone away.
24 They have not said to themselves,
'Let's fear the LORD our God,
who gives the rain, both early and late, in its season,
who guarantees to us the fixed weeks of the harvest.'
25 Your •guilty acts have diverted these things from you.

Your sins have withheld My bounty from you,
26 for wicked men live among My people.
They watch like fowlers lying in wait. F
They set a trap;
they catch men.
27 Like a cage full of birds,
so their houses are full of deceit.
Therefore they have grown powerful and rich.
28 They have become fat and sleek.
They have also excelled in evil matters.
They have not taken up cases,
such as the case of the fatherless, so they might prosper,
and they have not defended the rights of the needy.
29 Should I not punish them for these things?
Should I not avenge Myself This is the LORD's declaration.
on such a nation as this?

30† A horrible, terrible thing
has taken place in the land.
31 The prophets prophesy falsely,
and the priests rule by their own authority.
My people love it like this.
But what will you do at the end of it?

Threatened Siege of Jerusalem

6 “Run for cover, Benjaminites,
out of Jerusalem!
Sound the ram’s horn in Tekoa;
raise a smoke signal over Beth-haccherem,
for disaster threatens from the north,
even great destruction.
2 Though she is beautiful and delicate,
I will destroy [A] Daughter •Zion.
3 Shepherds and their flocks will come against her;
they will pitch their tents all around her.
Each will pasture his own portion.
4 Set them apart for war against her;
rise up, let’s attack at noon.
Woe to us, for the day is passing;
the evening shadows grow long.
5 Rise up, let’s attack by night.
Let us destroy her fortresses.”

6† For this is what the Lord of •Hosts says:

Cut down the trees;
raise a siege ramp against Jerusalem.
This city must be punished.
There is nothing but oppression within her.
7 As a well gushes out its water,
so she pours out her evil. [B]
Violence and destruction resound in her.
Sickness and wounds keep coming to My attention.
8 Be warned, Jerusalem,
or I will turn away from you;
I will make you a desolation,
a land without inhabitants.

Wrath on Israel

9 This is what the Lord of Hosts says:

Glean the remnant of Israel
as thoroughly as a vine.
Pass your hand once more like a grape gatherer
over the branches.

10 Who can I speak to and give such a warning [C]
that they will listen?
Look, their ear is uncircumcised,
so they cannot pay attention.
See, the word of the LORD has become contemptible to them —
they find no pleasure in it.
11 But I am full of the LORD's wrath;
I am tired of holding it back.
Pour it out on the children in the street,
on the gang of young men as well.
For both husband and wife will be captured,
the old with the very old. [D]
12 Their houses will be turned over to others,
their fields and wives as well,
for I will stretch out My hand
against the inhabitants of the land.
This is the LORD's declaration.
13 For from the least to the greatest of them,
everyone is making profit dishonestly.
From prophet to priest,
everyone deals falsely.
14 They have treated My people's brokenness superficially,
claiming, "Peace, peace,"
when there is no peace.
15 Were they ashamed when they acted so abhorrently?
They weren't at all ashamed.
They can no longer feel humiliation.
Therefore, they will fall among the fallen.
When I punish them, they will collapse,
says the LORD.

Disaster because of Disobedience

16 This is what the LORD says:

Stand by the roadways and look.
Ask about the ancient paths:
Which is the way to what is good?
Then take it
and find rest for yourselves.
But they protested, “We won’t!”
17 I appointed watchmen over you
and said: Listen for the sound of the ram’s horn.
But they protested, “We won’t listen!”

18 Therefore listen, you nations
and you witnesses,
learn what the charge is against them.
19 Listen, earth!
I am about to bring disaster on these people,
the fruit of their own plotting,
for they have paid no attention to My word.
They have rejected My instruction.
20† What use to Me is frankincense from Sheba
or sweet cane from a distant land?
Your •burnt offerings are not acceptable;
your sacrifices do not please Me.
21† Therefore, this is what the LORD says:
I am going to place stumbling blocks before these people;
fathers and sons together will stumble over them;
friends and neighbors will also perish.

A Cruel Nation from the North

22 This is what the LORD says:

Look, an army is coming from a northern land;
a great nation will be awakened

from the remote regions of the earth.
23 They grasp bow and javelin.
They are cruel and show no mercy.
Their voice roars like the sea,
and they ride on horses,
lined up like men in battle formation
against you, Daughter Zion.

24 We have heard about it,
and we are discouraged. [E]
Distress has seized us —
pain like a woman in labor.
25 Don't go out to the fields;
don't walk on the road.
For the enemy has a sword;
terror is on every side.

26 My dear [F] people, dress yourselves in •sackcloth
and roll in the dust.
Mourn as you would for an only son,
a bitter lament,
for suddenly the destroyer will come on us.

Jeremiah Appointed as an Examiner

27 I have appointed you to be an assayer among My people —
a refiner —
so you may know and assay their way of life.
28 All are stubborn rebels
spreading slander.
They are bronze and iron;
all of them are corrupt.
29 The bellows blow,
blasting the lead with fire.
The refining is completely in vain;
the evil ones are not separated out.
30 They are called rejected silver,

for the LORD has rejected them.

False Trust in the Temple

7 [†]This is the word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD: 2 “Stand in the
gate of the house of the LORD and there call out this word: Hear the
word of the LORD, all you people of Judah who enter through these gates to
worship the LORD.

3 “This is what the LORD of •Hosts, the God of Israel, says: Correct your
ways and your deeds, and I will allow you to live in this place. 4 Do not
trust deceitful words, chanting: This is the temple of the LORD, the temple of
the LORD, the temple of the LORD. 5 Instead, if you really change your ways
and your actions, if you act justly toward one another, [A] 6 if you no longer
oppress the foreigner, the fatherless, and the widow and no longer shed
innocent blood in this place or follow other gods, bringing harm on
yourselves, 7 I will allow you to live in this place, the land I gave to your
ancestors long ago and forever. 8 But look, you keep trusting in deceitful
words that cannot help.

9 “Do you steal, murder, commit adultery, swear falsely, burn incense to
•Baal, and follow other gods that you have not known? 10 Then do you
come and stand before Me in this house called by My name and say, ‘We
are delivered, so we can continue doing all these detestable acts’? 11 Has
this house, which is called by My name, become a den of robbers in your
view? Yes, I too have seen it.”

This is the LORD’s declaration.

Shiloh As a Warning

12 “But return to My place that was at Shiloh, where I made My name
dwell at first. See what I did to it because of the evil of My people Israel.
13 Now, because you have done all these things” — this is the LORD’s
declaration — “and because I have spoken to you time and time again [B] but
you wouldn’t listen, and I have called to you, but you wouldn’t answer,
14 what I did to Shiloh I will do to the house that is called by My
name — the house in which you trust — the place that I gave you and your
ancestors. 15 I will drive you from My presence, just as I drove out all of
your brothers, all the descendants of Ephraim.

Do Not Pray for Judah

[16]† "As for you, do not pray for these people. Do not offer a cry or a
prayer on their behalf, and do not beg Me, for I will not listen to you.
[17] Don't you see how they behave in the cities of Judah and in the streets of
Jerusalem? [18] The sons gather wood, the fathers light the fire, and the
women knead dough to make cakes for the queen of heaven, and they pour
out •drink offerings to other gods so that they provoke Me to anger. [19] But
are they really provoking Me? " This is the LORD's declaration. "Isn't it
they themselves being provoked to disgrace? "

[20] Therefore, this is what the Lord GOD says: "Look, My anger — My
burning wrath — is about to be poured out on this place, on man and beast,
on the tree of the field, and on the produce of the land. My wrath will burn
and not be quenched."

Obedience Over Sacrifice

[21]† This is what the LORD of Hosts, the God of Israel, says: "Add your
•burnt offerings to your other sacrifices, and eat the meat yourselves, [22] for
when I brought your ancestors out of the land of Egypt, I did not speak with
them or command them concerning burnt offering and sacrifice.
[23] However, I did give them this command: Obey Me, and then I will be
your God, and you will be My people. You must follow every way I
command you so that it may go well with you. [24] Yet they didn't listen or
pay attention but followed their own advice and according to their own
stubborn, evil heart. They went backward and not forward. [25] Since the day
your ancestors came out of the land of Egypt until this day, I have sent all
My servants the prophets to you time and time again. [C] [26] However, they
wouldn't listen to Me or pay attention but became obstinate; [D] they did
more evil than their ancestors.

A Lament for Disobedient Judah

[27] "When you speak all these things to them, they will not listen to you.
When you call to them, they will not answer you. [28] You must therefore

declare to them: This is the nation that would not listen to the voice of the
LORD their God and would not accept discipline. Truth [E] has perished — it
has disappeared from their mouths. 29 Cut off the hair of your sacred vow [F]
and throw it away. Raise up a dirge on the barren heights, for the LORD has
rejected and abandoned the generation under His wrath.

30 "For the Judeans have done what is evil in My sight." This is the
LORD's declaration. "They have set up their detestable things in the house
that is called by My name and defiled it. 31 They have built the •high places
of •Topheth [G], in the Valley of Hinnom in order to burn their sons and
daughters in the fire, a thing I did not command; I never entertained the
thought. [H]

32 "Therefore, take note! Days are coming" — the LORD's
declaration — "when this place will no longer be called Topheth and the
Valley of Hinnom, but the Valley of Slaughter. Topheth will become a
cemetery, [I] because there will be no other burial place. 33 The corpses of
these people will become food for the birds of the sky and for the wild
animals of the land, with no one to scare them away. 34 I will remove from
the cities of Judah and the streets of Jerusalem the sound of joy and
gladness and the voices of the groom and the bride, for the land will
become a desolate waste.

Death over Life

8 "At that time" — this is the LORD's declaration — "the bones of the
kings of Judah, the bones of her officials, the bones of the priests, the
bones of the prophets, and the bones of the residents of Jerusalem will be
brought out of their graves. 2 They will be exposed to the sun, the moon,
and the whole heavenly •host, which they have loved, served, followed,
consulted, and worshiped. Their bones will not be collected and buried but
will become like manure on the surface of the soil. 3 Death will be chosen
over life by all the survivors of this evil family, those who remain wherever
I have banished them." This is the declaration of the LORD of Hosts.

4 "You are to say to them: This is what the LORD says:

Do people fall and not get up again?
If they turn away, do they not return?
5 Why have these people turned away?
Why is Jerusalem always turning away?
They take hold of deceit;
they refuse to return.
6 I have paid careful attention.
They do not speak what is right.
No one regrets his evil,
asking, 'What have I done?'
Everyone has stayed his course
like a horse rushing into battle.
7 Even the stork in the sky
knows her seasons.
The turtledove, swallow, and crane [A]
are aware of their migration,
but My people do not know
the requirements of the LORD.

Punishment for Judah's Leaders

8 "How can you claim, 'We are wise;
the law of the LORD is with us'?
In fact, the lying pen of scribes
has produced falsehood.

9 The wise will be put to shame;
they will be dismayed and snared.
They have rejected the word of the LORD,
so what wisdom do they really have?
10 Therefore, I will give their wives to other men,
their fields to new occupants,
for from the least to the greatest,
everyone is making profit dishonestly.
From prophet to priest,
everyone deals falsely.
11 They have treated superficially the brokenness
of My dear [B] people,
claiming, 'Peace, peace,'
when there is no peace.
12 Were they ashamed when they acted so abhorrently?
They weren't at all ashamed.
They can no longer feel humiliation.
Therefore, they will fall among the fallen.
When I punish them, they will collapse,"
says the LORD.

13 I will gather them and bring them to an end. [C]
This is the LORD's declaration.
There will be no grapes on the vine,
no figs on the fig tree,
and even the leaf will wither.
Whatever I have given them will be lost to them.

God's People Unrepentant

14 Why are we just sitting here?
Gather together; let us enter the fortified cities
and perish there, [D]
for the LORD our God has destroyed [E] us.
He has given us poisoned water to drink,
because we have sinned against the LORD.
15 We hoped for peace, but there was nothing good;
for a time of healing, but there was only terror.

16 From Dan the snorting of horses
is heard.
At the sound of the neighing of mighty steeds,
the whole land quakes.
They come to devour the land and everything in it,
the city and all its residents.
17 Indeed, I am about to send snakes among you,
poisonous vipers that cannot be charmed.
They will bite you.
This is the LORD's declaration.

Lament over Judah

18 My joy has flown away;
grief has settled on me.
My heart is sick.
19 Listen — the cry of my dear [F] people
from a far away land,
"Is the LORD no longer in •Zion,
her King not within her? "
Why have they provoked me to anger
with their carved images,
with their worthless foreign idols?
20 Harvest has passed, summer has ended,
but we have not been saved.
21 I am broken by the brokenness
of my dear [G] people.
I mourn; horror has taken hold of me.
22 Is there no balm in Gilead?
Is there no physician there?
So why has the healing of my dear [H] people
not come about?

Chapter 9

[1]If my head were a spring of water,
my eyes a fountain of tears,
I would weep day and night
over the slain of my dear [A] people.
[2]If only I had a traveler's lodging place
in the wilderness,
I would abandon my people
and depart from them,
for they are all adulterers,
a solemn assembly of treacherous people.

[3] They bent their tongues like their bows;
lies and not faithfulness prevail in the land,
for they proceed from one evil to another,
and they do not take Me into account.
This is the LORD's declaration.

Imminent Ruin and Exile

[4] Everyone has to be on guard against his friend.
Don't trust any brother,
for every brother will certainly deceive,
and every friend spread slander.
[5] Each one betrays his friend;
no one tells the truth.
They have taught their tongues to speak lies;
they wear themselves out doing wrong.
[6] You live in a world of deception.
In their deception they refuse to know Me.
This is the LORD's declaration.
[7] Therefore, this is what the LORD of •Hosts
says:

I am about to refine them and test them,
for what else can I do
because of My dear [B] people?
[8] Their tongues are deadly arrows —

they speak deception.
With his mouth
a man speaks peaceably with his friend,
but inwardly he sets up an ambush.
9 Should I not punish them for these things?
Should I not avenge Myself This is the LORD's declaration.
on such a nation as this?

10 I will raise weeping and a lament
over the mountains,
a dirge over the wilderness grazing land,
for they have been so scorched
that no one passes through.
The sound of cattle is no longer heard.
From the birds of the sky to the animals,
everything has fled — they have gone away.
11 I will make Jerusalem a heap of rubble,
a jackals' den.
I will make the cities of Judah a desolation,
an uninhabited place.

12 Who is the man wise enough to understand this? Who has the LORD spoken to, that he may explain it? Why is the land destroyed and scorched like a wilderness, so no one can pass through?

13 The LORD said, "It is because they abandoned My instruction that I set in front of them and did not obey My voice or walk according to it.
14 Instead, they followed the stubbornness of their hearts and followed after
the •Baals as their fathers taught them." 15 Therefore, this is what the LORD
of Hosts, the God of Israel, says: "I am about to feed this people
•wormwood and give them poisonous water to drink. 16 I will scatter them
among the nations that they and their fathers have not known. I will send a sword after them until I have finished them off."

Mourning over Judah

17 This is what the LORD of Hosts says:

Consider, and summon the women who mourn;
send for the skillful women.
18 Let them come quickly to raise a lament over us
so that our eyes may overflow with tears,
our eyelids soaked with weeping.
19 For a sound of lamentation is heard from •Zion:
How devastated we are.
We are greatly ashamed,
for we have abandoned the land;
our dwellings have been torn down.

20 Now hear the word of the LORD, you women.
Pay attention to [C] the word of His mouth.
Teach your daughters a lament
and one another a dirge,
21 for Death has climbed through our windows;
it has entered our fortresses,
cutting off children from the streets,
young men from the squares.

22 Speak as follows:

This is what the LORD says:

Human corpses will fall
like manure on the surface of the field,
like newly cut grain after the reaper
with no one to gather it.

ARTICLE

How Does Christianity Relate to the Baha'i Faith? ⇒

Boast in the LORD

[23] This is what the LORD says:

The wise man must not boast in his wisdom;
the strong man must not boast in his strength;
the wealthy man must not boast in his wealth.
[24] But the one who boasts should boast in this,
that he understands and knows Me —
that I am •Yahweh, showing faithful love,
justice, and righteousness on the earth,
for I delight in these things.

This is the LORD's declaration.

[25] "The days are coming" — the LORD's
declaration — "when I will punish all the circumcised yet uncircumcised:
[26] Egypt, Judah, Edom, the Ammonites, Moab, and all the inhabitants of the
desert who clip the hair on their temples. [D] All these nations are
uncircumcised, and the whole house of Israel is uncircumcised in heart."

False Gods Contrasted with the Creator

10 Hear the word that the LORD has spoken to [A] you, house of Israel.
2 This is what the LORD says:

Do not learn the way of the nations
or be terrified by signs in the heavens,
although the nations are terrified by them,
3 for the customs of the peoples are worthless.
Someone cuts down a tree from the forest;
it is worked by the hands of a craftsman with a chisel.
4 He decorates it with silver and gold.
It is fastened with hammer and nails,
so it won't totter.
5† Like scarecrows in a cucumber patch,
their idols cannot speak.
They must be carried because they cannot walk.
Do not fear them for they can do no harm —
and they cannot do any good.

6 •Yahweh, there is no one like You.
You are great;
Your name is great in power.
7 Who should not •fear You,
King of the nations?
It is what You deserve.
For among all the wise people of the nations
and among all their kingdoms,
there is no one like You.
8 They are both stupid and foolish,
instructed by worthless idols
made of wood!
9 Beaten silver is brought from Tarshish,
and gold from Uphaz [B]
from the hands of a goldsmith,
the work of a craftsman.
Their clothing is blue and purple,
all the work of skilled artisans.

10 But Yahweh is the true God;
He is the living God and eternal King.
The earth quakes at His wrath,
and the nations cannot endure His rage.

11† You are to say this to them, “The gods that did not make the heavens and the earth will perish from the earth and from under these heavens.”

12 He made the earth by His power,
established the world by His wisdom,
and spread out the heavens by His understanding.
13 When He thunders, [C]
the waters in the heavens are in turmoil,
and He causes the clouds to rise
from the ends of the earth.
He makes lightning for the rain
and brings the wind from His storehouses.

14 Everyone is stupid and ignorant.
Every goldsmith is put to shame
by his carved image,
for his cast images are a lie;
there is no breath in them.
15 They are worthless, a work to be mocked.
At the time of their punishment
they will be destroyed.
16 Jacob’s Portion is not like these
because He is the One who formed all things.
Israel is the tribe of His inheritance;
Yahweh of •Hosts is His name.

Exile After the Siege

17 Gather up your belongings [D] from the ground,
you who live under siege.

18 For this is what the LORD says:

Look, I am slinging out
the land's residents at this time
and bringing them such distress
that they will feel it.

Jeremiah Grieves

19 Woe to me because of my brokenness —
I am severely wounded!
I exclaimed, "This is my intense suffering,
but I must bear it."
20 My tent is destroyed;
all my tent cords are snapped.
My sons have departed from me and are no more.
I have no one to pitch my tent again
or to hang up my curtains.
21 For the shepherds are stupid:
they don't seek the Lord.
Therefore they have not prospered,
and their whole flock is scattered.
22 Listen! A noise — it is coming —
a great commotion from the land to the north.
The cities of Judah will be made desolate,
a jackals' den.

23† I know, Lord,
that a man's way of life is not his own;
no one who walks determines his own steps.
24 Discipline me, Lord, but with justice —
not in Your anger,
or You will reduce me to nothing.
25 Pour out Your wrath on the nations
that don't recognize You
and on the families
that don't call on Your name,
for they have consumed Jacob;
they have consumed him and finished him off

and made his homeland desolate.

Reminder of the Covenant

11 This is the word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD: [2] “Listen to the
words of this covenant and tell them to the men of Judah and the
residents of Jerusalem. [3] You must tell them: This is what the LORD, the God
of Israel, says: ‘Let a curse be on the man who does not obey the words of
this covenant, [4] which I commanded your ancestors when I brought them
out of the land of Egypt, out of the iron furnace.’ I declared: ‘Obey Me,
and do everything that I command you, and you will be My people, and I
will be your God,’ [5] in order to establish the oath I swore to your
ancestors, to give them a land flowing with milk and honey, as it is today.”

I answered, “•Amen, LORD.”

[6] The LORD said to me, “Proclaim all these words in the cities of Judah
and in the streets of Jerusalem: Obey the words of this covenant and carry
them out. [7] For I strongly warned your ancestors when I brought them out
of the land of Egypt until today, warning them time and time again, [A]
‘Obey My voice.’ [8] Yet they would not obey or pay attention; each one
followed the stubbornness of his evil heart. So I brought on them all the
curses of this covenant, because they had not done what I commanded them
to do.”

[9] The LORD said to me, “A conspiracy has been discovered among the
men of Judah and the residents of Jerusalem. [10†] They have returned to the
sins of their ancestors who refused to obey My words and have followed
other gods to worship them. The house of Israel and the house of Judah
broke My covenant I made with their ancestors.

[11] “Therefore, this is what the LORD says: I am about to bring on them
disaster that they cannot escape. They will cry out to Me, but I will not
hear them. [12] Then the cities of Judah and the residents of Jerusalem will go
and cry out to the gods they have been burning incense to, but they certainly
will not save them in their time of disaster. [13] Your gods are indeed as
numerous as your cities, Judah, and the altars you have set up to
Shame — altars to burn incense to •Baal — as numerous as the streets of
Jerusalem.

[14]† “As for you, do not pray for these people. Do not raise up a cry or a prayer on their behalf, for I will not be listening when they call out to Me at the time of their disaster.

[15] What right does My beloved have
to be in My house,
having carried out so many evil schemes?
Can holy meat prevent your disaster
so you can rejoice?
[16] The LORD named you
a flourishing olive tree,
beautiful with well-formed fruit.
He has set fire to it,
and its branches are consumed
with a great roaring sound.

[17] “The LORD of •Hosts who planted you has decreed disaster against you, because of the harm the house of Israel and the house of Judah brought on themselves, provoking Me to anger by burning incense to Baal.”

[18] The LORD informed me, so I knew.
Then You helped me to see their deeds,
[19] for I was like a docile [B] lamb led to slaughter.
I didn’t know that they had devised plots against me:
“Let’s destroy the tree with its fruit; [C]
let’s cut him off from the land of the living
so that his name will no longer be remembered.”
[20] But, LORD of Hosts, who judges righteously,
who tests heart [D] and mind,
let me see Your vengeance on them,
for I have presented my case to You.

[21] Therefore, here is what the LORD says concerning the people of Anathoth who want to take your life. They warn, “You must not prophesy in the name of •Yahweh, or you will certainly die at our hand.”
[22] Therefore, this is what the LORD of Hosts says: “I am about to punish

them. The young men will die by the sword; their sons and daughters will
die by famine. [23] They will have no remnant, for I will bring disaster on the
people of Anathoth in the year of their punishment.”

Jeremiah's Complaint

12 [†]You will be righteous, LORD,
even if I bring a case against You.
Yet, I wish to contend with You:
Why does the way of the wicked prosper?
Why do all the treacherous live at ease?
2 You planted them, and they have taken root.
They have grown and produced fruit.
You are ever on their lips, [A]
but far from their conscience. [B]
3 As for You, LORD, You know me; You see me.
You test whether my heart is with You.
Drag the wicked away like sheep to slaughter
and set them apart for the day of killing.
4 How long will the land mourn
and the grass of every field wither?
Because of the evil of its residents,
animals and birds have been swept away,
for the people have said,
"He cannot see what our end will be."

The LORD's Response

5 If you have raced with runners
and they have worn you out,
how can you compete with horses?
If you stumble [C] in a peaceful land,
what will you do in the thickets of the Jordan?
6 Even your brothers — your own father's household —
even they were treacherous to you;
even they have cried out loudly after you.
Do not have confidence in them,
though they speak well of you.

7[†] I have abandoned My house;
I have deserted My inheritance.
I have given the love of My life
into the hands of her enemies.

[8]† My inheritance has acted toward Me
like a lion in the forest.
She has roared against Me.
Therefore, I hate her.
[9] Is My inheritance like a hyena D to Me?
Are birds of prey circling her?
Go, gather all the wild animals;
bring them to devour her.
[10] Many shepherds have destroyed My vineyard;
they have trampled My plot of land.
They have turned My desirable plot
into a desolate wasteland.
[11] They have made it a desolation.
It mourns, desolate, before Me.
All the land is desolate,
but no one takes it to heart.
[12] Over all the barren heights in the wilderness
the destroyers have come,
for the LORD has a sword that devours
from one end of the earth to the other.
No one has peace.
[13] They have sown wheat but harvested thorns.
They have exhausted themselves but have no profit.
Be put to shame by your harvests
because of the LORD's burning anger.

[14] This is what the LORD says: "Concerning all My evil neighbors who
attack the inheritance that I bequeathed to My people, Israel, I am about to
uproot them from their land, and I will uproot the house of Judah from
them. [15] After I have uprooted them, I will once again have compassion on
them and return each one to his inheritance and to his land. [16]† If they will
diligently learn the ways of My people — to swear by My name, 'As
•Yahweh lives,' just as they taught My people to swear by •Baal — they
will be built up among My people. [17] However, if they will not obey, then I
will uproot and destroy that nation."

This is the LORD's declaration.

Linen Underwear

13 This is what the LORD said to me: “Go and buy yourself a linen
undergarment and put it on, [A] but do not put it in water.” 2 So I
bought underwear as the LORD instructed me and put it on.

3 Then the word of the LORD came to me a second time: 4† “Take the
underwear that you bought and are wearing, [B] and go at once to the
Euphrates and hide it in a rocky crevice.” 5 So I went and hid it by the
Euphrates, as the LORD commanded me.

6 A long time later the LORD said to me, “Go at once to the Euphrates and
get the underwear that I commanded you to hide there.” 7 So I went to the
Euphrates and dug up the underwear and got it from the place where I had
hidden it, but it was ruined — of no use at all.

8 Then the word of the LORD came to me: 9 “This is what the LORD says:
Just like this I will ruin the great pride of both Judah and Jerusalem.
10 These evil people, who refuse to listen to Me, who follow the
stubbornness of their own hearts, and who have followed other gods to
serve and worship — they will be like this underwear, of no use at all.
11 Just as underwear clings to one’s waist, so I fastened the whole house of
Israel and of Judah to Me” — this is the LORD’s declaration — “so that they
might be My people for My fame, praise, and glory, but they would not
obey.

The Wine Jars

12 “Say this to them: This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: Every
jar should be filled with wine. Then they will respond to you, ‘Don’t we
know that every jar should be filled with wine?’ 13 And you will say to
them: This is what the LORD says: I am about to fill all who live in this
land — the kings who reign for David on his throne, the priests, the
prophets and all the residents of Jerusalem — with drunkenness. 14† I will
smash them against each other, fathers and sons alike” — this is the LORD’s
declaration. “I will allow no mercy, pity, or compassion to keep Me from
destroying them.”

The LORD's Warning

[15] Listen and pay attention. Do not be proud,
for the LORD has spoken.
[16] Give glory to the LORD your God
before He brings darkness,
before your feet stumble
on the mountains at dusk.
You wait for light,
but He brings darkest gloom [C]
and makes thick darkness.
[17] But if you will not listen,
my innermost being will weep in secret
because of your pride.
My eyes will overflow with tears,
for the LORD's flock has been taken captive.

[18] Say to the king and the queen mother:
Take a humble seat,
for your glorious crowns
have fallen from your heads.
[19] The cities of the •Negev are under siege;
no one can help them.
All of Judah has been taken into exile,
taken completely into exile.
[20] Look up and see
those coming from the north.
Where is the flock entrusted to you,
the sheep that were your pride?

The Destiny of Jerusalem

[21] What will you say when He appoints
close friends as leaders over you,
ones you yourself trained?
Won't labor pains seize you,
as they do a woman in labor?

22 And when you ask yourself,
“Why have these things happened to me? ”
It is because of your great •guilt
that your skirts have been stripped off,
your body exposed. [D]
23 Can the •Cushite change his skin,
or a leopard his spots?
If so, you might be able to do what is good,
you who are instructed in evil.
24 I will scatter you [E] like drifting chaff
before the desert wind.
25 This is your lot,
what I have decreed for you —
because you have forgotten Me this is the LORD’s declaration —
and trusted in Falsehood.
26 I will pull your skirts up over your face
so that your shame might be seen.
27 Your adulteries and your lustful neighing,
your heinous prostitution
on the hills, in the fields —
I have seen your detestable acts.
Woe to you, Jerusalem!
You are •unclean —
for how long yet?

The Drought

14 The word of the LORD that came to Jeremiah concerning the drought:

2 Judah mourns;
her gates languish.
Her people are on the ground in mourning;
Jerusalem's cry rises up.
3 Their nobles send their servants [A] for water.
They go to the cisterns;
they find no water;
their containers return empty.
They are ashamed and humiliated;
they cover their heads.
4 The ground is cracked
since no rain has fallen on the land.
The farmers are ashamed;
they cover their heads.
5 Even the doe in the field
gives birth and abandons her fawn
since there is no grass.
6 Wild donkeys stand on the barren heights
panting for air like jackals.
Their eyes fail
because there are no green plants.
7† Though our •guilt testifies against us,
•Yahweh, act for Your name's sake.
Indeed, our rebellions are many;
we have sinned against You.
8 Hope of Israel,
its Savior in time of distress,
why are You like a foreigner in the land,
like a traveler stopping only for the night?
9 Why are You like a helpless man,
like a warrior unable to save?
Yet You are among us, Yahweh,
and we are called by Your name.
Don't leave us!

10 This is what the LORD says concerning these people:

Truly they love to wander;
they never rest their feet.
So the LORD does not accept them.
Now He will remember their guilt
and punish their sins.

False Prophets to be Punished

11† Then the LORD said to me, “Do not pray for the well-being of these
people. 12 If they fast, I will not hear their cry of despair. If they offer
•burnt offering and •grain offering, I will not accept them. Rather, I will
finish them off by sword, famine, and plague.”

13 And I replied, “Oh no, Lord GOD! The prophets are telling them, ‘You won’t see sword or suffer famine. I will certainly give you true peace in this place.’ ”

14† But the LORD said to me, “These prophets are prophesying a lie in My name. I did not send them, nor did I command them or speak to them. They are prophesying to you a false vision, worthless •divination, the deceit of their own minds.

TWISTED SCRIPTURE

Jeremiah 14:14

Throughout the ages, self-proclaimed prophets such as Joseph Smith, Jeane Dixon, and Edgar Cayce have claimed to speak for God. Jeremiah, an authorized ambassador of God, identified false prophets as "prophesying . . . a false vision, worthless divination, the deceit of their own minds" which is "spoken . . . presumptuously" (Dt 18:22).

15 “Therefore, this is what the LORD says concerning the prophets who
prophesy in My name, though I did not send them, and who say, ‘There will
never be sword or famine in this land.’ By sword and famine these prophets
will meet their end. 16† The people they are prophesying to will be thrown
into the streets of Jerusalem because of the famine and the sword. There
will be no one to bury them — they, their wives, their sons, and their
daughters. I will pour out their own evil on them.”

Jeremiah’s Request

17 You are to speak this word to them:
Let my eyes overflow with tears;
day and night may they not stop,
for the virgin daughter of my people
has been destroyed by a great disaster,
an extremely severe wound.
18 If I go out to the field,
look — those slain by the sword!
If I enter the city,
look — those ill from famine!
For both prophet and priest
travel to a land they do not know.

19 Have You completely rejected Judah?
Do You detest •Zion?
Why do You strike us
with no hope of healing for us?
We hoped for peace,
but there was nothing good;
for a time of healing,
but there was only terror.
20 We acknowledge our wickedness, LORD,
the guilt of our fathers;
indeed, we have sinned against You.
21 Because of Your name, don’t despise us.
Don’t disdain Your glorious throne.
Remember Your covenant with us;

do not break it.
22 Can any of the worthless idols of the nations bring rain?
Or can the skies alone give showers?
Are You not the LORD our God?
We therefore put our hope in You,
for You have done all these things.

The Lord's Negative Response

15 Then the LORD said to me: "Even if Moses and Samuel should stand before Me, My compassions would not reach out to these people.
Send them from My presence, and let them go. 2 If they ask you, 'Where
will we go?' you must tell them: This is what the LORD says:

Those destined for death, to death;
those destined for the sword, to the sword.
Those destined for famine, to famine;
those destined for captivity, to captivity.

3 "I will ordain four kinds [A] of judgment for them" — this is the LORD's
declaration — "the sword to kill, the dogs to drag away, and the birds of
the sky and the wild animals of the land to devour and destroy. 4 I will
make them a horror to all the kingdoms of the earth because of Manasseh
son of Hezekiah, the king of Judah, for what he did in Jerusalem.

5 Who will have pity on you, Jerusalem?
Who will show sympathy toward you?
Who will turn aside
to ask about your welfare?
6 You have left Me.
You have turned your back, This is the LORD's declaration.
so I have stretched out My hand against you
and destroyed you.
I am tired of showing compassion.
7 I scattered them with a winnowing fork
at the gates of the land.
I made them childless; I destroyed My people.
They would not turn from their ways.
8 I made their widows more numerous
than the sand of the seas.
I brought a destroyer at noon
against the mother of young men.
I suddenly released on her
agitation and terrors.
9 The mother of seven grew faint;

she breathed her last breath.
Her sun set while it was still day;
she was ashamed and humiliated.
The rest of them I will give over to the sword
in the presence of their enemies."

This is the LORD's declaration.

Jeremiah's Complaint

10 Woe is me, my mother,
that you gave birth to me,
a man who incites dispute and conflict
in all the land.
I did not lend or borrow,
yet everyone curses me.

The LORD's Response

11 The LORD said:

I will certainly set you free and care for you. [B]
I will certainly intercede for you
in a time of trouble,
in your time of distress, with the enemy.
12 Can anyone smash iron,
iron from the north, or bronze?
13 I will give up your wealth
and your treasures as plunder,
without cost, for all your sins
in all your borders.
14 Then I will make you serve your enemies
in a land you do not know,
for My anger will kindle a fire
that will burn against you.

Jeremiah's Prayer for Vengeance

15 You know, LORD;
remember me and take note of me.

Avenge me against my persecutors.
In Your patience, [C] don't take me away.
Know that I suffer disgrace for Your honor.
16 Your words were found, and I ate them.
Your words became a delight to me
and the joy of my heart,
for I am called by Your name,
•Yahweh God of •Hosts.
17 I never sat with the band of revelers,
and I did not celebrate with them.
Because Your hand was on me, I sat alone,
for You filled me with indignation.
18 Why has my pain become unending,
my wound incurable,
refusing to be healed?
You truly have become like a mirage to me —
water that is not reliable.

Jeremiah Told to Repent

19 Therefore, this is what the Lord says:

If you return, I will restore you;
you will stand in My presence.
And if you speak noble words,
rather than worthless ones,
you will be My spokesman.
It is they who must return to you;
you must not return to them.
20 Then I will make you a fortified wall of bronze
to this people.
They will fight against you
but will not overcome you,
for I am with you
to save you and deliver you.
This is the Lord's declaration.
21 I will deliver you from the power of evil
people

and redeem you from the control of the ruthless.

No Marriage for Jeremiah

16 The word of the LORD came to me: [2] “You must not marry or have
sons or daughters in this place. [3] For this is what the LORD says
concerning sons and daughters born in this place as well as concerning the
mothers who bear them and the fathers who father them in this land: [4] They
will die from deadly diseases. They will not be mourned or buried but will
be like manure on the face of the earth. They will be finished off by sword
and famine. Their corpses will become food for the birds of the sky and for
the wild animals of the land.

[5] “For this is what the LORD says: Don’t enter a house where a mourning
feast is taking place. [A] Don’t go to lament or sympathize with them, for I
have removed My peace from these people” — this is the LORD’s
declaration — “as well as My faithful love and compassion. [6†] Both great
and small will die in this land without burial. No lament will be made for
them, nor will anyone cut himself or shave his head for them. [7] Food
won’t be provided for the mourner to comfort him because of the dead. A
cup of consolation won’t be given him because of the loss of his father or
mother. [8] You must not enter the house where feasting is taking place to sit
with them to eat and drink. [9] For this is what the LORD of •Hosts, the God of
Israel, says: I am about to eliminate from this place, before your very eyes
and in your time, the sound of joy and gladness, the voice of the groom and
the bride.

Abandoning the LORD and His Law

[10] “When you tell these people all these things, they will say to you,
‘Why has the LORD declared all this great disaster against us? What is our
•guilt? What is our sin that we have committed against the LORD our God? ’
[11] Then you will answer them: Because your fathers abandoned
Me” — this is the LORD’s declaration — “and followed other gods, served
them, and worshiped them. Indeed, they abandoned Me and did not keep
My instruction. [12] You did more evil than your fathers. Look, each one of
you was following the stubbornness of his evil heart, not obeying Me. [13] So
I will hurl you from this land into a land that you and your fathers are not

familiar with. There you will worship other gods both day and night, for I will not grant you grace. [B]

[14] "However, take note! The days are coming" — the LORD's
declaration — "when it will no longer be said, 'As the LORD lives who
brought the Israelites from the land of Egypt,' [15] but rather, 'As the LORD
lives who brought the Israelites from the land of the north and from all the other lands where He had banished them.' For I will return them to their land that I gave to their ancestors.

Punishment of Exile

[16] "I am about to send for many fishermen" — this is the LORD's
declaration — "and they will fish for them. Then I will send for many hunters, and they will hunt them down on every mountain and hill and out
of the clefts of the rocks, [17] for My gaze takes in all their ways. They are
not concealed from Me, and their guilt is not hidden from My sight. [18] I will
first repay them double for their guilt and sin because they have polluted My land. They have filled My inheritance with the lifelessness of their detestable and abhorrent idols."

[19] LORD, my strength and my stronghold,
my refuge in a time of distress,
the nations will come to You
from the ends of the earth, and they will say,
"Our fathers inherited only lies,
worthless idols of no benefit at all."
[20] Can one make gods for himself?
But they are not gods.
[21] "Therefore, I am about to inform them,
and this time I will make them know
My power and My might;
then they will know that My name is •Yahweh."

The Persistent Sin of Judah

17 The sin of Judah is written
with an iron stylus.
With a diamond point
it is engraved on the tablet of their hearts
and on the horns of their altars,
2 while their children remember their altars
and their •Asherah poles, by the green trees
on the high hills —
3 My mountains in the countryside.
I will give up your wealth
and all your treasures as plunder
because of the sin of your •high places [A]
in all your borders.
4 You will, on your own, relinquish your inheritance
that I gave you.
I will make you serve your enemies
in a land you do not know,
for you have set My anger on fire;
it will burn forever.

Curse and Blessing

5 This is what the LORD says:

The man who trusts in mankind,
who makes human flesh his strength
and turns his heart from the LORD is cursed.
6 He will be like a juniper in the •Arabah;
he cannot see when good comes
but dwells in the parched places in the wilderness,
in a salt land where no one lives.
7 The man who trusts in the LORD,
whose confidence indeed is the LORD, is blessed.
8 He will be like a tree planted by water:
it sends its roots out toward a stream,
it doesn't fear when heat comes,

and its foliage remains green.
It will not worry in a year of drought
or cease producing fruit.

The Deceitful Heart

9 The heart is more deceitful than anything else,
and incurable — who can understand it?
10† I, •Yahweh, examine the mind,
I test the heart [B]
to give to each according to his way,
according to what his actions deserve.
11 He who makes a fortune unjustly
is like a partridge that hatches eggs it didn't lay.
In the middle of his days
his riches will abandon him,
so in the end he will be a fool.

12 A throne of glory
on high from the beginning
is the place of our sanctuary.
13 LORD, the hope of Israel,
all who abandon You
will be put to shame.
All who turn away from Me
will be written in the dirt,
for they have abandoned
the LORD, the fountain of living water.

Jeremiah's Plea

14 Heal me, LORD, and I will be healed;
save me, and I will be saved,
for You are my praise.
15 Hear how they keep challenging me,
"Where is the word of the LORD?
Let it come! "

[16] But I have not run away from being Your shepherd,
and I have not longed for the fatal day.
You know my words were spoken in Your presence.
[17] Don't become a terror to me.
You are my refuge in the day of disaster.
[18] Let my persecutors be put to shame,
but don't let me be put to shame.
Let them be terrified, but don't let me be terrified.
Bring on them the day of disaster;
shatter them with total [C] destruction.

Observing the Sabbath

[19] This is what the LORD said to me, "Go and stand at the People's Gate,
through which the kings of Judah enter and leave, as well as at all the gates
of Jerusalem. [20] Announce to them: Hear the word of the LORD, kings of
Judah, all Judah, and all the residents of Jerusalem who enter through these
gates. [21†] This is what the LORD says: Watch yourselves; do not pick up a
load and bring it in through the gates of Jerusalem on the Sabbath day.
[22] You must not carry a load out of your houses on the Sabbath day or do
any work, but you must consecrate the Sabbath day, just as I commanded
your ancestors. [23] They wouldn't listen or pay attention but became
obstinate, not listening or accepting discipline.

[24] "However, if you listen to Me, says the LORD, and do not bring loads
through the gates of this city on the Sabbath day and consecrate the Sabbath
day and do no work on it, [25] kings and princes will enter through the gates
of this city. They will sit on the throne of David, riding in chariots and on
horses with their officials, the men of Judah, and the residents of
Jerusalem. This city will be inhabited forever. [26] Then people will come
from the cities of Judah and from the area around Jerusalem, from the land
of Benjamin and from the Judean foothills, from the hill country and from
the •Negev bringing •burnt offerings and sacrifice, •grain offerings and
frankincense, and thank offerings to the house of the LORD. [27] If you do not
listen to Me to consecrate the Sabbath day by not carrying a load while
entering the gates of Jerusalem on the Sabbath day, I will set fire to its

gates, and it will consume the citadels of Jerusalem and not be extinguished.”

Parable of the Potter

18 This is the word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD: 2 “Go down at
once to the potter’s house; there I will reveal My words to you.” 3 So
I went down to the potter’s house, and there he was, working away at the
wheel. [A] 4 But the jar that he was making from the clay became flawed in
the potter’s hand, so he made it into another jar, as it seemed right for him
to do.

5 The word of the LORD came to me: 6[†] “House of Israel, can I not treat
you as this potter treats his clay? ” — this is the LORD’s declaration. “Just
like clay in the potter’s hand, so are you in My hand, house of Israel. 7 At
one moment I might announce concerning a nation or a kingdom that I will
uproot, tear down, and destroy it. 8[†] However, if that nation I have made an
announcement about turns from its evil, I will relent concerning the disaster
I had planned to do to it. 9 At another time I announce that I will build and
plant a nation or a kingdom. 10 However, if it does what is evil in My sight
by not listening to My voice, I will relent concerning the good I had said I
would do to it. 11 So now, say to the men of Judah and to the residents of
Jerusalem: This is what the LORD says: I am about to bring harm to you and
make plans against you. Turn now, each from your evil way, and correct
your ways and your deeds. 12 But they will say, ‘It’s hopeless. We will
continue to follow our plans, and each of us will continue to act according
to the stubbornness of his evil heart.’ ”

Deluded Israel

13 Therefore, this is what the LORD says:

Ask among the nations,
Who has heard things like these?
Virgin Israel has done a most terrible thing.
14 Does the snow of Lebanon ever leave the highland crags?
Or does cold water flowing from a distance ever fail?
15 Yet My people have forgotten Me.
They burn incense to false idols
that make them stumble in their ways
on the ancient roads

and walk on new paths, not the highway.
16 They have made their land a horror,
a perpetual object of scorn; [B]
everyone who passes by it will be horrified
and shake his head.
17 I will scatter them before the enemy like the east wind.
I will show them My back and not My face
on the day of their calamity.

Plot against Jeremiah

18† Then certain ones said, "Come, let's make plans against Jeremiah, for
instruction will never be lost from the priest, or counsel from the wise, or
an •oracle from the prophet. Come, let's denounce him [C] and pay no
attention to all his words."

19 Pay attention to me, LORD.
Hear what my opponents are saying!
20 Should good be repaid with evil?
Yet they have dug a pit for me.
Remember how I stood before You
to speak good on their behalf,
to turn Your anger from them.
21 Therefore, hand their children over to famine,
and pour the sword's power on them.
Let their wives become childless and widowed,
their husbands slain by deadly disease, [D]
their young men struck down by the sword in battle.
22 Let a cry be heard from their houses
when You suddenly bring raiders against them,
for they have dug a pit to capture me
and have hidden snares for my feet.
23 But You, LORD, know
all their deadly plots against me.
Do not wipe out their •guilt;
do not blot out their sin before You.

Let them be forced to stumble before You;
deal with them in the time of Your anger.

The Clay Jar

19 This is what the LORD says: "Go, buy a potter's clay jar. Take some
of the elders of the people and some of the leading priests [2] and go
out to the Valley of Hinnom near the entrance of the Potsherd Gate.
Proclaim there the words I speak to you. [3] Say: Hear the word of the LORD,
kings of Judah and residents of Jerusalem. This is what the LORD of •Hosts,
the God of Israel, says: I am going to bring such disaster on this place that
everyone who hears about it will shudder [A], [4] because they have abandoned
Me and made this a foreign place. They have burned incense in it to other
gods that they, their fathers, and the kings of Judah have never known. They
have filled this place with the blood of the innocent. [5] They have built
•high places to •Baal on which to burn their children in the fire as burnt
offerings to Baal, something I have never commanded or mentioned; I
never entertained the thought. [B]

[6] "Therefore, take note! The days are coming" — this is the LORD's
declaration — "when this place will no longer be called Topheth and the
Valley of Hinnom, but the Valley of Slaughter. [7] I will spoil the plans of
Judah and Jerusalem in this place. I will make them fall by the sword before
their enemies, by the hand of those who want to take their life. I will
provide their corpses as food for the birds of the sky and for the wild
animals of the land. [8†] I will make this city desolate, an object of scorn.
Everyone who passes by it will be horrified and scoff because of all its
wounds. [9] I will make them eat the flesh of their sons and their daughters,
and they will eat each other's flesh in the siege and distress that their
enemies, those who want to take their life, inflict on them.

[10] "Then you are to shatter the jar in the presence of the people traveling
with you, [11] and you are to proclaim to them: This is what the LORD of
Hosts says: I will shatter these people and this city, like one shatters a
potter's jar that can never again be mended. They will bury the dead in
Topheth because there is no other place for burials. [12] I will do so to this
place" — this is the declaration of the LORD — "and to its residents, making
this city like Topheth. [13] The houses of Jerusalem and the houses of the
kings of Judah will become impure like that place Topheth — all the houses

on whose rooftops they have burned incense to the whole heavenly host
and poured out •drink offerings to other gods.”

14 Jeremiah came back from Topheth, where the LORD had sent him to
prophesy, stood in the courtyard of the LORD’s temple, and proclaimed to
all the people, 15 “This is what the LORD of Hosts, the God of Israel, says: ‘I
am about to bring on this city — and on all its dependent villages — all the
disaster that I spoke against it, for they have become obstinate, not obeying
My words.’ ”

Jeremiah Beaten by Pashhur

20 Pashhur the priest, the son of Immer and chief official in the temple
of the LORD, heard Jeremiah prophesying these things. 2 So Pashhur
had Jeremiah the prophet beaten and put him in the stocks at the Upper
Benjamin Gate in the LORD's temple. 3 The next day, when Pashhur released
Jeremiah from the stocks, Jeremiah said to him, "The LORD does not call
you Pashhur, but Magor-missabib, 4 for this is what the LORD says, 'I am
about to make you a terror to both yourself and those you love. They will
fall by the sword of their enemies before your very eyes. I will hand Judah
over to the king of Babylon, and he will deport them to Babylon and put
them to the sword. 5 I will give away all the wealth of this city, all its
products and valuables. Indeed, I will hand all the treasures of the kings of
Judah over to their enemies. They will plunder them, seize them, and carry
them off to Babylon. 6 As for you, Pashhur, and all who live in your house,
you will go into captivity. You will go to Babylon. There you will die, and
there you will be buried, you and all your friends that you prophesied
falsely to.' "

Jeremiah Compelled to Preach

7[†] You deceived me, LORD, and I was deceived.
You seized me and prevailed.
I am a laughingstock all the time;
everyone ridicules me.
8[†] For whenever I speak, I cry out,
I proclaim, "Violence and destruction! "
because the word of the LORD has become for me
constant disgrace and derision.
9 If I say, "I won't mention Him
or speak any longer in His name,"
His message becomes a fire burning in my heart,
shut up in my bones.
I become tired of holding it in,
and I cannot prevail.
10 For I have heard the gossip of many people,
"Terror is on every side! [A],
Report him; let's report him! "

Everyone I trusted [B] watches for my fall.
"Perhaps he will be deceived
so that we might prevail against him
and take our vengeance on him."
11† But the LORD is with me like a violent warrior.
Therefore, my persecutors will stumble and not prevail.
Since they have not succeeded, they will be utterly shamed,
an everlasting humiliation that will never be forgotten.
12 LORD of •Hosts, testing the righteous
and seeing the heart [C] and mind,
let me see Your vengeance on them,
for I have presented my case to You.
13 Sing to the LORD!
Praise the LORD,
for He rescues the life of the needy
from the hand of evil people.

Jeremiah's Lament

14 May the day I was born
be cursed.
May the day my mother bore me
never be blessed.
15 May the man be cursed
who brought the news to my father, saying,
"A male child is born to you,"
bringing him great joy.
16 Let that man be like the cities
the LORD demolished without compassion.
Let him hear an outcry in the morning
and a war cry at noontime
17 because he didn't kill me in the womb
so that my mother might have been my grave,
her womb eternally pregnant.
18 Why did I come out of the womb
to see only struggle and sorrow,

to end my life in shame?

Zedekiah's Request Denied

21 This is the word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD when King
Zedekiah sent Pashhur son of Malchijah and the priest Zephaniah
son of Maaseiah to Jeremiah, asking, 2 "Ask the LORD on our behalf, since
Nebuchadnezzar [A] king of Babylon is making war against us. Perhaps the
LORD will perform for us something like all His past wonderful works so
that Nebuchadnezzar will withdraw from us."

3 But Jeremiah answered, "This is what you are to say to Zedekiah:
4 'This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: I will repel the weapons of
war in your hands, those you are using to fight the king of Babylon and the
Chaldeans who are besieging you outside the wall, and I will bring them
into the center of this city. 5 I will fight against you with an outstretched
hand and a mighty arm, with anger, rage, and great wrath. 6 I will strike the
residents of this city, both man and beast. They will die in a great plague.
7 Afterward' " — this is the LORD's declaration — " 'King Zedekiah of
Judah, his officers, and the people — those in this city who survive the
plague, the sword, and the famine — I will hand over to King
Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, to their enemies, yes, to those who want to
take their lives. He will put them to the sword; he won't spare them or show
pity or compassion.'

A Warning for the People

8 "But you must say to this people, 'This is what the LORD says: Look, I
am presenting to you the way of life and the way of death. 9 Whoever stays
in this city will die by the sword, famine, and plague, but whoever goes out
and surrenders to the Chaldeans who are besieging you will live and will
retain his life like the spoils of war. 10† For I have turned [B] against this city
to bring disaster and not good' " — this is the LORD's declaration. " 'It will
be handed over to the king of Babylon, who will burn it down.'

11 "And to the house of the king of Judah say this: 'Hear the word of the
LORD! 12 House of David, this is what the LORD says:

Administer justice every morning,
and rescue the victim of robbery

from the hand of his oppressor,
or My anger will flare up like fire
and burn unquenchably
because of their evil deeds.
13 Beware! I am against you,
you who sit above the valley,
you atop the rocky plateau —
you who say, “Who can come down against us?
this is the LORD’s declaration —
Who can enter our hiding places? ”
14 I will punish you according to what you have done —
I will kindle a fire in its forest
this is the LORD’s declaration.
that will consume everything around it.’ ”

Judgment against Sinful Kings

22 This is what the LORD says: “Go down to the palace of the king of
Judah and announce this word there. [2] You are to say: Hear the word
of the LORD, king of Judah, you who sit on the throne of David — you, your
officers, and your people who enter these gates. [3]† This is what the LORD
says: Administer justice and righteousness. Rescue the victim of robbery
from the hand of his oppressor. Don’t exploit or brutalize the foreigner, the
fatherless, or the widow. Don’t shed innocent blood in this place. [4] For if
you conscientiously carry out this word, then kings sitting on David’s
throne will enter through the gates of this palace riding on chariots and
horses — they, their officers, and their people. [5] But if you do not obey
these words, then I swear by Myself” — this is the LORD’s
declaration — “that this house will become a ruin.”

[6] For this is what the LORD says concerning the house of the king of
Judah:

You are like Gilead to Me,
or the summit of Lebanon,
but I will certainly turn you into a wilderness,
uninhabited cities.
[7] I will appoint destroyers against you,
each with his weapons.
They will cut down the choicest of your cedars
and throw them into the fire.

[8] “Many nations will pass by this city and ask one another, ‘Why did the
LORD do such a thing to this great city? ’ [9] They will answer, ‘Because they
abandoned the covenant of •Yahweh their God and worshiped and served
other gods.’ ”

A Message Concerning Shallum

[10] Do not weep for the dead;
do not mourn for him.
Weep bitterly for the one who has gone away,
for he will never return again

and see his native land.

[11]† For this is what the LORD says concerning Shallum son of Josiah,
king of Judah, who became king in place of his father Josiah: "He has left
this place — he will never return here again, [12] but he will die in the place
where they deported him, never seeing this land again."

A Message concerning Jehoiakim

[13] Woe for the one who builds his palace
through unrighteousness,
his upper rooms through injustice,
who makes his fellow man serve without pay
and will not give him his wages,
[14] who says, "I will build myself a massive palace,
with spacious upper rooms."
He will cut windows [A] in it,
and it will be paneled with cedar
and painted with vermilion.
[15] Are you a king because you excel in cedar?
Didn't your father eat and drink
and administer justice and righteousness?
Then it went well with him.
[16] He took up the case of the poor and needy,
then it went well.
Is this not what it means to know Me?
This is the LORD's declaration.
[17] But you have eyes and a heart for
nothing
except your own dishonest profit,
shedding innocent blood
and committing extortion and oppression.

[18] Therefore, this is what the LORD says concerning Jehoiakim son of
Josiah, king of Judah:

They will not mourn for him, saying,

“Woe, my brother! ” or “Woe, my sister! ”
They will not mourn for him, saying,
“Woe, lord! Woe, his majesty! ”
19 He will be buried like a donkey,
dragged off and thrown
outside the gates of Jerusalem.
20 Go up to Lebanon and cry out;
raise your voice in Bashan;
cry out from Abarim,
for all your lovers [B] have been crushed.
21 I spoke to you when you were secure.
You said, “I will not listen.”
This has been your way since youth;
indeed, you have never listened to Me.
22 The wind will take charge of [C] all your shepherds,
and your lovers [D] will go into captivity.
Then you will be ashamed and humiliated
because of all your evil.
23 You residents of Lebanon,
nestled among the cedars,
how you will groan when labor pains come on you,
agony like a woman in labor.

A Message concerning Coniah

24 “As I live,” says the Lord, “though you, Coniah son of Jehoiakim, the
king of Judah, were a signet ring on My right hand, I would tear you from
it. 25 In fact, I will hand you over to those you dread, who want to take
your life, to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and the Chaldeans. 26 I will
hurl you and the mother who gave birth to you into another land, where
neither of you were born, and there you will both die. 27 They will never
return to the land they long to return to.”

28[†] Is this man Coniah a despised, shattered pot,
a jar no one wants?
Why are he and his descendants hurled out

and cast into a land they have not known?
29 Earth, earth, earth,
hear the word of the LORD!

30 This is what the LORD says:

Record this man as childless,
a man who will not be successful in his lifetime.
None of his descendants will succeed
in sitting on the throne of David
or ruling again in Judah.

The Lord and His Sheep

23 †“Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of My
pasture! ” This is the LORD’s declaration. 2 “Therefore, this is what
the LORD, the God of Israel, says about the shepherds who shepherd My
people: You have scattered My flock, banished them, and have not attended
to them. I will attend to you because of your evil acts” — this is the LORD’s
declaration. 3 “I will gather the remnant of My flock from all the lands
where I have banished them, and I will return them to their grazing land.
They will become fruitful and numerous. 4 I will raise up shepherds over
them who will shepherd them. They will no longer be afraid or dismayed,
nor will any be missing.” This is the LORD’s declaration.

The Righteous Branch of David

5 “The days are coming” — this is the LORD’s declaration —
“when I will raise up a Righteous Branch of David.
He will reign wisely as king
and administer justice and righteousness in the land.
6† In His days Judah will be saved,
and Israel will dwell securely.
This is what He will be named:
•Yahweh Our Righteousness.

7 “The days are coming” — the LORD’s declaration — “when it will no
longer be said, ‘As the LORD lives who brought the Israelites from the land
of Egypt,’ 8 but, ‘As the LORD lives, who brought and led the descendants
of the house of Israel from the land of the north and from all the other
countries where I had banished them.’ They will dwell once more in their
own land.”

False Prophets Condemned

9 Concerning the prophets:

My heart is broken within me,
and all my bones tremble.
I have become like a drunkard,

like a man overcome by wine,
because of the LORD,
because of His holy words.
10 For the land is full of adulterers;
the land mourns because of the curse,
and the grazing lands in the wilderness have dried up.
Their way of life [A] has become evil,
and their power is not rightly used
11 because both prophet and priest are ungodly,
even in My house I have found their evil.
This is the LORD's declaration.
12 Therefore, their way will be to them
like slippery paths in the gloom.
They will be driven away and fall down there,
for I will bring disaster on them,
the year of their punishment.
This is the LORD's declaration.
13 Among the prophets of Samaria
I saw something disgusting:
They prophesied by •Baal
and led My people Israel astray.
14 Among the prophets of Jerusalem also
I saw a horrible thing:
They commit adultery and walk in lies.
They strengthen the hands of evildoers,
and none turns his back on evil.
They are all like Sodom to Me;
Jerusalem's residents are like Gomorrah.

15 Therefore, this is what the LORD of •Hosts says concerning the prophets:

I am about to feed them •wormwood
and give them poisoned water to drink,
for from the prophets of Jerusalem
ungodliness [B] has spread throughout the land.

[16]† This is what the LORD of Hosts says: “Do not listen to the words of the
prophets who prophesy to you. They are making you worthless. They speak
visions from their own minds, not from the LORD’s mouth. [17] They keep on
saying to those who despise Me, ‘The LORD has said: You will have peace.’
They have said to everyone who follows the stubbornness of his heart, ‘No
harm will come to you.’ ”

[18] For who has stood in the council of the LORD
to see and hear His word?
Who has paid attention to His word and obeyed?
[19] Look, a storm from the LORD!
Wrath has gone out,
a whirling storm.
It will whirl about the heads of the wicked.
[20] The LORD’s anger will not turn back
until He has completely fulfilled the purposes of His heart.
In time to come you will understand it clearly.

[21] I did not send these prophets,
yet they ran with a message.
I did not speak to them,
yet they prophesied.
[22] If they had really stood in My council,
they would have enabled My people to hear My words
and would have turned them back from their evil ways
and their evil deeds.

[23]† “Am I a God who is only near” — this is the LORD’s
declaration — “and not a God who is far away? [24] Can a man hide himself
in secret places where I cannot see him? ” — the LORD’s declaration. “Do I
not fill the heavens and the earth? ” — the LORD’s declaration.

[25] “I have heard what the prophets who prophesy a lie in My name have
said, ‘I had a dream! I had a dream!’ [26] How long will this continue in the
minds of the prophets prophesying lies, prophets of the deceit of their own
minds? [27] Through their dreams that they tell one another, they plan to

cause My people to forget My name as their fathers forgot My name
through Baal worship. [28†] The prophet who has only a dream should
recount the dream, but the one who has My word should speak My word
truthfully, for what is straw compared to grain? " — this is the LORD's
declaration. [29] "Is not My word like fire" — this is the LORD's
declaration — "and like a hammer that pulverizes rock? [30] Therefore, take
note! I am against the prophets" — the LORD's declaration — "who steal
My words from each other. [31] I am against the prophets" — the LORD's
declaration — "who use their own tongues to make a declaration. [32] I am
against those who prophesy false dreams" — the LORD's
declaration — "telling them and leading My people astray with their
falsehoods and their boasting. It was not I who sent or commanded them,
and they are of no benefit at all to these people" — this is the LORD's
declaration.

The Burden of the LORD

[33] "Now when these people or a prophet or a priest asks you, 'What is the
burden of the LORD? ' you will respond to them: What is the burden? I will
throw you away" — this is the LORD's declaration. [34] "As for the prophet,
priest, or people who say, 'The burden of the LORD,' I will punish that man
and his household. [35] This is what each man is to say to his friend and to his
brother, 'What has the LORD answered?' or 'What has the LORD spoken?'
[36] But no longer refer to [C] the burden of the LORD, for each man's word
becomes his burden and you pervert the words of the living God, the LORD
of Hosts, our God. [37] You must say to the prophet: What has the LORD
answered you? and What has the LORD spoken? [38] But if you say, 'The
burden of the LORD,' then this is what the LORD says: Because you have
said, 'The burden of the LORD,' and I specifically told you not to say, 'The
burden of the LORD,' [39†] I will surely forget you and throw away from My
presence both you and the city that I gave you and your fathers. [40] I will
bring on you everlasting shame and humiliation that will never be
forgotten."

The Good and the Bad Figs

24 After Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had deported Jeconiah son of
Jehoiakim king of Judah, the officials of Judah, and the craftsmen and
metalsmiths from Jerusalem and had brought them to Babylon, the LORD
showed me two baskets of figs placed before the temple of the LORD. 2 One
basket contained very good figs, like early figs, but the other basket
contained very bad figs, so bad they were inedible. 3 The LORD said to me,
“What do you see, Jeremiah? ” I said, “Figs! The good figs are very good,
but the bad figs are extremely bad, so bad they are inedible.”

4 The word of the LORD came to me: 5 “This is what the LORD, the God of
Israel, says: Like these good figs, so I regard as good the exiles from Judah
I sent away from this place to the land of the Chaldeans. 6 I will keep My
eyes on them for their good and will return them to this land. I will build
them up and not demolish them; I will plant them and not uproot them. 7 I
will give them a heart to know Me, that I am •Yahweh. They will be My
people, and I will be their God because they will return to Me with all their
heart.

8 “But as for the bad figs, so bad they are inedible, this is what the LORD
says: in this way I will deal with king Zedekiah of Judah, his officials, and
the remnant of Jerusalem — those remaining in this land and those living in
the land of Egypt. 9 I will make them an object of horror and disaster to all
the kingdoms of the earth, a disgrace, an object of scorn, ridicule, and
cursing, wherever I have banished them. 10 I will send the sword, famine,
and plague against them until they have perished from the land I gave to
them and their ancestors.”

The Seventy-Year Exile

25 This is the word that came to Jeremiah concerning all the people of
Judah in the fourth year of Jehoiakim son of Josiah, king of Judah
(which was the first year of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon). 2 The
prophet Jeremiah spoke concerning all the people of Judah and all the
residents of Jerusalem as follows: 3 "From the thirteenth year of Josiah son
of Amon, king of Judah, until this very day — 23 years — the word of the
LORD has come to me, and I have spoken to you time and time again, [A], but
you have not obeyed. 4 The LORD sent all His servants the prophets to you
time and time again, [B] but you have not obeyed or even paid attention. [C]
5 He announced, 'Turn, each of you, from your [D] evil way of life and from
your evil deeds. Live in the land the LORD gave to you and your ancestors
long ago and forever. 6 Do not follow other gods to serve them and to
worship them, and do not provoke Me to anger by the work of your hands.
Then I will do you no harm.

7 " 'But you would not obey Me' — this is the LORD's declaration — 'in
order that you might provoke Me to anger by the work of your hands and
bring disaster on yourselves.'

8 "Therefore, this is what the LORD of •Hosts says: 'Because you have not
obeyed My words, 9 I am going to send for all the families of the
north' — this is the LORD's declaration — 'and send for My servant
Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and I will bring them against this land,
against its residents, and against all these surrounding nations, and I will
•completely destroy them and make them a desolation, a derision, and ruins
forever. 10 I will eliminate the sound of joy and gladness from them — the
voice of the groom and the bride, the sound of the millstones and the light
of the lamp. 11† This whole land will become a desolate ruin, and these
nations will serve the king of Babylon for 70 years. 12 When the 70 years
are completed, I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation' — this is
the LORD's declaration — 'the land of the Chaldeans, for their •guilt, and I
will make it a ruin forever. 13† I will bring on that land all My words I have
spoken against it, all that is written in this book that Jeremiah prophesied
against all the nations. 14 For many nations and great kings will enslave

them, and I will repay them according to their deeds and the work of their hands.' "

The Cup of God's Wrath

15 This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, said to me: "Take this cup of
the wine of wrath from My hand and make all the nations I am sending you
to, drink from it.
16 They will drink, stagger, [E] and go out of their minds
because of the sword I am sending among them."

17 So I took the cup from the LORD's hand and made all the nations drink
from it, everyone the LORD sent me to.
18 These included:

Jerusalem and the other cities of Judah, its kings and its officials, to make them a desolate ruin, an object of scorn and cursing — as it is today;
19 Pharaoh king of Egypt, his officers, his leaders, all his people,
20 and all the mixed peoples;
all the kings of the land of Uz;
all the kings of the land of the Philistines — Ashkelon, Gaza, Ekron, and the remnant of Ashdod;
21 Edom, Moab, and the Ammonites;
22 all the kings of Tyre,
all the kings of Sidon,
and the kings of the coastlands across the sea;
23 Dedan, Tema, Buz, and all those who shave their temples; [F]
24 all the kings of Arabia,
and all the kings of the mixed peoples who have settled in the desert;
25 all the kings of Zimri,
all the kings of Elam,
and all the kings of Media;
26 all the kings of the north, both near and far from one another;
that is, all the kingdoms of the world which are on the face of the earth.
Finally, the king of Sheshach will drink after them.

[27] "Then you are to say to them: This is what the LORD of Hosts, the God
of Israel, says: Drink, get drunk, and vomit. Fall down and never get up
again, as a result of the sword I am sending among you. [28] If [G] they refuse
to take the cup from you and drink, you are to say to them: This is what the
LORD of Hosts says: You must drink! [29] For I am already bringing disaster
on the city that bears My name, so how could you possibly go unpunished?
You will not go unpunished, for I am summoning a sword against all the
inhabitants of the earth" — this is the declaration of the LORD of Hosts.

Judgment on the Whole World

[30] "As for you, you are to prophesy all these things to them, and say to
them:

The LORD roars from heaven;
He raises His voice from His holy dwelling.
He roars loudly over His grazing land;
He calls out with a shout, like those who tread grapes,
against all the inhabitants of the earth.
[31] The tumult reaches to the ends of the earth
because the LORD brings a case against the nations.
He enters into judgment with all flesh.
As for the wicked, He hands them over to the sword —
this is the LORD's declaration.
[32] "This is what the LORD of Hosts says:

Pay attention! Disaster spreads
from nation to nation.
A great storm is stirred up
from the ends of the earth."

[33] Those slain by the LORD on that day will be spread from one end of
the earth to the other. They will not be mourned, gathered, or buried. They
will be like manure on the surface of the ground.

[34] Wail, you shepherds, and cry out.
Roll in the dust, you leaders of the flock.

Because the days of your slaughter have come,
you will fall and become shattered like a precious vase.
35 Flight will be impossible for the shepherds,
and escape, for the leaders of the flock.
36 Hear the sound of the shepherds' cry,
the wail of the leaders of the flock,
for the LORD is destroying their pasture.
37 Peaceful grazing land will become lifeless
because of the LORD's burning anger.
38 He has left His den like a lion,
for their land has become a desolation
because of the sword of the oppressor,
because of His burning anger.

Jeremiah's Speech in the Temple

26 At the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim son of Josiah, king of
Judah, this word came from the LORD: 2† “This is what the LORD says:
Stand in the courtyard of the LORD’s temple and speak all the words I have
commanded you to speak to all Judah’s cities that are coming to worship
there. Do not hold back a word. 3† Perhaps they will listen and
return — each from his evil way of life — so that I might relent concerning
the disaster that I plan to do to them because of the evil of their deeds.
4† You are to say to them: This is what the LORD says: If you do not listen to
Me by living according to My instruction that I set before you 5 and by
listening to the words of My servants the prophets I have been sending you
time and time again, [A] though you did not listen, 6 I will make this temple
like Shiloh. I will make this city an object of cursing for all the nations of
the earth.”

Jeremiah Seized

7 The priests, the prophets, and all the people heard Jeremiah speaking
these words in the temple of the LORD. 8 He finished the address the LORD
had commanded him to deliver to all the people. Then the priests, the
prophets, and all the people took hold of him, yelling, “You must surely die!
9 How dare you prophesy in the name of •Yahweh, ‘This temple will
become like Shiloh and this city will become an uninhabited ruin’! ” Then
all the people assembled against Jeremiah at the LORD’s temple.

10 When the officials of Judah heard these things, they went from the
king’s palace to the LORD’s temple and sat at the entrance of the New Gate.
11 Then the priests and prophets said to the officials and all the people,
“This man deserves the death sentence because he has prophesied against
this city, as you have heard with your own ears.”

Jeremiah’s Defense

12 Then Jeremiah said to all the officials and the people, “The LORD sent
me to prophesy all the words that you have heard against this temple and
city. 13 So now, correct your ways and deeds and obey the voice of the
LORD your God so that He might relent concerning the disaster that He

warned about. 14 As for me, here I am in your hands; do to me what you
think is good and right. 15 But know for certain that if you put me to death,
you will bring innocent blood on yourselves, on this city, and on its
residents, for it is certain the LORD has sent me to speak all these things
directly to you."

Jeremiah Released

16 Then the officials and all the people told the priests and prophets,
"This man doesn't deserve the death sentence, for he has spoken to us in the
name of Yahweh our God! "

17 Some of the elders of the land stood up and said to all the assembled
people, 18† "Micah the Moreshite prophesied in the days of Hezekiah king
of Judah and said to all the people of Judah, 'This is what the LORD of
•Hosts says:

•Zion will be plowed like a field,
Jerusalem will become ruins,
and the temple mount a forested hill.'

19 Did Hezekiah king of Judah and all the people of Judah put him to death?
Did he not •fear the LORD and plead for the LORD's favor, [B] and did not the
LORD relent concerning the disaster He had pronounced against them? We
are about to bring great harm on ourselves! "

The Prophet Uriah

20 Another man was also prophesying in the name of Yahweh — Uriah
son of Shemaiah from Kiriath-jearim. He prophesied against this city and
against this land in words like all those of Jeremiah. 21 King Jehoiakim, all
his warriors, and all the officials heard his words, and the king tried to put
him to death. When Uriah heard, he fled in fear and went to Egypt. 22 But
King Jehoiakim sent men to Egypt: Elnathan son of Achbor and certain
other men with him went to Egypt. 23 They brought Uriah out of Egypt and

took him to King Jehoiakim, who executed him with the sword and threw his corpse into the burial place of the common people. [C]

[24] But Ahikam son of Shaphan supported Jeremiah, so he was not handed over to the people to be put to death.

The Yoke of Babylon

27 At the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah son of Josiah, king of
Judah, this word came to Jeremiah from the LORD: 2 “This is what the
LORD said to me: Make chains and yoke bars for yourself and put them on
your neck. 3 Send word to the king of Edom, the king of Moab, the king of
the Ammonites, the king of Tyre, and the king of Sidon through
messengers who are coming to Zedekiah king of Judah in Jerusalem.
4 Command them to go to their masters, saying: This is what the LORD of
•Hosts, the God of Israel, says: This is what you must say to your masters:
5 By My great strength and outstretched arm, I made the earth, and the
people, and animals on the face of the earth. I give it to anyone I please. [A]
6 So now I have placed all these lands under the authority of My servant
Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. I have even given him the wild animals
to serve him. 7 All nations will serve him, his son, and his grandson until
the time for his own land comes, and then many nations and great kings will
enslave him.

8† “As for the nation or kingdom that does not serve Nebuchadnezzar
king of Babylon and does not place its neck under the yoke of the king of
Babylon, that nation I will punish by sword, famine, and plague” — this is
the LORD’s declaration — “until through him I have destroyed it. 9 But as
for you, do not listen to your prophets, diviners, dreamers, fortune-tellers,
or sorcerers who say to you, ‘Don’t serve the king of Babylon! ’ 10 for they
prophesy a lie to you so that you will be removed from your land. I will
banish you, and you will perish. 11 But as for the nation that will put its
neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon and serve him, I will leave it in
its own land, and that nation will cultivate [B] it and reside in it.” This is the
LORD’s declaration.

Warning to Zedekiah

12 I spoke to Zedekiah king of Judah in the same way: “Put your necks
under the yoke of the king of Babylon, serve him and his people, and live!
13 Why should you and your people die by the sword, famine, or plague as
the LORD has threatened against any nation that does not serve the king of
Babylon? 14† Do not listen to the words of the prophets who are telling you,

‘You must not serve the king of Babylon,’ for they are prophesying a lie to
you. [15†] ‘I have not sent them’ — this is the LORD’s declaration — ‘and
they are prophesying falsely in My name; therefore, I will banish you, and
you will perish — you and the prophets who are prophesying to you.’ ”

[16] Then I spoke to the priests and all these people, saying, “This is what
the LORD says: ‘Do not listen to the words of your prophets. They are
prophesying to you, claiming, “Look, very soon now the articles of the
LORD’s temple will be brought back from Babylon.” They are prophesying
a lie to you. [17] Do not listen to them. Serve the king of Babylon and live!
Why should this city become a ruin? [18] If they are indeed prophets and if
the word of the LORD is with them, let them intercede with the LORD of
Hosts not to let the articles that remain in the LORD’s temple, in the palace
of the king of Judah, and in Jerusalem go to Babylon.’ [19] For this is what
the LORD of Hosts says about the pillars, the sea, the water carts, and the
rest of the articles that still remain in this city, [20] those Nebuchadnezzar
king of Babylon did not take when he deported Jeconiah son of Jehoiakim,
king of Judah, from Jerusalem to Babylon along with all the nobles of
Judah and Jerusalem. [21] Yes, this is what the LORD of Hosts, the God of
Israel, says about the articles that remain in the temple of the LORD, in the
palace of the king of Judah, and in Jerusalem: [22†] ‘They will be brought to
Babylon and will remain there until I attend to them again.’ This is the
LORD’s declaration. ‘Then I will bring them up and restore them to this
place.’ ”

Hananiah's False Prophecy

28 In that same year, at the beginning of the reign of King Zedekiah of
Judah, in the fifth month of the fourth year, the prophet Hananiah son
of Azzur from Gibeon said to me in the temple of the LORD in the presence
of the priests and all the people, 2† "This is what the LORD of •Hosts, the
God of Israel, says: 'I have broken the yoke of the king of Babylon.
3 Within two years I will restore to this place all the articles of the LORD's
temple that King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon took from here and
transported to Babylon. 4 And I will restore to this place Jeconiah son of
Jehoiakim, king of Judah, and all the exiles from Judah who went to
Babylon' — this is the LORD's declaration — 'for I will break the yoke of
the king of Babylon.' "

Jeremiah's Response to Hananiah

5 The prophet Jeremiah replied to the prophet Hananiah in the presence
of the priests and all the people who were standing in the temple of the
LORD. 6 The prophet Jeremiah said, "•Amen! May the LORD do so. May the
LORD make the words you have prophesied come true and may He restore
the articles of the LORD's temple and all the exiles from Babylon to this
place! 7 Only listen to this message I am speaking in your hearing and in the
hearing of all the people. 8 The prophets who preceded you and me from
ancient times prophesied war, disaster, and plague against many lands and
great kingdoms. 9 As for the prophet who prophesies peace — only when
the word of the prophet comes true will the prophet be recognized as one
the LORD has truly sent."

Hananiah Breaks Jeremiah's Yoke

10 The prophet Hananiah then took the yoke bar from the neck of
Jeremiah the prophet and broke it. 11 In the presence of all the people
Hananiah proclaimed, "This is what the LORD says: 'In this way, within two
years I will break the yoke of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon from the
neck of all the nations.' " Jeremiah the prophet then went on his way.

The LORD's Word against Hananiah

[12] The word of the LORD came to Jeremiah after Hananiah the prophet
had broken the yoke bar from the neck of Jeremiah the prophet: [13] "Go say
to Hananiah: This is what the LORD says, 'You broke a wooden yoke bar,
but in its place you will make an iron yoke bar.' [14] For this is what the LORD
of Hosts, the God of Israel, says, 'I have put an iron yoke on the neck of all
these nations that they might serve King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, and
they will serve him. I have also put the wild animals under him.' "

[15] The prophet Jeremiah said to the prophet Hananiah, "Listen,
Hananiah! The LORD did not send you, but you have led these people to
trust in a lie. [16] Therefore, this is what the LORD says: 'I am about to send
you off the face of the earth. You will die this year because you have
spoken rebellion against the LORD.' " [17] And the prophet Hananiah died that
year in the seventh month.

Jeremiah’s Letter to the Exiles

29 This is the text of the letter that Jeremiah the prophet sent from Jerusalem to the rest of the elders of the exiles, the priests, the prophets, and all the people Nebuchadnezzar had deported from Jerusalem to Babylon.
2 This was after King Jeconiah, the queen mother, the court officials, the officials of Judah and Jerusalem, the craftsmen, and the metalsmiths had left Jerusalem.
3 The letter was sent by Elasah son of Shaphan and Gemariah son of Hilkiah whom Zedekiah king of Judah had sent to Babylon to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon. The letter stated:

4 This is what the LORD of •Hosts, the God of Israel, says to all the exiles I deported from Jerusalem to Babylon:
5 "Build houses and live in them. Plant gardens and eat their produce.
6† Take wives and have sons and daughters. Take wives for your sons and give your daughters to men in marriage so that they may bear sons and daughters. Multiply there; do not decrease.
7 Seek the welfare of the city I have deported you to. Pray to the LORD on its behalf, for when it has prosperity, you will prosper."

8 For this is what the LORD of Hosts, the God of Israel, says: "Don't let your prophets who are among you and your diviners deceive you, and don't listen to the dreams you elicit from them,
9 for they are prophesying falsely to you in My name. I have not sent them." This is the LORD's declaration.

10† For this is what the LORD says: "When 70 years for Babylon are complete, I will attend to you and will confirm My promise concerning you to restore you to this place.
11 For I know the plans I have for you" — this is the LORD's declaration — "plans for your welfare, not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope.
12 You will call to Me and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you.
13 You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart.
14 I will be found by you" — this is the LORD's declaration — "and I will restore your fortunes [A] and gather you from all the nations and places where I banished you" — this is the LORD's declaration. "I will restore you to the place I deported you from."

[15] You have said, “The LORD has raised up prophets for us in
Babylon! ” [16] But this is what the LORD says concerning the king
sitting on David’s throne and concerning all the people living in
this city — that is, concerning your brothers who did not go with
you into exile. [17] This is what the LORD of Hosts says: “I am about
to send against them sword, famine, and plague and will make
them like rotten figs that are inedible because they are so bad. [18] I
will pursue them with sword, famine, and plague. I will make
them a horror to all the kingdoms of the earth — a curse and a
desolation, an object of scorn and a disgrace among all the nations
where I have banished them. [19] I will do this because they have
not listened to My words” — this is the LORD’s
declaration — “that I sent to them with My servants the prophets
time and time again. [B] And you too have not listened.” This is the
LORD’s declaration.

[20] Hear the word of the LORD, all you exiles I have sent from
Jerusalem to Babylon. [21] This is what the LORD of Hosts, the God
of Israel, says to Ahab son of Kolaiah and to Zedekiah son of
Maaseiah, the ones prophesying a lie to you in My name: “I am
about to hand them over to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and
he will kill them before your very eyes. [22] Based on what happens
to them, all the exiles of Judah who are in Babylon will create a
curse that says, ‘May the LORD make you like Zedekiah and
Ahab, whom the king of Babylon roasted in the fire! ’ [23] because
they have committed an outrage in Israel by committing adultery
with their neighbors’ wives and have spoken a lie in My name,
which I did not command them. I am He who knows, and I am a
witness.” This is the LORD’s declaration.

[24] To Shemaiah the Nehelamite you are to say, [25] “This is what the
LORD of Hosts, the God of Israel, says: You [C] in your own name
have sent out letters to all the people of Jerusalem, to the priest
Zephaniah son of Maaseiah, and to all the priests, saying: [26] ‘The
LORD has appointed you priest in place of Jehoiada the priest to be
the chief officer in the temple of the LORD, responsible for every

> madman who acts like a prophet. You must confine him in the
> stocks and an iron collar. [27] So now, why have you not rebuked
> Jeremiah of Anathoth who has been acting like a prophet among
> you? [28] For he has sent word to us in Babylon, claiming, "The
> exile will be long. Build houses and settle down. Plant gardens
> and eat their produce." ' "

[29] Zephaniah the priest read this letter in the hearing of Jeremiah the prophet.

A Message about Shemaiah

[30] Then the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah: [31] "Send a message to all
the exiles, saying: This is what the LORD says concerning Shemaiah the
Nehelamite. Because Shemaiah prophesied to you, though I did not send
him, and made you trust a lie, [32] this is what the LORD says: I am about to
punish Shemaiah the Nehelamite and his descendants. There will not be
even one of his descendants living among these people, nor will any ever
see the good that I will bring to My people" — this is the LORD's
declaration — "for he has preached rebellion against the LORD."

Restoration from Captivity

30 [†]This is the word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD. 2 This is what
the LORD, the God of Israel, says: “Write down on a scroll all the
words that I have spoken to you, 3 for the days are certainly
coming” — this is the LORD’s declaration — “when I will restore the
fortunes [A] of My people Israel and Judah” — the LORD’s declaration. “I
will restore them to the land I gave to their ancestors and they will possess
it.”

4 These are the words the LORD spoke to Israel and Judah. 5 Yes, this is
what the LORD says:

We have heard a cry of terror,
of dread — there is no peace.
6 Ask and see
whether a male can give birth.
Why then do I see every man
with his hands on his stomach like a woman in labor
and every face turned pale?
7 How awful that day will be!
There will be none like it!
It will be a time of trouble for Jacob,
but he will be delivered out of it.

8 “On that day” — this is the declaration of the LORD of •Hosts — “I will
break his yoke from your neck and tear off your chains so strangers will
never again enslave him. 9 They will serve the LORD their God and I will
raise up David their king for them.”

10 As for you, My servant Jacob,
do not be afraid —
and do not be dismayed, Israel, this is the LORD’s declaration —
for without fail I will save you from far away,
your descendants, from the land of their captivity!
Jacob will return and have calm and quiet
with no one to frighten him.
11 For I will be with you —

to save you! this is the LORD's declaration —
I will bring destruction on all the nations
where I have scattered you;
however, I will not bring destruction on you.
I will discipline you justly,
and I will by no means leave you unpunished.

Healing Zion's Wounds

12 For this is what the LORD says:

Your injury is incurable;
your wound most severe.
13 No one takes up the case for your sores.
There is no healing for you.
14 All your lovers have forgotten you;
they no longer look for you,
for I have struck you as an enemy would,
with the discipline of someone cruel,
because of your enormous •guilt
and your innumerable sins.
15 Why do you cry out about your injury?
Your pain has no cure!
I have done these things to you
because of your enormous guilt
and your innumerable sins.
16 Nevertheless, all who devoured you will be devoured,
and all your adversaries — all of them —
will go off into exile.
Those who plunder you will be plundered,
and all who raid you will be raided.
17 But I will bring you health
and will heal you of your wounds —
for they call you Outcast, this is the LORD's declaration —
•Zion whom no one cares about.

Restoration of the Land

[18] This is what the LORD says:

I will certainly restore the fortunes [B] of Jacob's tents
and show compassion on his dwellings.
Every city will be rebuilt on its mound;
every citadel will stand on its proper site.
[19] Thanksgiving will come out of them,
a sound of celebration.
I will multiply them, and they will not decrease;
I will honor them, and they will not be insignificant.
[20] His children will be as in past days;
his congregation will be established in My presence.
I will punish all his oppressors.
[21] Jacob's leader will be one of them;
his ruler will issue from him.
I will invite him to Me, and he will approach Me,
for who would otherwise risk his life to approach Me?
This is the LORD's declaration.
[22] You will be My people,
and I will be your God.

The Wrath of God

[23] Look, a storm from the LORD!
Wrath has gone out,
a churning storm.
It will whirl about the heads of the wicked.
[24] The LORD's burning anger will not turn back
until He has completely fulfilled the purposes of His heart.
In time to come you will understand it.

God's Relationship with His People

31 "At that time" — this is the LORD's declaration — "I will be the God of all the families of Israel, and they will be My people."

2 This is what the LORD says:

They found favor in the wilderness —
the people who survived the sword.
When Israel went to find rest,
3 the LORD appeared to him from far away.
I have loved you with an everlasting love;
therefore, I have continued to extend faithful love to you.
4† Again I will build you so that you will be rebuilt,
Virgin Israel.
You will take up your tambourines again
and go out in joyful dancing.
5 You will plant vineyards again
on the mountains of Samaria;
the planters will plant and will enjoy the fruit.
6 For there will be a day when watchmen will call out
in the hill country of Ephraim,
"Get up, let's go up to •Zion,
to •Yahweh our God! "

God's People Brought Home

7 For this is what the LORD says:

Sing with joy for Jacob;
shout for the chief of the nations!
Proclaim, praise, and say,
"LORD, save Your people,
the remnant of Israel! "
8 Watch! I am going to bring them from the northern land.
I will gather them from remote regions of the earth —
the blind and the lame will be with them,
along with those who are pregnant and those about to give birth.
They will return here as a great assembly!

9 They will come weeping,
but I will bring them back with consolation.
I will lead them to •wadis filled with water
by a smooth way where they will not stumble,
for I am Israel's Father,
and Ephraim is My firstborn.
10 Nations, hear the word of the LORD,
and tell it among the far off coastlands!
Say: The One who scattered Israel will gather him.
He will watch over him as a shepherd guards his flock,
11 for the LORD has ransomed Jacob
and redeemed him from the power of one stronger than he.
12 They will come and shout for joy on the heights of Zion;
they will be radiant with joy
because of the LORD's goodness,
because of the grain, the new wine, the fresh oil,
and because of the young of the flocks and herds.
Their life will be like an irrigated garden,
and they will no longer grow weak from hunger.
13 Then the young woman will rejoice with dancing,
while young and old men rejoice together.
I will turn their mourning into joy,
give them consolation,
and bring happiness out of grief.
14 I will refresh the priests with an abundance, [A]
and My people will be satisfied with My goodness.
This is the LORD's declaration.

Lament Turned to Joy

15† This is what the LORD says:

A voice was heard in Ramah,
a lament with bitter weeping —
Rachel weeping for her children,
refusing to be comforted for her children
because they are no more.

[16] This is what the LORD says:

Keep your voice from weeping
and your eyes from tears,
for the reward for your work will come —
this is the LORD's declaration —
and your children will return from the enemy's land.
[17] There is hope for your future —
this is the LORD's declaration —
and your children will return to their own territory.
[18] I have heard Ephraim moaning,
"You disciplined me, and I have been disciplined
like an untrained calf.
Restore me, and I will return,
for you, LORD, are my God.
[19] After I returned, I repented;
After I was instructed, I struck my thigh in grief.
I was ashamed and humiliated
because I bore the disgrace of my youth."
[20] Isn't Ephraim a precious son to Me,
a delightful child?
Whenever I speak against him,
I certainly still think about him.
Therefore, My inner being yearns for him;
I will truly have compassion on him.
This is the LORD's declaration.

Repentance and Restoration

[21] Set up road markers for yourself;
establish signposts!
Keep the highway in mind,
the way you have traveled.
Return, Virgin Israel!
Return to these cities of yours.
[22] How long will you turn here and there,
faithless daughter?

For the LORD creates something new in the land [B] —
a female [C] will shelter [D] a man.

[23] This is what the LORD of •Hosts, the God of Israel, says: “When I
restore their fortunes, [E] they will once again speak this word in the land of
Judah and in its cities, ‘May the LORD bless you, righteous settlement, holy
mountain.’ [24] Judah and all its cities will live in it together — also farmers
and those who move with the flocks — [25] for I satisfy the thirsty person
and feed all those who are weak.”

[26†] At this I awoke and looked around. My sleep had been most pleasant
to me.

[27] “The days are coming” — this is the LORD’s declaration — “when I
will sow the house of Israel and the house of Judah with the seed of man
and the seed of beast. [28] Just as I watched over them to uproot and to tear
them down, to demolish and to destroy, and to cause disaster, so will I be
attentive to build and to plant them,” says the LORD. [29†] “In those days, it
will never again be said:

The fathers have eaten sour grapes,
and the children’s teeth are set on edge.

[30] Rather, each will die for his own wrongdoing. Anyone who eats sour
grapes — his own teeth will be set on edge.

The New Covenant

[31] “Look, the days are coming” — this is the LORD’s
declaration — “when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel
and with the house of Judah. [32†] This one will not be like the covenant I
made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out
of the land of Egypt — a covenant they broke even though I had married
them” — the LORD’s declaration. [33] “Instead, this is the covenant I will
make with the house of Israel after those days” — the LORD’s declaration. “I
will put My teaching within them and write it on their hearts. I will be their

God, and they will be My people. [34†] No longer will one teach his neighbor
or his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they will all know Me, from
the least to the greatest of them” — this is the LORD’s declaration. “For I
will forgive their wrongdoing and never again remember their sin.”

35 This is what the LORD says:

The One who gives the sun for light by day,
the fixed order of moon and stars for light by night,
who stirs up the sea and makes its waves roar —
Yahweh of Hosts is His name:
36 If this fixed order departs from My presence —
then also Israel’s descendants will cease this is the LORD’s declaration —
to be a nation before Me forever.

37 This is what the LORD says:

If the heavens above can be measured
and the foundations of the earth below explored,
I will reject all of Israel’s descendants
because of all they have done —
this is the LORD’s declaration.

38 “Look, the days are coming” — the
LORD’s declaration — “when the city from the Tower of Hananel to the
Corner Gate will be rebuilt for the LORD. 39 A measuring line will once
again stretch out straight to the hill of Gareb and then turn toward Goah.
40 The whole valley — the corpses, the ashes, and all the fields as far as the
Kidron Valley to the corner of the Horse Gate to the east — will be holy to
the LORD. It will never be uprooted or demolished again.”

Jeremiah's Land Purchase

32 This is the word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD in the tenth year
of Zedekiah king of Judah, which was the eighteenth year of
Nebuchadnezzar. 2 At that time, the army of the king of Babylon was
besieging Jerusalem, and Jeremiah the prophet was imprisoned in the
guard's courtyard in the palace of the king of Judah. 3 Zedekiah king of
Judah had imprisoned him, saying: "Why are you prophesying, 'This is
what the LORD says: Look, I am about to hand this city over to Babylon's
king, and he will capture it. 4 Zedekiah king of Judah will not escape from
the Chaldeans; indeed, he will certainly be handed over to Babylon's king.
They will speak face to face [A] and meet eye to eye. 5 He will take Zedekiah
to Babylon where he will stay until I attend to him' — this is the LORD's
declaration. 'You will fight the Chaldeans, but you will not succeed'? "

6 Jeremiah replied, "The word of the LORD came to me: 7[†] Watch!
Hanamel, the son of your uncle Shallum, is coming to you to say, 'Buy my
field in Anathoth for yourself, for you own the right of redemption to buy
it.'

8 "Then my cousin Hanamel came to the guard's courtyard as the LORD
had said and urged me, 'Please buy my field in Anathoth in the land of
Benjamin, for you own the right of inheritance and redemption. Buy it for
yourself.' Then I knew that this was the word of the LORD. 9 So I bought the
field in Anathoth from my cousin Hanamel, and I weighed out to him the
money — 17 •shekels of silver. 10 I recorded it on a scroll, sealed it, called
in witnesses, and weighed out the silver in the scales. 11 I took the purchase
agreement — the sealed copy with its terms and conditions and the open
copy — 12 and gave the purchase agreement to Baruch son of Neriah, son
of Mahseiah. I did this in the sight of my cousin Hanamel, the witnesses
who were signing the purchase agreement, and all the Judeans sitting in the
guard's courtyard.

13 "I instructed Baruch in their sight, 14 'This is what the LORD of •Hosts,
the God of Israel, says: Take these scrolls — this purchase agreement with
the sealed copy and this open copy — and put them in an earthen storage jar
so they will last a long time. 15 For this is what the LORD of Hosts, the God

of Israel, says: Houses, fields, and vineyards will again be bought in this land.'

[16] "After I had given the purchase agreement to Baruch, son of Neriah, I
prayed to the LORD: [17] Oh, Lord GOD! You Yourself made the heavens and
earth by Your great power and with Your outstretched arm. Nothing is too
difficult for You! [18] You show faithful love to thousands but lay the fathers'
sins on their sons' laps after them, great and mighty God whose name is
•Yahweh of Hosts, [19] the One great in counsel and mighty in deed, whose
eyes are on all the ways of the sons of men in order to give to each person
according to his ways and the result of his deeds. [20] You performed signs
and wonders in the land of Egypt and do so to this very day both in Israel
and among mankind. You made a name for Yourself, as is the case today.
[21] You brought Your people Israel out of Egypt with signs and wonders,
with a strong hand and an outstretched arm, and with great terror. [22] You
gave them this land You swore to give to their ancestors, a land flowing
with milk and honey. [23] They entered and possessed it, but they did not
obey Your voice or live according to Your instructions. They failed to
perform all You commanded them to do, and so You have brought all this
disaster on them. [24] Look! Siege ramps have come against the city to
capture it, and the city, as a result of the sword, famine, and plague, has
been handed over to the Chaldeans who are fighting against it. What You
have spoken has happened. Look, You can see it! [25] Yet You, Lord GOD,
have said to me: Buy the field with silver and call in witnesses — even
though the city has been handed over to the Chaldeans! "

[26] Then the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah: [27] "Look, I am Yahweh,
the God of all flesh. Is anything too difficult for Me? [28] Therefore, this is
what the LORD says: I am about to hand this city over to the Chaldeans, to
Babylon's king Nebuchadnezzar, and he will capture it. [29] The Chaldeans
who are going to fight against this city will come, set this city on fire, and
burn it along with the houses where incense has been burned to •Baal on
their rooftops and where •drink offerings have been poured out to other
gods to provoke Me to anger. [30] From their youth, the Israelites and
Judeans have done nothing but what is evil in My sight! They have done

nothing but provoke Me to anger by the work of their hands" — this is the
LORD's declaration — [31] "for this city has caused My wrath and fury from
the day it was built until now. I will therefore remove it from My presence,
[32] because of all the evil the Israelites and Judeans have done to provoke
Me to anger — they, their kings, their officials, their priests, and their
prophets, the men of Judah, and the residents of Jerusalem. [33] They have
turned their backs to Me and not their faces. Though I taught them time and
time again, [B], they do not listen and receive discipline. [34] They have placed
their detestable things in the house that is called by My name and have
defiled it. [35†] They have built the •high places of Baal in the Valley of
Hinnom to make their sons and daughters pass through the fire to
•Molech — something I had not commanded them. I had never entertained
the thought [C] that they do this detestable act causing Judah to sin!

[36] "Now therefore, this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says to this
city about which you said, 'It has been handed over to Babylon's king
through sword, famine, and plague': [37] I am about to gather them from all
the lands where I have banished them in My anger, rage and great wrath,
and I will return them to this place and make them live in safety. [38] They
will be My people, and I will be their God. [39] I will give them one heart
and one way so that for their good and for the good of their descendants
after them, they will •fear Me always.

[40] "I will make an everlasting covenant with them: I will never turn
away from doing good to them, and I will put fear of Me in their hearts so
they will never again turn away from Me. [41] I will take delight in them to
do what is good for them, and with all My heart and mind I will faithfully
plant them in this land.

[42] "For this is what the LORD says: Just as I have brought all this great
disaster on these people, so am I about to bring on them all the good I am
promising them. [43] Fields will be bought in this land about which you are
saying, 'It's a desolation without man or beast; it has been handed over to
the Chaldeans! ' [44] Fields will be purchased with silver, the transaction
written on a scroll and sealed, and witnesses will be called on in the land of

Benjamin, in the areas surrounding Jerusalem, and in Judah's cities — the cities of the hill country, the cities of the Judean foothills, and the cities of the •Negev — because I will restore their fortunes." [D]

This is the LORD's declaration.

Israel's Restoration

33 While he was still confined in the guard’s courtyard, the word of the
LORD came to Jeremiah a second time: [2] “The LORD who made the
earth, the LORD who forms it to establish it, •Yahweh is His name, says
this: [3] Call to Me and I will answer you and tell you great and
incomprehensible things you do not know. [4] For this is what the LORD, the
God of Israel, says concerning the houses of this city and the palaces of
Judah’s kings, the ones torn down for defense against the siege ramps and
the sword: [5] The people coming to fight the Chaldeans will fill the houses
with the corpses of their own men that I strike down in My wrath and rage.
I have hidden My face from this city because of all their evil. [6] Yet I will
certainly bring health and healing to it and will indeed heal them. I will let
them experience the abundance [A] of peace and truth. [7] I will restore the
fortunes [B] of Judah and of Israel and will rebuild them as in former times.
[8] I will purify them from all the wrongs they have committed against Me,
and I will forgive all the wrongs they have committed against Me, rebelling
against Me. [9] This city will bear on My behalf a name of joy, praise, and
glory before all the nations of the earth, who will hear of all the good I will
do for them. They will tremble with awe because of all the good and all the
peace I will bring about for them.

[10] “This is what the LORD says: In this place, which you say is a ruin,
without man or beast — that is, in Judah’s cities and Jerusalem’s streets that
are a desolation without man, without inhabitant, and without beast — there
will be heard again [11] a sound of joy and gladness, the voice of the groom
and the bride, and the voice of those saying,

Praise the LORD of •Hosts,
for the LORD is good;
His faithful love endures forever

as they bring thank offerings to the temple of the LORD. For I will restore
the fortunes [C] of the land as in former times, says the LORD.

[12] “This is what the LORD of Hosts says: In this desolate place — without
man or beast — and in all its cities there will once more be a grazing land

where shepherds may rest flocks. 13 The flocks will again pass under the
hands of the one who counts them in the cities of the hill country, the cities
of the Judean foothills, the cities of the •Negev, the land of Benjamin — the
cities surrounding Jerusalem and Judah's cities, says the Lord.

God's Covenant with David

14 "Look, the days are coming" —
this is the Lord's declaration —
"when I will fulfill the good promises
that I have spoken
concerning the house of Israel
and the house of Judah.
15 In those days and at that time
I will cause a Righteous Branch
to sprout up for David,
and He will administer justice
and righteousness in the land.
16† In those days Judah will be saved,
and Jerusalem will dwell securely,
and this is what she will be named:
Yahweh Our Righteousness.

17 For this is what the Lord says: David will never fail to have a man
sitting on the throne of the house of Israel. 18 The Levitical priests will
never fail to have a man always before Me to offer •burnt offerings, to burn
•grain offerings, and to make sacrifices."

19 The word of the Lord came to Jeremiah: 20 "This is what the Lord
says: If you can break My covenant with the day and My covenant with the
night so that day and night cease to come at their regular time, 21 then also
My covenant with My servant David may be broken so that he will not
have a son reigning on his throne, and the Levitical priests will not be My
ministers. 22 The hosts of heaven cannot be counted; the sand of the sea
cannot be measured. So, too, I will make the descendants of My servant
David and the Levites who minister to Me innumerable."

[23] The word of the LORD came to Jeremiah: [24] "Have you not noticed
what these people have said? They say, 'The LORD has rejected the two
families He had chosen.' My people are treated with contempt and no
longer regarded as a nation among them. [25] This is what the LORD says: If I
do not keep My covenant with the day and with the night and fail to
establish the fixed order of heaven and earth, [26] then I might also reject the
•seed of Jacob and of My servant David — not taking from his descendants
rulers over the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Instead, I will
restore their fortunes [D] and have compassion on them."

Jeremiah's Word to King Zedekiah

34 This is the word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD when
Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, all his army, all the earthly
kingdoms under his control, and all other nations were fighting against
Jerusalem and all its surrounding cities: 2 "This is what the LORD, the God
of Israel, says: Go, speak to Zedekiah, king of Judah, and tell him: This is
what the LORD says: I am about to hand this city over to the king of
Babylon, and he will burn it down. 3 As for you, you will not escape from
his hand but are certain to be captured and handed over to him. You will
meet the king of Babylon eye to eye and speak face to face; [A] you will go
to Babylon.

4† "Yet hear the LORD's word, Zedekiah, king of Judah. This is what the
LORD says concerning you: You will not die by the sword; 5 you will die
peacefully. There will be a burning ceremony for you just like the burning
ceremonies for your fathers, the former kings who preceded you. 'Our king
is dead! ' [B] will be the lament for you, for I have spoken this word." This is
the LORD's declaration.

6 So Jeremiah the prophet related all these words to Zedekiah king of
Judah in Jerusalem 7 while the king of Babylon's army was attacking
Jerusalem and all of Judah's remaining cities — against Lachish and
Azekah, for they were the only ones left of Judah's fortified cities.

The People and Their Slaves

8 This is the word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD after King
Zedekiah made a covenant with all the people who were in Jerusalem to
proclaim freedom to them, 9 so each man would free his male and female
Hebrew slaves and no one would enslave his Judean brother. 10 All the
officials and people who entered into covenant to free their male and female
slaves — in order not to enslave them any longer — obeyed and freed them.
11 Afterward, however, they changed their minds and took back their male
and female slaves they had freed and forced them to become slaves again.

12 Then the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah from the LORD: 13 "This
is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: I made a covenant with your

ancestors when I brought them out of the land of Egypt, out of the place of
slavery, saying: [14] At the end of seven years, each of you must free his
Hebrew brother who sold himself [C] to you. He may serve you six years, but
then you must send him out free from you. But your ancestors did not obey
Me or pay any attention. [15] Today you repented and did what pleased Me,
each of you proclaiming freedom for his neighbor. You made a covenant
before Me at the temple called by My name. [16] But you have changed your
minds and profaned My name. Each has taken back his male and female
slaves who had been freed to go wherever they wanted, and you have again
subjugated them to be your slaves.

[17] "Therefore, this is what the LORD says: You have not obeyed Me by
proclaiming freedom, each man for his brother and for his neighbor. I
hereby proclaim freedom for you" — this is the LORD's declaration — "to
the sword, to plague, and to famine! I will make you a horror to all the
earth's kingdoms. [18] As for those who disobeyed My covenant, not keeping
the terms of the covenant they made before Me, I will treat them like the
calf they cut in two in order to pass between its pieces. [19] The officials of
Judah and Jerusalem, the court officials, the priests, and all the people of the
land who passed between the pieces of the calf [20] will be handed over to
their enemies, to those who want to take their life. Their corpses will
become food for the birds of the sky and for the wild animals of the land.
[21] I will hand Zedekiah king of Judah and his officials over to their enemies,
to those who want to take their lives, to the king of Babylon's army that is
withdrawing. [22] I am about to give the command" — this is the LORD's
declaration — "and I will bring them back to this city. They will fight
against it, capture it, and burn it down. I will make Judah's cities a
desolation, without inhabitant."

The Rechabites' Example

35 This is the word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD in the days of
Jehoiakim son of Josiah, king of Judah: 2† “Go to the house of the
Rechabites, speak to them, and bring them to one of the chambers of the
temple of the LORD to offer them a drink of wine.”

3 So I took Jaazaniah son of Jeremiah, son of Habazziniah, and his
brothers and all his sons — the entire house of the Rechabites — 4 and I
brought them into the temple of the LORD to a chamber occupied by the sons
of Hanan son of Igdaliah, a man of God, who had a chamber near the
officials’ chamber, which was above the chamber of Maaseiah son of
Shallum the doorkeeper. 5 I set jars filled with wine and some cups before
the sons of the house of the Rechabites and said to them, “Drink wine! ”

6 But they replied, “We do not drink wine, for Jonadab, son of our
ancestor Rechab, commanded: ‘You and your sons must never drink wine.
7 You must not build a house or sow seed or plant a vineyard. Those things
are not for you. Rather, you must live in tents your whole life, so you may
live a long time on the soil where you stay as a temporary resident.’ 8 We
have obeyed the voice of Jonadab, son of our ancestor Rechab, in all he
commanded us. So we haven’t drunk wine our whole life — we, our wives,
our sons, and our daughters. 9 We also have not built houses to live in and
do not have vineyard, field, or seed. 10 But we have lived in tents and have
obeyed and done as our ancestor Jonadab commanded us. 11 However,
when Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon marched into the land, we said:
Come, let’s go into Jerusalem to get away from the Chaldean and Aramean
armies. So we have been living in Jerusalem.”

12 Then the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah: 13 “This is what the
LORD of •Hosts, the God of Israel, says: Go, say to the men of Judah and the
residents of Jerusalem: Will you not accept discipline by listening to My
words? ” — this is the LORD’s declaration. 14 “The words of Jonadab, son of
Rechab, have been carried out. He commanded his sons not to drink wine,
and they have not drunk to this very day because they have obeyed their
ancestor’s command. But I have spoken to you time and time again, [A], and
you have not obeyed Me! 15 Time and time again [B] I have sent you all My

servants the prophets, proclaiming: Turn, each one from his evil way of
life, and correct your actions. Stop following other gods to serve them.
Live in the land that I gave you and your ancestors. But you would not pay
attention or obey Me. [16] Yes, the sons of Jonadab son of Rechab carried out
their ancestor's command he gave them, but these people have not obeyed
Me. [17] Therefore, this is what the LORD, the God of Hosts, the God of Israel,
says: I will certainly bring to Judah and to all the residents of Jerusalem all
the disaster I have pronounced against them because I have spoken to them,
but they have not obeyed, and I have called to them, but they would not
answer."

[18] Jeremiah said to the house of the Rechabites: "This is what the LORD of
Hosts, the God of Israel, says: 'Because you have obeyed the command of
your ancestor Jonadab and have kept all his commands and have done all
that he commanded you, [19] this is what the LORD of Hosts, the God of
Israel, says: Jonadab son of Rechab will never fail to have a man to always
stand before Me.' "

Jeremiah Dictates a Scroll

36 In the fourth year of Jehoiakim son of Josiah, king of Judah, this
word came to Jeremiah from the LORD: [2†] “Take a scroll, and write on
it all the words I have spoken to you concerning Israel, Judah, and all the
nations from the time I first spoke to you during Josiah’s reign until today.
[3] Perhaps when the house of Judah hears about all the disaster I am
planning to bring on them, each one of them will turn from his evil way.
Then I will forgive their wrongdoing and their sin.”

[4] So Jeremiah summoned Baruch son of Neriah. At Jeremiah’s
dictation, [A] Baruch wrote on a scroll all the words the LORD had spoken to
Jeremiah. [5] Then Jeremiah commanded Baruch, “I am restricted; I cannot
enter the temple of the LORD, [6] so you must go and read from the
scroll — which you wrote at my dictation [B] — the words of the LORD in the
hearing of the people at the temple of the LORD on a day of fasting. You
must also read them in the hearing of all the Judeans who are coming from
their cities. [7] Perhaps their petition will come before the LORD, and each
one will turn from his evil way, for the anger and fury that the LORD has
pronounced against this people are great.” [8] So Baruch son of Neriah did
everything Jeremiah the prophet had commanded him. At the LORD’s temple
he read the LORD’s words from the scroll.

Baruch Reads the Scroll

[9] In the fifth year of Jehoiakim son of Josiah, king of Judah, in the ninth
month, all the people of Jerusalem and all those coming in from Judah’s
cities into Jerusalem proclaimed a fast before the LORD. [10] Then at the
LORD’s temple, in the chamber of Gemariah son of Shaphan the scribe, in
the upper courtyard at the opening of the New Gate of the LORD’s temple,
in the hearing of all the people, Baruch read Jeremiah’s words from the
scroll.

[11] When Micaiah son of Gemariah, son of Shaphan, heard all the words
of the LORD from the scroll, [12†] he went down to the scribe’s chamber in the
king’s palace. All the officials were sitting there — Elishama the scribe,
Delaiah son of Shemaiah, Elnathan son of Achbor, Gemariah son of

Shaphan, Zedekiah son of Hananiah, and all the other officials. 13 Micaiah
reported to them all the words he had heard when Baruch read from the
scroll in the hearing of the people. 14 Then all the officials sent word to
Baruch through Jehudi son of Nethaniah, son of Shelemiah, son of Cushi,
saying, “Bring the scroll that you read in the hearing of the people, and
come.” So Baruch son of Neriah took the scroll and went to them. 15 They
said to him, “Sit down and read it in our hearing.” So Baruch read it in their
hearing.

16 When they had heard all the words, they turned to each other in fear
and said to Baruch, “We must surely tell the king all these things.” 17 Then
they asked Baruch, “Tell us — how did you write all these words? At his
dictation? ” [C]

18 Baruch said to them, “At his dictation. [D] He recited all these words to
me while I was writing on the scroll in ink.”

Jehoiakim Burns the Scroll

19 The officials said to Baruch, “You and Jeremiah must hide yourselves
and tell no one where you are.” 20 Then they came to the king at the
courtyard, having deposited the scroll in the chamber of Elishama the
scribe, and reported everything in the hearing of the king. 21 The king sent
Jehudi to get the scroll, and he took it from the chamber of Elishama the
scribe. Jehudi then read it in the hearing of the king and all the officials who
were standing by the king. 22 Since it was the ninth month, the king was
sitting in his winter quarters with a fire burning in front of him. 23 As soon
as Jehudi would read three or four columns, Jehoiakim would cut the
scroll [E] with a scribe’s knife and throw the columns into the blazing fire
until the entire scroll was consumed by the fire in the brazier. 24 As they
heard all these words, the king and all of his servants did not become
terrified or tear their garments. 25 Even though Elnathan, Delaiah, and
Gemariah had urged the king not to burn the scroll, he would not listen to
them. 26[†] Then the king commanded Jerahmeel the king’s son, Seraiah son

of Azriel, and Shelemiah son of Abdeel to seize Baruch the scribe and
Jeremiah the prophet, but the LORD had hidden them.

Jeremiah Dictates Another Scroll

27 After the king had burned the scroll with the words Baruch had written
at Jeremiah’s dictation, [F] the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah: 28 “Take
another scroll, and once again write on it the very words that were on the
original scroll that Jehoiakim king of Judah burned. 29 You are to proclaim
concerning Jehoiakim king of Judah: This is what the LORD says: You have
burned the scroll, saying, ‘Why have you written on it: The king of
Babylon will certainly come and destroy this land and cause it to be without
man or beast?’ 30[†] Therefore, this is what the LORD says concerning
Jehoiakim king of Judah: He will have no one to sit on David’s throne, and
his corpse will be thrown out to be exposed to the heat of day and the frost
of night. 31[†] I will punish him, his descendants, and his officers for their
wrongdoing. I will bring on them, on the residents of Jerusalem, and on the
men of Judah all the disaster, which I warned them about but they did not
listen.”

32 Then Jeremiah took another scroll and gave it to Baruch son of Neriah,
the scribe, and he wrote on it at Jeremiah’s dictation [G] all the words of the
scroll that Jehoiakim, Judah’s king, had burned in the fire. And many other
words like them were added.

Jerusalem's Last Days

37 Zedekiah son of Josiah reigned as king in the land of Judah in place
of Jehoiachin son of Jehoiakim, for Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon
made him king. 2 He and his officers and the people of the land did not
obey the words of the LORD that He spoke through Jeremiah the prophet.

3 Nevertheless, King Zedekiah sent Jehucal son of Shelemiah and
Zephaniah son of Maaseiah, the priest, to Jeremiah the prophet, requesting,
"Please pray to the LORD our God for us! " 4 Jeremiah was going about his
daily tasks [A] among the people, for they had not yet put him into the
prison. 5 Pharaoh's army had left Egypt, and when the Chaldeans, who
were besieging Jerusalem, heard the report, they withdrew from Jerusalem.

6 The word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet: 7 "This is what the
LORD, the God of Israel, says: This is what you will say to Judah's king,
who is sending you to inquire of Me: Watch: Pharaoh's army, which has
come out to help you, is going to return to its own land of Egypt. 8 The
Chaldeans will then return and fight against this city. They will capture it
and burn it down. 9 This is what the LORD says: Don't deceive yourselves
by saying, 'The Chaldeans will leave us for good,' for they will not leave.
10 Indeed, if you were to strike down the entire Chaldean army that is
fighting with you, and there remained among them only the badly
wounded [B] men, each in his tent, they would get up and burn this city
down."

Jeremiah's Imprisonment

11 When the Chaldean army withdrew from Jerusalem because of
Pharaoh's army, 12 Jeremiah started to leave Jerusalem to go to the land of
Benjamin to claim his portion there among the people. 13 But when he was
at the Benjamin Gate, an officer of the guard was there, whose name was
Irijah son of Shelemiah, son of Hananiah, and he apprehended Jeremiah the
prophet, saying, "You are deserting to the Chaldeans."

14 "That's a lie," Jeremiah replied. "I am not deserting to the
Chaldeans! " Irijah would not listen to him but apprehended Jeremiah and

took him to the officials. [15] The officials were angry at Jeremiah and beat
him and placed him in jail in the house of Jonathan the scribe, for it had
been made into a prison. [16] So Jeremiah went into a cell in the dungeon and
stayed there many days.

Jeremiah Summoned by Zedekiah

[17] King Zedekiah later sent for him and received him, and in his house
privately asked him, “Is there a word from the LORD? ”

“There is,” Jeremiah responded, and he continued, “You will be handed
over to the king of Babylon.” [18] Then Jeremiah said to King Zedekiah,
“How have I sinned against you or your servants or these people that you
have put me in prison? [19] Where are your prophets who prophesied to you,
claiming, ‘The king of Babylon will not come against you and this land’?
[20] So now please listen, my lord the king. May my petition come before
you. Don’t send me back to the house of Jonathan the scribe, or I will die
there.”

[21] So King Zedekiah gave orders, and Jeremiah was placed in the guard’s
courtyard. He was given a loaf of bread each day from the baker’s street
until all the bread was gone from the city. So Jeremiah remained in the
guard’s courtyard.

Jeremiah Thrown into a Cistern

38 Now Shephatiah son of Mattan, Gedaliah son of Pashhur, Jucal son
of Shelemiah, and Pashhur son of Malchijah heard the words
Jeremiah was speaking to all the people: 2 "This is what the LORD says:
'Whoever stays in this city will die by the sword, famine, and plague, but
whoever surrenders to the Chaldeans will live. He will keep his life like the
spoils of war and will live.' 3 This is what the LORD says: 'This city will
most certainly be handed over to the king of Babylon's army, and he will
capture it.' "

4 The officials then said to the king, "This man ought to die, because he is
weakening the morale of the warriors who remain in this city and of all the
people by speaking to them in this way. This man is not seeking the well-
being of this people, but disaster."

5 King Zedekiah said, "Here he is; he's in your hands since the king can't
do anything against you." 6 So they took Jeremiah and dropped him into the
cistern of Malchiah the king's son, which was in the guard's courtyard,
lowering Jeremiah with ropes. There was no water in the cistern, only mud,
and Jeremiah sank in the mud.

7 But Ebed-melech, a •Cushite court official employed in the king's
palace, heard Jeremiah had been put into the cistern. While the king was
sitting at the Benjamin Gate, 8 Ebed-melech went from the king's palace
and spoke to the king: 9 "My lord the king, these men have been evil in all
they have done to Jeremiah the prophet. They have dropped him into the
cistern where he will die from hunger, because there is no more bread in the
city."

10 So the king commanded Ebed-melech, the Cushite, "Take from here 30
men under your authority and pull Jeremiah the prophet up from the cistern
before he dies."

11 So Ebed-melech took the men under his authority and went to the
king's palace to a place below the storehouse. [A] From there he took old rags
and worn-out clothes and lowered them by ropes to Jeremiah in the cistern.
12 Ebed-melech the Cushite cried out to Jeremiah, "Place these old rags and

clothes between your armpits and the ropes." Jeremiah did so, [13] and they
pulled him up with the ropes and lifted him out of the cistern, but he
continued to stay in the guard's courtyard.

Zedekiah's Final Meeting with Jeremiah

[14] King Zedekiah sent for Jeremiah the prophet and received him at the third entrance of the LORD's temple. The king said to Jeremiah, "I am going to ask you something; don't hide anything from me."

[15] Jeremiah replied to Zedekiah, "If I tell you, you will kill me, won't you? Besides, if I give you advice, you won't listen to me anyway."

[16] King Zedekiah swore to Jeremiah in private, "As the LORD lives, who has given us this life, I will not kill you or hand you over to these men who want to take your life."

[17] Jeremiah therefore said to Zedekiah, "This is what the LORD, the God
of •Hosts, the God of Israel, says: 'If indeed you surrender to the officials of
the king of Babylon, then you will live, this city will not be burned down,
and you and your household will survive. [18] But if you do not surrender to
the officials of the king of Babylon, then this city will be handed over to the
Chaldeans. They will burn it down, and you yourself will not escape from
them.' "

[19] But King Zedekiah said to Jeremiah, "I am worried about the Judeans who have deserted to the Chaldeans. They may hand me over to the Judeans to abuse me."

[20] "They will not hand you over," Jeremiah replied. "Obey the voice of
the LORD in what I am telling you, so it may go well for you and you can
live. [21] But if you refuse to surrender, this is the verdict [B] that the LORD has
shown me: [22] 'All the women [C] who remain in the palace of Judah's king
will be brought out to the officials of the king of Babylon and will say:

Your trusted friends [D] misled [E] you

and overcame you.
Your feet sank into the mire,
and they deserted you.

23 All your wives and sons will be brought out to the Chaldeans. You yourself will not escape from them, for you will be seized by the king of Babylon and this city will burn down.' "

24 Then Zedekiah warned Jeremiah, "Don't let anyone know about these
things or you will die. 25 If the officials hear that I have spoken with you and come and demand of you, 'Tell us what you said to the king; don't hide anything from us and we won't kill you. Also, what did the king say to
you? ' 26 then you will tell them, 'I was bringing before the king my petition that he not return me to the house of Jonathan to die there.' "
27† When all the officials came to Jeremiah and questioned him, he reported the exact words to them the king had commanded, and they quit speaking
with him because nothing had been heard. 28 Jeremiah remained in the guard's courtyard until the day Jerusalem was captured, and he was there when it happened. F

The Fall of Jerusalem to Babylon

39 In the ninth year of Zedekiah king of Judah, in the tenth month, King
Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon advanced against Jerusalem with his
entire army and laid siege to it. [2†] In the fourth month of Zedekiah's
eleventh year, on the ninth day of the month, the city was broken into. [3] All
the officials of the king of Babylon entered and sat at the Middle Gate:
Nergal-sharezer, Samgar, Nebusarsechim the Rab-saris, Nergal-sharezer
the Rab-mag, and all the rest of the officials of Babylon's king.

[4] When he saw them, Zedekiah king of Judah and all the soldiers fled.
They left the city at night by way of the king's garden through the gate
between the two walls. They left along the route to the •Arabah.
[5] However, the Chaldean army pursued them and overtook Zedekiah in the
plains [A] of Jericho, arrested him, and brought him to Nebuchadnezzar,
Babylon's king, at Riblah in the land of Hamath. The king passed sentence
on him there.

[6] At Riblah the king of Babylon slaughtered Zedekiah's sons before his
eyes, and he also slaughtered all Judah's nobles. [7] Then he blinded
Zedekiah and put him in bronze chains to take him to Babylon. [8] The
Chaldeans next burned down the king's palace and the people's houses and
tore down the walls of Jerusalem. [9] Nebuzaradan, the commander of the
guards, deported the rest of the people to Babylon — those who had
remained in the city and those deserters who had defected to him along with
the rest of the people who had remained. [10] However, Nebuzaradan, the
commander of the guards, left in the land of Judah some of the poor people
who owned nothing, and he gave them vineyards and fields at that time.

Jeremiah Freed by Nebuchadnezzar

[11] Speaking through Nebuzaradan, captain of the guard, King
Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon gave orders concerning Jeremiah, saying:
[12] "Take him, look after him, and don't let any harm come to him; do for
him whatever he says." [13] Nebuzaradan, captain of the guard, Nebushazban
the Rab-saris, Nergal-sharezer the Rab-mag, and all the captains of the king
of Babylon [14] had Jeremiah brought from the guard's courtyard and turned

him over to Gedaliah son of Ahikam, son of Shaphan, to take him home. So he settled among his own people.

15† Now the word of the LORD had come to Jeremiah when he was
confined in the guard's courtyard: 16† "Go tell Ebed-melech the •Cushite:
This is what the LORD of •Hosts, the God of Israel, says: I am about to fulfill My words for harm and not for good against this city. They will take place
before your eyes on that day. 17 But I will rescue you on that day" — this is the LORD's declaration — "and you will not be handed over to the men you
fear. 18 Indeed, I will certainly deliver you so that you do not fall by the sword. Because you have trusted in Me, you will keep your life like the spoils of war." This is the LORD's declaration.

Jeremiah Stays in Judah

40 [†]This is the word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD after
Nebuzaradan, captain of the guard, released him at Ramah. When he
found him, he was bound in chains with all the exiles of Jerusalem and
Judah who were being exiled to Babylon. 2 [†] The captain of the guard took
Jeremiah and said to him, “The LORD your God decreed this disaster on this
place, 3 and the LORD has fulfilled it. He has done just what He decreed.
Because you people have sinned against the LORD and have not obeyed
Him, this thing has happened. 4 Now pay attention: Today I am setting you
free from the chains that were on your hands. If it pleases you to come with
me to Babylon, come, and I will take care of you. But if it seems wrong to
you to come with me to Babylon, go no farther. [A] Look — the whole land is
in front of you. Wherever it seems good and right for you to go, go there.”
5 When Jeremiah had not yet turned to go, Nebuzaradan said to him:
“Return to Gedaliah son of Ahikam, son of Shaphan, whom the king of
Babylon has appointed over the cities of Judah, and stay with him among
the people or go wherever you want to go.” So the captain of the guard gave
him a ration and a gift and released him. 6 Jeremiah therefore went to
Gedaliah son of Ahikam at Mizpah, and he stayed with him among the
people who remained in the land.

Gedaliah Advises Peace

7 When all the commanders of the armies in the field — they and their
men — heard that the king of Babylon had appointed Gedaliah son of
Ahikam over the land and that he had put him in charge of the men, women,
and children from the poorest of the land who had not been deported to
Babylon, 8 they came to Gedaliah at Mizpah. The commanders included
Ishmael son of Nethaniah, Johanan and Jonathan the sons of Kareah,
Seraiah son of Tanhumeth, the sons of Ephai the Netophathite, and Jezaniah
son of the Maacathite — they and their men.

9 Gedaliah son of Ahikam, son of Shaphan, swore an oath to them and
their men, assuring them, “Don’t be afraid to serve the Chaldeans. Live in
the land and serve the king of Babylon, and it will go well for you. 10 As
for me, I am going to live in Mizpah to represent [B] you before the

Chaldeans who come to us. As for you, gather wine, summer fruit, and oil,
place them in your storage jars, and live in the cities you have captured."

[11] When all the Judeans in Moab and among the Ammonites and in
Edom and in all the other lands also heard that the king of Babylon had left
a remnant in Judah and had appointed Gedaliah son of Ahikam, son of
Shaphan, over them, [12] they all returned from all the places where they had
been banished and came to the land of Judah, to Gedaliah at Mizpah, and
harvested a great amount of wine and summer fruit.

[13] Meanwhile, Johanan son of Kareah and all the commanders of the
armies in the field came to Gedaliah at Mizpah [14] and warned him, "Don't
you realize that Baalis, king of the Ammonites, has sent Ishmael son of
Nethaniah to kill you? " But Gedaliah son of Ahikam would not believe
them. [15] Then Johanan son of Kareah suggested to Gedaliah in private at
Mizpah, "Let me go kill Ishmael son of Nethaniah. No one will know it.
Why should he kill you and scatter all of Judah that has gathered to you so
that the remnant of Judah would perish? "

[16] But Gedaliah son of Ahikam responded to Johanan son of Kareah,
"Don't do that! What you're saying about Ishmael is a lie."

Gedaliah Assassinated by Ishmael

41 In the seventh month, Ishmael son of Nethaniah, son of Elishama, of the royal family and one of the king's chief officers, came with 10 men to Gedaliah son of Ahikam at Mizpah. They ate a meal together there
in Mizpah, [2] but then Ishmael son of Nethaniah and the 10 men who were with him got up and struck down Gedaliah son of Ahikam, son of Shaphan, with the sword; he killed the one the king of Babylon had appointed in the
land. [3] Ishmael also struck down all the Judeans who were with Gedaliah at Mizpah, as well as the Chaldean soldiers who were there.

[4] On the second day after he had killed Gedaliah, when no one knew yet,
[5]† 80 men came from Shechem, Shiloh, and Samaria who had shaved their beards, torn their garments, and gashed themselves, and who were carrying
•grain and incense offerings to bring to the temple of the LORD. [6] Ishmael son of Nethaniah came out of Mizpah to meet them, weeping as he came. When he encountered them, he said: "Come to Gedaliah son of Ahikam! "
[7] But when they came into the city, Ishmael son of Nethaniah and the men with him slaughtered them and threw them into a cistern.

[8] However, there were 10 men among them who said to Ishmael, "Don't kill us, for we have hidden treasure in the field — wheat, barley, oil, and honey! " So he stopped and did not kill them along with their companions.
[9] Now the cistern where Ishmael had thrown all the corpses of the men he had struck down was a large one that King Asa had made in the encounter with Baasha king of Israel. Ishmael son of Nethaniah filled it with the slain.

[10] Then Ishmael took captive all the remnant of the people of Mizpah including the daughters of the king — all those who remained in Mizpah over whom Nebuzaradan, captain of the guard, had appointed Gedaliah son of Ahikam. Ishmael son of Nethaniah took them captive and set off to cross over to the Ammonites.

The Captives Rescued by Johanan

[11] When Johanan son of Kareah and all the commanders of the armies with him heard of all the evil that Ishmael son of Nethaniah had done,

12 they took all their men and went to fight with Ishmael son of Nethaniah
and found him by the great pool in Gibeon. 13 When all the people with
Ishmael saw Johanan son of Kareah and all the commanders of the army
with him, they rejoiced, 14 and all the people whom Ishmael had taken
captive from Mizpah turned around and rejoined Johanan son of Kareah.
15 But Ishmael son of Nethaniah escaped from Johanan with eight men and
went to the Ammonites. 16 Johanan son of Kareah and all the commanders
of the armies with him then took from Mizpah all the remnant of the people
whom he had recovered from Ishmael son of Nethaniah after Ishmael had
killed Gedaliah son of Ahikam — men, soldiers, women, children, and
court officials whom he brought back from Gibeon. 17 They left, stopping in
Geruth Chimham, which is near Bethlehem, in order to make their way into
Egypt, 18 away from the Chaldeans. For they feared them because Ishmael
son of Nethaniah had struck down Gedaliah son of Ahikam, whom the king
of Babylon had appointed in the land.

The People Seek Jeremiah's Counsel

42 Then all the commanders of the armies, along with Johanan son of
Kareah, Jezaniah son of Hoshaiah, and all the people from the least to
the greatest, approached [2] Jeremiah the prophet and said, "May our petition
come before you; pray to the LORD your God on our behalf, on behalf of
this entire remnant (for few of us remain out of the many, as you can see
with your own eyes), [3] that the LORD your God may tell us the way we
should walk and the thing we should do."

[4] So Jeremiah the prophet said to them, "I have heard. I will now pray to
the LORD your God according to your words, and every word that the LORD
answers you I will tell you; I won't withhold a word from you."

[5] And they said to Jeremiah, "As for every word the LORD your God
sends you to tell us, if we don't act accordingly, may the LORD be a true and
faithful witness against us. [6] Whether it is pleasant or unpleasant, we will
obey the voice of the LORD our God to whom we are sending you so that it
may go well with us. We will certainly obey the voice of the LORD our
God! "

Jeremiah's Advice to Stay

[7] Now at the end of 10 days, the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah,
[8] and he summoned Johanan son of Kareah, all the commanders of the
armies who were with him, and all the people from the least to the greatest.

[9] He said to them, "This is what the LORD says, the God of Israel to
whom you sent me to bring your petition before Him: [10†] 'If you will
indeed stay in this land, then I will rebuild and not demolish you, and I will
plant and not uproot you, because I relent concerning the disaster that I
have brought on you. [11] Don't be afraid of the king of Babylon whom you
now fear; don't be afraid of him' — this is the LORD's
declaration — 'because I am with you to save you and deliver you from
him. [12] I will grant you compassion, and he will have compassion on you
and allow you to return to your own soil. [13] But if you say, 'We will not stay
in this land,' so as not to obey the voice of the LORD your God, [14] and if
you say, 'No, instead we'll go to the land of Egypt where we will not see

war or hear the sound of the ram’s horn or hunger for food, and we’ll live
there,’ 15 then hear the word of the LORD, remnant of Judah! This is what
the LORD of •Hosts, the God of Israel, says: If you are firmly resolved to go
to Egypt and live there for a while, 16 then the sword you fear will
overtake you there in the land of Egypt, and the famine you are worried
about will follow on your heels [A] there to Egypt, and you will die there.
17† All who resolve to go to Egypt to live there for a while will die by the
sword, famine, and plague. They will have no one escape or survive from
the disaster I will bring on them.’

18 “For this is what the LORD of Hosts, the God of Israel, says: ‘Just as
My anger and fury were poured out on Jerusalem’s residents, so will My
fury pour out on you if you go to Egypt. You will become an object of
cursing, scorn, execration, and disgrace, and you will never see this place
again.’ 19 The LORD has spoken concerning you, remnant of Judah: ‘Don’t
go to Egypt.’ Know for certain that I have warned you today! 20 You have
led your own selves astray because you are the ones who sent me to the
LORD your God, saying, ‘Pray to the LORD our God on our behalf, and as for
all that the LORD our God says, tell it to us, and we’ll act accordingly.’
21 For I have told you today, but you have not obeyed the voice of the LORD
your God in everything He has sent me to tell you. 22 Now therefore, know
for certain that by the sword, famine, and plague you will die in the place
where you desired to go to live for a while.”

Jeremiah's Counsel Rejected

43 When Jeremiah had finished speaking to all the people all the words
of the LORD their God — all these words the LORD their God had sent
him to give them — 2 then Azariah son of Hoshaiah, Johanan son of
Kareah, and all the other arrogant men responded to Jeremiah, “You are
speaking a lie! The LORD our God has not sent you to say, ‘You must not go
to Egypt to live there for a while! ’ 3 Rather, Baruch son of Neriah is
inciting you against us to hand us over to the Chaldeans to put us to death
or to deport us to Babylon! ”

4 So Johanan son of Kareah and all the commanders of the armies did not
obey the voice of the LORD to stay in the land of Judah. 5 Instead, Johanan
son of Kareah and all the commanders of the armies took the whole
remnant of Judah, those who had returned from all the nations where they
had been banished to live in the land of Judah for a while — 6 the men,
women, children, king’s daughters, and everyone whom Nebuzaradan,
captain of the guard, had allowed to remain with Gedaliah son of Ahikam
son of Shaphan, along with Jeremiah the prophet and Baruch son of
Neriah — 7 and they went to the land of Egypt because they did not obey
the voice of the LORD. They went as far as Tahpanhes.

God’s Sign to the People in Egypt

8† Then the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah at Tahpanhes: 9 “Pick up
some large stones and set them in the mortar of the brick pavement that is at
the opening of Pharaoh’s palace at Tahpanhes. Do this in the sight of the
Judean men 10 and tell them: This is what the LORD of •Hosts, the God of
Israel, says: I will send for My servant Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon,
and I will place his throne on these stones that I have embedded, and he will
pitch his pavilion over them. 11 He will come and strike down the land of
Egypt — those destined for death, to death; those destined for captivity, to
captivity; and those destined for the sword, to the sword. 12 I will kindle a
fire in the temples of Egypt’s gods, and he will burn them and take them
prisoner. He will •clean the land of Egypt as a shepherd picks lice off [A] his
garment, and he will leave there unscathed. 13 He will smash the sacred

pillars of the sun temple [B] in the land of Egypt and burn down the temples of the Egyptian gods.”

God’s Judgment against His People in Egypt

44 This is the word that came to Jeremiah for all the Jews living in the
land of Egypt — at Migdol, Tahpanhes, Memphis, and in the land of
Pathros: 2 “This is what the LORD of •Hosts, the God of Israel, says: You
have seen all the disaster I brought against Jerusalem and all Judah’s cities;
look, they are a ruin today without an inhabitant in them 3 because of their
evil ways that provoked Me to anger, going and burning incense to serve
other gods that they, you, and your fathers did not know. 4 So I sent you all
My servants the prophets time and time again, [A] saying: Don’t do this
detestable thing that I hate. 5 But they did not listen or pay attention; they
did not turn from their evil or stop burning incense to other gods. 6 So My
fierce wrath poured out and burned in Judah’s cities and Jerusalem’s streets
so that they became the desolate ruin they are today.

7 “So now, this is what the LORD, the God of Hosts, the God of Israel,
says: Why are you doing such great harm to yourselves? You are cutting off
man and woman, child and infant from Judah, leaving yourselves without a
remnant. 8 You are provoking Me to anger by the work of your hands. You
are burning incense to other gods in the land of Egypt where you have gone
to live for a while. As a result, you will be cut off and become an object of
cursing and insult among all the nations of earth. 9 Have you forgotten the
evils of your fathers, the evils of Judah’s kings, the evils of their wives,
your own evils, and the evils of your wives that were committed in the land
of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem? 10 They have not become humble
to this day, and they have not •feared or followed My instruction or My
statutes that I set before you and your ancestors.

11 “Therefore, this is what the LORD of Hosts, the God of Israel, says: I
am about to turn against you to bring disaster, to cut off all Judah. 12 And I
will take away the remnant of Judah, those who have resolved to go to the
land of Egypt to live there for a while; they will meet their end. All of them
in the land of Egypt will fall by the sword; they will meet their end by
famine. From the least to the greatest, they will die by the sword and by
famine. Then they will become an object of cursing, scorn, execration, and
disgrace. 13 I will punish those living in the land of Egypt just as I punished
Jerusalem by sword, famine, and plague. 14[†] Then the remnant of

Judah — those going to live for a while there in the land of Egypt — will have no fugitive or survivor to return to the land of Judah where they are longing [B] to return to live, for they will not return except for a few fugitives."

The People's Stubborn Response

15 However, all the men who knew that their wives were burning incense to other gods, all the women standing by — a great assembly — and all the people who were living in the land of Egypt at Pathros answered Jeremiah,
16 "As for the word you spoke to us in the name of •Yahweh, we are not
going to listen to you! 17 Instead, we will do everything we said we would:
burn incense to the queen of heaven and offer •drink offerings to her just as we, our fathers, our kings, and our officials did in Judah's cities and in Jerusalem's streets. Then we had enough food and good things and saw no
disaster, 18 but from the time we ceased to burn incense to the queen of
heaven and to offer her drink offerings, we have lacked everything, and through sword and famine we have met our end."

19 And the women said, "When we burned incense to the queen of heaven and poured out drink offerings to her, was it apart from our husbands' knowledge that we made sacrificial cakes in her image and poured out drink offerings to her? "

20 But Jeremiah responded to all the people — the men, women, and all
the people who were answering him: 21 "As for the incense you burned in
Judah's cities and in Jerusalem's streets — you, your fathers, your kings, your officials, and the people of the land — did the LORD not remember
them? He brought this to mind. 22 The LORD can no longer bear your evil
deeds and the detestable acts you have committed, so your land has become a waste, a desolation, and an object of cursing, without inhabitant, as you
see today. 23 Because you burned incense and sinned against the LORD and
didn't obey the LORD's voice and didn't follow His instruction, His statutes, and His testimonies, this disaster has come to you, as you see today."

[24] Then Jeremiah said to all the people, including all the women, “Hear
the word of the LORD, all Judah who are in the land of Egypt. [25†] This is
what the LORD of Hosts, the God of Israel, says: ‘As for you and your
wives, you women have spoken with your mouths, and you men fulfilled it
by your deeds, saying, “We will keep our vows that we have made to burn
incense to the queen of heaven and to pour out drink offerings for her.” Go
ahead, confirm your vows! Pay your vows! ’

[26] “Therefore, hear the word of the LORD, all you Judeans who live in the
land of Egypt: ‘I have sworn by My great name, says Yahweh, that My
name will never again be invoked by anyone of Judah in all the land of
Egypt, saying, “As the Lord GOD lives.” [27] I am watching over them for
disaster and not for good, and every man of Judah who is in the land of
Egypt will meet his end by sword or famine until they are finished off.
[28†] Those who escape the sword will return from the land of Egypt to the
land of Judah only few in number, and the whole remnant of Judah, the
ones going to the land of Egypt to live there for a while, will know whose
word stands, Mine or theirs! [29†] This will be a sign to you’ — this is the
LORD’s declaration — ‘that I am about to punish you in this place, so you
may know that My words of disaster concerning you will certainly come to
pass. [30] This is what the LORD says: I am about to hand over Pharaoh
Hophra, Egypt’s king, to his enemies, to those who want to take his life,
just as I handed over Judah’s King Zedekiah to Babylon’s King
Nebuchadnezzar, who was his enemy, the one who wanted to take his
life.’ ”

The LORD's Message to Baruch

45 [†]This is the word that Jeremiah the prophet spoke to Baruch son of
Neriah when he wrote these words on a scroll at Jeremiah’s
dictation [A], in the fourth year of Jehoiakim son of Josiah, king of Judah:
2 “This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says to you, Baruch: 3 ‘You
have said, “Woe is me, because the LORD has added misery to my pain! I am
worn out with [B] groaning and have found no rest.” ’

4 “This is what you are to say to him: ‘This is what the LORD says: What I
have built I am about to demolish, and what I have planted I am about to
uproot — the whole land! 5 But as for you, do you seek great things for
yourself? Stop seeking! For I am about to bring disaster on every living
creature’ — this is the LORD’s declaration — ‘but I will grant you your life
like the spoils of war wherever you go.’ ”

PROPHECIES AGAINST THE NATIONS

46 [†]The word of the LORD that came to Jeremiah the prophet about the nations:

Prophecies against Egypt

2[†] About Egypt and the army of Pharaoh Neco, Egypt's king, which was defeated at Carchemish on the Euphrates River by Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon in the fourth year of Judah's King Jehoiakim son of Josiah:

3 Deploy small shields and large;
draw near for battle!
4 Harness the horses;
mount the steeds; [A]
take your positions with helmets on!
Polish the lances;
put on armor!
5 Why have I seen this?
They are terrified,
they are retreating,
their warriors are crushed,
they flee headlong,
they never look back,
terror is on every side!
This is the LORD's declaration.
6 The swift cannot flee,
and the warrior cannot escape!
In the north by the bank of the Euphrates River,
they stumble and fall.

7 Who is this, rising like the Nile,
like rivers whose waters churn?
8 Egypt rises like the Nile,
and its waters churn like rivers.
He boasts, "I will go up, I will cover the earth;
I will destroy cities with their residents."
9 Rise up, you cavalry!
Race furiously, you chariots!
Let the warriors go out —

•Cush and Put,
who are able to handle shields,
and the Ludim,
who are able to handle and string the bow.
10 That day belongs to the Lord, the God of •Hosts,
a day of vengeance to avenge Himself
against His adversaries.
The sword will devour and be satisfied;
it will drink its fill of their blood,
because it will be a sacrifice to the Lord, the God of Hosts,
in the northern land by the Euphrates River.

11 Go up to Gilead and get balm,
Virgin Daughter Egypt!
You have multiplied remedies in vain;
there is no healing for you.
12 The nations have heard of your dishonor,
and your outcry fills the earth,
because warrior stumbles against warrior
and together both of them have fallen.

13† This is the word the Lord spoke to Jeremiah the prophet about the coming of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon to defeat the land of Egypt:

14 Announce it in Egypt, and proclaim it in Migdol!
Proclaim it in Memphis and in Tahpanhes!
Say: Take positions! Prepare yourself,
for the sword devours all around you.
15 Why have your strong ones been swept away?
Each has not stood,
for the Lord has thrust him down.
16 He continues to stumble.
Indeed, each falls over the other.
They say, “Get up! Let’s return to our people
and to the land of our birth,
away from the sword that oppresses.”
17 There they will cry out,

“Pharaoh king of Egypt was all noise;
he let the opportune moment pass.”

18 As I live —
He will •Yahweh of Hosts is His name. this is the King’s declaration;
come like Tabor among the mountains
and like Carmel by the sea.
19 Get your bags ready for exile,
inhabitant of Daughter Egypt!
For Memphis will become a desolation,
uninhabited ruins.

20 Egypt is a beautiful young cow,
but a horsefly from the north is coming against her.
21 Even her mercenaries among her
are like stall-fed calves.
They too will turn back;
together they will flee;
they will not take their stand,
for the day of their calamity is coming on them,
the time of their punishment.
22 Egypt will hiss like a slithering snake, [B]
for the enemy will come with an army;
with axes they will come against her
like those who cut trees.
23 They will cut down her forest —
though it is dense, this is the LORD’s declaration —
for they are more numerous than locusts;
they cannot be counted.
24 Daughter Egypt will be put to shame,
handed over to a northern people.

25 The LORD of Hosts, the God of Israel, says: “I am about to punish
Amon, god of Thebes, along with Pharaoh, Egypt, her gods, and her
kings — Pharaoh and those trusting in him. 26[†] I will hand them over to
those who want to take their lives — to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon

and his officers. But after this, it will be inhabited again as in ancient times."

This is the LORD's declaration.

Reassurance for Israel

27 But you, My servant Jacob, do not be afraid,
and do not be discouraged, Israel,
for without fail I will save you from far away
and your descendants, from the land of their captivity!
Jacob will return and have calm and quiet
with no one to frighten him.
28 And you, My servant Jacob, do not be afraid —
for I will be with you. this is the LORD's declaration —
I will bring destruction on all the nations
where I have banished you,
but I will not bring destruction on you.
I will discipline you with justice,
and I will by no means leave you unpunished.

Prophecies against the Philistines

47 †This is the word of the LORD that came to Jeremiah the prophet about
the Philistines before Pharaoh defeated Gaza. 2 This is what the
LORD says:

Look, waters are rising from the north
and becoming an overflowing •wadi.
They will overflow the land and everything in it,
the cities and their inhabitants.
The people will cry out,
and every inhabitant of the land will wail.
3 At the sound of the stomping hooves of his stallions,
the rumbling of his chariots,
and the clatter of their wheels,
fathers will not turn back for their sons,
because they will be utterly helpless [A]
4 on account of the day that is coming
to destroy all the Philistines,
to cut off from Tyre and Sidon
every remaining ally.
Indeed, the LORD is about to destroy the Philistines,
the remnant of the islands of Caphtor.
5 Baldness is coming to Gaza.
Ashkelon will become silent,
a remnant of their valley.
How long will you gash yourself?

6 Oh, sword of the LORD!
How long will you be restless?
Go back to your sheath;
be still; be silent!
7 How can it rest
when the LORD has given it a command?
He has assigned it
against Ashkelon and the shore of the sea.

Prophecies against Moab

48 About Moab, this is what the LORD of •Hosts, the God of Israel, says:

Woe to Nebo, because it is about to be destroyed;
Kiriathaim will be put to shame; it will be taken captive.
The fortress will be put to shame and dismayed!
2 There is no longer praise for Moab;
they plan harm against her in Heshbon:
Come, let's cut her off from nationhood.
Also, Madmen, you will be silenced;
the sword will pursue you.
3 A voice cries out from Horonaim,
"devastation and great disaster!"
4 Moab will be shattered;
her little ones will cry out.
5 For on the Ascent to Luhith
they will be weeping continually, [A]
and on the descent to Horonaim
will be heard cries of distress over the destruction:
6 Flee! Save your lives!
Be like a juniper bush [B], in the wilderness.
7 Because you trust in your works and treasures,
you will be captured also.
Chemosh will go into exile
with his priests and officials.
8 The destroyer will move against every town;
not one town will escape.
The valley will perish,
and the plain will be annihilated,
as the LORD has said.
9 Make Moab a salt marsh,
for she will run away; [C]
her towns will become a desolation,
without inhabitant.

10† The one who does
the LORD's business deceitfully [D] is cursed,

and the one who withholds
his sword from bloodshed is cursed.

11 Moab has been left quiet since his youth,
settled like wine on its dregs.
He hasn't been poured from one container to another
or gone into exile.
So his taste has remained the same,
and his aroma hasn't changed.
12 Therefore look, the days are coming —
when I will send those to him, who will this is the LORD's declaration —
pour him out.
They will empty his containers
and smash his jars.
13† Moab will be put to shame because of Chemosh,
just as the house of Israel was put to shame
because of Bethel that they trusted in.

14 How can you say, "We are warriors —
mighty men ready for battle"?
15 The destroyer of Moab and its towns
has come up, [E]
and the best of its young men
have gone down to slaughter.
16 Moab's •Yahweh of Hosts is His name. This is the King's declaration;
calamity is near at hand;
his disaster is rushing swiftly.
17 Mourn for him, all you surrounding nations,
everyone who knows his name.
Say: How the mighty scepter is shattered,
the glorious staff!

18 Come down from glory; sit on parched ground,
resident of the daughter of Dibon,
for the destroyer of Moab has come against you;
he has destroyed your fortresses.
19 Stand by the highway and look,

resident of Aroer!
Ask him who is fleeing or her who is escaping:
What happened?
20 Moab is put to shame, indeed dismayed.
Wail and cry out!
Declare by the Arnon
that Moab is destroyed.

21† "Judgment has come to the land of the plateau — to Holon, Jahzah,
Mephaath, 22 Dibon, Nebo, Beth-diblathaim, 23 Kiriathaim, Beth-gamul,
Beth-meon, 24 Kerioth, Bozrah, and all the towns of the land of Moab,
those far and near. 25 Moab's •horn is chopped off; his arm is shattered."

This is the LORD's declaration.

26 "Make him drunk, because he has exalted himself against the LORD.
Moab will wallow in his own vomit, and he will also become a
laughingstock. 27 Wasn't Israel a laughingstock to you? Was he ever found
among thieves? For whenever you speak of him you shake your head."

28 Abandon the towns! Live in the cliffs,
residents of Moab!
Be like a dove
that nests inside the mouth of a cave.

29† We have heard of Moab's pride,
great pride, indeed —
his insolence, arrogance, pride,
and haughty heart.
30 I know his outburst.
It is empty. This is the LORD's declaration.
His boast is empty.
31 Therefore, I will wail over Moab.
I will cry out for Moab, all of it;
he will moan for the men of Kir-heres.
32 I will weep for you, vine of Sibmah,

with more than the weeping for Jazer.
Your tendrils have extended to the sea;
they have reached to the sea and to Jazer.
The destroyer has fallen on your summer fruit and grape harvest.
33 Joy and celebration are taken from the fertile field
and from the land of Moab.
I have stopped the flow of wine from the winepresses;
no one will tread with shouts of joy.
The shouting is not a shout of joy.

34 “There is a cry from Heshbon to Elealeh; they raise their voices as far
as Jahaz — from Zoar to Horonaim and Eglath-shelishiyah — because
even the waters of Nimrim have become desolate. 35 In Moab, I will
stop” — this is the LORD’s declaration — “the one who offers sacrifices on
the •high place and burns incense to his gods. 36 Therefore, My heart
moans like flutes for Moab, and My heart moans like flutes for the people
of Kir-heres. And therefore, the wealth he has gained has perished.
37 Indeed, every head is bald and every beard clipped; on every hand is a
gash and •sackcloth around the waist. 38 On all the rooftops of Moab and in
her public squares, everyone is mourning because I have shattered Moab
like a jar no one wants.” This is the LORD’s declaration. 39 “How broken it
is! They wail! How Moab has turned his back! He is ashamed. Moab will
become a laughingstock and a shock to all those around him.”

40 For this is what the LORD says:

He will swoop down like an eagle
and spread his wings against Moab.
41 The towns have [F] been captured,
and the strongholds seized.
In that day the heart of Moab’s warriors
will be like the heart of a woman with contractions.
42 Moab will be destroyed as a people
because he has exalted himself against the LORD.
43 Panic, pit, and trap
await you, resident of Moab.

44 He who flees from the panic will fall in the pit,
and he who climbs from the pit
will be captured in the trap,
for I will bring against Moab
the year of their punishment.
This is the LORD's declaration.

45 Those who flee will stand exhausted
in Heshbon's shadow
because fire has come out from Heshbon
and a flame from within Sihon.
It will devour Moab's forehead
and the skull of the noisemakers.
46 Woe to you, Moab!
The people of Chemosh have perished
because your sons have been taken captive
and your daughters have gone into captivity.
47† Yet, I will restore the fortunes [G] of Moab in the last days.
This is the LORD's declaration.
The judgment on Moab ends here.

Prophecies against Ammon

49 About the Ammonites, this is what the LORD says:

Does Israel have no sons?
Is he without an heir?
Why then has •Milcom dispossessed Gad
and his people settled in their cities?
2 Therefore look, the days are coming —
when I will make the shout of battle heard — this is the LORD's declaration —
against Rabbah of the Ammonites.
It will become a desolate mound,
and its villages will be burned down.
Israel will dispossess their dispossessors,
says the LORD.
3 Wail, Heshbon, for Ai is devastated;
cry out, daughters of Rabbah!
Clothe yourselves with •sackcloth, and lament;
run back and forth within your walls, [A]
because Milcom will go into exile
together with his priests and officials.
4 Why do you brag about your valleys,
your flowing valley, [B]
you faithless daughter?
You who trust in your treasures
and boast, "Who can attack me? "
5 Look, I am about to bring terror on you —
from all those around you. — this is the declaration of the Lord GOD of •Hosts —
You will be banished, each man headlong,
with no one to gather up the fugitives.
6† But after that, I will restore the fortunes [C] of the Ammonites.
This is the LORD's declaration.

Prophecies against Edom

7 About Edom, this is what the LORD of Hosts says:

Is there no longer wisdom in Teman?

Has counsel perished from the prudent?
Has their wisdom rotted away?
8 Run! Turn back! Lie low,
residents of Dedan,
for I will bring Esau's calamity on him
at the time I punish him.
9† If grape harvesters came to you,
wouldn't they leave some gleanings?
Were thieves to come in the night,
they would destroy only what they wanted.
10† But I will strip Esau bare;
I will uncover his secret places.
He will try to hide himself, but he will be unable.
His descendants will be destroyed
along with his relatives and neighbors.
He will exist no longer.
11 Abandon your fatherless; I will preserve them;
let your widows trust in Me.

12 "For this is what the LORD says: If those who do not deserve to drink
the cup must drink it, can you possibly remain unpunished? You will not
remain unpunished, for you must drink it too. 13 For by Myself I have
sworn" — this is the LORD's declaration — "Bozrah will become a
desolation, a disgrace, a ruin, and a curse, and all her cities will become
ruins forever."

14† I have heard a message from the LORD;
a messenger has been sent among the nations:
Assemble yourselves to come against her.
Rise up for war!

15 Look, I will certainly make you insignificant among the nations,
despised among humanity.
16† As to the terror you cause, [D]
your presumptuous heart has deceived you.
You who live in the clefts of the rock,
you who occupy the mountain summit,

though you elevate your nest like the eagle,
even from there I will bring you down.
This is the LORD's declaration.
[17] "Edom will become a desolation.
Everyone who passes by her will be horrified and scoff because of all her
wounds. [18] As when Sodom and Gomorrah were overthrown along with
their neighbors," says the LORD, "no one will live there; no human being
will even stay in it as a temporary resident.

[19] "Look, it will be like a lion coming from the thickets [E] of the Jordan to
the watered grazing land. Indeed, I will chase Edom away from her land in
a flash. I will appoint whoever is chosen for her. For who is like Me? Who
will summon Me? Who is the shepherd who can stand against Me? "

[20] Therefore, hear the plans that the LORD has drawn up against Edom and
the strategies He has devised against the people of Teman: The flock's little
lambs will certainly be dragged away, and their grazing land will be made
desolate because of them. [21] At the sound of their fall the earth will quake;
the sound of her cry will be heard at the •Red Sea. [22] Look! It will be like
an eagle soaring upward, then swooping down and spreading its wings over
Bozrah. In that day the hearts of Edom's warriors will be like the heart of a
woman with contractions.

Prophecies against Damascus

[23] About Damascus:

Hamath and Arpad are put to shame,
for they have heard a bad report and are agitated;
in the sea there is anxiety that cannot be calmed.
[24] Damascus has become weak;
she has turned to run;
panic has gripped her.
Distress and labor pains have seized her
like a woman in labor.
[25] How can the city of praise not be abandoned,

the town that brings Me joy?
26 Therefore, her young men will fall in her public squares;
all the warriors will perish in that day.
27 I will set fire to the wall
of Damascus;
it will consume Ben-hadad’s citadels.
This is the declaration of the LORD of Hosts.

Prophecies against Kedar and Hazor

28 About Kedar and the kingdoms of Hazor, which Nebuchadnezzar, Babylon’s king, defeated, this is what the LORD says:

Rise up, go against Kedar,
and destroy the people of the east!
29 They will take their tents and their flocks
along with their tent curtains and all their equipment.
They will take their camels for themselves.
They will call out to them:
Terror is on every side!
30 Run! Escape quickly! Lie low,
residents of Hazor —
this is the LORD’s declaration —
for Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon
has drawn up a plan against you;
he has devised a strategy against you.

31 Rise up, go up against a nation at ease,
one living in security.
This is the LORD’s declaration.
They have no doors, not even a gate bar;
they live alone.
32 Their camels will become plunder,
and their massive herds of cattle will become spoil.
I will scatter them to the wind in every direction,
those who shave their temples;
I will bring calamity on them across all their borders.
This is the LORD’s declaration.
33† Hazor will become a jackals’ den,
a desolation forever.
No one will live there;

no human being will even stay in it as a temporary resident.

Prophecies against Elam

34† This is the word of the LORD that came to Jeremiah the prophet about
Elam at the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah king of Judah. 35 This is
what the LORD of Hosts says:

I am about to shatter Elam's bow,
the source [F] of their might.
36 I will bring the four winds against Elam
from the four corners of the heavens,
and I will scatter them to all these winds.
There will not be a nation
to which Elam's banished ones will not go.
37 I will devastate Elam before their enemies,
before those who want to take their lives.
I will bring disaster on them,
My burning anger.
I will send the sword after them — This is the LORD's declaration.
until I finish them off.
38 I will set My throne in Elam,
and I will destroy the king and officials from there.
This is the LORD's declaration.
39 In the last days,
I will restore the fortunes [G] of Elam.
This is the LORD's declaration.

Prophecies against Babylon

50 †The word the LORD spoke about Babylon, the land of the Chaldeans, through Jeremiah the prophet:

2 Announce to the nations;
proclaim and raise up a signal flag;
proclaim, and hide nothing.
Say: Babylon is captured;
Bel is put to shame;
Marduk is devastated;
her idols are put to shame;
her false gods, devastated.
3† For a nation from the north will come against her;
it will make her land desolate.
No one will be living in it —
both man and beast will escape. [A]
4 In those days and at that time —
this is the LORD's declaration —
the Israelites and Judeans will come together,
weeping as they come,
and will seek the LORD their God.
5 They will ask about •Zion,
turning their faces to this road.
They will come and join themselves to the LORD
in an everlasting covenant that will never be forgotten.

6 My people are lost sheep;
their shepherds have led them astray,
guiding them the wrong way in the mountains.
They have wandered from mountain to hill;
they have forgotten their resting place.
7 All who found them devoured them.
Their adversaries said, "We're not •guilty;
instead, they have sinned against the LORD,
their righteous grazing land,
the hope of their ancestors, the LORD."

8 Escape from Babylon;

depart from the Chaldeans' land.
Be like the rams that lead the flock.
9† For I will soon stir up and bring against Babylon
an assembly of great nations from the north country.
They will line up in battle formation against her;
from there she will be captured.
Their arrows will be like those of a skilled warrior
who does not return empty-handed.
10 The Chaldeans will become plunder;
all Babylon's plunderers will be fully satisfied.
This is the LORD's declaration.
11 Because you rejoice,
because you sing in triumph —
you who plundered My inheritance —
because you frolic like a young cow treading grain
and neigh like stallions,
12 your mother will be utterly humiliated;
she who bore you will be put to shame.
Look! She will lag behind all [B] the nations —
a dry land, a wilderness, an •Arabah.
13 Because of the LORD's wrath,
she will not be inhabited;
she will become a desolation, every bit of her.
Everyone who passes through Babylon
will be horrified
and scoff because of all her wounds.
14 Line up in battle formation around Babylon,
all you archers!
Shoot at her! Do not spare an arrow,
for she has sinned against the LORD.
15 Raise a war cry against her on every side!
She has thrown up her hands in surrender;
her defense towers have fallen;
her walls are demolished.
Since this is the LORD's vengeance,
take out your vengeance on her;
as she has done, do the same to her.

16 Cut off the sower from Babylon
as well as him who wields the sickle at harvest time.
Because of the oppressor's sword,
each will turn to his own people,
each will flee to his own land.

The Return of God's People

17 Israel is a stray lamb, chased by lions.
The first who devoured him was the king of Assyria;
the last one who crushed his bones
was Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon.

18 Therefore, this is what the LORD of •Hosts, the God of Israel, says: "I am about to punish the king of Babylon and his land just as I punished the king of Assyria.

19 I will return Israel to his grazing land,
and he will feed on Carmel and Bashan;
he will be satisfied
in the hill country of Ephraim and of Gilead.
20 In those days and at that time —
one will search for Israel's guilt, this is the LORD's declaration —
but there will be none,
and for Judah's sins,
but they will not be found,
for I will forgive those I leave as a remnant.

The Invasion of Babylon

21 "Go against the land of Merathaim,
and against those living in Pekod.
Put them to the sword;
•completely destroy them —
do everything I have commanded you. this is the LORD's declaration —
22 The sound of war is in the land —
a great destruction.

23 How the hammer of the whole earth
is cut down and smashed!
What a horror Babylon has become
among the nations!
24 Babylon, I laid a trap for you, and you were caught,
but you did not even know it.
You were found and captured
because you fought against the LORD.
25 The LORD opened His armory
and brought out His weapons of wrath,
because it is a task of the Lord GOD of Hosts
in the land of the Chaldeans.
26 Come against her from the most distant places. [C]
Open her granaries;
pile her up like mounds of grain
and completely destroy her.
Leave her no survivors.
27 Put all her young bulls to the sword;
let them go down to the slaughter.
Woe to them, because their day has come,
the time of their punishment.

The Humiliation of Babylon

28 “There is a voice of fugitives and those who escape
from the land of Babylon
announcing in Zion the vengeance of the LORD our God,
the vengeance for His temple.
29[†] Summon the archers to Babylon,
all who string the bow;
camp all around her; let none escape.
Repay her according to her deeds;
just as she has done, do the same to her,
for she has acted arrogantly against the LORD,
against the Holy One of Israel.
30 Therefore, her young men will fall

in her public squares;
all the warriors will perish in that day.
This is the LORD's declaration.
31 Look, I am against you, you arrogant one —
this is the declaration of the Lord GOD of Hosts —
because your day has come,
the time when I will punish you.
32 The arrogant will stumble and fall
with no one to pick him up.
I will set fire to his cities,
and it will consume everything around him."

The Desolation of Babylon

33 This is what the LORD of Hosts says:

Israelites and Judeans alike have been oppressed.
All their captors hold them fast;
they refuse to release them.
34 Their Redeemer is strong;
•Yahweh of Hosts is His name.
He will fervently plead their case
so that He might bring rest to the earth
but turmoil to those who live in Babylon.
35 A sword is over the Chaldeans —
this is the LORD's declaration —
against those who live in Babylon,
against her officials, and against her sages.
36 A sword is against the diviners,
and they will act foolishly.
A sword is against her heroic warriors,
and they will be terrified.
37 A sword is against his horses and chariots
and against all the foreigners among them,
and they will be like women.
A sword is against her treasuries,
and they will be plundered.

38 A drought will come on her waters,
and they will be dried up.
For it is a land of carved images,
and they go mad because of terrifying things. [D]

39 Therefore, desert creatures [E] will live with hyenas,
and ostriches will also live in her.
It will never again be inhabited
or lived in through all generations.
40 Just as God demolished Sodom and Gomorrah
and their neighboring towns —
so no one will live there; this is the LORD's declaration —
no human being will even stay in it
as a temporary resident.

The Conquest of Babylon

41† Look! A people comes from the north.
A great nation and many kings will be stirred up
from the remote regions of the earth.
42 They grasp bow and javelin.
They are cruel and show no mercy.
Their voice roars like the sea,
and they ride on horses,
lined up like men in battle formation
against you, Daughter Babylon.
43 The king of Babylon has heard reports about them,
and his hands fall helpless.
Distress has seized him —
pain, like a woman in labor.

44 "Look, it will be like a lion coming from the thickets [F], of the Jordan
to the watered grazing land. Indeed, I will chase Babylon [G] away from her
land in a flash. I will appoint whoever is chosen for her. For who is like
Me? Who will summon Me? Who is the shepherd who can stand against
Me? "

45 Therefore, hear the plans that the LORD has drawn up against Babylon
and the strategies He has devised against the land of the Chaldeans:
Certainly the flock's little lambs will be dragged away; certainly the grazing
land will be made desolate because of them. 46 At the sound of Babylon's
conquest the earth will quake; a cry will be heard among the nations.

God’s Judgment on Babylon

51 This is what the LORD says:

I am about to stir up a destructive wind [A] against Babylon
and against the population of Leb-qamai. [B],
2 I will send strangers to Babylon
who will scatter her and strip her land bare,
for they will come against her
from every side in the day of disaster.
3 Don't let the archer string his bow;
don't let him put on [C] his armor.
Don't spare her young men;
•completely destroy her entire army!
4 Those who were slain will fall in the land of the Chaldeans,
those who were pierced through, in her streets.
5 For Israel and Judah are not left widowed
by their God, the LORD of •Hosts,
though their land is full of •guilt
against the Holy One of Israel.

6 Leave Babylon;
save your lives, each of you!
Don't perish because of her guilt.
For this is the time of the LORD's vengeance —
He will pay her what she deserves.
7 Babylon was a gold cup in the LORD's hand,
making the whole earth drunk.
The nations drank her wine;
therefore, the nations go mad.
8 Suddenly Babylon fell and was shattered.
Wail for her;
get balm for her wound —
perhaps she can be healed.

9 We tried to heal Babylon,
but she could not be healed.
Abandon her!
Let each of us go to his own land,

for her judgment extends to the sky
and reaches as far as the clouds.

10 The LORD has brought about our vindication;
come, let's tell in •Zion
what the LORD our God has accomplished.

11† Sharpen the arrows!
Fill the quivers!
The LORD has put it into the mind
of the kings of the Medes
because His plan is aimed at Babylon
to destroy her,
for it is the LORD's vengeance,
vengeance for His temple.
12 Raise up a signal flag
against the walls of Babylon;
fortify the watch post;
set the watchmen in place;
prepare the ambush.
For the LORD has both planned and accomplished
what He has threatened
against those who live in Babylon.
13 You who reside by many waters,
rich in treasures,
your end has come,
your life thread is cut.

14 The LORD of Hosts has sworn by Himself:

I will fill you up with men as with locusts,
and they will sing the victory song over you.

15† He made the earth by His power,
established the world by His wisdom,
and spread out the heavens by His understanding.
16 When He thunders, D
the waters in the heavens are in turmoil,

and He causes the clouds
to rise from the ends of the earth.
He makes lightning for the rain
and brings the wind from His storehouses.

17 Everyone is stupid and ignorant.
Every goldsmith is put to shame by his carved image,
for his cast images are a lie;
there is no breath in them.
18 They are worthless, a work to be mocked.
At the time of their punishment they will be destroyed.
19 Jacob's Portion is not like these
because He is the One who formed all things.
Israel is the tribe of His inheritance;
•Yahweh of Hosts is His name.

20 You are My battle club,
My weapons of war.
With you I will smash nations;
with you I will bring kingdoms to ruin.
21 With you I will smash the horse and its rider;
with you I will smash the chariot and its rider.
22 With you I will smash man and woman;
with you I will smash the old man and the youth;
with you I will smash the young man and the young woman.
23 With you I will smash the shepherd and his flock;
with you I will smash the farmer and his ox-team. [E]
With you I will smash governors and officials.

24 "I will repay Babylon and all the residents of Chaldea for all their evil they have done in Zion before your very eyes."

This is the LORD's declaration.

25 Look, I am against you, devastating mountain —
you devastate the whole earth. this is the LORD's declaration —
I will stretch out My hand against you,
roll you down from the cliffs,

and turn you into a charred mountain.
26 No one will be able to retrieve a cornerstone
or a foundation stone from you,
because you will become desolate forever.
This is the LORD's declaration.
27† Raise a signal flag in the land;
blow a ram's horn among the nations;
set apart the nations against her.
Summon kingdoms against her —
Ararat, Minni, and Ashkenaz.
Appoint a marshal against her;
bring up horses like a swarm [F] of locusts.
28 Set apart the nations for battle against her —
the kings of Media,
her governors and all her officials,
and all the lands they rule.
29 The earth quakes and trembles
because the LORD's intentions against Babylon stand:
to make the land of Babylon an uninhabited desolation.
30 Babylon's warriors have stopped fighting;
they sit in their strongholds.
Their might is exhausted;
they have become like women.
Babylon's homes have been set ablaze,
her gate bars are shattered.
31 Messenger races to meet messenger,
and herald to meet herald,
to announce to the king of Babylon
that his city has been captured
from end to end.
32 The fords have been seized,
the marshes set on fire,
and the soldiers are terrified.

33 For this is what the LORD of Hosts, the God of Israel, says:

Daughter Babylon is like a threshing floor

at the time it is trampled.
In just a little while her harvest time will come.

34 “Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon has devoured me;
he has crushed me.
He has set me aside like an empty dish;
he has swallowed me like a sea monster;
he filled his belly with my delicacies;
he has vomited me out,” [G]
35 says the inhabitant of Zion;
“Let the violence done to me and my family be done to Babylon.
Let my blood be on the inhabitants of Chaldea,”
says Jerusalem.

36† Therefore, this is what the LORD says:

I am about to plead your case
and take vengeance on your behalf;
I will dry up her sea
and make her fountain run dry.
37 Babylon will become a heap of rubble,
a jackals’ den,
a desolation and an object of scorn,
without inhabitant.
38 They will roar together like young lions;
they will growl like lion cubs.
39† While they are flushed with heat, I will serve them a feast,
and I will make them drunk so that they revel.
Then they will fall asleep forever
and never wake up.
This is the LORD’s declaration.
40 I will bring them down like lambs to the slaughter,
like rams together with male goats.

41 How Sheshach has been captured,
the praise of the whole earth seized.
What a horror Babylon has become

among the nations!
42 The sea has risen over Babylon;
she is covered with its turbulent waves.
43 Her cities have become a desolation,
a dry and arid land,
a land where no one lives,
where no human being passes through.
44 I will punish Bel in Babylon.
I will make him vomit what he swallowed.
The nations will no longer stream to him;
even Babylon's wall will fall.

45 Come out from among her, My people!
Save your lives, each of you,
from the LORD's burning anger.
46 May you not become cowardly and fearful
when the report is proclaimed in the land,
for the report will come one year,
and then another the next year.
There will be violence in the land
with ruler against ruler.
47 Therefore, look, the days are coming
when I will punish Babylon's carved images.
Her entire land will suffer shame,
and all her slain will lie fallen within her.
48 Heaven and earth and everything in them
will shout for joy over Babylon
because the destroyers from the north
will come against her.
This is the LORD's declaration.

49 Babylon must fall because of the slain
of Israel,
even as the slain of all the earth fell
because of Babylon.
50 You who have escaped the sword,
go and do not stand still!
Remember the LORD from far away,

and let Jerusalem come to your mind.

51 We are ashamed
because we have heard insults.
Humiliation covers our faces
because foreigners have entered
the holy places of the LORD's temple.

52 Therefore, look, the days are coming —
this is the LORD's declaration —
when I will punish her carved images,
and the wounded will groan
throughout her land.
53 Even if Babylon should ascend to the heavens
and fortify her tall fortresses,
destroyers will come against her from Me.
This is the LORD's declaration.

54 The sound of a cry from Babylon!
The sound of great destruction
from the land of the Chaldeans!
55 For the LORD is going to devastate Babylon;
He will silence her mighty voice.
Their waves roar like abundant waters;
the tumult of their voice resounds,
56 for a destroyer is coming against her,
against Babylon.
Her warriors will be captured,
their bows shattered,
for the LORD is a God of retribution;
He will certainly repay.
57 I will make her princes and sages drunk,
along with her governors, officials, and warriors.
Then they will fall asleep forever
and never wake up.
This is the King's declaration;
Yahweh of Hosts is His name.

58 This is what Yahweh of Hosts says:

Babylon's thick walls will be totally demolished,

and her high gates consumed by fire.
The peoples will have labored for nothing;
the nations will exhaust themselves only to feed the fire.

59 This is what Jeremiah the prophet commanded Seraiah son of Neriah
son of Mahseiah, the quartermaster, when he went to Babylon with King
Zedekiah of Judah in the fourth year of Zedekiah's reign. 60† Jeremiah
wrote on one scroll about all the disaster that would come to Babylon; all
these words were written against Babylon.

61 Jeremiah told Seraiah, "When you get to Babylon, see that you read all
these words aloud. 62 You must say, 'LORD, You have threatened to cut off
this place so that no one will live in it — man or beast. Indeed, it will
remain desolate forever.' 63 When you have finished reading this scroll, tie
a stone to it and throw it into the middle of the Euphrates River. 64 Then
say, 'In the same way, Babylon will sink and never rise again because of the
disaster I am bringing on her. They will grow weary.' "

The words of Jeremiah end here.

The Fall of Jerusalem

52 [†]Zedekiah was 21 years old when he became king and reigned 11 years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Hamutal daughter of Jeremiah; she was from Libnah. 2 Zedekiah did what was evil in the LORD's sight just as Jehoiakim had done. 3 Because of the LORD's anger, it came to the point in Jerusalem and Judah that He finally banished them from His presence. Nevertheless, Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon.

4 In the ninth year of Zedekiah's reign, on the tenth day of the tenth month, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon advanced against Jerusalem with his entire army. They laid siege to the city and built a siege wall all around it. 5 The city was under siege until King Zedekiah's eleventh year.

6 By the ninth day of the fourth month the famine was so severe in the city that the people of the land had no food. 7 Then the city was broken into, and all the warriors fled. They left the city by night by way of the gate between the two walls near the king's garden, though the Chaldeans surrounded the city. They made their way along the route to the •Arabah. 8 The Chaldean army pursued the king and overtook Zedekiah in the plains of Jericho. Zedekiah's entire army was scattered from him. 9 The Chaldeans seized the king and brought him to the king of Babylon at Riblah in the land of Hamath, and he passed sentence on him.

10 At Riblah the king of Babylon slaughtered Zedekiah's sons before his eyes and also slaughtered the Judean commanders. 11 Then he blinded Zedekiah and bound him with bronze chains. The king of Babylon brought Zedekiah to Babylon, where he kept him in custody [A] until his dying day.

12[†] On the tenth day of the fifth month — which was the nineteenth year of King Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon — Nebuzaradan, the commander of the guards, entered Jerusalem as the representative of [B] the king of Babylon. 13 He burned the LORD's temple, the king's palace, all the houses of Jerusalem, and all the houses of the nobles. 14[†] The whole Chaldean army with the commander of the guards tore down all the walls surrounding Jerusalem. 15 Nebuzaradan, the commander of the guards, deported some of the poorest of the people, as well as the rest of the people who were left

in the city, the deserters who had defected to the king of Babylon, and the
rest of the craftsmen. [16] But some of the poorest people of the land
Nebuzaradan, the commander of the guards, left to be vinedressers and
farmers.

[17] Now the Chaldeans broke into pieces the bronze pillars for the LORD’s
temple and the water carts and the bronze reservoir that were in the LORD’s
temple, and carried all the bronze to Babylon. [18†] They took the pots,
shovels, wick trimmers, sprinkling basins, dishes, and all the bronze articles
used in the temple service. [19] The commander of the guards took away the
bowls, firepans, sprinkling basins, pots, lampstands, pans, and •drink
offering bowls — whatever was gold or silver.

[20] As for the two pillars, the one reservoir, and the 12 bronze bulls under
the water carts that King Solomon had made for the LORD’s temple, the
weight of the bronze of all these articles was beyond measure. [21] One pillar
was 27 feet [C] tall, had a circumference of 18 feet, [D] was hollow — four
fingers thick — [22] and had a bronze capital on top of it. One capital,
encircled by bronze latticework and pomegranates, stood 7 1/2 feet [E] high.
The second pillar was the same, with pomegranates. [23] Each capital had 96
pomegranates all around it. All the pomegranates around the latticework
numbered 100.

[24] The commander of the guards also took away Seraiah the chief priest,
Zephaniah the priest of the second rank, and the three doorkeepers. [25] From
the city he took a court official who had been appointed over the warriors;
seven trusted royal aides [F] found in the city; the secretary of the commander
of the army, who enlisted the people of the land for military duty; and 60
men from the common people who were found within the city.
[26] Nebuzaradan, the commander of the guards, took them and brought them
to the king of Babylon at Riblah. [27] The king of Babylon put them to death
at Riblah in the land of Hamath. So Judah went into exile from its land.

[28†] These are the people Nebuchadnezzar deported: in the seventh year,
3,023 Jews; [29] in his eighteenth year, 832 people from Jerusalem; [30] in

Nebuchadnezzar’s twenty-third year, Nebuzaradan, the commander of the
guards, deported 745 Jews. All together 4,600 people were deported.

Jehoiachin Pardoned

31† On the twenty-fifth day of the twelfth month of the thirty-seventh
year of the exile of Judah’s King Jehoiachin, Evil-merodach king of
Babylon, in the first year of his reign, pardoned King Jehoiachin of Judah
and released him from prison. 32 He spoke kindly to him and set his throne
above the thrones of the kings who were with him in Babylon. 33† So
Jehoiachin changed his prison clothes, and he dined regularly in the
presence of the king of Babylon for the rest of his life. 34 As for his
allowance, a regular allowance was given to him by the king of Babylon, a
portion for each day until the day of his death, for the rest of his life.

LAMENTATIONS

Introduction to Lamentations

LAMENTATIONS

Lament over Jerusalem

Alef

1 †How she sits alone,
the city once crowded with people!
She who was great among the nations
has become like a widow.
The princess among the provinces
has been put to forced labor.

Bet

2 She weeps aloud during the night,
with tears on her cheeks.
There is no one to offer her comfort,
not one from all her lovers.
All her friends have betrayed her;
they have become her enemies.

Gimel

3 Judah has gone into exile
following [A] affliction and harsh slavery;
she lives among the nations
but finds no place to rest.
All her pursuers have overtaken her
in narrow places.

Dalet

4 The roads to •Zion mourn,
for no one comes to the appointed festivals.
All her gates are deserted;
her priests groan,
her young women grieve,
and she herself is bitter.

He

5† Her adversaries have become her masters;
her enemies are at ease,
for the LORD has made her suffer
because of her many transgressions.
Her children have gone away

as captives before the adversary.

Vav

6 All her splendor has vanished
from Daughter Zion.
Her leaders are like stags
that find no pasture;
they walk away exhausted
before the hunter.

Zayin

7 During the days of her affliction and homelessness
Jerusalem remembers all her precious belongings
that were hers in days of old.
When her people fell into the adversary’s hand,
she had no one to help.
The adversaries looked at her,
laughing over her downfall.

Khet

8 Jerusalem has sinned grievously;
therefore, she has become an object of scorn. [B]
All who honored her now despise her,
for they have seen her nakedness.
She herself groans and turns away.

Tet

9 Her uncleanness stains her skirts.
She never considered her end.
Her downfall was astonishing;
there was no one to comfort her.
LORD, look on my affliction,
for the enemy triumphs!

Yod

10† The adversary has seized
all her precious belongings.

She has even seen the nations
enter her sanctuary —
those You had forbidden
to enter Your assembly.

Kaf

11 All her people groan
while they search for bread.
They have traded their precious belongings for food
in order to stay alive.
LORD, look and see
how I have become despised.

Lamed

12 Is this nothing to you, all you who pass by?
Look and see!
Is there any pain like mine,
which was dealt out to me,
which the LORD made me suffer
on the day of His burning anger?

Mem

13 He sent fire from heaven into my bones;
He made it descend.
He spread a net for my feet
and turned me back.
He made me desolate,
sick all day long.

Nun

14 My transgressions have been formed into a yoke, ,
fastened together by His hand;
they have been placed on my neck,
and the Lord has broken my strength.
He has handed me over
to those I cannot withstand.

Samek

[15] The Lord has rejected
all the mighty men within me.
He has summoned an army [D] against me
to crush my young warriors.
The Lord has trampled Virgin Daughter Judah
like grapes in a winepress.

Ayin

[16] I weep because of these things;
my eyes flow [E] with tears.
For there is no one nearby to comfort me,
no one to keep me alive.
My children are desolate
because the enemy has prevailed.

Pe

[17] Zion stretches out her hands;
there is no one to comfort her.
The Lord has issued a decree against Jacob
that his neighbors should be his adversaries.
Jerusalem has become
something impure among them.

Tsade

[18] The Lord is just,
for I have rebelled against His command.
Listen, all you people;
look at my pain.
My young men and women
have gone into captivity.

Qof

[19] I called to my lovers,
but they betrayed me.
My priests and elders
perished in the city
while searching for food

to keep themselves alive.

Resh

[20] LORD, see how I am in distress.
I am churning within;
my heart is broken, [F]
for I have been very rebellious.
Outside, the sword takes the children;
inside, there is death.

Shin

[21] People have heard me groaning,
but there is no one to comfort me.
All my enemies have heard of my misfortune;
they are glad that You have caused it.
Bring on the day You have announced,
so that they may become like me.

Tav

[22] Let all their wickedness come before You,
and deal with them
as You have dealt with me
because of all my transgressions.
For my groans are many,
and I am sick at heart.

Judgment on Jerusalem

Alef

2 How the Lord has overshadowed
Daughter •Zion with His anger!
He has thrown down Israel's glory
from heaven to earth.
He has abandoned His footstool
in the day of His anger.

Bet

2 Without compassion the Lord has swallowed up
all the dwellings of Jacob.
In His wrath He has demolished
the fortified cities of Daughter Judah.
He brought them to the ground
and defiled the kingdom and its leaders.

Gimel

3 He has cut off every •horn of Israel
in His burning anger
and withdrawn His right hand
in the presence of the enemy.
He has blazed against Jacob like a flaming fire
that consumes everything.

Dalet

4 He has bent His bow like an enemy;
His right hand is positioned like an adversary.
He has killed everyone who was loved, [A]
pouring out His wrath like fire
on the tent of Daughter Zion.

He

5 The Lord is like an enemy;
He has swallowed up Israel.
He swallowed up all its palaces
and destroyed its fortified cities.
He has multiplied mourning and lamentation
within Daughter Judah.

Vav

[6] He has done violence to His temple [B]
as if it were a garden booth,
destroying His place of meeting.
The LORD has abolished
appointed festivals and Sabbaths in Zion.
He has despised king and priest
in His fierce anger.

Zayin

[7] The Lord has rejected His altar,
repudiated His sanctuary;
He has handed the walls of her palaces
over to the enemy.
They have raised a shout in the house of the LORD
as on the day of an appointed festival.

Khet

[8] The LORD determined to destroy
the wall of Daughter Zion.
He stretched out a measuring line
and did not restrain Himself from destroying.
He made the ramparts and walls grieve;
together they waste away.

Tet

[9†] Zion's gates have fallen to the ground;
He has destroyed and shattered the bars on her gates.
Her king and her leaders live among the nations,
instruction [C] is no more,
and even her prophets receive
no vision from the LORD.

Yod

[10] The elders of Daughter Zion
sit on the ground in silence.
They have thrown dust on their heads

and put on •sackcloth.
The young women of Jerusalem
have bowed their heads to the ground.

Kaf

11 My eyes are worn out from weeping;
I am churning within.
My heart is poured out in grief [D]
because of the destruction of my dear people,
because children and infants faint
in the streets of the city.

Lamed

12 They cry out to their mothers:
Where is the grain and wine?
as they faint like the wounded
in the streets of the city,
as their lives fade away
in the arms of their mothers.

Mem

13 What can I say on your behalf?
What can I compare you to, Daughter Jerusalem?
What can I liken you to,
so that I may console you, Virgin Daughter Zion?
For your ruin is as vast as the sea.
Who can heal you?

Nun

14† Your prophets saw visions for you
that were empty and deceptive;
they did not reveal your •guilt
and so restore your fortunes.
They saw •oracles for you
that were empty and misleading.

Samek

15 All who pass by
scornfully clap their hands at you.
They mock [E] and shake their heads
at Daughter Jerusalem:
Is this the city that was called
the perfection of beauty,
the joy of the whole earth?

Pe

16 All your enemies
open their mouths against you.
They hiss and gnash their teeth,
saying, “We have swallowed her up.
This is the day we have waited for!
We have lived to see it.”

Ayin

17 The LORD has done what He planned;
He has accomplished His decree,
which He ordained in days of old.
He has demolished without compassion,
letting the enemy gloat over you
and exalting the horn of your adversaries.

Tsade

18 The hearts of the people cry out to the Lord.
Wall of Daughter Zion,
let your tears run down like a river
day and night.
Give yourself no relief
and your [F] eyes no rest.

Qof

19 Arise, cry out in the night
from the first watch of the night.
Pour out your heart like water
before the Lord’s presence.

Lift up your hands to Him
for the lives of your children
who are fainting from hunger
on the corner of every street.

Resh

20† LORD, look and consider
who You have done this to.
Should women eat their own children,
the infants they have nurtured? [G]
Should priests and prophets
be killed in the Lord's sanctuary?

Shin

21 Both young and old
are lying on the ground in the streets.
My young men and women
have fallen by the sword.
You have killed them in the day of Your anger,
slaughtering without compassion.

Tav

22 You summoned my attackers [H] on every side,
as if for an appointed festival day;
on the day of the LORD's anger
no one escaped or survived.
My enemy has destroyed
those I nurtured [I] and reared.

Hope through God's Mercy

Alef

3 I am the man who has seen affliction
under the rod of God's wrath.
2 He has driven me away and forced me to walk
in darkness instead of light.
3 Yes, He repeatedly turns His hand
against me all day long.

Bet

4 He has worn away my flesh and skin;
He has shattered my bones.
5 He has laid siege against me,
encircling me with bitterness and hardship.
6 He has made me dwell in darkness
like those who have been dead for ages.

Gimel

7 He has walled me in so I cannot escape;
He has weighed me down with chains.
8† Even when I cry out and plead for help,
He rejects my prayer.
9 He has walled in my ways with cut stones;
He has made my paths crooked.

Dalet

10 He is [A] a bear waiting in ambush,
a lion in hiding.
11 He forced me off my way and tore me to pieces;
He left me desolate.
12 He strung His bow
and set me as the target for His arrow.

He

13 He pierced my kidneys
with His arrows.
14 I am a laughingstock to all my people,
mocked by their songs all day long.

15 He filled me with bitterness,
satiated me with •wormwood.

Vav

16 He ground my teeth on gravel
and made me cower [B] in the dust.
17 My soul has been deprived of peace;
I have forgotten what happiness is.
18 Then I thought: My future [C] is lost,
as well as my hope from the LORD.

Zayin

19 Remember [D] my affliction and my homelessness,
the wormwood and the poison.
20 I continually remember them
and have become depressed.
21 Yet I call this to mind,
and therefore I have hope:

Khet

22 Because of the LORD's faithful love
we do not perish,
for His mercies never end.
23 They are new every morning;
great is Your faithfulness!
24 I say: The LORD is my portion,
therefore I will put my hope in Him.

Tet

25 The LORD is good to those who wait for Him,
to the person who seeks Him.
26 It is good to wait quietly
for deliverance from the LORD.
27 It is good for a man to bear the yoke
while he is still young.

Yod

28 Let him sit alone and be silent,
for God has disciplined him.
29 Let him put his mouth in the dust —
perhaps there is still hope.
30 Let him offer his cheek
to the one who would strike him;
let him be filled with shame.

Kaf

31 For the Lord
will not reject us forever.
32 Even if He causes suffering,
He will show compassion
according to His abundant, faithful love.
33 For He does not enjoy bringing affliction
or suffering on •mankind.

Lamed

34 Crushing all the prisoners of the land [E]
beneath one's feet,
35 denying justice to a man
in the presence of the •Most High,
36 or suppressing a person's lawsuit —
the Lord does not approve of these things.

Mem

37† Who is there who speaks and it happens,
unless the Lord has ordained it?
38 Do not both adversity and good
come from the mouth of the Most High?
39 Why should any living person complain,
any man, because of the punishment for his sins?

Nun

40 Let us search out and examine our ways,

and turn back to the LORD.
41 Let us lift up our hearts and our hands
to God in heaven:
42 We have sinned and rebelled;
You have not forgiven.

Samek

43 You have covered Yourself in anger and pursued us;
You have killed without compassion.
44† You have covered Yourself with a cloud
so that no prayer can pass through.
45 You have made us disgusting filth
among the peoples.

Pe

46 All our enemies
open their mouths against us.
47 We have experienced panic and pitfall,
devastation and destruction.
48 My eyes flow with streams of tears
because of the destruction of my dear people.

Ayin

49 My eyes overflow unceasingly,
without end,
50 until the LORD looks down
from heaven and sees.
51 My eyes bring me grief
because of the fate of all the women in my city.

Tsade

52 For no apparent reason, my enemies [F]
hunted me like a bird.
53 They dropped me alive into [G] a pit
and threw stones at me.
54 Water flooded over my head,

and I thought: I'm going to die!

Qof

55 I called on Your name, •Yahweh,
from the depths of the •Pit.
56 You hear my plea:
Do not ignore my cry for relief.
57 You come near when I call on You;
You say: "Do not be afraid."

Resh

58 You defend my cause, Lord;
You redeem my life.
59 LORD, You see the wrong done to me;
judge my case.
60 You see all their malice,
all their plots against me.

Sin / ש Shin

61 LORD, You hear their insults,
all their plots against me.
62 The slander [H] and murmuring of my opponents
attack me all day long.
63 When they sit and when they rise, look,
I am mocked by their songs.

Tav

64 You will pay them back what they deserve, LORD,
according to the work of their hands.
65 You will give them a heart filled with anguish. [I]
May Your curse be on them!
66 You will pursue them in anger and destroy them
under Your heavens. ,

Terrors of the Besieged City

Alef

4 How the gold has become tarnished,
the fine gold become dull!
The stones of the temple [A] lie scattered
at the corner of every street.

Bet

2 •Zion's precious people —
once worth their weight in pure gold —
how they are regarded as clay jars,
the work of a potter's hands!

Gimel

3 Even jackals offer their breasts
to nurse their young,
but my dear people have become cruel
like ostriches in the wilderness.

Dalet

4† The nursing infant's tongue
clings to the roof of his mouth from thirst.
Little children beg for bread,
but no one gives them any.

He

5 Those who used to eat delicacies
are destitute in the streets;
those who were reared in purple garments
huddle in garbage heaps.

Vav

6† The punishment of my dear people
is greater than that of Sodom,
which was overthrown in an instant
without a hand laid on it.

Zayin

7 Her dignitaries were brighter than snow,

whiter than milk;
their bodies [B] were more ruddy than coral,
their appearance like sapphire. [C]

Khet

8 Now they appear darker than soot;
they are not recognized in the streets.
Their skin has shriveled on their bones;
it has become dry like wood.

Tet

9 Those slain by the sword are better off
than those slain by hunger,
who waste away, pierced with pain
because the fields lack produce.

Yod

10† The hands of compassionate women
have cooked their own children;
they became their food
during the destruction of my dear people.

Kaf

11 The LORD has exhausted His wrath,
poured out His burning anger;
He has ignited a fire in Zion,
and it has consumed her foundations.

Lamed

12† The kings of the earth
and all the world's inhabitants did not believe
that an enemy or adversary
could enter Jerusalem's gates.

Mem

13 Yet it happened because of the sins of her prophets
and the •guilt of her priests,

who shed the blood of the righteous
within her.

Nun

14 Blind, they stumbled in the streets,
defiled by this blood,
so that no one dared
to touch their garments.

Samek

15 “Stay away! •Unclean! ” people shouted at them.
“Away, away! Don’t touch us! ”
So they wandered aimlessly.
It was said among the nations,
“They can stay here no longer.”

Pe

16 The LORD Himself has scattered them;
He regards them no more.
The priests are not respected;
the elders find no favor.

Ayin

17 All the while our eyes were failing
as we looked in vain for assistance;
we watched from our towers
for a nation that refused to help.

Tsade

18 Our steps were closely followed
so that we could not walk in our streets.
Our end drew near; our time ran out.
Our end had come!

Qof

19 Those who chased us were swifter
than eagles in the sky;

they relentlessly pursued us over the mountains
and ambushed us in the wilderness.

Resh

20† The LORD's anointed, the breath of our life, D
was captured in their traps.
We had said about him,
"We will live under his protection among the nations."

Sin

21 So rejoice and be glad, Daughter Edom,
you resident of the land of Uz!
Yet the cup will pass to you as well;
you will get drunk and expose yourself.

Tav

22 Daughter Zion, your punishment is complete;
He will not lengthen your exile. E
But He will punish your iniquity, Daughter Edom,
and will expose your sins.

Prayer for Restoration

5 •Yahweh, remember what has happened to us.
Look, and see our disgrace!
2 Our inheritance has been turned over to strangers,
our houses to foreigners.
3 We have become orphans, fatherless;
our mothers are widows.
4 We must pay for the water we drink;
our wood comes at a price.
5 We are closely pursued;
we are tired, and no one offers us rest.
6 We made a treaty with [A] Egypt
and with Assyria, to get enough food.
7† Our fathers sinned; they no longer exist,
but we bear their punishment.
8 Slaves rule over us;
no one rescues us from their hands.
9 We secure our food at the risk of our lives
because of the sword in the wilderness.
10 Our skin is as hot [B] as an oven
from the ravages of hunger.
11 Women are raped in •Zion,
girls in the cities of Judah.
12 Princes are hung up by their hands;
elders are shown no respect.
13† Young men labor at millstones;
boys stumble under loads of wood.
14 The elders have left the city •gate,
the young men, their music.
15 Joy has left our hearts;
our dancing has turned to mourning.
16 The crown has fallen from our head.
Woe to us, for we have sinned.
17 Because of this, our heart is sick;
because of these, our eyes grow dim:

18 because of Mount Zion, which lies desolate
and has jackals prowling in it.
19 You, LORD, are enthroned forever;
Your throne endures from generation to generation.
20 Why have You forgotten us forever,
abandoned us for our entire lives?
21 LORD, restore us to Yourself, so we may return;
renew our days as in former times,
22 unless You have completely rejected us
and are intensely angry with us.

EZEKIEL

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EZEKIEL

1 †In the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, on the fifth day of the month,
while I was among the exiles by the Chebar Canal, the heavens opened
and I saw visions of God. 2† On the fifth day of the month — it was the
fifth year of King Jehoiachin's exile — 3† the word of the LORD came
directly to Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans
by the Chebar Canal. And the LORD's hand was on him there.

Vision of the LORD's Glory

4† I looked and there was a whirlwind coming from the north, a great
cloud with fire flashing back and forth and brilliant light all around it. In the
center of the fire, there was a gleam like amber. 5† The form of four living
creatures came from it. And this was their appearance: They had human
form, 6 but each of them had four faces and four wings. 7 Their legs were
straight, and the soles of their feet were like the hooves of a calf, sparkling
like the gleam of polished bronze. 8 They had human hands under their
wings on their four sides. All four of them had faces and wings. 9 Their
wings were touching. The creatures did not turn as they moved; each one
went straight ahead. 10† The form of each of their faces was that of a man,
and each of the four had the face of a lion on the right, the face of an ox on
the left, and the face of an eagle. 11 That is what their faces were like. Their
wings were spread upward; each had two wings touching that of another
and two wings covering its body. 12 Each creature went straight ahead.
Wherever the Spirit [A] wanted to go, they went without turning as they
moved.

13 The form of the living creatures was like the appearance of burning
coals of fire and torches. Fire was moving back and forth between the
living creatures; it was bright, with lightning coming out of it. 14 The
creatures were darting back and forth like flashes of lightning.

15† When I looked at the living creatures, there was one wheel on the
ground beside each creature that had four faces. 16 The appearance of the
wheels and their craftsmanship was like the gleam of beryl, and all four
had the same form. Their appearance and craftsmanship was like a wheel

within a wheel. [17] When they moved, they went in any of the four
directions, without pivoting as they moved. [18] Their rims were large and
frightening. Each of their four rims were full of eyes all around. [19] So when
the living creatures moved, the wheels moved beside them, and when the
creatures rose from the earth, the wheels also rose. [20] Wherever the Spirit [B]
wanted to go, the creatures went in the direction the Spirit was moving. The
wheels rose alongside them, for the spirit of the living creatures was in the
wheels. [21] When the creatures moved, the wheels moved; when the
creatures stood still, the wheels stood still; and when the creatures rose from
the earth, the wheels rose alongside them, for the spirit of the living
creatures was in the wheels.

[22†] The shape of an expanse, with a gleam like awe-inspiring crystal,
was spread out over the heads of the living creatures. [23] And under the
expanse their wings extended one toward another. Each of them also had
two wings covering their bodies. [24] When they moved, I heard the sound of
their wings like the roar of mighty waters, like the voice of the •Almighty,
and a sound of commotion like the noise of an army. When they stood still,
they lowered their wings.

[25] A voice came from above the expanse over their heads; when they
stood still, they lowered their wings. [26†] The shape of a throne with the
appearance of sapphire [C] stone was above the expanse. [D], There was a form
with the appearance of a human on the throne high above. [27] From what
seemed to be His waist up, I saw a gleam like amber, with what looked like
fire enclosing it all around. From what seemed to be His waist down, I also
saw what looked like fire. There was a brilliant light all around Him.
[28†] The appearance of the brilliant light all around was like that of a
rainbow in a cloud on a rainy day. This was the appearance of the form of
the LORD's glory. When I saw it, I fell facedown and heard a voice
speaking.

Mission to Rebellious Israel

2 [†]He said to me, “Son of man, stand up on your feet and I will speak
with you.” [2] As He spoke to me, the Spirit entered me and set me on my
feet, and I listened to the One who was speaking to me. [3][†] He said to me:
“Son of man, I am sending you to the Israelites, to [A] the rebellious pagans
who have rebelled against Me. The Israelites and their ancestors have
transgressed against Me to this day. [4] The children are obstinate [B] and
hardhearted. I am sending you to them, and you must say to them, ‘This is
what the Lord GOD says.’ [5] Whether they listen or refuse to listen — for
they are a rebellious house — they will know that a prophet has been
among them.

[6] “But you, son of man, do not be afraid of them or their words, though
briers and thorns are beside you and you live among scorpions. Don’t be
afraid of their words or be discouraged by the look on their faces, for they
are a rebellious house. [7] But speak My words to them whether they listen or
refuse to listen, for they are rebellious.

[8] “And you, son of man, listen to what I tell you: Do not be rebellious
like that rebellious house. Open your mouth and eat what I am giving you.”
[9] So I looked and saw a hand reaching out to me, and there was a written
scroll in it. [10] When He unrolled it before me, it was written on the front
and back; words of lamentation, mourning, and woe were written on it.

3 He said to me: “Son of man, eat what you find here. Eat this scroll, then
go and speak to the house of Israel.” 2 So I opened my mouth, and He
fed me the scroll. 3† “Son of man,” he said to me, “eat [A] and fill your
stomach with this scroll I am giving you.” So I ate it, and it was as sweet as
honey in my mouth.

4 Then He said to me: “Son of man, go to the house of Israel and speak
My words to them. 5 For you are not being sent to a people of unintelligible
speech or difficult language but to the house of Israel. 6 You are not being
sent to many peoples of unintelligible speech or difficult language, whose
words you cannot understand. No doubt, if I sent you to them, they would
listen to you. 7 But the house of Israel will not want to listen to you
because they do not want to listen to Me. For the whole house of Israel is
hardheaded and hardhearted. 8† Look, I have made your face as hard as
their faces and your forehead as hard as their foreheads. 9 I have made your
forehead like a diamond, harder than flint. Don’t be afraid of them or
discouraged by the look on their faces, even though they are a rebellious
house.”

10 Next He said to me: “Son of man, listen carefully to all My words that
I speak to you and take them to heart. 11 Go to your people, the exiles, and
speak to them. Tell them, ‘This is what the Lord GOD says,’ whether they
listen or refuse to listen.”

12 The Spirit then lifted me up, and I heard a great rumbling sound
behind me — praise the glory of the LORD in His place! — 13 with the
sound of the living creatures’ wings brushing against each other and the
sound of the wheels beside them, a great rumbling sound. 14 So the Spirit
lifted me up and took me away. I left in bitterness and in an angry spirit,
and the LORD’s hand was on me powerfully. 15 I came to the exiles at Tel-
abib, who were living by the Chebar Canal, and I sat there among them
stunned for seven days.

Ezekiel as a Watchman

16† Now at the end of seven days the word of the LORD came to me:
17 "Son of man, I have made you a watchman over the house of Israel.
When you hear a word from My mouth, give them a warning from Me.
18 If I say to the wicked person, 'You will surely die,' but you do not warn
him — you don't speak out to warn him about his wicked way in order to
save his life — that wicked person will die for his iniquity. Yet I will hold
you responsible for his blood. 19 But if you warn a wicked person and he
does not turn from his wickedness or his wicked way, he will die for his
iniquity, but you will have saved your life. 20 Now if a righteous person
turns from his righteousness and practices iniquity, and I put a stumbling
block in front of him, he will die. If you did not warn him, he will die
because of his sin and the righteous acts he did will not be remembered. Yet
I will hold you responsible for his blood. 21 But if you warn the righteous
person that he should not sin, and he does not sin, he will indeed live
because he listened to your warning, and you will have saved your life."

22 Then the hand of the LORD was on me there, and He said to me, "Get
up, go out to the plain, and I will speak with you there." 23 So I got up and
went out to the plain. The LORD's glory was present there, like the glory I
had seen by the Chebar Canal, and I fell facedown. 24 The Spirit entered
me and set me on my feet. He spoke with me and said: "Go, shut yourself
inside your house. 25 And you, son of man, they will put ropes on you and
bind you with them so you cannot go out among them. 26 I will make your
tongue stick to the roof of your mouth, and you will be mute and unable to
rebuke them, for they are a rebellious house. 27 But when I speak with you,
I will open your mouth, and you will say to them, 'This is what the Lord
GOD says.' Let the one who listens, listen, and let the one who refuses,
refuse — for they are a rebellious house.

Jerusalem’s Siege Dramatized

4 [†]“Now you, son of man, take a brick, set it in front of you, and draw the
city of Jerusalem on it. 2 Then lay siege against it: construct a siege
wall, build a ramp, pitch military camps, and place battering rams against it
on all sides. 3 Take an iron plate and set it up as an iron wall between
yourself and the city. Turn your face toward it so that it is under siege, and
besiege it. This will be a sign for the house of Israel.

4 “Then lie down on your left side and place the iniquity [A] of the house of
Israel on it. You will bear their iniquity for the number of days you lie on
your side. 5 For I have assigned you the years of their iniquity according to
the number of days you lie down, 390 days; so you will bear the iniquity of
the house of Israel. 6 When you have completed these days, lie down again,
but on your right side, and bear the iniquity of the house of Judah. I have
assigned you 40 days, a day for each year. 7 You must turn your face toward
the siege of Jerusalem with your arm bared, and prophesy against it. 8 Be
aware that I will put cords on you so you cannot turn from side to side until
you have finished the days of your siege.

9[†] “Also take wheat, barley, beans, lentils, millet, and spelt. Put them in a
single container and make them into bread for yourself. You are to eat it
during the number of days you lie on your side, 390 days. 10 The food you
eat each day will be eight ounces [B] by weight; you will eat it from time to
time. [C] 11 You are also to drink water by measure, a sixth of a gallon, [D]
which you will drink from time to time. 12[†] You will eat it as you would a
barley cake and bake it over dried human excrement in their sight.” 13 The
LORD said, “This is how the Israelites will eat their bread — ceremonially
•unclean — among the nations where I will banish them.”

14 But I said, “Oh, Lord GOD, I have never been defiled. From my youth
until now I have not eaten anything that died naturally or was mauled by
wild beasts. And impure meat has never entered my mouth.”

15 He replied to me, “Look, I will let you use cow dung instead of human
excrement, and you can make your bread over that.” 16 Then He said to me,
“Son of man, I am going to cut off the supply of bread in Jerusalem. They

will anxiously eat bread rationed by weight and in dread drink water by
measure. [17] So they will lack bread and water; everyone will be devastated
and waste away because of their iniquity.

Ezekiel Dramatizes Jerusalem's Fall

5 [†]"Now you, son of man, take a sharp sword, use it as you would a
barber's razor, and shave your head and beard. Then take a set of scales
and divide the hair. 2 You are to burn up a third of it in the city when the
days of the siege have ended; you are to take a third and slash it with the
sword all around the city; and you are to scatter a third to the wind, for I
will draw a sword to chase after them. 3 But you are to take a few strands
from the hair and secure them in the folds of your robe. 4 Take some more
of them, throw them into the fire, and burn them in it. A fire will spread
from it to the whole house of Israel.

5 "This is what the Lord GOD says: I have set this Jerusalem in the center
of the nations, with countries all around her. 6 But she has rebelled against
My ordinances with more wickedness than the nations, and against My
statutes more than the countries that surround her. For her people have
rejected My ordinances and have not walked in My statutes.

7 "Therefore, this is what the Lord GOD says: Because you have been
more insubordinate than the nations around you — you have not walked in
My statutes or kept My ordinances; you have not even kept the ordinances
of the nations around you — 8 therefore, this is what the Lord GOD says:
See, I am against you, Jerusalem, and I will execute judgments within you
in the sight of the nations. 9 Because of all your detestable practices, I will
do to you what I have never done before and what I will never do again.
10[†] As a result, fathers will eat their sons within Jerusalem, [A] and sons will
eat their fathers. I will execute judgments against you and scatter all your
survivors to every direction of the wind.

11 "Therefore, as I live" — this is the declaration of the Lord GOD — "I
am going to cut you off and show you no pity, because you have defiled My
sanctuary with all your detestable practices and abominations. Yes, I will
not spare you. 12[†] A third of your people will die by plague and be
consumed by famine within you; a third will fall by the sword all around
you; and I will scatter a third to every direction of the wind, and I will draw
a sword to chase after them. 13 When My anger is spent and I have vented

My wrath on them, I will be appeased. Then after I have spent My wrath on them, they will know that I, •Yahweh, have spoken in My jealousy.

[14] "I will make you a ruin and a disgrace among the nations around you,
in the sight of everyone who passes by. [15] So you will be a disgrace and a
taunt, a warning and a horror, to the nations around you when I execute
judgments against you in anger, wrath, and furious rebukes. I, Yahweh,
have spoken. [16] When I shoot deadly arrows of famine at them, arrows for
destruction that I will send to destroy you, inhabitants of Jerusalem, I will
intensify the famine against you and cut off your supply of bread. [17] I will
send famine and dangerous animals against you. They will leave you
childless, Jerusalem. Plague and bloodshed will sweep through you, and I
will bring a sword against you. I, Yahweh, have spoken."

Prophecy against Israel's Idolatry

6 [†]The word of the Lord came to me: 2 “Son of man, turn your face
toward the mountains of Israel and prophesy against them. 3 You are to
say: Mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord God! This is what the
Lord God says to the mountains and the hills, to the ravines and the valleys:
I am about to bring a sword against you, and I will destroy your •high
places. 4[†] Your altars will be desolated and your incense altars smashed. I
will throw down your slain in front of your idols. 5 I will lay the corpses of
the Israelites in front of their idols and scatter your bones around your
altars. 6 Wherever you live the cities will be in ruins and the high places
will be desolate, so that your altars will lie in ruins and be desecrated, [A]
your idols smashed and obliterated, your incense altars cut down, and your
works wiped out. 7 The slain will fall among you, and you will know that I
am •Yahweh.

8 “Yet I will leave a remnant when you are scattered among the nations,
for throughout the countries there will be some of you who will escape the
sword. 9 Then your survivors will remember Me among the nations where
they are taken captive, how I was crushed by their promiscuous hearts that
turned away from Me and by their eyes that lusted after their idols. They
will loathe themselves because of the evil things they did, their detestable
practices of every kind. 10 And they will know that I am the Lord; I did not
threaten to bring this disaster on them without a reason.

Lament over the Fall of Jerusalem

11[†] “This is what the Lord God says: Clap your hands, stamp your feet,
and cry out over all the evil and detestable practices of the house of Israel,
who will fall by the sword, famine, and plague. 12 The one who is far off
will die by plague; the one who is near will fall by the sword; and the one
who remains and is spared [B] will die of famine. In this way I will exhaust
My wrath on them. 13 You will all know that I am Yahweh when their slain
lie among their idols around their altars, on every high hill, on all the
mountaintops, and under every green tree and every leafy oak — the places
where they offered pleasing aromas to all their idols. 14 I will stretch out My
hand against them, and wherever they live I will make the land a desolate

waste, from the wilderness to Diblah. Then they will know that I am Yahweh."

Announcement of the End

7 †And the word of the LORD came to me: [2] “Son of man, this is what the Lord GOD says to the land of Israel:

An end! The end has come
on the four corners of the land.
[3] The end is now upon you;
I will send My anger against you
and judge you according to your ways.
I will punish you for all your detestable practices.
[4] I will not look on you with pity or spare you,
but I will punish you for your ways
and for your detestable practices within you.
Then you will know that I am •Yahweh.”

[5]† This is what the Lord GOD says:

Look, one disaster after another is coming!
[6] An end has come; the end has come!
It has awakened against you.
Look, it is coming!
[7] Doom [A] has come on you,
inhabitants of the land.
The time has come; the day is near.
There will be panic on the mountains
and not celebration.

[8] I will pour out My wrath on you very soon;
I will exhaust My anger against you
and judge you according to your ways.
I will punish you for all your detestable practices.
[9] I will not look on you with pity or spare you.
I will punish you for your ways
and for your detestable practices within you.
Then you will know
that it is I, Yahweh, who strikes.

[10] Look, the day is coming!

Doom has gone out.
The rod has blossomed;
arrogance has bloomed.
11 Violence has grown into a rod of wickedness.
None of them will remain:
none of their multitude,
none of their wealth,
and none of the eminent among them.

12 The time has come; the day has arrived.
Let the buyer not rejoice
and the seller not mourn,
for wrath is on all her masses.
13 The seller will certainly not return
to what was sold
as long as he and the buyer remain alive. [B]
For the vision concerning all its people
will not be revoked,
and none of them will preserve
his life because of his iniquity.

14 They have blown the trumpet
and prepared everything,
but no one goes to war,
for My wrath is on all her masses.
15† The sword is on the outside;
plague and famine are on the inside.
Whoever is in the field will die by the sword,
and famine and plague will devour
whoever is in the city.

16 The survivors among them will escape
and live on the mountains
like doves of the valley,
all of them moaning,
each over his own iniquity.
17 All their hands will become weak,
and all their knees will turn to water.

18† They will put on •sackcloth,
and horror will overwhelm them.
Shame will cover all their faces,
and all their heads will be bald.

19 They will throw their silver into the streets,
and their gold will seem like something filthy.
Their silver and gold will be unable to save them
in the day of the LORD's wrath.
They will not satisfy their appetites
or fill their stomachs,
for these were the stumbling blocks
that brought about their iniquity.

20 He appointed His beautiful ornaments for majesty,
but [C] they made their abhorrent images from them,
their detestable things.
Therefore, I have made these
into something filthy for them.
21 I will hand these things over
to foreigners as plunder
and to the wicked of the earth as spoil,
and they will profane them.
22 I will turn My face from the wicked
as they profane My treasured place.
Violent men will enter it and profane it.

23† Forge the chain,
for the land is filled with crimes of bloodshed,
and the city is filled with violence.
24 So I will bring the most evil of nations
to take possession of their houses.
I will put an end to the pride of the strong,
and their sacred places will be profaned.
25 Anguish is coming!
They will seek peace, but there will be none.
26 Disaster after disaster will come,

and there will be rumor after rumor.
Then they will seek a vision from a prophet,
but instruction will perish from the priests
and counsel from the elders.
27 The king will mourn;
the prince will be clothed in grief;
and the hands of the people of the land will tremble.
I will deal with them according to their own conduct,
and I will judge them by their own standards.
Then they will know that I am Yahweh.

Visionary Journey to Jerusalem

8 †In the sixth year, in the sixth month, on the fifth day of the month, I
was sitting in my house and the elders of Judah were sitting in front of
me, and there the hand of the Lord GOD came down on me. 2 I looked, and
there was a form that had the appearance of a man. From what seemed to
be His waist down was fire, and from His waist up was something that
looked bright, like the gleam of amber. 3 He stretched out what appeared
to be a hand and took me by the hair of my head. Then the Spirit lifted me
up between earth and heaven and carried me in visions of God to
Jerusalem, to the entrance of the inner gate that faces north, where the
offensive statue that provokes jealousy was located. 4 I saw the glory of the
God of Israel there, like the vision I had seen in the plain.

Pagan Practices in the Temple

5† The LORD said to me, "Son of man, look toward the north." I looked to
the north, and there was this offensive statue north of the altar gate, at the
entrance. 6 He said to me, "Son of man, do you see what they are doing
here, more detestable things that the house of Israel is committing, so that I
must depart from My sanctuary? You will see even more detestable things."

7† Then He brought me to the entrance of the court, and when I looked
there was a hole in the wall. 8 He said to me, "Son of man, dig through the
wall." So I dug through the wall, and there was a doorway. 9 He said to me,
"Go in and see the terrible and detestable things they are committing here."
10 I went in and looked, and there engraved all around the wall was every
form of detestable thing, crawling creatures and beasts, as well as all the
idols of the house of Israel.

11 Seventy elders from the house of Israel were standing before them,
with Jaazaniah son of Shaphan standing among them. Each had a firepan in
his hand, and a fragrant cloud of incense was rising up. 12 Then He said to
me, "Son of man, do you see what the elders of the house of Israel are
doing in the darkness, each at the shrine of his idol? For they are saying,
'The LORD does not see us. The LORD has abandoned the land.' " 13 Again
He said to me, "You will see even more detestable things, which they are
committing."

[14]† So He brought me to the entrance of the north gate of the LORD's house, and I saw women sitting there weeping for Tammuz. [15] And He said to me, "Do you see this, son of man? You will see even more detestable things than these."

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Don't Religious Beliefs Just Reflect Where One Was Raised? ⇒

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[16]† So He brought me to the inner court of the LORD's house, and there were about 25 men at the entrance of the LORD's temple, between the portico and the altar, with their backs to the LORD's temple and their faces turned to the east. They were bowing to the east in worship of the sun.
[17] And He said to me, "Do you see this, son of man? Is it not enough for the house of Judah to commit the detestable things they are practicing here, that they must also fill the land with violence and repeatedly provoke Me to anger, even putting the branch to their nose? [18] Therefore I will respond with wrath. I will not show pity or spare them. Though they cry out in My ears with a loud voice, I will not listen to them."

Vision of Slaughter in Jerusalem

9 Then He called to me directly with a loud voice, “Come near,
executioners of the city, each of you with a destructive weapon in his
hand.” 2† And I saw six men coming from the direction of the Upper Gate,
which faces north, each with a war club in his hand. There was another man
among them, clothed in linen, with writing equipment at his side. They
came and stood beside the bronze altar.

3 Then the glory of the God of Israel rose from above the •cherub where
it had been, to the threshold of the temple. He called to the man clothed in
linen with the writing equipment at his side. 4 “Pass throughout the city of
Jerusalem,” the LORD said to him, “and put a mark on the foreheads of the
men who sigh and groan over all the detestable practices committed in it.”

5† He spoke as I listened to the others, “Pass through the city after him
and start killing; do not show pity or spare them! 6 Slaughter the old men,
the young men and women, as well as the older women and little children,
but do not come near anyone who has the mark. Now begin at My
sanctuary.” So they began with the elders who were in front of the temple.
7 Then He said to them, “Defile the temple and fill the courts with the slain.
Go! ” So they went out killing people in the city.

8 While they were killing, I was left alone. And I fell facedown and cried
out, “Oh, Lord GOD! Are You going to destroy the entire remnant of Israel
when You pour out Your wrath on Jerusalem? ”

9 He answered me: “The iniquity of the house of Israel and Judah is
extremely great; the land is full of bloodshed, and the city full of
perversity. For they say, ‘The LORD has abandoned the land; He does not
see.’ 10 But as for Me, I will not show pity or spare them. I will bring their
actions down on their own heads.” 11 Then the man clothed in linen with
the writing equipment at his side reported back, “I have done as You
commanded me.”

God's Glory Leaves the Temple

10 Then I looked, and there above the expanse over the heads of the
•cherubim was something like sapphire [A] stone resembling the shape
of a throne that appeared above them. 2 The LORD spoke to the man clothed
in linen and said, “Go inside the wheelwork beneath the cherubim. Fill your
hands with hot coals from among the cherubim and scatter them over the
city.” So he went in as I watched.

3 Now the cherubim were standing to the south of the temple when the
man went in, and the cloud filled the inner court. 4 Then the glory of the
LORD rose from above the cherub to the threshold of the temple. The
temple was filled with the cloud, and the court was filled with the
brightness of the LORD’s glory. 5 The sound of the cherubim’s wings could
be heard as far as the outer court; it was like the voice of •God Almighty
when He speaks.

6 After the LORD commanded the man clothed in linen, saying, “Take fire
from inside the wheelwork, from among the cherubim,” the man went in
and stood beside a wheel. 7 Then the cherub reached out his hand to the fire
that was among them. He took some, and put it into the hands of the man
clothed in linen, who took it and went out. 8 The cherubim appeared to have
the form of human hands under their wings.

9 I looked, and there were four wheels beside the cherubim, one wheel
beside each cherub. The luster of the wheels was like the gleam of beryl.
10 In appearance, all four had the same form, like a wheel within a wheel.
11 When they moved, they would go in any of the four directions, without
pivoting as they moved. But wherever the head faced, they would go in that
direction, [B] without pivoting as they went. 12 Their entire bodies, including
their backs, hands, wings, and the wheels that the four of them had, were
full of eyes all around. 13 As I listened the wheels were called “the
wheelwork.” 14[†] Each one had four faces: the first face was that of a
cherub, the second that of a man, the third that of a lion, and the fourth that
of an eagle.

[15] The cherubim ascended; these were the living creatures I had seen by
the Chebar Canal. [16] When the cherubim moved, the wheels moved beside
them, and when they lifted their wings to rise from the earth, even then the
wheels did not veer away from them. [17] When the cherubim stood still, the
wheels stood still, and when they ascended, the wheels ascended with them,
for the spirit of the living creatures was in them.

[18]† Then the glory of the LORD moved away from the threshold of the
temple and stood above the cherubim. [19]† The cherubim lifted their wings
and ascended from the earth right before my eyes; the wheels were beside
them as they went. The glory of the God of Israel was above them, and it
stood at the entrance to the eastern gate of the LORD's house.

[20] These were the living creatures I had seen beneath the God of Israel
by the Chebar Canal, and I recognized that they were cherubim. [21] Each
had four faces and each had four wings, with the form of human hands
under their wings. [22] Their faces looked like the same faces I had seen by
the Chebar Canal. Each creature went straight ahead.

Vision of Israel's Corrupt Leaders

11 †The Spirit then lifted me up and brought me to the eastern gate of
the LORD's house, which faces east, and at the gate's entrance were 25
men. Among them I saw Jaazaniah son of Azzur, and Pelatiah son of
Benaiah, leaders of the people. 2 The LORD said to me, "Son of man, these
are the men who plan evil and give wicked advice in this city. 3† They are
saying, 'Isn't the time near to build houses? [A], The city is the pot, and we
are the meat.' 4† Therefore, prophesy against them. Prophesy, son of man! "

5 Then the Spirit of the LORD came on me, and He told me, "You are to
say: This is what the LORD says: That is what you are thinking, house of
Israel; and I know the thoughts that arise in your mind. 6 You have
multiplied your slain in this city, filling its streets with the dead.

7 "Therefore, this is what the Lord GOD says: The slain you have put
within it are the meat, and the city is the pot, but I will remove you from
it. 8 You fear the sword, so I will bring the sword against you." This is the
declaration of the Lord GOD. 9 "I will bring you out of the city and hand you
over to foreigners; I will execute judgments against you. 10 You will fall by
the sword, and I will judge you at the border of Israel. Then you will know
that I am •Yahweh. 11 The city will not be a pot for you, and you will not be
the meat within it. I will judge you at the border of Israel, 12 so you will
know that I am Yahweh, whose statutes you have not followed and whose
ordinances you have not practiced. Instead, you have acted according to the
ordinances of the nations around you."

13† Now while I was prophesying, Pelatiah son of Benaiah died. Then I
fell facedown and cried out with a loud voice: "Oh, Lord GOD! Will You
bring to an end the remnant of Israel? "

Promise of Israel's Restoration

14 The word of the LORD came to me again: 15 "Son of man, your own
relatives, those who have the right to redeem you, and the entire house of
Israel, all of them, are those that the residents of Jerusalem have said this to,
'Stay away from the LORD; this land has been given to us as a possession.'

[16] "Therefore say: This is what the Lord God says: Though I sent them far away among the nations and scattered them among the countries, yet for a little while I have been a sanctuary for them in the countries where they have gone.

[17] "Therefore say: This is what the Lord God says: I will gather you from the peoples and assemble you from the countries where you have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel.

[18] "When they arrive there, they will remove all its detestable things and
practices from it. [19] And I will give them one heart and put a new spirit
within them; I will remove their heart of stone from their bodies [C] and give
them a heart of flesh, [20] so they may follow My statutes, keep My
ordinances, and practice them. Then they will be My people, and I will be
their God. [21] But as for those whose hearts pursue their desire for
detestable things and practices, I will bring their actions down on their own heads." This is the declaration of the Lord God.

God's Glory Leaves Jerusalem

[22] Then the •cherubim, with the wheels beside them, lifted their wings,
and the glory of the God of Israel was above them. [23†] The glory of the
Lord rose up from within the city and stood on the mountain east of the
city. [24] The Spirit lifted me up and brought me to Chaldea and to the exiles
in a vision from the Spirit of God. After the vision I had seen left me, [25] I
spoke to the exiles about all the things the Lord had shown me.

Ezekiel Dramatizes the Exile

12 [†]The word of the LORD came to me: 2 “Son of man, you are living
among a rebellious house. They have eyes to see but do not see, and
ears to hear but do not hear, for they are a rebellious house.

3 “Son of man, get your bags ready for exile and go into exile in their
sight during the day. You will go into exile from your place to another place
while they watch; perhaps they will understand, though they are a rebellious
house. 4 During the day, bring out your bags like an exile’s bags while they
look on. Then in the evening go out in their sight like those going into exile.
5 As they watch, dig through the wall and take the bags out through it. 6 And
while they look on, lift the bags to your shoulder and take them out in the
dark; cover your face so that you cannot see the land. For I have made you a
sign to the house of Israel.”

7 So I did just as I was commanded. In the daytime I brought out my bags
like an exile’s bags. In the evening I dug through the wall by hand; I took
them out in the dark, carrying them on my shoulder in their sight.

8 Then the word of the LORD came to me in the morning: 9 “Son of man,
hasn’t the house of Israel, that rebellious house, asked you, ‘What are you
doing?’ 10 Say to them: This is what the Lord GOD says: This •oracle is
about the prince in Jerusalem and all the house of Israel who are living
there. [A] 11 You are to say, ‘I am a sign for you. Just as I have done, so it will
be done to them; they will go into exile, into captivity.’ 12 The prince who
is among them will lift his bags to his shoulder in the dark and go out.
They will dig through the wall to bring him out through it. He will cover
his face so he cannot see the land with his eyes. 13 But I will spread My net
over him, and he will be caught in My snare. I will bring him to Babylon,
the land of the Chaldeans, yet he will not see it, and he will die there. 14 I
will also scatter all the attendants who surround him and all his troops to
every direction of the wind, and I will draw a sword to chase after them.
15 They will know that I am •Yahweh when I disperse them among the
nations and scatter them among the countries. 16 But I will spare a few of
them from the sword, famine, and plague so they can tell about all their

detestable practices among the nations where they go. Then they will know that I am Yahweh."

Ezekiel Dramatizes Israel's Anxiety

17 The word of the LORD came to me: 18 "Son of man, eat your bread
with trembling and drink your water with shaking and anxiety. 19 Then say
to the people of the land: This is what the Lord GOD says about the residents
of Jerusalem in the land of Israel: They will eat their bread with anxiety and
drink their water in dread, for their [B] land will be stripped of everything in
it because of the violence of all who live there. 20 The inhabited cities will
be destroyed, and the land will become a desolation. Then you will know
that I am Yahweh."

A Deceptive Proverb Stopped

21† Again the word of the LORD came to me: 22 "Son of man, what is this
proverb you people have about the land of Israel, which goes:

The days keep passing by,
and every vision fails?

23 Therefore say to them: This is what the Lord GOD says: I will put a stop
to this proverb, and they will not use it again in Israel. But say to them: The
days draw near, as well as the fulfillment of every vision. 24 For there will
no longer be any false vision or flattering •divination within the house of
Israel. 25 But I, Yahweh, will speak whatever message I will speak, and it
will be done. It will no longer be delayed. For in your days, rebellious
house, I will speak a message and bring it to pass." This is the declaration
of the Lord GOD.

26 The word of the LORD came to me: 27 "Son of man, notice that the
house of Israel is saying, 'The vision that he sees concerns many years from
now; he prophesies about distant times.' 28 Therefore say to them: This is
what the Lord GOD says: None of My words will be delayed any longer. The
message I speak will be fulfilled." This is the declaration of the Lord GOD.

Israel's False Prophets Condemned

13 †The word of the LORD came to me: 2 “Son of man, prophesy against
the prophets of Israel who are prophesying. Say to those who
prophesy out of their own imagination: Hear the word of the LORD! 3 This
is what the Lord GOD says: Woe to the foolish prophets who follow their
own spirit and have seen nothing. 4 Your prophets, Israel, are like jackals
among ruins. 5 You did not go up to the gaps or restore the wall around the
house of Israel so that it might stand in battle on the day of the LORD. 6 They
see false visions and speak lying •divinations. They claim, ‘This is the
LORD’s declaration,’ when the LORD did not send them, yet they wait for the
fulfillment of their message. 7 Didn’t you see a false vision and speak a
lying divination when you proclaimed, ‘This is the LORD’s declaration,’
even though I had not spoken?

8 “Therefore, this is what the Lord GOD says: I am against you because
you have spoken falsely and had lying visions.” This is the declaration of
the Lord GOD. 9 “My hand will be against the prophets who see false visions
and speak lying divinations. They will not be present in the fellowship of
My people or be recorded in the register of the house of Israel, and they will
not enter the land of Israel. Then you will know that I am the Lord
•Yahweh.

10 “Since they have led My people astray saying, ‘Peace,’ when there is
no peace, for when someone builds a wall they plaster it with whitewash,
11 therefore, tell those who plaster it that it will fall. Torrential rain will
come, and I will send hailstones plunging down, and a windstorm will be
released. 12 Now when the wall has fallen, will you not be asked, ‘Where is
the coat of whitewash that you put on it?’

13 “So this is what the Lord GOD says: I will release a windstorm in My
wrath. Torrential rain will come in My anger, and hailstones will fall in
destructive fury. 14 I will tear down the wall you plastered with whitewash
and knock it to the ground so that its foundation is exposed. The city will
fall, and you will be destroyed within it. Then you will know that I am
Yahweh. 15 After I exhaust My wrath against the wall and against those who
plaster it with whitewash, I will say to you: The wall is no more and neither

are those who plastered it — 16 those prophets of Israel who prophesied to
Jerusalem and saw a vision of peace for her when there was no peace.”
This is the declaration of the Lord GOD.

17 “Now, son of man, turn [A] toward the women of your people who
prophesy out of their own imagination. Prophesy against them
18[†] and say:
This is what the Lord GOD says: Woe to the women who sew magic bands
on the wrist of every hand and who make veils for the heads of people of
every height in order to ensnare lives. Will you ensnare the lives of My
people but preserve your own?
19 You profane Me in front of My people
for handfuls of barley and scraps of bread; you kill those who should not
die and spare those who should not live, when you lie to My people, who
listen to lies.

20 “Therefore, this is what the Lord GOD says: I am against your magic
bands that you ensnare people with like birds, and I will tear them from
your arms. I will free the people you have ensnared like birds.
21 I will also
tear off your veils and deliver My people from your hands, so that they will
no longer be prey in your hands. Then you will know that I am Yahweh.
22 Because you have disheartened the righteous person with lies, even
though I have not caused him grief, and because you have encouraged the
wicked person not to turn from his evil way to save his life,
23 therefore
you will no longer see false visions or practice divination. I will deliver My
people from your hands. Then you will know that I am Yahweh.”

Idolatrous Elders Punished

14 Some of the elders of Israel came to me and sat down in front of me.
2 Then the word of the LORD came to me: 3 “Son of man, these men
have set up idols in their hearts and have put sinful stumbling blocks before
their faces. Should I be consulted by them at all?

4 “Therefore, speak to them and tell them: This is what the Lord GOD
says: When anyone from the house of Israel sets up idols in his heart, puts a
sinful stumbling block before his face, and then comes to the prophet, I,
•Yahweh, will answer him appropriately. I will answer him according to his
many idols, 5 so that I may take hold of the house of Israel by their hearts.
They are all estranged from Me because of their idols.

6 “Therefore, say to the house of Israel: This is what the Lord GOD says:
Repent and turn away from your idols; turn your faces away from all your
detestable things. 7 For when anyone from the house of Israel or from the
foreigners who reside in Israel separates himself from Me, setting up idols
in his heart and putting a sinful stumbling block before his face, and then
comes to the prophet to inquire of Me, [A] I, Yahweh, will answer him
Myself. 8 I will turn against that one and make him a sign and a proverb; I
will cut him off from among My people. Then you will know that I am
Yahweh.

9 “But if the prophet is deceived and speaks a message, it was I, Yahweh,
who deceived that prophet. I will stretch out My hand against him and
destroy him from among My people Israel. 10 They will bear their
punishment — the punishment of the one who inquires will be the same as
that of the prophet — 11 in order that the house of Israel may no longer
stray from following Me and no longer defile themselves with all their
transgressions. Then they will be My people and I will be their God.” This
is the declaration of the Lord GOD.

Four Devastating Judgments

12 The word of the LORD came to me: 13 “Son of man, if a land sins
against Me by acting faithlessly, and I stretch out My hand against it to cut
off its supply of bread, to send famine through it, and to wipe out both man

and animal from it, [14]† even if these three men — Noah, Daniel, and
Job — were in it, they would deliver only themselves by their
righteousness." This is the declaration of the Lord GOD.

[15] "If I allow dangerous animals to pass through the land and depopulate
it so that it becomes desolate, with no one passing through it for fear of the
animals, [16] even if these three men were in it, as I live" — the declaration of
the Lord GOD — "they could not deliver their sons or daughters. They alone
would be delivered, but the land would be desolate.

[17] "Or if I bring a sword against that land and say: Let a sword pass
through it, so that I wipe out both man and animal from it, [18] even if these
three men were in it, as I live" — the declaration of the Lord GOD — "they
could not deliver their sons or daughters, but they alone would be delivered.

[19] "Or if I send a plague into that land and pour out My wrath on it with
bloodshed to wipe out both man and animal from it, [20] even if Noah,
Daniel, and Job were in it, as I live" — the declaration of the Lord
GOD — "they could not deliver their son or daughter. They would deliver
only themselves by their righteousness.

[21] "For this is what the Lord GOD says: How much worse will it be when
I send My four devastating judgments against Jerusalem — sword, famine,
dangerous animals, and plague — in order to wipe out both man and animal
from it! [22] Even so, there will be survivors left in it, sons and daughters who
will be brought out. Indeed, they will come out to you, and you will observe
their conduct and actions. Then you will be consoled about the devastation
I have brought on Jerusalem, about all I have brought on it. [23] They will
bring you consolation when you see their conduct and actions, and you will
know that it was not without cause that I have done what I did to it." This
is the declaration of the Lord GOD.

Parable of the Useless Vine

15 Then the word of the LORD came to me: [2†] “Son of man, how does the
wood of the vine, that branch among the trees of the forest, compare
to any other wood? [3] Can wood be taken from it to make something useful?
Or can anyone make a peg from it to hang things on? [4] In fact, it is put into
the fire as fuel. The fire devours both of its ends, and the middle is charred.
Can it be useful for anything? [5] Even when it was whole it could not be
made into a useful object. How much less can it ever be made into anything
useful when the fire has devoured it and it is charred!

[6] “Therefore, this is what the Lord GOD says: Like the wood of the vine
among the trees of the forest, which I have given to the fire as fuel, so I will
give up the residents of Jerusalem. [7] I will turn against them. They may
have escaped from the fire, but it will still consume them. And you will
know that I am •Yahweh when I turn against them. [8] I will make the land
desolate because they have acted unfaithfully.” This is the declaration of the
Lord GOD.

Parable of God’s Adulterous Wife

16 [†]The word of the LORD came to me again: 2 “Son of man, explain
Jerusalem’s detestable practices to her. 3 You are to say: This is what
the Lord GOD says to Jerusalem: Your origin and your birth were in the land
of the Canaanites. Your father was an Amorite and your mother a Hittite.
4 As for your birth, your umbilical cord wasn’t cut on the day you were
born, and you weren’t washed •clean [A] with water. You were not rubbed
with salt or wrapped in cloths. 5[†] No one cared enough about you to do
even one of these things out of compassion for you. But you were thrown
out into the open field because you were despised on the day you were
born.

6 “I passed by you and saw you lying in your blood, and I said to you as
you lay in your blood: Live! Yes, I said to you as you lay in your blood:
Live! 7 I made you thrive like plants of the field. You grew up and
matured and became very beautiful. [B] Your breasts were formed and your
hair grew, but you were stark naked.

8 “Then I passed by you and saw you, and you were indeed at the age for
love. So I spread the edge of My garment over you and covered your
nakedness. I pledged Myself to you, entered into a covenant with you, and
you became Mine.” This is the declaration of the Lord GOD. 9 “I washed
you with water, rinsed off your blood, and anointed you with oil. 10 I
clothed you in embroidered cloth and provided you with leather sandals. I
also wrapped you in fine linen and covered you with silk. 11 I adorned you
with jewelry, putting bracelets on your wrists and a chain around your neck.
12 I put a ring in your nose, earrings on your ears, and a beautiful tiara on
your head. 13 So you were adorned with gold and silver, and your clothing
was made of fine linen, silk, and embroidered cloth. You ate fine flour,
honey, and oil. You became extremely beautiful and attained royalty.
14 Your fame spread among the nations because of your beauty, for it was
perfect through My splendor, which I had bestowed on you.” This is the
declaration of the Lord GOD.

15 “But you were confident in your beauty and acted like a prostitute
because of your fame. You lavished your sexual favors on everyone who

passed by. Your beauty became his. [C] 16 You took some of your garments and made colorful •high places for yourself, and you engaged in prostitution on them. These places should not have been built, and this should never have happened! [D] 17† You also took your beautiful jewelry made from the gold and silver I had given you, and you made male images so that you could engage in prostitution with them. 18 Then you took your embroidered garments to cover them, and set My oil and incense before them. 19 You also set before them as a pleasing aroma the food I gave you — the fine flour, oil, and honey that I fed you. That is what happened.” This is the declaration of the Lord God.

20 “You even took your sons and daughters you bore to Me and sacrificed them to these images as food. Wasn’t your prostitution enough? 21 You slaughtered My children and gave them up when you passed them through the fire to the images. 22 In all your detestable practices and acts of prostitution, you did not remember the days of your youth when you were stark naked and lying in your blood.

23 “Then after all your evil — Woe, woe to you! ” — the declaration of the Lord God — 24 “you built yourself a mound and made yourself an elevated place in every square. 25 You built your elevated place at the head of every street and turned your beauty into a detestable thing. You spread your legs to everyone who passed by and increased your prostitution. 26 You engaged in promiscuous acts with Egyptian men, your well-endowed neighbors, and increased your prostitution to provoke Me to anger.

ARTICLE

Is God Male? ⇒

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27 “Therefore, I stretched out My hand against you and reduced your provisions. I gave you over to the desire of those who hate you, the Philistine women, who were embarrassed by your indecent behavior.

[28] Then you engaged in prostitution with the Assyrian men because you
were not satisfied. Even though you did this with them, you were still not
satisfied. [29] So you extended your prostitution to Chaldea, the land of
merchants, but you were not even satisfied with this!

[30] "How your heart was inflamed with lust" — the declaration of the
Lord GOD — "when you did all these things, the acts of a brazen prostitute,
[31] building your mound at the head of every street and making your
elevated place in every square. But you were unlike a prostitute because
you scorned payment. [32] You adulterous wife, who receives strangers
instead of her husband! [33] Men give gifts to all prostitutes, but you gave
gifts to all your lovers. You bribed them to come to you from all around for
your sexual favors. [34] So you were the opposite of other women in your acts
of prostitution; no one solicited you. When you paid a fee instead of one
being paid to you, you were the opposite.

[35] "Therefore, you prostitute, hear the word of the LORD! [36] This is what
the Lord GOD says: Because your lust was poured out and your nakedness
exposed by your acts of prostitution with your lovers, and because of all
your detestable idols and the blood of your children that you gave to them,
[37] I am therefore going to gather all the lovers you pleased — all those you
loved as well as all those you hated. I will gather them against you from all
around and expose your nakedness to them so they see you completely
naked. [38] I will judge you the way adulteresses and those who shed blood
are judged. Then I will bring about your bloodshed in wrath and jealousy.
[39] I will hand you over to them, and they will level your mounds and tear
down your elevated places. They will strip off your clothes, take your
beautiful jewelry, and leave you stark naked. [40] They will bring a mob
against you to stone you and cut you to pieces with their swords. [41] Then
they will burn down your houses and execute judgments against you in the
sight of many women. I will stop you from being a prostitute, and you will
never again pay fees for lovers. [42] So I will satisfy My wrath against you,
and My jealousy will turn away from you. Then I will be silent and no
longer angry. [43] Because you did not remember the days of your youth but
enraged Me with all these things, I will also bring your actions down on

your own head." This is the declaration of the Lord GOD. "Haven't you
committed immoral acts in addition to all your detestable practices?

[44]† "Look, everyone who uses proverbs will say this proverb about you:

Like mother, like daughter.

[45] You are the daughter of your mother, who despised her husband and
children. You are the sister of your sisters, who despised their husbands and
children. Your mother was a Hittite and your father an Amorite. [46] Your
older sister was Samaria, who lived with her daughters to the north of you,
and your younger sister was Sodom, who lived with her daughters to the
south of you. [47] Didn't you walk in their ways and do their detestable
practices? It was only a short time before you behaved more corruptly than
they did. [E]

[48]† "As I live" — the declaration of the Lord GOD — "your sister Sodom
and her daughters have not behaved as you and your daughters have.
[49] Now this was the iniquity of your sister Sodom: she and her daughters
had pride, plenty of food, and comfortable security, but didn't support the
poor and needy. [50] They were haughty and did detestable things before Me,
so I removed them when I saw this. [F] [51] But Samaria did not commit even
half your sins. You have multiplied your detestable practices beyond theirs
and made your sisters appear righteous by all the detestable things you have
committed. [52] You must also bear your disgrace, since you have been an
advocate for your sisters. For they appear more righteous than you because
of your sins, which you committed more abhorrently than they did. So you
also, be ashamed and bear your disgrace, since you have made your sisters
appear righteous.

[53] "I will restore their fortunes, the fortunes of Sodom and her daughters
and those of Samaria and her daughters. I will also restore your fortunes
among them, [54] so you will bear your disgrace and be ashamed of all you
did when you comforted them. [55] As for your sisters, Sodom and her
daughters and Samaria and her daughters will return to their former state.
You and your daughters will also return to your former state. [56] Didn't you

treat your sister Sodom as an object of scorn when you were proud,
[57] before your wickedness was exposed? It was like the time you were
scorned by the daughters of Aram and all those around her, and by the
daughters of the Philistines — those who treated you with contempt from
every side. [58] You yourself must bear the consequences of your indecency
and detestable practices" — this is the LORD's declaration.

[59]† "For this is what the Lord GOD says: I will deal with you according to
what you have done, since you have despised the oath by breaking the
covenant. [60] But I will remember the covenant I made with you in the days
of your youth, and I will establish an everlasting covenant with you.
[61] Then you will remember your ways and be ashamed when you receive
your older and younger sisters. I will give them to you as daughters, but not
because of your covenant. [62] I will establish My covenant with you, and
you will know that I am •Yahweh, [63] so that when I make •atonement for all
you have done, you will remember and be ashamed, and never open your
mouth again because of your disgrace." This is the declaration of the Lord
GOD.

Parable of the Eagles

17 The word of the LORD came to me: [2] “Son of man, pose a riddle and
speak a parable to the house of Israel. [3] You are to say: This is what
the Lord GOD says:

A great eagle with great wings, long pinions,
and full plumage of many colors
came to Lebanon and took the top of the cedar.
[4] He plucked off its topmost shoot,
brought it to the land of merchants,
and set it in a city of traders.
[5] Then he took some of the land’s seed
and put it in a fertile field;
he set it like a willow,
a plant [A] by abundant waters.
[6] It sprouted and became a spreading vine,
low in height with its branches turned toward him,
yet its roots stayed under it.
So it became a vine,
produced branches, and sent out shoots.

[7] But there was another great eagle
with great wings and thick plumage.
And this vine bent its roots toward him!
It stretched out its branches to him
from its planting bed,
so that he might water it.
[8] It had been planted
in a good field by abundant waters
in order to produce branches,
bear fruit, and become a splendid vine.

[9] You are to say: This is what the Lord GOD says:

Will it flourish?
Will he not tear out its roots
and strip off its fruit
so that it shrivels?

All its fresh leaves will wither!
Great strength and many people
will not be needed to pull it from its roots.
10 Even though it is planted, will it flourish?
Won't it completely wither
when the east wind strikes it?
It will wither on the bed where it sprouted."

11† The word of the LORD came to me: 12 "Now say to that rebellious
house: Don't you know what these things mean? Tell them: The king of
Babylon came to Jerusalem, took its king and officials, and brought them
back with him to Babylon. 13 He took one of the royal family and made a
covenant with him, putting him under oath. Then he took away the leading
men of the land, 14 so the kingdom might be humble and not exalt itself but
might keep his covenant in order to endure. 15 However, this king revolted
against him by sending his ambassadors to Egypt so they might give him
horses and a large army. Will he flourish? Will the one who does such
things escape? Can he break a covenant and still escape?

16 "As I live" — this is the declaration of the Lord GOD — "he will die in
Babylon, in the land of the king who put him on the throne, whose oath he
despised and whose covenant he broke. 17 Pharaoh will not help him with
his great army and vast horde in battle, when ramps are built and siege
walls constructed to destroy many lives. 18 He despised the oath by
breaking the covenant. He did all these things even though he gave his hand
in pledge. He will not escape! "

19 Therefore, this is what the Lord GOD says: "As I live, I will bring down
on his head My oath that he despised and My covenant that he broke. 20 I
will spread My net over him, and he will be caught in My snare. I will
bring him to Babylon and execute judgment on him there for the treachery
he committed against Me. 21 All the fugitives among his troops will fall by
the sword, and those who survive will be scattered to every direction of the
wind. Then you will know that I, •Yahweh, have spoken."

22† This is what the Lord GOD says:

I will take a sprig
from the lofty top of the cedar and plant it.
I will pluck a tender sprig
from its topmost shoots,
and I will plant it
on a high towering mountain.
23 I will plant it on Israel's high mountain
so that it may bear branches, produce fruit,
and become a majestic cedar.
Birds of every kind will nest under it,
taking shelter in the shade of its branches.
24 Then all the trees of the field will know
that I am Yahweh.
I bring down the tall tree,
and make the low tree tall.
I cause the green tree to wither
and make the withered tree thrive.
I, Yahweh, have spoken
and I will do it.

Personal Responsibility for Sin

18 †The word of the LORD came to me: 2 “What do you mean by using
this proverb concerning the land of Israel:

The fathers eat sour grapes,
and the children’s teeth are set on edge?

3 As I live” — this is the declaration of the Lord GOD — “you will no longer
use this proverb in Israel. 4 Look, every life belongs to Me. The life of the
father is like the life of the son — both belong to Me. The person who sins
is the one who will die.

5† “Now suppose a man is righteous and does what is just and right: 6 He
does not eat at the mountain shrines or raise his eyes to the idols of the
house of Israel. He does not defile his neighbor’s wife or come near a
woman during her menstrual impurity. 7 He doesn’t oppress anyone but
returns his collateral to the debtor. He does not commit robbery, but gives
his bread to the hungry and covers the naked with clothing. 8 He doesn’t
lend at interest or for profit but keeps his hand from wrongdoing and
carries out true justice between men. 9 He follows My statutes and keeps
My ordinances, acting faithfully. Such a person is righteous; he will
certainly live.” This is the declaration of the Lord GOD.

10† “Now suppose the man has a violent son, who sheds blood and does
any of these things, 11 though the father has done none of them. Indeed,
when the son eats at the mountain shrines and defiles his neighbor’s wife,
12 and when he oppresses the poor and needy, commits robbery, and does
not return collateral, and when he raises his eyes to the idols, commits
detestable acts, 13 and lends at interest or for profit, will he live? He will
not live! Since he has committed all these detestable acts, he will certainly
die. His blood will be on him.

14 “Now suppose he has a son who sees all the sins his father has
committed, and though he sees them, he does not do likewise. 15 He does
not eat at the mountain shrines or raise his eyes to the idols of the house of
Israel. He does not defile his neighbor’s wife. 16 He doesn’t oppress anyone,
hold collateral, or commit robbery. He gives his bread to the hungry and

covers the naked with clothing. 17 He keeps his hand from harming the
poor, not taking interest or profit on a loan. He practices My ordinances and
follows My statutes. Such a person will not die for his father's iniquity. He
will certainly live.

18 "As for his father, he will die for his own iniquity because he practiced
fraud, robbed his brother, and did what was wrong among his people.
19 But you may ask, 'Why doesn't the son suffer punishment for the father's
iniquity? ' Since the son has done what is just and right, carefully
observing all My statutes, he will certainly live. 20 The person who sins is
the one who will die. A son won't suffer punishment for the father's
iniquity, and a father won't suffer punishment for the son's iniquity. The
righteousness of the righteous person will be on him, and the wickedness
of the wicked person will be on him.

21† "Now if the wicked person turns from all the sins he has committed,
keeps all My statutes, and does what is just and right, he will certainly live;
he will not die. 22 None of the transgressions he has committed will be held
against him. He will live because of the righteousness he has practiced.
23 Do I take any pleasure in the death of the wicked? " This is the
declaration of the Lord God. "Instead, don't I take pleasure when he turns
from his ways and lives? 24 But when a righteous person turns from his
righteousness and practices iniquity, committing the same detestable acts
that the wicked do, will he live? None of the righteous acts he did will be
remembered. He will die because of the treachery he has engaged in and
the sin he has committed.

25† "But you say, 'The Lord's way isn't fair.' Now listen, house of Israel:
Is it My way that is unfair? Instead, isn't it your ways that are unfair?
26 When a righteous person turns from his righteousness and practices
iniquity, he will die for this. He will die because of the iniquity he has
practiced. 27 But if a wicked person turns from the wickedness he has
committed and does what is just and right, he will preserve his life. 28 He
will certainly live because he thought it over and turned from all the
transgressions he had committed; he will not die. 29 But the house of Israel

says, ‘The Lord’s way isn’t fair.’ Is it My ways that are unfair, house of Israel? Instead, isn’t it your ways that are unfair?

30† “Therefore, house of Israel, I will judge each one of you according to
his ways.” This is the declaration of the Lord GOD. “Repent and turn from
all your transgressions, so they will not be a stumbling block that causes
your punishment. 31 Throw off all the transgressions you have committed,
and get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit. Why should you die,
house of Israel? 32 For I take no pleasure in anyone’s death.” This is the
declaration of the Lord GOD. “So repent and live!

A Lament for Israel's Princes

19 [†]“Now, lament for the princes of Israel [2] and say:

What was your mother? A lioness!
She lay down among the lions;
she reared her cubs among the young lions.
[3] She brought up one of her cubs,
and he became a young lion.
After he learned to tear prey,
he devoured people.
[4] When the nations heard about him,
he was caught in their pit.
Then they led him away with hooks
to the land of Egypt.

[5] When she saw that she waited in vain,
that her hope was lost,
she took another of her cubs
and made him a young lion.
[6] He prowled among the lions,
and he became a young lion.
After he learned to tear prey,
he devoured people.
[7] He devastated their strongholds
and destroyed their cities.
The land and everything in it shuddered
at the sound of his roaring.
[8] Then the nations from the surrounding provinces
set out against him.
They spread their net over him;
he was caught in their pit.
[9] They put a wooden yoke on him [A] with hooks
and led him away to the king of Babylon.
They brought him into the fortresses
so his roar could no longer be heard
on the mountains of Israel.

[10] Your mother was like a vine in your vineyard,

planted by the water;
it was fruitful and full of branches
because of plentiful waters.
11 It had strong branches, fit for the scepters of rulers;
its height towered among the clouds. [B]
So it was conspicuous for its height
as well as its many branches.
12 But it was uprooted in fury,
thrown to the ground,
and the east wind dried up its fruit.
Its strong branches were torn off and dried up;
fire consumed them.
13 Now it is planted in the wilderness,
in a dry and thirsty land.
14 Fire has gone out from its main branch [C]
and has devoured its fruit,
so that it no longer has a strong branch,
a scepter for ruling.

This is a lament and should be used as a lament.”

Israel's Rebellion

20 †In the seventh year, in the fifth month, on the tenth day of the month,
some of Israel's elders came to consult the LORD, and they sat down
in front of me. 2 Then the word of the LORD came to me: 3 "Son of man,
speak with the elders of Israel and tell them: This is what the Lord GOD
says: Are you coming to consult Me? As I live, I will not be consulted by
you." This is the declaration of the Lord GOD.

4 "Will you pass judgment against them, will you pass judgment, son of
man? Explain the detestable practices of their fathers to them. 5 Say to
them: This is what the Lord GOD says: On the day I chose Israel, I swore an
oath [A], to the descendants of Jacob's house and made Myself known to
them in the land of Egypt. I swore to them, saying: I am •Yahweh your
God. 6 On that day I swore [B] to them that I would bring them out of the
land of Egypt into a land I had searched out for them, a land flowing with
milk and honey, the most beautiful of all lands. 7 I also said to them: Each
of you must throw away the detestable things that are before your eyes and
not defile yourselves with the idols of Egypt. I am Yahweh your God.

8 "But they rebelled against Me and were unwilling to listen to Me. None
of them threw away the detestable things that were before their eyes, and
they did not forsake the idols of Egypt. So I considered pouring out My
wrath on them, exhausting My anger against them within the land of Egypt.
9 But I acted because of My name, so that it would not be profaned in the
eyes of the nations they were living among, in whose sight I had made
Myself known to Israel by bringing them out of Egypt.

10 "So I brought them out of the land of Egypt and led them into the
wilderness. 11 Then I gave them My statutes and explained My ordinances
to them — the person who does them will live by them. 12 I also gave them
My Sabbaths to serve as a sign between Me and them, so they will know
that I am Yahweh who sets them apart as holy.

13 "But the house of Israel rebelled against Me in the wilderness. They
did not follow My statutes and they rejected My ordinances — the person
who does them will live by them. They also completely profaned My
Sabbaths. So I considered pouring out My wrath on them in the wilderness

to put an end to them. [14] But I acted because of My name, so that it would
not be profaned in the eyes of the nations in whose sight I had brought them
out. [15†] However, I swore [C] to them in the wilderness that I would not bring
them into the land I had given them — the most beautiful of all lands,
flowing with milk and honey — [16] because they rejected My ordinances,
profaned My Sabbaths, and did not follow My statutes. For their hearts
went after their idols. [17] But I spared them from destruction and did not
bring them to an end in the wilderness.

[18] "Then I said to their children in the wilderness: Don't follow the
statutes of your fathers, defile yourselves with their idols, or keep their
ordinances. [19] I am Yahweh your God. Follow My statutes, keep My
ordinances, and practice them. [20] Keep My Sabbaths holy, and they will be
a sign between Me and you, so you may know that I am Yahweh your God.

[21] "But the children rebelled against Me. They did not follow My
statutes or carefully keep My ordinances — the person who does them will
live by them. They also profaned My Sabbaths. So I considered pouring out
My wrath on them and exhausting My anger against them in the wilderness.
[22] But I withheld My hand and acted because of My name, so that it would
not be profaned in the eyes of the nations in whose sight I brought them out.
[23†] However, I swore [D] to them in the wilderness that I would disperse them
among the nations and scatter them among the countries. [24] For they did
not practice My ordinances but rejected My statutes and profaned My
Sabbaths, and their eyes were fixed on their fathers' idols. [25] I also gave
them statutes that were not good and ordinances they could not live by.
[26] When they made every firstborn pass through the fire, I defiled them
through their gifts in order to devastate them so they would know that I am
Yahweh.

[27] "Therefore, son of man, speak to the house of Israel, and tell them:
This is what the Lord God says: In this way also your fathers blasphemed
Me by committing treachery against Me: [28†] When I brought them into the
land that I swore [E] to give them and they saw any high hill or leafy tree,
they offered their sacrifices and presented their offensive offerings there.

They also sent up their pleasing aromas and poured out their •drink
offerings there. 29 So I asked them: What is this •high place you are going
to? And it is called High Place to this day.

30 “Therefore say to the house of Israel: This is what the Lord GOD says:
Are you defiling yourselves the way your fathers did, and prostituting
yourselves with their detestable things? 31 When you offer your gifts,
making your children pass through the fire, you continue to defile
yourselves with all your idols to this day. So should I be consulted by you,
house of Israel? As I live” — this is the declaration of the Lord GOD — “I
will not be consulted by you!

Israel’s Restoration

32 “When you say, ‘Let us be like the nations, like the peoples of other
countries, worshiping wood and stone,’ what you have in mind will never
happen. 33 As I live” — the declaration of the Lord GOD — “I will rule over
you with a strong hand, an outstretched arm, and outpoured wrath. 34 I will
bring you from the peoples and gather you from the countries where you
were scattered, with a strong hand, an outstretched arm, and outpoured
wrath. 35 I will lead you into the wilderness of the peoples and enter into
judgment with you there face to face. 36 Just as I entered into judgment with
your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so I will enter into
judgment with you.” This is the declaration of the Lord GOD. 37 “I will
make you pass under the rod and will bring you into the bond of the
covenant. 38 And I will also purge you of those who rebel and transgress
against Me. I will bring them out of the land where they live as foreign
residents, but they will not enter the land of Israel. Then you will know that
I am Yahweh.

39† “As for you, house of Israel, this is what the Lord GOD says: Go and
serve your idols, each of you. But afterward you will surely listen to Me,
and you will no longer defile My holy name with your gifts and idols.
40 For on My holy mountain, Israel’s high mountain” — the declaration of
the Lord GOD — “there the entire house of Israel, all of them, will serve
Me in the land. There I will accept them and will require your contributions

and choicest gifts, all your holy offerings. [41] When I bring you from the
peoples and gather you from the countries where you have been scattered, I
will accept you as a pleasing aroma. And I will demonstrate My holiness
through you in the sight of the nations. [42] When I lead you into the land of
Israel, the land I swore [F] to give your fathers, you will know that I am
Yahweh. [43] There you will remember your ways and all your deeds that
you have defiled yourselves with, and you will loathe yourselves for all the
evil things you have done. [44] You will know that I am Yahweh, house of
Israel, when I have dealt with you because of My name rather than
according to your evil ways and corrupt acts." This is the declaration of the
Lord GOD.

Fire in the South

[45] The word of the LORD came to me: [46] "Son of man, face the south and
preach against it. Prophesy against the forest land in the •Negev, [47] and say
to the forest there: Hear the word of the LORD! This is what the Lord GOD
says: I am about to ignite a fire in you, and it will devour every green tree
and every dry tree in you. The blazing flame will not be extinguished, and
every face from the south to the north will be scorched by it. [48] Then all
people will see that I, Yahweh, have kindled it. It will not be extinguished."

[49] Then I said, "Oh, Lord GOD, they are saying of me, 'Isn't he just
posing riddles? ' "

Chapter 21 *God’s Sword of Judgment*

[1]The word of the LORD came to me again: [2] “Son of man, turn your face
toward Jerusalem and preach against the sanctuaries. Prophesy against the
land of Israel, [3] and say to it: This is what the LORD says: I am against you.
I will draw My sword from its sheath and cut off both the righteous and the
wicked from you. [4] Since I will cut off [A] both the righteous and the wicked,
My sword will therefore come out of its sheath against everyone from the
south to the north. [5] So all the people will know that I, •Yahweh, have
taken My sword from its sheath — it will not be sheathed again.

[6] “But you, son of man, groan! Groan bitterly with a broken heart [B] right
before their eyes. [7] And when they ask you, ‘Why are you groaning?’ then
say: Because of the news that is coming. Every heart will melt, and every
hand will become weak. Every spirit will be discouraged, and every knee
will turn to water. Yes, it is coming and it will happen.” This is the
declaration of the Lord GOD.

[8][†] The word of the LORD came to me: [9] “Son of man, prophesy: This is
what the Lord says! You are to proclaim:

A sword! A sword is sharpened
and also polished.
[10] It is sharpened for slaughter,
polished to flash like lightning!
Should we rejoice?
The scepter of My son,
the sword despises every tree. [C]
[11] The sword is given to be polished,
to be grasped in the hand.
It is sharpened, and it is polished,
to be put in the hand of the slayer.
[12] Cry out and wail, son of man,
for it is against My people.
It is against all the princes of Israel!

They are given over to the sword with My people.
Therefore strike your thigh in grief.
13 Surely it will be a trial!
And what if the sword despises even the scepter?
The scepter will not continue. [D]

This is the declaration of the Lord God.

14 Therefore, son of man, prophesy
and clap your hands together.
Let the sword strike two times, even three.
It is a sword for massacre,
a sword for great massacre —
it surrounds [E] them!
15 I have appointed a sword for slaughter [F]
at all their gates,
so that their hearts may melt
and many may stumble.
Yes! It is ready to flash like lightning;
it is drawn [G] for slaughter.
16 Slash to the right;
turn to the left —
wherever your blade is directed.
17 I also will clap My hands together,
and I will satisfy My wrath.
I, Yahweh, have spoken."

18† Then the word of the Lord came to me: 19 "Now you, son of man,
mark out two roads that the sword of Babylon's king can take. Both of them
should originate from the same land. And make a signpost at the fork in the
road to each city. 20 Mark out a road that the sword can take to Rabbah of
the Ammonites and to Judah into fortified Jerusalem. 21 For the king of
Babylon stands at the split in the road, at the fork of the two roads, to
practice •divination: he shakes the arrows, consults the idols, and observes
the liver. 22 The answer marked [H] Jerusalem appears in his right hand,
indicating that he should set up battering rams, give the order to [I] slaughter,

raise a battle cry, set battering rams against the gates, build a ramp, and
construct a siege wall. 23 It will seem like false divination in the eyes of
those who have sworn an oath to the Babylonians, [J], but it will draw
attention to their •guilt so that they will be captured.

24 "Therefore, this is what the Lord GOD says: Because you have drawn attention to your guilt, exposing your transgressions, so that your sins are revealed in all your actions, since you have done this, you will be captured by them.

25 And you, profane and wicked prince of Israel,
the day has come
for your punishment." [K]

26 This is what the Lord GOD says:

Remove the turban, and take off the crown.
Things will not remain as they are; [L]
exalt the lowly and bring down the exalted.
27 A ruin, a ruin,
I will make it a ruin!
Yet this will not happen
until He comes;
I have given the judgment to Him. [M]

28† "Now prophesy, son of man, and say: This is what the Lord GOD says concerning the Ammonites and their contempt. You are to proclaim:

A sword! A sword
is drawn for slaughter,
polished to consume, to flash like lightning.
29 While they offer false visions
and lying divinations about you,
the time has come to put you
to the necks of the profane wicked ones;
the day has come

for your punishment. [N]

30 Return it to its sheath!

I will judge you
in the place where you were created,
in the land of your origin.
31 I will pour out My indignation on you;
I will blow the fire of My fury on you.
I will hand you over to brutal men,
skilled at destruction.
32 You will be fuel for the fire.
Your blood will be spilled in the land.
You will not be remembered,
for I, Yahweh, have spoken.”

Indictment of Sinful Jerusalem

22 †The word of the LORD came to me: [2] “As for you, son of man, will
you pass judgment? Will you pass judgment against the city of blood?
Then explain all her detestable practices to her. [3] You are to say: This is
what the Lord GOD says: A city that sheds blood within her walls so that
her time of judgment has come and who makes idols for herself so that she
is defiled! [4] You are •guilty of the blood you have shed, and you are defiled
from the idols you have made. You have brought your judgment days near
and have come to your years of punishment. Therefore, I have made you a
disgrace to the nations and a mockery to all the lands. [5] Those who are near
and those far away from you will mock you, you infamous one full of
turmoil.

[6] “Look, every prince of Israel within you has used his strength to shed
blood. [7] Father and mother are treated with contempt, and the foreign
resident is exploited within you. The fatherless and widow are oppressed in
you. [8] You despise My holy things and profane My Sabbaths. [9] There are
men within you who slander in order to shed blood. People who live in you
eat at the mountain shrines; they commit immoral acts within you. [10] Men
within you have sexual intercourse with their father’s wife and violate
women during their menstrual impurity. [11] One man within you commits a
detestable act with his neighbor’s wife; another wickedly defiles his
daughter-in-law; and yet another violates his sister, his father’s daughter.
[12] People who live in you accept bribes in order to shed blood. You take
interest and profit on a loan and brutally extort your neighbors. You have
forgotten Me.” This is the declaration of the Lord GOD.

[13] “Now look, I clap My hands together against the dishonest profit you
have made and against the blood shed among you. [14] Will your courage
endure or your hands be strong in the days when I deal with you? I,
•Yahweh, have spoken, and I will act. [15] I will disperse you among the
nations and scatter you among the countries; I will purge your
uncleanness. [16] You will be profaned in the sight of the nations. Then you
will know that I am Yahweh.”

Jerusalem as God’s Furnace

17 The word of the LORD came to me: 18 “Son of man, the house of Israel
has become dross to Me. All of them are copper, tin, iron, and lead inside
the furnace; they are the dross of silver. 19 Therefore, this is what the Lord
GOD says: Because all of you have become dross, I am about to gather you
into Jerusalem. 20 Just as one gathers silver, copper, iron, lead, and tin into
the furnace to blow fire on them and melt them, so I will gather you in My
anger and wrath, put you inside, and melt you. 21 Yes, I will gather you
together and blow on you with the fire of My fury, and you will be melted
within the city. 22 As silver is melted inside a furnace, so you will be melted
inside the city. Then you will know that I, Yahweh, have poured out My
wrath on you.”

Indictment of a Sinful Land

23[†] The word of the LORD came to me: 24 “Son of man, say to her: You
are a land that has not been cleansed, that has not received rain in the day
of indignation. 25 The conspiracy of her prophets within her is like a
roaring lion tearing its prey: they devour people, seize wealth and valuables,
and multiply the widows within her. 26 Her priests do violence to My
instruction and profane My holy things. They make no distinction between
the holy and the common, and they do not explain the difference between
the •clean and the •unclean. They disregard [A] My Sabbaths, and I am
profaned among them.

27 “Her officials within her are like wolves tearing their prey, shedding
blood, and destroying lives in order to make profit dishonestly. 28 Her
prophets plaster with whitewash for them by seeing false visions and lying
•divinations, and they say, ‘This is what the Lord GOD says,’ when the
LORD has not spoken. 29 The people of the land have practiced extortion and
committed robbery. They have oppressed the poor and needy and
unlawfully exploited the foreign resident. 30 I searched for a man among
them who would repair the wall and stand in the gap before Me on behalf
of the land so that I might not destroy it, but I found no one. 31 So I have
poured out My indignation on them and consumed them with the fire of My

fury. I have brought their actions down on their own heads." This is the declaration of the Lord GOD.

The Two Immoral Sisters

23 [†]The word of the LORD came to me again: 2 “Son of man, there were
two women, daughters of the same mother, 3 who acted like
prostitutes in Egypt, behaving promiscuously in their youth. Their breasts
were fondled there, and their virgin nipples caressed. 4 The older one was
named Oholah, and her sister was Oholibah. They became Mine and gave
birth to sons and daughters. As for their names, Oholah represents Samaria
and Oholibah represents Jerusalem.

5 “Oholah acted like a prostitute even though she was Mine. She lusted
after her lovers, the Assyrians: warriors 6 dressed in blue, governors and
prefects, all of them desirable young men, horsemen riding on steeds. 7 She
offered her sexual favors to them; all of them were the elite of Assyria. She
defiled herself with all those she lusted after and with all their idols. 8 She
didn’t give up her promiscuity that began in Egypt, when men slept with
her in her youth, caressed her virgin nipples, and poured out their lust on
her. 9 Therefore, I handed her over to her lovers, the Assyrians she lusted
for. 10 They exposed her nakedness, seized her sons and daughters, and
killed her with the sword. Since they executed judgment against her, she
became notorious among women.

11 “Now her sister Oholibah saw this, but she was even more depraved in
her lust than Oholah, and made her promiscuous acts worse than those of
her sister. 12 She lusted after the Assyrians: governors and prefects,
warriors splendidly dressed, horsemen riding on steeds, all of them
desirable young men. 13 And I saw that she had defiled herself; both of
them had taken the same path. 14 But she increased her promiscuity when
she saw male figures carved on the wall, images of the Chaldeans,
engraved in vermilion, 15 wearing belts on their waists and flowing turbans
on their heads; all of them looked like officers, a depiction of the
Babylonians in Chaldea, the land of their birth. 16 At the sight of them [A] she
lusted after them and sent messengers to them in Chaldea. 17 Then the
Babylonians came to her, to the bed of love, and defiled her with their lust.
But after she was defiled by them, she turned away from them in disgust.
18 When she flaunted her promiscuity and exposed her nakedness, I turned
away from her in disgust just as I turned away from her sister. 19 Yet she

multiplied her acts of promiscuity, remembering the days of her youth when
she acted like a prostitute in the land of Egypt [20] and lusted after their
lovers, whose sexual members were like those of donkeys and whose
emission was like that of stallions. [21] So you revisited the indecency of your
youth, when the Egyptians caressed your nipples to enjoy your youthful
breasts.

[22] "Therefore Oholibah, this is what the Lord GOD says: I am going to
incite your lovers against you, those you turned away from in disgust. I will
bring them against you from every side: [23] the Babylonians and all the
Chaldeans; Pekod, Shoa, and Koa; and all the Assyrians with
them — desirable young men, all of them governors and prefects, officers
and administrators, all of them riding on horses. [24] They will come against
you with an alliance of nations and with weapons, chariots, and wagons.
They will set themselves against you on every side with shields, bucklers,
and helmets. I will delegate judgment to them, and they will judge you by
their own standards. [25] When I vent My jealous rage on you, they will deal
with you in wrath. They will cut off your nose and ears, and your
descendants will fall by the sword. They will seize your sons and daughters,
and your descendants will be consumed by fire. [26] They will strip off your
clothes and take your beautiful jewelry. [27] So I will put an end to your
indecency and sexual immorality, which began in the land of Egypt, and
you will not look longingly at them or remember Egypt anymore.

[28] "For this is what the Lord GOD says: I am going to hand you over to
those you hate, to those you turned away from in disgust. [29] They will treat
you with hatred, take all you have worked for, and leave you stark naked,
so that the shame of your debauchery will be exposed, both your indecency
and promiscuity. [30] These things will be done to you because you acted like
a prostitute with the nations, defiling yourself with their idols. [31] You have
followed the path of your sister, so I will put her cup in your hand."

[32] This is what the Lord GOD says:

You will drink your sister's cup,
which is deep and wide.

You will be an object of [B] ridicule and scorn,
for it holds so much.
33 You will be filled with drunkenness and grief,
with a cup of devastation and desolation,
the cup of your sister Samaria.
34 You will drink it and drain it;
then you will gnaw its broken pieces,
and tear your breasts.
For I have spoken.

This is the declaration of the Lord GOD.

35 Therefore, this is what the Lord GOD says: "Because you have
forgotten Me and cast Me behind your back, you must bear the
consequences of your indecency and promiscuity."

36 Then the LORD said to me: "Son of man, will you pass judgment
against Oholah and Oholibah? Then declare their detestable practices to
them. 37 For they have committed adultery, and blood is on their hands;
they have committed adultery with their idols. They have even made the
children they bore to Me pass through the fire as food for the idols. 38 They
also did this to Me: they defiled My sanctuary on that same day and
profaned My Sabbaths. 39 On the same day they slaughtered their children
for their idols, they entered My sanctuary to profane it. Yes, that is what
they did inside My house.

40 "In addition, they sent for men who came from far away when a
messenger was dispatched to them. And look how they came! You bathed,
painted your eyes, and adorned yourself with jewelry for them. 41 You sat
on a luxurious couch with a table spread before it, on which you had set
My incense and oil. 42 The sound of a carefree crowd was there.
Drunkards [C] from the desert were brought in, along with common men.
They put bracelets on the women's hands and beautiful crowns on their
heads. 43 Then I said concerning this woman worn out by adultery: Will
they now have illicit sex with her, even her? 44 Yet they had sex with her as
one does with a prostitute. This is how they had sex with Oholah and

Oholibah, those obscene women. 45 But righteous men will judge them the way adulteresses and those who shed blood are judged, for they are adulteresses and blood is on their hands.

46 "This is what the Lord GOD says: Summon [D] an assembly against them and consign them to terror and plunder. 47 The assembly will stone them and cut them down with their swords. They will kill their sons and daughters and burn their houses with fire. 48 So I will put an end to indecency in the land, and all the women will be admonished not to imitate your indecent behavior. 49 They will repay you for your indecency, and you will bear the consequences for your sins of idolatry. Then you will know that I am the Lord •Yahweh."

Parable of the Boiling Pot

24 [†]The word of the LORD came to me in the ninth year, in the tenth
month, on the tenth day of the month: 2 “Son of man, write down
today’s date, this very day. The king of Babylon has laid siege to Jerusalem
this very day. 3 Now speak a parable to the rebellious house. Tell them:
This is what the Lord GOD says:

Put the pot on the fire —
put it on,
and then pour water into it!
4 Place the pieces of meat in it,
every good piece —
thigh and shoulder.
Fill it with choice bones.
5 Take the choicest of the flock
and also pile up the fuel [A] under it.
Bring it to a boil
and cook the bones in it.”

6 Therefore, this is what the Lord GOD says:

Woe to the city of bloodshed,
the pot that has rust inside it,
and whose rust will not come off!
Empty it piece by piece;
lots should not be cast for its contents.
7 For the blood she shed [B] is still within her.
She put it out on the bare rock;
she didn’t pour it on the ground
to cover it with dust.
8 In order to stir up wrath and take vengeance,
I have put her blood on the bare rock,
so that it would not be covered.

9 Therefore, this is what the Lord GOD says:

Woe to the city of bloodshed!

I Myself will make the pile of kindling large.
[10] Pile on the logs and kindle the fire!
Cook the meat well
and mix in the spices!
Let the bones be burned!
[11] Set the empty pot on its coals
so that it becomes hot and its copper glows.
Then its impurity will melt inside it;
its rust will be consumed.
[12] It has frustrated every effort; [D]
its thick rust will not come off.
Into the fire with its rust!
[13] Because of the indecency of your uncleanness —
since I tried to purify you,
but you would not be purified from your uncleanness —
you will not be pure again
until I have satisfied My wrath on you.
[14] I, •Yahweh, have spoken.
It is coming, and I will do it!
I will not refrain, I will not show pity,
and I will not relent.
I will judge you
according to your ways and deeds.

This is the declaration of the Lord GOD.

The Death of Ezekiel's Wife: A Sign

[15]† Then the word of the LORD came to me: [16] "Son of man, I am about to
take the delight of your eyes away from you with a fatal blow. But you
must not lament or weep or let your tears flow. [17] Groan quietly; do not
observe mourning rites for the dead. Put on your turban and strap your
sandals on your feet; do not cover your mustache or eat the bread of
mourners." [E]

[18] I spoke to the people in the morning, and my wife died in the evening.
The next morning I did just as I was commanded. [19] Then the people asked

me, “Won’t you tell us what these things you are doing mean for us? ”

[20] So I answered them: “The word of the LORD came to me: [21] ‘Say to the house of Israel: This is what the Lord GOD says: I am about to desecrate My sanctuary, the pride of your power, the delight of your eyes, and the desire of your heart. Also, the sons and daughters you left behind will fall by the sword. [22] Then you will do just as I have done: You will not cover your mustache or eat the bread of mourners. F [23] Your turbans will remain on your heads and your sandals on your feet. You will not lament or weep but will waste away because of your sins and will groan to one another. [24] Now Ezekiel will be a sign for you. You will do everything that he has done. When this happens, you will know that I am the Lord Yahweh.

[25] “ ‘Son of man, know that on the day I take their stronghold from them, their pride and joy, the delight of their eyes and the longing of their hearts, as well as their sons and daughters, [26] on that day a fugitive will come to you and report the news. [27] On that day your mouth will be opened to talk with him; you will speak and no longer be mute. So you will be a sign for them, and they will know that I am Yahweh.’ ”

PROPHECIES AGAINST THE NATIONS

Judgment against Ammon

25 † Then the word of the LORD came to me: 2 “Son of man, turn your
face toward the Ammonites and prophesy against them. 3 Say to the
Ammonites: Hear the word of the Lord GOD: This is what the Lord GOD
says: Because you said, ‘Good!’ about My sanctuary when it was
desecrated, about the land of Israel when it was laid waste, and about the
house of Judah when they went into exile, 4 therefore I am about to give
you to the people of the east as a possession. They will set up their
encampments and pitch their tents among you. They will eat your fruit and
drink your milk. 5 I will make Rabbah a pasture for camels and Ammon a
sheepfold. Then you will know that I am •Yahweh.”

6 For this is what the Lord GOD says: “Because you clapped your hands,
stamped your feet, and rejoiced over the land of Israel with wholehearted
contempt, 7 therefore I am about to stretch out My hand against you and
give you as plunder to the nations. I will cut you off from the peoples and
eliminate you from the countries. I will destroy you, and you will know that
I am Yahweh.”

Judgment against Moab

8† This is what the Lord GOD says: “Because Moab and Seir said, ‘Look,
the house of Judah is like all the other nations,’ 9 therefore I am about to
expose Moab’s flank beginning with its [A] frontier cities, the pride of the
land: Beth-jeshimoth, Baal-meon, and Kiriathaim. 10 I will give it along
with Ammon to the people of the east as a possession, so that Ammon will
not be remembered among the nations. 11 So I will execute judgments
against Moab, and they will know that I am Yahweh.”

Judgment against Edom

12† This is what the Lord GOD says: “Because Edom acted vengefully
against the house of Judah and incurred grievous •guilt by taking revenge
on them, 13 therefore this is what the Lord GOD says: I will stretch out My
hand against Edom and cut off both man and animal from it. I will make it a
wasteland; they will fall by the sword from Teman to Dedan. 14 I will take
My vengeance on Edom through My people Israel, and they will deal with

Edom according to My anger and wrath. So they will know My vengeance." This is the declaration of the Lord God.

Judgment against Philistia

15[†] This is what the Lord God says: "Because the Philistines acted in
vengeance and took revenge with deep contempt, destroying because of
their ancient hatred, 16 therefore this is what the Lord God says: I am about
to stretch out My hand against the Philistines, cutting off the Cherethites
and wiping out what remains of the coastal peoples. [B] 17 I will execute
great vengeance against them with furious rebukes. They will know that I am Yahweh when I take My vengeance on them."

The Downfall of Tyre

26 [†]In the eleventh year, on the first day of the month, the word of the
LORD came to me: 2 “Son of man, because Tyre said about Jerusalem,
‘Good! The gateway to the peoples is shattered. She has been turned over
to me. I will be filled now that she lies in ruins,’ 3 therefore this is what the
Lord GOD says: See, I am against you, Tyre! I will raise up many nations
against you, just as the sea raises its waves. 4 They will destroy the walls of
Tyre and demolish her towers. I will scrape the soil from her and turn her
into a bare rock. 5 She will become a place in the sea to spread nets, for I
have spoken.” This is the declaration of the Lord GOD. “She will become
plunder for the nations, 6 and her villages on the mainland will be
slaughtered by the sword. Then they will know that I am •Yahweh.”

7 For this is what the Lord GOD says: “See, I am about to bring King
Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, king of kings, against Tyre from the north
with horses, chariots, cavalry, and a vast company of troops. 8 He will
slaughter your villages on the mainland with the sword. He will set up siege
works against you, and will build a ramp [A] and raise a wall of shields
against you. 9 He will direct the blows of his battering rams against your
walls and tear down your towers with his iron tools. 10 His horses will be so
numerous that their dust will cover you. When he enters your gates as an
army entering a breached city, your walls will shake from the noise of
cavalry, wagons, and chariots. 11 He will trample all your streets with the
hooves of his horses. He will slaughter your people with the sword, and
your mighty pillars will fall to the ground. 12 They will take your wealth as
spoil and plunder your merchandise. They will also demolish your walls
and tear down your beautiful homes. Then they will throw your stones,
timber, and soil into the water. 13 I will put an end to the noise of your
songs, and the sound of your lyres will no longer be heard. 14 I will turn
you into a bare rock, and you will be a place to spread nets. You will never
be rebuilt, for I, Yahweh, have spoken.” This is the declaration of the Lord
GOD.

15 This is what the Lord GOD says to Tyre: “Won’t the coasts and islands
quake at the sound of your downfall, when the wounded groan and
slaughter occurs within you? 16 All the princes of the sea will descend from

their thrones, remove their robes, and strip off their embroidered garments.
They will clothe themselves with trembling; they will sit on the ground,
tremble continually, and be appalled at you. 17 Then they will lament for
you and say of you:

How you have perished, city of renown,
you who were populated from the seas!
She who was powerful on the sea,
she and all of her inhabitants
inflicted their terror. [B]
18 Now the coastlands tremble
on the day of your downfall;
the islands in the sea
are alarmed by your demise."

19 For this is what the Lord God says: "When I make you a ruined city
like other deserted cities, when I raise up the deep against you so that the
mighty waters cover you, 20 then I will bring you down to be with those
who descend to the •Pit, to the people of antiquity. I will make you dwell in
the underworld [C] like the ancient ruins, with those who descend to the Pit,
so that you will no longer be inhabited or display your splendor in the land
of the living. 21 I will make you an object of horror, and you will no longer
exist. You will be sought but will never be found again." This is the
declaration of the Lord God.

The Sinking of Tyre

27 [†]The word of the LORD came to me: 2 “Now, son of man, lament for
Tyre. 3 Say to Tyre, who is located at the entrance of the sea,
merchant of the peoples to many coasts and islands: This is what the Lord
GOD says:

Tyre, you declared,
‘I am perfect in beauty.’
4 Your realm was in the heart of the sea;
your builders perfected your beauty.
5 They constructed all your planking
with pine trees from Senir.
They took a cedar from Lebanon
to make a mast for you.
6 They made your oars of oaks from Bashan.
They made your deck of cypress wood
from the coasts of Cyprus,
inlaid with ivory.
7 Your sail was made of
fine embroidered linen from Egypt,
and served as your banner.
Your awning was of blue and purple fabric
from the coasts of Elishah.
8 The inhabitants of Sidon and Arvad
were your rowers.
Your wise men were within you, Tyre;
they were your captains.
9 The elders of Gebal and its wise men
were within you, repairing your leaks.

All the ships of the sea and their sailors
came to [A] you to barter for your goods.
10 Men of Persia, Lud, and Put
were in your army, serving as your warriors.
They hung shields and helmets in you;
they gave you splendor.
11 Men of Arvad and Helech

were stationed on your walls all around,
and Gammadites were in your towers.
They hung their shields [B] all around your walls;
they perfected your beauty.

[12] “Tarshish was your trading partner because of your great wealth of
every kind. They exchanged silver, iron, tin, and lead for your merchandise.
[13] Javan, Tubal, and Meshech were your merchants. They exchanged
slaves [C] and bronze utensils for your goods. [14] Those from Beth-togarmah
exchanged horses, war horses, and mules for your merchandise. [15] Men of
Dedan were also your merchants; many coasts and islands were your
regular markets. They brought back ivory tusks and ebony as your
payment. [16] Aram was your trading partner because of your numerous
products. They exchanged turquoise, [D] purple and embroidered cloth, fine
linen, coral, [E] and rubies [F] for your merchandise. [17] Judah and the land of
Israel were your merchants. They exchanged wheat from Minnith, meal, [G]
honey, oil, and balm, for your goods. [18] Damascus was also your trading
partner because of your numerous products and your great wealth of every
kind, trading in wine from Helbon and white wool. [H] [19] Vedan [I] and Javan
from Uzal [J], dealt in your merchandise; wrought iron, cassia, and aromatic
cane were exchanged for your goods. [20] Dedan was your merchant in
saddlecloths for riding. [21] Arabia and all the princes of Kedar were your
business [K] partners, trading with you in lambs, rams, and goats. [22] The
merchants of Sheba and Raamah traded with you. They exchanged gold,
the best of all spices, and all kinds of precious stones for your merchandise.
[23] Haran, Canneh, Eden, the merchants of Sheba, Asshur, and Chilmad
traded with you. [24] They were your merchants in choice garments, cloaks of
blue and embroidered materials, and multicolored carpets, [L] which were
bound and secured with cords in your marketplace. [25] Ships of Tarshish
were the carriers for your goods.

So you became full and heavily loaded [M]
in the heart of the sea.
[26] Your rowers have brought you

onto the high seas,
but the east wind has shattered you
in the heart of the sea.
27 Your wealth, merchandise, and goods,
your sailors and captains,
those who repair your leaks,
those who barter for your goods,
and all the warriors within you,
with all the other people on board, [N]
sink into the heart of the sea
on the day of your downfall.

28 The countryside shakes
at the sound of your sailors' cries.
29 All those who handle an oar
disembark from their ships.
The sailors and all the captains of the sea
stand on the shore.
30 They raise their voices over you
and cry out bitterly.
They throw dust on their heads;
they roll in ashes.
31 They shave their heads because of you
and wrap themselves in •sackcloth.
They weep over you
with deep anguish and bitter mourning.

32 In their wailing they lament for you,
mourning over you:
Who was like Tyre,
silenced [O] in the middle of the sea?
33 When your merchandise was unloaded from the seas,
you satisfied many peoples.
You enriched the kings of the earth
with your abundant wealth and goods.
34 Now you are shattered by the sea
in the depths of the waters;

your goods and the people within you
have gone down.
[35] All the inhabitants of the coasts and islands
are appalled at you.
Their kings shudder with fear;
their faces are contorted.
[36] Those who trade among the peoples
mock [P] you;
you have become an object of horror
and will never exist again.”

The Fall of Tyre’s Ruler

28 † The word of the LORD came to me: [2] "Son of man, say to the ruler of
Tyre: This is what the Lord GOD says:

Your [A] heart is proud,
and you have said, 'I am a god;
I sit in the seat of gods
in the heart of the sea.'
Yet you are a man and not a god,
though you have regarded your heart
as that of a god.
[3]† Yes, you are wiser than Daniel;
no secret is hidden from you!
[4] By your wisdom and understanding
you have acquired wealth for yourself.
You have acquired gold and silver
for your treasuries.
[5] By your great skill in trading
you have increased your wealth,
but your heart has become proud
because of your wealth."

[6] Therefore this is what the Lord GOD says:

Because you regard your heart as that of a god,
[7] I am about to bring strangers against you,
ruthless men from the nations.
They will draw their swords
against your magnificent wisdom
and will defile your splendor.
[8] They will bring you down to the •Pit,
and you will die a violent death
in the heart of the sea.
[9] Will you still say, 'I am a god,'
in the presence of those who kill you?
Yet you will be only a man, not a god,
in the hands of those who kill you.

10 You will die the death of the uncircumcised
at the hands of strangers.
For I have spoken.

This is the declaration of the Lord GOD.

A Lament for Tyre's King

11 The word of the LORD came to me: 12 "Son of man, lament for the
king of Tyre and say to him: This is what the Lord GOD says:

You were the seal [B] of perfection, [C]
full of wisdom and perfect in beauty.
13 You were in Eden, the garden of God.
Every kind of precious stone covered you:
carnelian, topaz, and diamond, [D]
beryl, onyx, and jasper,
sapphire, [E] turquoise [F] and emerald. [G]
Your mountings and settings were crafted in gold;
they were prepared on the day you were created.
14 You were an anointed guardian cherub,
for [H] I had appointed you.
You were on the holy mountain of God;
you walked among the fiery stones.
15 From the day you were created
you were blameless in your ways
until wickedness was found in you.
16 Through the abundance of your trade,
you were filled with violence, and you sinned.
So I expelled you in disgrace
from the mountain of God,
and banished you, guardian cherub, [I]
from among the fiery stones.
17 Your heart became proud because of your beauty;
For the sake of your splendor
you corrupted your wisdom.

So I threw you down to the earth;
I made you a spectacle before kings.
18 You profaned your sanctuaries
by the magnitude of your iniquities
in your dishonest trade.
So I made fire come from within you,
and it consumed you.
I reduced you to ashes on the ground
in the sight of everyone watching you.
19 All those who know you among the nations
are appalled at you.
You have become an object of horror
and will never exist again."

A Prophecy against Sidon

20† The word of the LORD came to me: 21 "Son of man, turn your face
toward Sidon and prophesy against it. 22 You are to say: This is what the
Lord GOD says:

Look! I am against you, Sidon,
and I will display My glory within you.
They will know that I am •Yahweh
when I execute judgments against her
and demonstrate My holiness through her.
23 I will send a plague against her
and bloodshed in her streets;
the slain will fall within her,
while the sword is against her [J] on every side.
Then they will know that I am Yahweh.

24 "The house of Israel will no longer be hurt by [K] prickly briers or
painful thorns from all their neighbors who treat them with contempt. Then
they will know that I am the Lord Yahweh.

25 "This is what the Lord GOD says: When I gather the house of Israel
from the peoples where they are scattered and demonstrate My holiness

through them in the sight of the nations, then they will live in their own land, which I gave to My servant Jacob. [26] They will live there securely, build houses, and plant vineyards. They will live securely when I execute judgments against all their neighbors who treat them with contempt. Then they will know that I am Yahweh their God."

A Prophecy of Egypt's Ruin

29 [†]In the tenth year, in the tenth month on the twelfth day of the month,
the word of the LORD came to me: 2 "Son of man, turn your face
toward Pharaoh king of Egypt and prophesy against him and against all of
Egypt. 3 Speak to him and say: This is what the Lord GOD says:

Look, I am against you, Pharaoh king of Egypt,
the great monster [A] lying in the middle of his Nile,
who says, 'My Nile is my own;
I made it for myself.'
4 I will put hooks in your jaws
and make the fish of your streams
cling to your scales.
I will haul you up
from the middle of your Nile,
and all the fish of your streams
will cling to your scales.
5 I will leave you in the desert,
you and all the fish of your streams.
You will fall on the open ground
and will not be taken away
or gathered for burial.
I have given you
to the beasts of the earth
and the birds of the sky as food.

6 Then all the inhabitants of Egypt
will know that I am •Yahweh,
for they have been a staff made of reed
to the house of Israel.
7 When Israel grasped you by the hand,
you splintered, tearing all their shoulders;
when they leaned on you,
you shattered and made all their hips unsteady.

8 "Therefore this is what the Lord GOD says: I am going to bring a sword
against you and wipe out man and animal from you. 9 The land of Egypt

will be a desolate ruin. Then they will know that I am Yahweh. Because
you said, 'The Nile is my own; I made it,' [10] therefore, I am against you
and your Nile. I will turn the land of Egypt into ruins, a desolate waste from
Migdol to Syene, as far as the border of •Cush. [11] No human foot will pass
through it, and no animal foot will pass through it. It will be uninhabited
for 40 years. [12] I will make the land of Egypt a desolation among [B] desolate
lands, and its cities will be a desolation among [C] ruined cities for 40 years.
I will disperse the Egyptians among the nations and scatter them across the
countries.

[13] "For this is what the Lord God says: At the end of 40 years I will
gather the Egyptians from the nations where they were dispersed. [14] I will
restore the fortunes of Egypt and bring them back to the land of Pathros, the
land of their origin. There they will be a lowly kingdom. [15] Egypt will be
the lowliest of kingdoms and will never again exalt itself over the nations. I
will make them so small they cannot rule over the nations. [16] It will never
again be an object of trust for the house of Israel, drawing attention to their
sin of turning to the Egyptians. Then they will know that I am the Lord
Yahweh."

Babylon Receives Egypt as Compensation

[17†] In the twenty-seventh year in the first month, on the first day of the
month, the word of the Lord came to me: [18] "Son of man, Nebuchadnezzar
king of Babylon made his army labor strenuously against Tyre. Every head
was made bald and every shoulder chafed, but he and his army received no
compensation from Tyre for the labor he expended against it. [19] Therefore
this is what the Lord God says: I am going to give the land of Egypt to
Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, who will carry off its wealth, seizing its
spoil and taking its plunder. This will be his army's compensation. [20] I have
given him the land of Egypt as the pay he labored for, since they worked for
Me." This is the declaration of the Lord God. [21] "In that day I will cause a
•horn to sprout for the house of Israel, and I will enable you to speak out
among them. Then they will know that I am Yahweh."

Egypt's Doom

30 The word of the LORD came to me: 2† "Son of man, prophesy and say: This is what the Lord GOD says:

Wail: Woe for the day!
3 For a day is near;
a day belonging to the LORD is near.
It will be a day of clouds,
a time of doom for the nations.
4 A sword will come against Egypt,
and there will be anguish in •Cush
when the slain fall in Egypt,
and its wealth is taken away,
and its foundations are torn down.
5 Cush, Put, and Lud,
and all the various foreign troops, [A]
plus Libya [B] and the men of the covenant land
will fall by the sword along with them.
6 This is what the LORD says:
Those who support Egypt will fall,
and its proud strength will collapse.
From Migdol to Syene
they will fall within it by the sword.
This is the declaration of the Lord GOD.
7 They will be desolate
among [C] desolate lands,
and their cities will lie
among ruined [D] cities.
8 They will know that I am •Yahweh
when I set fire to Egypt
and all its allies are shattered.

9 On that day, messengers will go out from Me in ships to terrify confident Cush. Anguish will come over them on the day of Egypt's doom. For indeed it is coming."

10 This is what the Lord GOD says:

I will put an end to the hordes [E] of Egypt
by the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon.
11 He along with his people,
ruthless men from the nations,
will be brought in to destroy the land.
They will draw their swords against Egypt
and fill the land with the slain.
12 I will make the streams dry
and sell the land into the hands of evil men.
I will bring desolation
on the land and everything in it
by the hands of foreigners.
I, Yahweh, have spoken.

13† This is what the Lord God says:

I will destroy the idols and put an end
to the false gods in Memphis.
There will no longer be
a prince from the land of Egypt.
So I will instill fear in that land.
14 I will make Pathros desolate,
set fire to Zoan,
and execute judgments on Thebes.
15 I will pour out My wrath on Pelusium,
the stronghold of Egypt,
and will wipe out the crowds [F] of Thebes.
16 I will set fire to Egypt;
Pelusium will writhe in anguish,
Thebes will be breached,
and Memphis will face foes in broad daylight. [G]
17 The young men of On and Pi-beseth
will fall by the sword,
and those cities [H] will go into captivity.
18 The day will be dark in Tehaphnehes,
when I break the yoke of Egypt there

and its proud strength
comes to an end in the city.
A cloud will cover Tehaphnehes, [I]
and its villages will go into captivity.
19 So I will execute judgments against Egypt,
and they will know that I am Yahweh.

Pharaoh's Power Broken

20† In the eleventh year, in the first month, on the seventh day of the
month, the word of the LORD came to me: 21 "Son of man, I have broken the
arm of Pharaoh king of Egypt. Look, it has not been bandaged — no
medicine has been applied and no splint put on to bandage it so that it can
grow strong enough to handle a sword. 22 Therefore this is what the Lord
GOD says: Look! I am against Pharaoh king of Egypt. I will break his arms,
both the strong one and the one already broken, and will make the sword
fall from his hand. 23 I will disperse the Egyptians among the nations and
scatter them among the countries. 24 I will strengthen the arms of
Babylon's king and place My sword in his hand. But I will break the arms
of Pharaoh, and he will groan before him as a mortally wounded man. 25 I
will strengthen the arms of Babylon's king, but Pharaoh's arms will fall.
They will know that I am Yahweh when I place My sword in the hand of
Babylon's king and he wields it against the land of Egypt. 26 When I
disperse the Egyptians among the nations and scatter them among the
countries, they will know that I am Yahweh."

Downfall of Egypt and Assyria

31 [†]In the eleventh year, in the third month, on the first day of the
month, the word of the LORD came to me: 2 “Son of man, say to
Pharaoh king of Egypt and to his hordes:

Who are you like in your greatness?
3 Think of Assyria, a cedar in Lebanon,
with beautiful branches and shady foliage
and of lofty height.
Its top was among the clouds. [A]
4 The waters caused it to grow;
the underground springs made it tall,
directing their rivers all around
the place where the tree was planted
and sending their channels
to all the trees of the field.
5 Therefore the cedar became greater in height
than all the trees of the field.
Its branches multiplied,
and its boughs grew long
as it spread them out
because of the plentiful water.
6 All the birds of the sky
nested in its branches,
and all the animals of the field
gave birth beneath its boughs;
all the great nations lived in its shade.
7 It was beautiful in its greatness,
in the length of its limbs,
for its roots extended to abundant water.
8 The cedars in God’s garden could not rival it;
the pine trees couldn’t compare with its branches,
nor could the plane trees match its boughs.
No tree in the garden of God
could compare with it in beauty.
9 I made it beautiful with its many limbs,
and all the trees of Eden,

which were in God’s garden, envied it.

10 “Therefore this is what the Lord GOD says: Since it became great in
height and set its top among the clouds, [B] and it [C] grew proud on account
of its height, 11 I determined to hand it over to a ruler of nations; he would
surely deal with it. I banished it because of its wickedness. 12 Foreigners,
ruthless men from the nations, cut it down and left it lying. Its limbs fell on
the mountains and in every valley; its boughs lay broken in all the earth’s
ravines. All the peoples of the earth left its shade and abandoned it. 13 All
the birds of the sky nested on its fallen trunk, and all the animals of the field
were among its boughs. 14 This happened so that no trees planted beside
water would become great in height and set their tops among the clouds, [D]
and so that no other well-watered trees would reach them in height. For
they have all been consigned to death, to the underworld, among the
•people who descend to the •Pit.

15 “This is what the Lord GOD says: I caused grieving on the day the
cedar went down to •Sheol. I closed off the underground deep because of
it: [E] I held back the rivers of the deep, and its abundant waters were
restrained. I made Lebanon mourn on account of it, and all the trees of the
field fainted because of it. 16 I made the nations quake at the sound of its
downfall, when I threw it down to Sheol to be with those who descend to
the Pit. Then all the trees of Eden, all the well-watered trees, the choice and
best of Lebanon, were comforted in the underworld. 17 They too descended
with it to Sheol, to those slain by the sword. As its allies they had lived in
its shade among the nations.

18 “Who then are you like in glory and greatness among Eden’s trees?
You also will be brought down to the underworld to be with the trees of
Eden. You will lie among the uncircumcised with those slain by the sword.
This is Pharaoh and all his hordes” — the declaration of the Lord GOD.

A Lament for Pharaoh

32 [†]In the twelfth year, in the twelfth month, on the first day of the
month, the word of the LORD came to me: [2] "Son of man, lament for
Pharaoh king of Egypt and say to him:

You compare yourself to a lion of the nations,
but [A] you are like a monster in the seas.
You thrash about in your rivers,
churn up the waters with your feet,
and muddy the [B] rivers."

[3] This is what the Lord GOD says:

I will spread My net over you
with an assembly of many peoples,
and they will haul you up in My net.
[4] I will abandon you on the land
and hurl you on the open field.
I will cause all the birds of the sky
to settle on you
and let the beasts of the entire earth
eat their fill of you.
[5] I will put your flesh on the mountains
and fill the valleys with your carcass.
[6] I will drench the land
with the flow of your blood,
even to the mountains;
the ravines will be filled with your gore.

[7] When I snuff you out,
I will cover the heavens
and darken their stars.
I will cover the sun with a cloud,
and the moon will not give its light.
[8] I will darken all the shining lights
in the heavens over you,
and will bring darkness on your land.

This is the declaration of the Lord GOD.

9 I will trouble the hearts of many peoples,
when I bring about your destruction
among the nations,
in countries you do not know.
10 I will cause many nations to be appalled at you,
and their kings will shudder with fear because of you
when I brandish My sword in front of them.
On the day of your downfall
each of them will tremble
every moment for his life.

11 For this is what the Lord GOD says:

The sword of Babylon's king
will come against you!
12 I will make your hordes fall
by the swords of warriors,
all of them ruthless men from the nations.
They will ravage Egypt's pride,
and all its hordes will be destroyed.
13 I will slaughter all its cattle
that are beside many waters.
No human foot will churn them again,
and no cattle hooves will disturb them.
14 Then I will let their waters settle
and will make their rivers flow like oil.
15 When I make the land of Egypt This is the declaration of the Lord GOD.
a desolation,
so that it is emptied of everything in it,
when I strike down all who live there,
then they will know that I am •Yahweh.

16 "This is a lament that will be chanted; the women of the nations will
chant it. They will chant it over Egypt and all its hordes." This is the
declaration of the Lord GOD.

Egypt in Sheol

17† In the twelfth year, on the fifteenth day of the month, the word of the
LORD came to me: 18 "Son of man, wail over the hordes of Egypt and bring
Egypt and the daughters of mighty nations down to the underworld, C to be
with those who descend to the •Pit:

19 Who do you surpass in loveliness?
Go down and be laid to rest with the uncircumcised!
20 They will fall among those slain by the sword.
A sword is appointed!
They drag her and all her hordes away.
21 Warrior leaders will speak
from the middle of •Sheol
about him and his allies:
They have come down;
the uncircumcised lie
slain by the sword.

22† Assyria is there with all her company;
her graves are all around her.
All of them are slain, fallen by the sword.
23 Her graves are set in the deepest regions of the Pit,
and her company is all around her burial place.
All of them are slain, fallen by the sword —
those who once spread terror
in the land of the living.

24 Elam is there
with all her hordes around her grave.
All of them are slain, fallen by the sword —
those who went down to the underworld D uncircumcised,
who once spread their terror
in the land of the living.
They bear their disgrace
with those who descend to the Pit.
25 Among the slain

they prepare a resting place for Elam
with all her hordes.
Her graves are all around her.
All of them are uncircumcised,
slain by the sword,
although their terror was once spread
in the land of the living.
They bear their disgrace
with those who descend to the Pit.
They are placed among the slain.

26 Meshech and Tubal [E], are there,
with all their hordes.
Their graves are all around them.
All of them are uncircumcised, slain by the sword,
although their terror was once spread
in the land of the living.
27 They do not lie down
with the fallen warriors of the uncircumcised,
who went down to Sheol
with their weapons of war,
whose swords were placed under their heads. [F]
The punishment for their sins
rested on their bones,
although the terror of these warriors
was once in the land of the living.
28 But you will be shattered
and will lie down among the uncircumcised,
with those slain by the sword.

29 Edom is there, her kings and all her princes,
who, despite their strength, have been placed
among those slain by the sword.
They lie down with the uncircumcised,
with those who descend to the Pit.
30 All the leaders of the north
and all the Sidonians are there.

They went down in shame with the slain,
despite the terror their strength inspired.
They lie down uncircumcised
with those slain by the sword.
They bear their disgrace
with those who descend to the Pit.

31 Pharaoh will see them
and be comforted over all his hordes —
Pharaoh and all his army,
slain by the sword.

This is the declaration of the Lord GOD.

32 For I will spread My terror
in the land of the living,
so Pharaoh and all his hordes
will be laid to rest among the uncircumcised,
with those slain by the sword."

This is the declaration of the Lord GOD.

Ezekiel as Israel's Watchman

33 †The word of the LORD came to me: 2 “Son of man, speak to your
people and tell them: Suppose I bring the sword against a land, and
the people of that land select a man from among them, appointing him as
their watchman, 3 and he sees the sword coming against the land and blows
his trumpet to warn the people. 4 Then, if anyone hears the sound of the
trumpet but ignores the warning, and the sword comes and takes him away,
his blood will be on his own head. 5 Since he heard the sound of the trumpet
but ignored the warning, his blood is on his own hands. [A] If he had taken
warning, he would have saved his life. 6 However, if the watchman sees the
sword coming but doesn’t blow the trumpet, so that the people aren’t
warned, and the sword comes and takes away their lives, then they have
been taken away because of their iniquity, but I will hold the watchman
accountable for their blood.

7 “As for you, son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of
Israel. When you hear a word from My mouth, give them a warning from
Me. 8 If I say to the wicked, ‘Wicked one, you will surely die,’ but you do
not speak out to warn him about his way, that wicked person will die for his
iniquity, yet I will hold you responsible for his blood. 9 But if you warn a
wicked person to turn from his way and he doesn’t turn from it, he will die
for his iniquity, but you will have saved your life.

10† “Now as for you, son of man, say to the house of Israel: You have
said this, ‘Our transgressions and our sins are heavy on us, and we are
wasting away because of them! How then can we survive?’ 11 Tell them:
As I live” — the declaration of the Lord GOD — “I take no pleasure in the
death of the wicked, but rather that the wicked person should turn from his
way and live. Repent, repent of your evil ways! Why will you die, house of
Israel?

12 “Now, son of man, say to your people: The righteousness of the
righteous person will not save him on the day of his transgression; neither
will the wickedness of the wicked person cause him to stumble on the day
he turns from his wickedness. The righteous person won’t be able to survive
by his righteousness on the day he sins. 13 When I tell the righteous person

that he will surely live, but he trusts in his righteousness and commits iniquity, then none of his righteousness will be remembered, and he will die because of the iniquity he has committed.

14 “So when I tell the wicked person, ‘You will surely die,’ but he repents
of his sin and does what is just and right — 15 he returns collateral, makes
restitution for what he has stolen, and walks in the statutes of life without
practicing iniquity — he will certainly live; he will not die. 16 None of the
sins he committed will be held against him. He has done what is just and
right; he will certainly live.

17 “But your people say, ‘The Lord’s way isn’t fair,’ even though it is
their own way that isn’t fair. 18 When a righteous person turns from his
righteousness and commits iniquity, he will die on account of this. 19 But if
a wicked person turns from his wickedness and does what is just and right,
he will live because of this. 20 Yet you say, ‘The Lord’s way isn’t fair.’ I will
judge each of you according to his ways, house of Israel.”

The News of Jerusalem’s Fall

21† In the twelfth year of our exile, in the tenth month, on the fifth day of
the month, a fugitive from Jerusalem came to me and reported, “The city
has been taken! ” 22 Now the hand of the LORD had been on me the evening
before the fugitive arrived, and He opened my mouth before the man came
to me in the morning. So my mouth was opened and I was no longer mute.

Israel’s Continued Rebellion

23 Then the word of the LORD came to me: 24 “Son of man, those who live
in the B ruins in the land of Israel are saying, ‘Abraham was only one
person, yet he received possession of the land. But we are many; the land
has been given to us as a possession.’ 25 Therefore say to them: This is
what the Lord GOD says: You eat meat with blood in it, raise your eyes to
your idols, and shed blood. Should you then receive possession of the land?
26 You have relied on your swords, you have committed detestable acts, and

each of you has defiled his neighbor's wife. Should you then receive possession of the land?

27 "Tell them this: This is what the Lord GOD says: As surely as I live, those who are in the ruins will fall by the sword, those in the open field I have given to wild animals to be devoured, and those in the strongholds and caves will die by plague. 28 I will make the land a desolate waste, and its proud strength will come to an end. The mountains of Israel will become desolate, with no one passing through. 29 They will know that I am •Yahweh when I make the land a desolate waste because of all the detestable acts they have committed.

30 "Now, son of man, your people are talking about you near the city walls and in the doorways of their houses. One person speaks to another, each saying to his brother, 'Come and hear what the message is that comes from the LORD! ' 31 So My people come to you in crowds, [C] sit in front of you, and hear your words, but they don't obey them. Although they express love with their mouths, their hearts pursue dishonest profit. 32 Yes, to them you are like a singer of love songs who has a beautiful voice and plays skillfully on an instrument. They hear your words, but they don't obey them. 33 Yet when it comes — and it will definitely come — then they will know that a prophet has been among them."

The Shepherds and God's Flock

34 [†]The word of the LORD came to me: 2 “Son of man, prophesy against
the shepherds of Israel. Prophesy, and say to them: This is what the
Lord GOD says to the shepherds: Woe to the shepherds of Israel, who have
been feeding themselves! Shouldn’t the shepherds feed their flock? 3 You
eat the fat, wear the wool, and butcher the fattened animals, but you do not
tend the flock. 4 You have not strengthened the weak, healed the sick,
bandaged the injured, brought back the strays, or sought the lost. Instead,
you have ruled them with violence and cruelty. 5 They were scattered for
lack of a shepherd; they became food for all the wild animals when they
were scattered. 6[†] My flock went astray on all the mountains and every high
hill. They were scattered over the whole face of the earth, and there was no
one searching or seeking for them.

7 “Therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the LORD. 8 As I
live” — the declaration of the Lord GOD — “because My flock has become
prey and food for every wild animal since they lack a shepherd, for My
shepherds do not search for My flock, and because the shepherds feed
themselves rather than My flock, 9 therefore, you shepherds, hear the word
of the LORD!

10 “This is what the Lord GOD says: Look, I am against the shepherds. I
will demand My flock from them [A] and prevent them from shepherding the
flock. The shepherds will no longer feed themselves, for I will rescue My
flock from their mouths so that they will not be food for them.

11 “For this is what the Lord GOD says: See, I Myself will search for My
flock and look for them. 12 As a shepherd looks for his sheep on the day he
is among his scattered flock, so I will look for My flock. I will rescue them
from all the places where they have been scattered on a cloudy and dark
day. 13 I will bring them out from the peoples, gather them from the
countries, and bring them into their own land. I will shepherd them on the
mountains of Israel, in the ravines, and in all the inhabited places of the
land. 14 I will tend them with good pasture, and their grazing place will be
on Israel’s lofty mountains. There they will lie down in a good grazing
place; they will feed in rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. 15 I will tend

My flock and let them lie down." This is the declaration of the Lord GOD.
[16] "I will seek the lost, bring back the strays, bandage the injured, and
strengthen the weak, but I will destroy the fat and the strong. I will
shepherd them with justice.

[17] "The Lord GOD says to you, My flock: I am going to judge between
one sheep and another, between the rams and male goats. [18] Isn't it enough
for you to feed on the good pasture? Must you also trample the rest of the
pasture with your feet? Or isn't it enough that you drink the clear water?
Must you also muddy the rest with your feet? [19] Yet My flock has to feed on
what your feet have trampled, and drink what your feet have muddied.

[20] "Therefore, this is what the Lord GOD says to them: See, I Myself will
judge between the fat sheep and the lean sheep. [21] Since you have pushed
with flank and shoulder and butted all the weak ones with your horns until
you scattered them all over, [22] I will save My flock, and they will no longer
be prey for you. I will judge between one sheep and another. [23] I will
appoint over them a single shepherd, My servant David, and he will
shepherd them. He will tend them himself and will be their shepherd. [24] I,
•Yahweh, will be their God, and My servant David will be a prince among
them. I, Yahweh, have spoken.

[25] "I will make a covenant of peace with them and eliminate dangerous
animals in the land, so that they may live securely in the wilderness and
sleep in the forest. [26] I will make them and the area around My hill a
blessing: I will send down showers in their season — showers [B] of
blessing. [27] The trees of the field will give their fruit, and the land will yield
its produce; My flock will be secure in their land. They will know that I am
Yahweh when I break the bars of their yoke and rescue them from the hands
of those who enslave them. [28] They will no longer be prey for the nations,
and the wild animals of the land will not consume them. They will live
securely, and no one will frighten them. [29] I will establish for them a place
renowned for its agriculture, and they will no longer be victims of famine
in the land. They will no longer endure the insults of the nations. [30] Then
they will know that I, Yahweh their God, am with them, and that they, the

house of Israel, are My people." This is the declaration of the Lord GOD.
31 "You are My flock, the human flock of My pasture, and I am your God."
This is the declaration of the Lord GOD.

A Prophecy against Edom

35

†The word of the LORD came to me: 2 “Son of man, turn your face
toward Mount Seir and prophesy against it. 3 Say to it: This is what
the Lord GOD says:

Look! I am against you, Mount Seir.
I will stretch out My hand against you
and make you a desolate waste.
4 I will turn your cities into ruins,
and you will become a desolation.
Then you will know that I am •Yahweh.

5† “Because you maintained an ancient hatred and handed over the
Israelites to the power of the sword in the time of their disaster, the time of
final punishment, 6 therefore, as I live” — this is the declaration of the
Lord GOD — “I will destine you for bloodshed, and it will pursue you.
Since you did not hate bloodshed, it will pursue you. 7 I will make Mount
Seir a desolate waste and will cut off from it those who come and go. 8 I
will fill its mountains with the slain; those slain by the sword will fall on
your hills, in your valleys, and in all your ravines. 9 I will make you a
perpetual desolation; your cities will not be inhabited. Then you will know
that I am Yahweh.

10 “Because you said, ‘These two nations and two lands will be mine, and
we will possess them’ — though the LORD was there — 11 therefore, as I
live” — the declaration of the Lord GOD — “I will treat you according to
the anger and jealousy you showed in your hatred of them. I will make
Myself known among them when I judge you. 12 Then you will know that
I, Yahweh, have heard all the blasphemies you uttered against the
mountains of Israel, saying, ‘They are desolate. They have been given to us
to devour!’ 13 You boasted against Me with your mouth, and spoke many
words against Me. I heard it Myself!

14 “This is what the Lord GOD says: While the whole world rejoices, I
will make you a desolation. 15 Just as you rejoiced over the inheritance of
the house of Israel because it became a desolation, so I will deal with you:

you will become a desolation, Mount Seir, and so will all Edom in its entirety. Then they will know that I am Yahweh.

Restoration of Israel's Mountains

36 †“Son of man, prophesy to the mountains of Israel and say: Mountains
of Israel, hear the word of the LORD. 2 This is what the Lord GOD
says: Because the enemy has said about you, ‘Good! The ancient heights
have become our possession,’ 3 therefore, prophesy and say: This is what
the Lord GOD says: Because they have made you desolate and have
trampled you from every side, so that you became a possession for the rest
of the nations and an object of people’s gossip and slander, 4 therefore,
mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord GOD. This is what the Lord
GOD says to the mountains and hills, to the ravines and valleys, to the
desolate ruins and abandoned cities, which have become plunder and a
mockery to the rest of the nations all around.

5 “This is what the Lord GOD says: Certainly in My burning zeal I speak
against the rest of the nations and all of Edom, who took [A] My land as their
own possession with wholehearted rejoicing and utter contempt so that its
pastureland became [B] plunder. 6 Therefore, prophesy concerning the land of
Israel and say to the mountains and hills, to the ravines and valleys: This is
what the Lord GOD says: Look, I speak in My burning zeal because you
have endured the insults of the nations. 7 Therefore this is what the Lord
GOD says: I swear [C] that the nations all around you will endure their own
insults.

8 “You, mountains of Israel, will produce your branches and bear your
fruit for My people Israel, since their arrival is near. 9 Look! I am on your
side; I will turn toward you, and you will be tilled and sown. 10 I will fill
you with people, with the whole house of Israel in its entirety. The cities
will be inhabited and the ruins rebuilt. 11 I will fill you with people and
animals, and they will increase and be fruitful. I will make you inhabited as
you once were and make you better off than you were before. Then you will
know that I am •Yahweh. 12 I will cause people, My people Israel, to walk
on you; they will possess you, and you will be their inheritance. You will
no longer deprive them of their children.

13 “This is what the Lord GOD says: Because people are saying to you,
‘You devour men and deprive your nation of children,’ 14 therefore, you

will no longer devour men and deprive your nation of children." This is the
declaration of the Lord GOD. 15 "I will no longer allow the insults of the
nations to be heard against you, and you will not have to endure the
reproach of the peoples anymore; you will no longer cause your nation to
stumble." This is the declaration of the Lord GOD.

Restoration of Israel's People

16† The word of the LORD came to me: 17 "Son of man, while the house of
Israel lived in their land, they defiled it with their conduct and actions.
Their behavior before Me was like menstrual impurity. 18 So I poured out
My wrath on them because of the blood they had shed on the land, and
because they had defiled it with their idols. 19 I dispersed them among the
nations, and they were scattered among the countries. I judged them
according to their conduct and actions. 20 When they came to the nations
where they went, they profaned My holy name, because it was said about
them, 'These are the people of Yahweh, yet they had to leave His land in
exile.' 21 Then I had concern for My holy name, which the house of Israel
profaned among the nations where they went.

22 "Therefore, say to the house of Israel: This is what the Lord GOD says:
It is not for your sake that I will act, house of Israel, but for My holy
name, which you profaned among the nations where you went. 23 I will
honor the holiness of My great name, which has been profaned among the
nations — the name you have profaned among them. The nations will know
that I am Yahweh" — the declaration of the Lord GOD — "when I
demonstrate My holiness through you in their sight.

24† "For I will take you from the nations and gather you from all the
countries, and will bring you into your own land. 25 I will also sprinkle
clean water on you, and you will be •clean. I will cleanse you from all your
impurities and all your idols. 26 I will give you a new heart and put a new
spirit within you; I will remove your heart of stone D and give you a heart
of flesh. 27 I will place My Spirit within you and cause you to follow My
statutes and carefully observe My ordinances. 28 Then you will live in the

land that I gave your fathers; you will be My people, and I will be your
God. [29] I will save you from all your uncleanness. I will summon the grain
and make it plentiful, and will not bring famine on you. [30] I will also make
the fruit of the trees and the produce of the field plentiful, so that you will
no longer experience reproach among the nations on account of famine.

[31] "Then you will remember your evil ways and your deeds that were not
good, and you will loathe yourselves for your iniquities and detestable
practices. [32] It is not for your sake that I will act" — the declaration of the
Lord GOD — "let this be known to you. Be ashamed and humiliated because
of your ways, house of Israel!

[33] "This is what the Lord GOD says: On the day I cleanse you from all
your iniquities, I will cause the cities to be inhabited, and the ruins will be
rebuilt. [34] The desolate land will be cultivated instead of lying desolate in
the sight of everyone who passes by. [35] Then they will say, 'This land that
was desolate has become like the garden of Eden. The cities that were once
ruined, desolate, and destroyed are now fortified and inhabited.' [36] Then the
nations that remain around you will know that I, Yahweh, have rebuilt what
was destroyed and have replanted what was desolate. I, Yahweh, have
spoken and I will do it.

ARTICLE

Notable Christian Apologist: Blaise Pascal ⇒

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[37] "This is what the Lord GOD says: I will respond to the house of Israel
and do this for them: I will multiply them in number like a flock. [E] [38] So
the ruined cities will be filled with a flock of people, just as the flock of
sheep for sacrifice is filled [F] in Jerusalem during its appointed festivals.
Then they will know that I am Yahweh."

The Valley of Dry Bones

37 †The hand of the LORD was on me, and He brought me out by His
Spirit and set me down in the middle of the valley; it was full of
bones. 2 He led me all around them. There were a great many of them on
the surface of the valley, and they were very dry. 3 Then He said to me,
"Son of man, can these bones live? "

I replied, "Lord GOD, only You know."

4 He said to me, "Prophesy concerning these bones and say to them: Dry
bones, hear the word of the LORD! 5 This is what the Lord GOD says to these
bones: I will cause breath to enter you, and you will live. 6 I will put
tendons on you, make flesh grow on you, and cover you with skin. I will
put breath in you so that you come to life. Then you will know that I am
•Yahweh."

7 So I prophesied as I had been commanded. While I was prophesying,
there was a noise, a rattling sound, and the bones came together, bone to
bone. 8 As I looked, tendons appeared on them, flesh grew, and skin
covered them, but there was no breath in them. 9 He said to me, "Prophesy
to the breath, [A] prophesy, son of man. Say to it: This is what the Lord GOD
says: Breath, come from the four winds and breathe into these slain so that
they may live! " 10 So I prophesied as He commanded me; the breath [B]
entered them, and they came to life and stood on their feet, a vast army.

11 Then He said to me, "Son of man, these bones are the whole house of
Israel. Look how they say, 'Our bones are dried up, and our hope has
perished; we are cut off.' 12 Therefore, prophesy and say to them: This is
what the Lord GOD says: I am going to open your graves and bring you up
from them, My people, and lead you into the land of Israel. 13 You will
know that I am Yahweh, My people, when I open your graves and bring you
up from them. 14 I will put My Spirit in you, and you will live, and I will
settle you in your own land. Then you will know that I am Yahweh. I have
spoken, and I will do it." This is the declaration of Yahweh.

The Reunification of Israel

[15] The word of the LORD came to me: [16] "Son of man, take a single stick
and write on it: Belonging to Judah and the Israelites associated with him.
Then take another stick and write on it: Belonging to Joseph — the stick of
Ephraim — and all the house of Israel associated with him. [17] Then join
them together into a single stick so that they become one in your hand.
[18] When your people ask you, 'Won't you explain to us what you mean by
these things? ' — [19] tell them: This is what the Lord GOD says: I am going
to take the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes
of Israel associated with him, and put them together with the stick of Judah.
I will make them into a single stick so that they become one in My hand.

[20] "When the sticks you have written on are in your hand and in full view
of the people, [21] tell them: This is what the Lord GOD says: I am going to
take the Israelites out of the nations where they have gone. I will gather
them from all around and bring them into their own land. [22] I will make
them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel, and one king will
rule over all of them. They will no longer be two nations and will no longer
be divided into two kingdoms. [23] They will not defile themselves anymore
with their idols, their detestable things, and all their transgressions. I will
save them from all their apostasies by which they sinned, and I will
cleanse them. Then they will be My people, and I will be their God. [24] My
servant David will be king over them, and there will be one shepherd for all
of them. They will follow My ordinances, and keep My statutes and obey
them.

[25] "They will live in the land that I gave to My servant Jacob, where
your fathers lived. They will live in it forever with their children and
grandchildren, and My servant David will be their prince forever. [26] I will
make a covenant of peace with them; it will be an everlasting covenant
with them. I will establish and multiply them and will set My sanctuary
among them forever. [27] My dwelling place will be with them; I will be their
God, and they will be My people. [28] When My sanctuary is among them
forever, the nations will know that I, Yahweh, sanctify Israel."

The Defeat of Gog

38 † The word of the LORD came to me: 2† “Son of man, turn your face
toward Gog, of the land of Magog, the chief prince of [A] Meshech and
Tubal. Prophesy against him 3 and say: This is what the Lord GOD says:
Look, I am against you, Gog, chief prince of Meshech and Tubal. 4† I will
turn you around, put hooks in your jaws, and bring you out with all your
army, including horses and riders, who are all splendidly dressed, a huge
company armed with shields and bucklers, all of them brandishing swords.
5 Persia, •Cush, and Put are with them, all of them with shields and helmets;
6 Gomer with all its troops; and Beth-togarmah from the remotest parts of
the north along with all its troops — many peoples are with you.

7 “Be prepared and get yourself ready, you and all your company who
have been mobilized around you; you will be their guard. 8† After a long
time you will be summoned. In the last years you will enter a land that has
been restored from war [B] and regathered from many peoples to the
mountains of Israel, which had long been a ruin. They were brought out
from the peoples, and all of them now live securely. 9 You, all of your
troops, and many peoples with you will advance, coming like a
thunderstorm; you will be like a cloud covering the land.

10 “This is what the Lord GOD says: On that day, thoughts will arise in
your mind, and you will devise an evil plan. 11 You will say, ‘I will go up
against a land of open villages; I will come against a tranquil people who
are living securely, all of them living without walls and without bars or
gates — 12 in order to seize spoil and carry off plunder, to turn your hand
against ruins now inhabited and against a people gathered from the nations,
who have been acquiring cattle and possessions and who live at the center
of the world.’ 13 Sheba and Dedan and the merchants of Tarshish with all
its rulers [C] will ask you, ‘Have you come to seize spoil? Have you
assembled your hordes to carry off plunder, to make off with silver and
gold, to take cattle and possessions, to seize great spoil? ’

14 “Therefore prophesy, son of man, and say to Gog: This is what the
Lord GOD says: On that day when My people Israel are dwelling securely,
will you not know this 15 and come from your place in the remotest parts of

the north — you and many peoples with you, who are all riding horses — a
mighty horde, a huge army? [16] You will advance against My people Israel
like a cloud covering the land. It will happen in the last days, Gog, that I
will bring you against My land so that the nations may know Me, when I
show Myself holy through you in their sight.

[17†] “This is what the Lord God says: Are you the one I spoke about in
former times through My servants, the prophets of Israel, who for years
prophesied in those times that I would bring you against them? [18†] Now on
that day, the day when Gog comes against the land of Israel” — this is the
declaration of the Lord God — “My wrath will flare up. [D] [19] I swear in My
zeal and fiery rage: On that day there will be a great earthquake in the land
of Israel. [20] The fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, the animals of the field,
every creature that crawls on the ground, and every human being on the
face of the earth will tremble before Me. The mountains will be thrown
down, the cliffs will collapse, and every wall will fall to the ground. [21] I
will call for a sword against him on all My mountains” — the declaration of
the Lord God — “and every man’s sword will be against his brother. [22] I
will execute judgment on him with plague and bloodshed. I will pour out
torrential rain, hailstones, fire, and brimstone on him, as well as his troops
and the many peoples who are with him. [23] I will display My greatness and
holiness, and will reveal Myself in the sight of many nations. Then they
will know that I am •Yahweh.

The Disposal of Gog

39 "As for you, son of man, prophesy against Gog and say: This is what
the Lord GOD says: Look, I am against you, Gog, chief prince of [A]
Meshech and Tubal. 2 I will turn you around, drive you on, and lead you
up from the remotest parts of the north. I will bring you against the
mountains of Israel. 3 Then I will knock your bow from your left hand and
make your arrows drop from your right hand. 4† You, all your troops, and
the peoples who are with you will fall on the mountains of Israel. I will give
you as food to every kind of predatory bird and to the wild animals. 5 You
will fall on the open field, for I have spoken." This is the declaration of the
Lord GOD.

6 "I will send fire against Magog and those who live securely on the
coasts and islands. Then they will know that I am •Yahweh. 7 So I will
make My holy name known among My people Israel and will no longer
allow it to be profaned. Then the nations will know that I am Yahweh, the
Holy One in Israel. 8 Yes, it is coming, and it will happen." This is the
declaration of the Lord GOD. "This is the day I have spoken about.

9 "Then the inhabitants of Israel's cities will go out, kindle fires, and burn
the weapons — the bucklers and shields, the bows and arrows, the clubs
and spears. For seven years they will use them to make fires. 10 They will
not gather wood from the countryside or cut it down from the forests, for
they will use the weapons to make fires. They will take the loot from those
who looted them and plunder those who plundered them." This is the
declaration of the Lord GOD.

11† "Now on that day I will give Gog a burial place there in Israel — the
Valley of the Travelers [B] east of the Sea. It will block those who travel
through, for Gog and all his hordes will be buried there. So it will be called
the Valley of Hamon-gog. 12 The house of Israel will spend seven months
burying them in order to cleanse the land. 13 All the people of the land will
bury them and their fame will spread on the day I display My glory." This
is the declaration of the Lord GOD.

14 “They will appoint men on a full-time basis to pass through the land
and bury the invaders [C] who remain on the surface of the ground, in order
to cleanse it. They will make their search at the end of the seven months.
15 When they pass through the land and one of them sees a human bone, he
will set up a marker next to it until the buriers have buried it in the Valley of
Hamon-gog. 16 There will even be a city named Hamonah there. So they
will cleanse the land.

17 “Son of man, this is what the Lord God says: Tell every kind of bird
and all the wild animals: Assemble and come! Gather from all around to
My sacrificial feast that I am slaughtering for you, a great feast on the
mountains of Israel; you will eat flesh and drink blood. 18 You will eat the
flesh of mighty men and drink the blood of the earth’s princes: rams, lambs,
male goats, and all the fattened bulls of Bashan. 19 You will eat fat until you
are satisfied and drink blood until you are drunk, at My sacrificial feast that
I have prepared for you. 20 At My table you will eat your fill of horses and
riders, of mighty men and all the warriors.” This is the declaration of the
Lord God.

Israel’s Restoration to God

21 “I will display My glory among the nations, and all the nations will
see the judgment I have executed and the hand I have laid on them. 22 From
that day forward the house of Israel will know that I am Yahweh their God.
23 And the nations will know that the house of Israel went into exile on
account of their iniquity, because they dealt unfaithfully with Me.
Therefore, I hid My face from them and handed them over to their enemies,
so that they all fell by the sword. 24 I dealt with them according to their
uncleanness and transgressions, and I hid My face from them.

25† “So this is what the Lord God says: Now I will restore the fortunes of
Jacob and have compassion on the whole house of Israel, and I will be
jealous for My holy name. 26 They will feel remorse for their disgrace and
all the unfaithfulness they committed against Me, when they live securely
in their land with no one to frighten them. 27 When I bring them back from

the peoples and gather them from the countries of their enemies, I will demonstrate My holiness through them in the sight of many nations.
[28] They will know that I am Yahweh their God when I regather them to their own land after having exiled them among the nations. I will leave none of them behind. [E] [29] I will no longer hide My face from them, for I will pour out My Spirit on the house of Israel." This is the declaration of the Lord GOD.

The New Temple

40 [†] In the twenty-fifth year of our exile, at the beginning of the year, on
the tenth day of the month in the fourteenth year after Jerusalem had
been captured, on that very day the LORD's hand was on me, and He
brought me there. [2] In visions of God He took me to the land of Israel and
set me down on a very high mountain. On its southern slope was a
structure resembling a city. [3] He brought me there, and I saw a man whose
appearance was like bronze, with a linen cord and a measuring rod in his
hand. He was standing by the gate. [4] He spoke to me: "Son of man, look
with your eyes, listen with your ears, and pay attention to everything I am
going to show you, for you have been brought here so that I might show it
to you. Report everything you see to the house of Israel."

The Wall and Outer Gates

[5][†] Now there was a wall surrounding the outside of the temple. The
measuring rod in the man's hand was six units of 21 inches; each unit was
the standard length plus three inches. [A] He measured the thickness of the
wall structure; it was about 10 feet, [B] and its height was the same. [C] [6] Then
he came to the gate that faced east and climbed its steps. He measured the
threshold of the gate; it was 10 feet deep — the first threshold was 10 feet
deep. [7] Each recess was about 10 feet [D] long and 10 feet [E] deep, and there
was a space of 8 3/4 feet [F] between the recesses. The inner threshold of the
gate on the temple side next to the gate's portico was about 10 feet. [G] [8] Next
he measured the portico of the gate; [9] it was 14 feet, [H] and its pilasters were
3 1/2 feet. [I] The portico of the gate was on the temple side.

[10] There were three recesses on each side of the east gate, each with the
same measurements, and the pilasters on either side also had the same
measurements. [11] Then he measured the width of the gate's entrance; it was
17 1/2 feet, [J] while the width [K] of the gateway was 22 3/4 feet. [L] [12] There
was a barrier of 21 inches [M] in front of the recesses on both sides, and the
recesses on each side were 10 1/2 feet [N] square. [13] Then he measured the
gateway from the roof of one recess to the roof of the opposite one; the
distance was 43 3/4 feet. [O] The openings of the recesses faced each other.
[14] Next, he measured the pilasters — 105 feet. [P] The gate extended around

to the pilaster of the court. [Q] [15] The distance from the front of the gate at the
entrance to the front of the gate's portico on the inside was 87 1/2 feet. [R]
[16] The recesses and their pilasters had beveled windows all around the
inside of the gateway. The porticoes also had windows all around on the
inside. Each pilaster was decorated with palm trees.

[17] Then he brought me into the outer court, and there were chambers and
a paved surface laid out all around the court. Thirty chambers faced the
pavement, [18] which flanked the gates and corresponded to the length of the
gates; this was the lower pavement. [19] Then he measured the distance from
the front of the lower gate to the exterior front of the inner court; it was 175
feet. [S] This was the east; next the north is described.

[20] He measured the gate of the outer court facing north, both its length
and width. [21] Its three recesses on each side, its pilasters, and its portico had
the same measurements as the first gate: 87 1/2 feet [T] long and 43 3/4 feet [U]
wide. [22] Its windows, portico, and palm trees had the same measurements as
those of the gate that faced east. Seven steps led up to the gate, and its
portico was ahead of them. [23] The inner court had a gate facing the north
gate, like the one on the east. He measured the distance from gate to gate; it
was 175 feet. [V]

[24] He brought me to the south side, and there was also a gate on the
south. He measured its pilasters and portico; they had the same
measurements as the others. [25] Both the gate and its portico had windows
all around, like the other windows. It was 87 1/2 feet [W] long and 43 3/4
feet [X] wide. [26] Its stairway had seven steps, and its portico was ahead of
them. It had palm trees on its pilasters, one on each side. [27] The inner court
had a gate on the south. He measured from gate to gate on the south; it was
175 feet. [Y]

The Inner Gates

[28] Then he brought me to the inner court through the south gate. When he
measured the south gate, it had the same measurements as the others. [29] Its

recesses, pilasters, and portico had the same measurements as the others. Both it and its portico had windows all around. It was 87 1/2 feet [Z] long and 43 3/4 feet [A] wide. [30] (There were porticoes all around, 43 3/4 feet long and 8 3/4 feet [B] wide.) [31†] Its portico faced the outer court, and its pilasters were decorated with palm trees. Its stairway had eight steps.

[32] Then he brought me to the inner court on the east side. When he measured the gate, it had the same measurements as the others. [33] Its recesses, pilasters, and portico had the same measurements as the others. Both it and its portico had windows all around. It was 87 1/2 feet [C] long and 43 3/4 feet [D] wide. [34] Its portico faced the outer court, and its pilasters were decorated with palm trees on each side. Its stairway had eight steps.

[35] Then he brought me to the north gate. When he measured it, it had the same measurements as the others, [36] as did its recesses, pilasters, and portico. It also had windows all around. It was 87 1/2 feet [E] long and 43 3/4 feet [F] wide. [37] Its portico faced the outer court, and its pilasters were decorated with palm trees on each side. Its stairway had eight steps.

Rooms for Preparing Sacrifices

[38] There was a chamber whose door opened into the portico of the gate. The •burnt offering was to be washed there. [39] Inside the portico of the gate there were two tables on each side, on which to slaughter the burnt offering, •sin offering, and •restitution offering. [40] Outside, as one approaches the entrance of the north gate, there were two tables on one side and two more tables on the other side of the gate's portico. [41] So there were four tables inside the gate and four outside, eight tables in all on which the slaughtering was to be done. [42] There were also four tables of cut stone for the burnt offering, each 31 1/2 inches [G] long, 31 1/2 inches wide, and 21 inches [H] high. The utensils used to slaughter the burnt offerings and other sacrifices were placed on them. [43] There were three-inch [I] hooks [J] fastened all around the inside of the room, and the flesh of the offering was to be laid on the tables.

Rooms for Singers and Priests

44 Outside the inner gate, within the inner court, there were chambers for
the singers: one beside the north gate, facing south, and another beside the
south gate, facing north. 45 Then the man said to me: “This chamber that
faces south is for the priests who keep charge of the temple. 46 The
chamber that faces north is for the priests who keep charge of the altar.
These are the sons of Zadok, the ones from the sons of Levi who may
approach the LORD to serve Him.” 47 Next he measured the court. It was
square, 175 feet [K] long and 175 feet wide. The altar was in front of the
temple.

48 Then he brought me to the portico of the temple and measured the
pilasters of the portico; they were 8 3/4 feet [L] thick on each side. The width
of the gateway was 24 1/2 feet, [M] and the side walls of the gate were 5 1/4
feet [N] wide on each side. 49 The portico was 35 feet [O] across and 21 feet [P]
deep, and 10 steps led up to it. There were pillars by the pilasters, one on
each side.

Inside the Temple

41 [†]Next he brought me into the great hall and measured the pilasters;
on each side the width of the pilaster was 10 1/2 feet. 2 The width of
the entrance was 17 1/2 feet, [B] and the side walls of the entrance were 8 3/4
feet [C] wide on each side. He also measured the length of the great hall, 70
feet, [D] and the width, 35 feet. [E], 3 He went inside the next room and
measured the pilasters at the entrance; they were 3 1/2 feet [F] wide. The
entrance was 10 1/2 feet [G] wide, and the width of the entrance's side walls
on each side was 12 1/4 feet. [H] 4 He then measured the length of the room
adjacent to the great hall, 35 feet, [I] and the width, 35 feet. And he said to
me, "This is the most holy place."

Outside the Temple

5 Then he measured the wall of the temple; it was 10 1/2 feet [J] thick. The
width of the side rooms all around the temple was seven feet. [K], 6 The side
rooms were arranged one above another in three stories of 30 rooms each. [L]
There were ledges on the wall of the temple all around to serve as supports
for the side rooms, so that the supports would not be in the temple wall
itself. 7 The side rooms surrounding the temple widened at each successive
story, for the structure surrounding the temple went up by stages. This was
the reason for the temple's broadness as it rose. And so, one would go up
from the lowest story to the highest by means of the middle one. [M]

8 I saw that the temple had a raised platform surrounding it; this
foundation for the side rooms was 10 1/2 feet high. [N], 9 The thickness of the
outer wall of the side rooms was 8 3/4 feet. [O] The free space between the
side rooms of the temple 10 and the outer chambers was 35 feet [P] wide all
around the temple. 11 The side rooms opened into the free space, one
entrance toward the north and another to the south. The area of free space
was 8 3/4 feet [Q] wide all around.

12 Now the building that faced the temple yard toward the west was
122 1/2 feet [R] wide. The wall of the building was 8 3/4 feet [S] thick on all
sides, and the building's length was 157 1/2 feet. [T]

13 Then the man measured the temple; it was 175 feet [U] long. In
addition, the temple yard and the building, including its walls, were 175 feet
long. 14 The width of the front of the temple along with the temple yard to
the east was 175 feet. 15 Next he measured the length of the building facing
the temple yard to the west, with its galleries [V] on each side; it was 175
feet.

Interior Wooden Structures

The interior of the great hall and the porticoes of the court — 16 the
thresholds, the beveled windows, and the balconies all around with their
three levels opposite the threshold — were overlaid with wood on all sides.
They were paneled from the ground to the windows (but the windows were
covered), 17 reaching to the top of the entrance, and as far as the inner
temple and on the outside. On every wall all around, on the inside and
outside, was a pattern 18 carved with •cherubim and palm trees. There was
a palm tree between each pair of cherubim. Each cherub had two faces: 19 a
human face turned toward the palm tree on one side, and a lion's face
turned toward it on the other. They were carved throughout the temple on
all sides. 20 Cherubim and palm trees were carved from the ground to the
top of the entrance and on the wall of the great hall.

21 The doorposts of the great hall were square, and the front of the
sanctuary had the same appearance. 22 The altar was [W] made of wood, 5 1/4
feet [X] high and 3 1/2 feet [Y] long. It had corners, and its length and sides
were of wood. The man told me, "This is the table that stands before the
Lord."

23 The great hall and the sanctuary each had a double door, 24 and each
of the doors had two swinging panels. There were two panels for one door
and two for the other. 25 Cherubim and palm trees were carved on the doors
of the great hall like those carved on the walls. There was a wooden
canopy [Z], outside, in front of the portico. 26 There were beveled windows
and palm trees on both sides, on the side walls of the portico, the side
rooms of the temple, and the canopies. [A]

The Priests' Chambers

42 [†]Then the man led me out by way of the north gate into the outer
court. He brought me to the group of chambers opposite the temple
yard and opposite the building to the north. 2 Along the length of the
chambers, which was 175 feet, [A], there was an entrance on the north; the
width was 87 1/2 feet. [B] 3 Opposite the 35 foot space [C] belonging to the
inner court and opposite the paved surface belonging to the outer court, the
structure rose gallery by gallery in three tiers. 4 In front of the chambers
was a walkway toward the inside, 17 1/2 feet [D] wide and 175 feet [E] long,
and their entrances were on the north. 5 The upper chambers were narrower
because the galleries took away more space from them than from the lower
and middle stories of the building. 6 For they were arranged in three stories
and had no pillars like the pillars of the courts; therefore the upper
chambers were set back from the ground more than the lower and middle
stories. 7 A wall on the outside ran in front of the chambers, parallel to
them, toward the outer court; it was 87 1/2 feet [F] long. 8 For the chambers
on the outer court were 87 1/2 feet long, while those facing the great hall
were 175 feet [G] long. 9 At the base of these chambers there was an
entryway on the east side as one enters them from the outer court.

10 In the thickness of the wall of the court toward the south, there were
chambers facing the temple yard and the western building, 11 with a
passageway in front of them, just like the chambers that faced north. Their
length and width, as well as all their exits, measurements, and entrances,
were identical. 12 The entrance at the beginning of the passageway, the way
in front of the corresponding [H] wall as one enters on the east side, was
similar to the entrances of the chambers that were on the south side.

13 Then the man said to me, “The northern and southern chambers that
face the temple yard are the holy chambers where the priests who approach
the LORD will eat the most holy offerings. There they will deposit the most
holy offerings — the •grain offerings, •sin offerings, and •restitution
offerings — for the place is holy. 14 Once the priests have entered, they
must not go out from the holy area to the outer court until they have
removed the clothes they minister in, for these are holy. They are to put on
other clothes before they approach the public area.”

Outside Dimensions of the Temple Complex

15 When he finished measuring inside the temple complex, he led me out by way of the gate that faced east and measured all around the complex.

16 He measured the east side with a measuring rod;
it was 875 feet [I] by the measuring rod. [J]
17 He measured the north side;
it was 875 feet [K] by the measuring rod. [L]
18 He measured the south side;
it was 875 feet [M] by the measuring rod. [N]
19 Then he turned to the west side
and measured 875 feet [O] by the measuring rod. [P]

20 He measured the temple complex on all four sides. It had a wall all around it, 875 feet long and 875 feet wide, to separate the holy from the common.

Return of the LORD's Glory

43 [†]He led me to the gate, the one that faces east, 2 and I saw the glory
of the God of Israel coming from the east. His voice sounded like the
roar of mighty waters, and the earth shone with His glory. 3 The vision I
saw was like the one I had seen when He came to destroy the city, and
like the ones I had seen by the Chebar Canal. I fell facedown. 4 The glory
of the LORD entered the temple by way of the gate that faced east. 5 Then
the Spirit lifted me up and brought me to the inner court, and the glory of
the LORD filled the temple.

6 While the man was standing beside me, I heard someone speaking to
me from the temple. 7 He said to me: "Son of man, this is the place of My
throne and the place for the soles of My feet, where I will dwell among the
Israelites forever. The house of Israel and their kings will no longer defile
My holy name by their religious prostitution and by the corpses [A], of their
kings at their •high places. 8 Whenever they placed their threshold next to
My threshold and their doorposts beside My doorposts, with only a wall
between Me and them, they were defiling My holy name by the detestable
acts they committed. So I destroyed them in My anger. 9 Now let them
remove their prostitution and the corpses [B] of their kings far from Me, and
I will dwell among them forever.

10 "As for you, son of man, describe the temple to the house of Israel, so
that they may be ashamed of their iniquities. Let them measure its pattern,
11 and they will be ashamed of all that they have done. Reveal the design of
the temple to them — its layout with its exits and entrances — its complete
design along with all its statutes, design specifications, and laws. Write it
down in their sight so that they may observe its complete design and all its
statutes and may carry them out. 12 This is the law of the temple: all its
surrounding territory on top of the mountain will be especially holy. Yes,
this is the law of the temple.

The Altar

13[†] "These are the measurements of the altar in units of length (each unit
being the standard length plus three inches): [C] the gutter is 21 inches [D]

deep and 21 inches wide, with a rim of nine inches [E] around its edge. This
is the base of the altar. 14 The distance from the gutter on the ground to the
lower ledge is 3 1/2 feet, [F] and the width of the ledge is 21 inches. [G] There
are seven feet [H] from the small ledge to the large ledge, whose width is also
21 inches. 15 The altar hearth [I] is seven feet [J] high, and four horns project
upward from the hearth. 16 The hearth is square, 21 feet [K] long by 21 feet
wide. 17 The ledge is 24 1/2 feet [L] long by 24 1/2 feet wide, with four equal
sides. The rim all around it is 10 1/2 inches, [M] and its gutter is 21 inches [N]
all around it. The altar's steps face east."

18† Then He said to me: "Son of man, this is what the Lord GOD says:
These are the statutes for the altar on the day it is constructed, so that •burnt
offerings may be sacrificed on it and blood may be sprinkled on it: 19 You
are to give a bull from the herd as a •sin offering to the Levitical priests
who are from the offspring of Zadok, who approach Me in order to serve
Me." This is the declaration of the Lord GOD. 20 "You must take some of its
blood and apply it to the four horns of the altar, the four corners of the
ledge, and all around the rim. In this way you will purify the altar and make
•atonement for it. 21 Then you must take away the bull for the sin offering,
and it must be burned outside the sanctuary in the place appointed for the
temple.

22 "On the second day you are to present an unblemished male goat as a
sin offering. They will purify the altar just as they did with the bull.
23 When you have finished the purification, you are to present a young,
unblemished bull and an unblemished ram from the flock. 24 You must
present them before the LORD; the priests will throw salt on them and
sacrifice them as a burnt offering to the LORD. 25 You will offer a goat for a
sin offering each day for seven days. A young bull and a ram from the
flock, both unblemished, must also be offered. 26 For seven days the priests
are to make atonement for the altar and cleanse it. In this way they will
consecrate it [O] 27 and complete the days of purification. Then on the eighth
day and afterward, the priests will offer your burnt offerings and
•fellowship offerings on the altar, and I will accept you." This is the
declaration of the Lord GOD.

The Prince's Privilege

44 †The man then brought me back toward the sanctuary’s outer gate that
faced east, and it was closed. 2 The LORD said to me: “This gate will
remain closed. It will not be opened, and no one will enter through it,
because the LORD, the God of Israel, has entered through it. Therefore it
will remain closed. 3 The prince himself will sit in the gateway to eat a meal
before the LORD. He must enter by way of the portico of the gate and go
out the same way.”

4† Then the man brought me by way of the north gate to the front of the
temple. I looked, and the glory of the LORD filled His temple. And I fell
facedown. 5 The LORD said to me: “Son of man, pay attention; look with
your eyes and listen with your ears to everything I tell you about all the
statutes and laws of the LORD’s temple. Take careful note of the entrance of
the temple along with all the exits of the sanctuary.

The Levites’ Duties and Privileges

6 “Say to the rebellious people, the house of Israel: This is what the Lord
GOD says: I have had enough of all your detestable practices, house of
Israel. 7 When you brought in foreigners, uncircumcised in both heart and
flesh, to occupy My sanctuary, you defiled My temple while you offered
My food — the fat and the blood. You broke My covenant by all your
detestable practices. 8 You have not kept charge of My holy things but have
appointed others to keep charge of My sanctuary for you.

9 “This is what the Lord GOD says: No foreigner, uncircumcised in heart
and flesh, may enter My sanctuary, not even a foreigner who is among the
Israelites. 10 Surely the Levites who wandered away from Me when Israel
went astray, and who strayed from Me after their idols, will bear the
consequences of their sin. 11 Yet they will occupy My sanctuary, serving as
guards at the temple gates and ministering at the temple. They will
slaughter the •burnt offerings and other sacrifices for the people and will
stand before them to serve them. 12 Because they ministered to the house of
Israel before their idols and became a sinful stumbling block to them,
therefore I swore an oath [A] against them” — this is the declaration of the

Lord God — “that they would bear the consequences of their sin. [13] They
must not approach Me to serve Me as priests or come near any of My holy
things or the most holy things. They will bear their disgrace and the
consequences of the detestable acts they committed. [14] Yet I will make them
responsible for the duties of the temple — for all its work and everything
done in it.

The Priests’ Duties and Privileges

[15]† “But the Levitical priests descended from Zadok, who kept charge of
My sanctuary when the Israelites went astray from Me, will approach Me to
serve Me. They will stand before Me to offer Me fat and blood.” This is the
declaration of the Lord God. [16] “They are the ones who may enter My
sanctuary and draw near to My table to serve Me. They will keep My
mandate. [17] When they enter the gates of the inner court they must wear
linen garments; they must not have on them anything made of wool when
they minister at the gates of the inner court and within it. [18] They must wear
linen turbans on their heads and linen undergarments around their waists.
They are not to put on anything that makes them sweat. [19] Before they go
out to the outer court, to the people, they must take off the clothes they
have been ministering in, leave them in the holy chambers, and dress in
other clothes so that they do not transmit holiness to the people through
their clothes.

[20] “They may not shave their heads or let their hair grow long, but must
carefully trim their hair. [21] No priest may drink wine before he enters the
inner court. [22] He is not to marry a widow or a divorced woman, but must
marry a virgin from the offspring of the house of Israel, or a widow who is
the widow of a priest. [23] They must teach My people the difference between
the holy and the common, and explain to them the difference between the
•clean and the •unclean.

[24] “In a dispute, they will officiate as judges and decide the case
according to My ordinances. They must observe My laws and statutes
regarding all My appointed festivals, and keep My Sabbaths holy. [25] A
priest may not come near a dead person so that he becomes defiled.

However, he may defile himself for a father, a mother, a son, a daughter, a brother, or an unmarried sister. 26 After he is cleansed, he is to count off seven days for himself. 27 On the day he goes into the sanctuary, into the inner court to minister in the sanctuary, he must present his •sin offering." This is the declaration of the Lord God.

28 "This will be their inheritance: I am their inheritance. You are to give them no possession in Israel: I am their possession. 29 They will eat the •grain offering, the sin offering, and the •restitution offering. Everything in Israel that is permanently dedicated to the Lord will belong to them. 30 The best of all the •firstfruits of every kind and contribution of every kind from all your gifts will belong to the priests. You are to give your first batch of dough to the priest so that a blessing may rest on your homes. 31 The priests may not eat any bird or animal that died naturally or was mauled by wild beasts.

The Sacred Portion of the Land

45 [†]“When you divide the land by lot as an inheritance, you must set
aside a donation to the LORD, a holy portion of the land, 8 1/3 miles [A]
long and 6 2/3 miles wide. This entire tract of land will be holy. 2 In this
area there will be a square section [B] for the sanctuary, 875 by 875 feet, [C],
with 87 1/2 feet [D] of open space all around it. 3 From this holy portion, [E]
you will measure off an area 8 1/3 miles [F] long and 3 1/3 miles [G] wide, in
which the sanctuary, the most holy place, will stand. [H] 4 It will be a holy
area of the land to be used by the priests who minister in the sanctuary, who
draw near to serve the LORD. It will be a place for their houses, as well as a
holy area for the sanctuary. 5 There will be another area 8 1/3 miles [I] long
and 3 1/3 miles [J] wide for the Levites who minister in the temple; it will be
their possession for towns to live in.

6 “As the property of the city, you must set aside an area 1 2/3 of a mile [K]
wide and 8 1/3 miles [L] long, adjacent to the holy donation of land. It will be
for the whole house of Israel. 7 And the prince will have the area on each
side of the holy donation of land and the city’s property, adjacent to the holy
donation and the city’s property, stretching to the west on the west side and
to the east on the east side. Its length will correspond to one of the tribal
portions from the western boundary to the eastern boundary. 8 This will be
his land as a possession in Israel. My princes will no longer oppress My
people but give the rest of the land to the house of Israel according to their
tribes.

9[†] “This is what the Lord GOD says: You have gone too far, [M], princes of
Israel! Put away violence and oppression and do what is just and right. Put
an end to your evictions of My people.” This is the declaration of the Lord
GOD. 10 “You must have honest scales, an honest dry measure, [N] and an
honest liquid measure. [O] 11 The dry measure [P] and the liquid measure [Q]
will be uniform, with the liquid measure containing 5 1/2 gallons [R] and the
dry measure holding half a bushel. [S] Their measurement will be a tenth of
the standard larger capacity measure. [T] 12 The •shekel will weigh 20
gerahs. Your mina will equal 60 shekels.

The People’s Contribution to the Sacrifices

13[†] “This is the contribution you are to offer: Three quarts [U] from five
bushels [V] of wheat and three quarts from five bushels of barley. 14 The
quota of oil in liquid measures [W] will be one percent of every [X] cor. The cor
equals 10 liquid measures or one standard larger capacity measure, [Y] since
10 liquid measures equal one standard larger capacity measure. 15 And the
quota from the flock is one animal out of every 200 from the well-watered
pastures of Israel. These are for the •grain offerings, •burnt offerings, and
•fellowship offerings, to make •atonement for the people.” This is the
declaration of the Lord God. 16 “All the people of the land must take part in
this contribution for the prince in Israel. 17 Then the burnt offerings, grain
offerings, and •drink offerings for the festivals, New Moons, and
Sabbaths — for all the appointed times of the house of Israel — will be the
prince’s responsibility. He will provide the •sin offerings, grain offerings,
burnt offerings, and fellowship offerings to make atonement on behalf of
the house of Israel.

18 “This is what the Lord God says: In the first month, on the first day of
the month, you are to take a young, unblemished bull and purify the
sanctuary. 19 The priest must take some of the blood from the sin offering
and apply it to the temple doorposts, the four corners of the altar’s ledge,
and the doorposts of the gate to the inner court. 20 You must do the same
thing on the seventh day of the month for everyone who sins
unintentionally or through ignorance. In this way you will make atonement
for the temple.

21 “In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month, you are to
celebrate the •Passover, a festival of seven days during which unleavened
bread will be eaten. 22 On that day the prince will provide a bull as a sin
offering on behalf of himself and all the people of the land. 23 During the
seven days of the festival, he will provide seven bulls and seven rams
without blemish as a burnt offering to the Lord on each of the seven days,
along with a male goat each day for a sin offering. 24 He will also provide a
grain offering of half a bushel [Z] per bull and half a bushel per ram, along
with a gallon [A] of oil for every half bushel. 25 At the festival that begins on
the fifteenth day of the seventh month, he will provide the same things for

seven days — the same sin offerings, burnt offerings, grain offerings, and oil.

Sacrifices at Appointed Times

46 [†]“This is what the Lord God says: The gate of the inner court that
faces east must be closed during the six days of work, but it will be
opened on the Sabbath day and opened on the day of the New Moon. 2 The
prince should enter from the outside by way of the gate’s portico and stand
at the doorpost of the gate while the priests sacrifice his •burnt offerings and
•fellowship offerings. He will bow in worship at the threshold of the gate
and then depart, but the gate must not be closed until evening. 3 The people
of the land will also bow in worship before the Lord at the entrance of that
gate on the Sabbaths and New Moons.

4 “The burnt offering that the prince presents to the Lord on the Sabbath
day is to be six unblemished lambs and an unblemished ram. 5 The •grain
offering will be half a bushel [A] with the ram, and the grain offering with
the lambs will be whatever he wants to give, as well as a gallon [B] of oil for
every half bushel. 6 On the day of the New Moon, the burnt offering is to be
a young, unblemished bull, as well as six lambs and a ram without blemish.
7 He will provide a grain offering of half a bushel [C] with the bull, half a
bushel with the ram, and whatever he can afford with the lambs, together
with a gallon [D] of oil for every half bushel. 8 When the prince enters, he
must go in by way of the gate’s portico and go out the same way.

9 “When the people of the land come before the Lord at the appointed
times, [E], whoever enters by way of the north gate to worship must go out
by way of the south gate, and whoever enters by way of the south gate must
go out by way of the north gate. No one must return through the gate by
which he entered, but must go out by the opposite gate. 10 When the people
enter, the prince will enter with them, and when they leave, he will leave.
11 At the festivals and appointed times, the grain offering will be half a
bushel [F] with the bull, half a bushel with the ram, and whatever he wants to
give with the lambs, along with a gallon [G] of oil for every half bushel.

12 “When the prince makes a freewill offering, whether a burnt offering
or a fellowship offering as a freewill offering to the Lord, the gate that
faces east must be opened for him. He is to offer his burnt offering or

fellowship offering just as he does on the Sabbath day. Then he will go out,
and the gate must be closed after he leaves.

[13] “You must offer an unblemished year-old male lamb as a daily burnt
offering to the LORD; you will offer it every morning. [14] You must also
prepare a grain offering every morning along with it: three quarts, [H] with
one-third of a gallon [I] of oil to moisten the fine flour — a grain offering to
the LORD. This is a permanent statute to be observed regularly. [15] They will
offer the lamb, the grain offering, and the oil every morning as a regular
burnt offering.

Transfer of Royal Lands

[16] “This is what the Lord GOD says: If the prince gives a gift to each of
his sons as their inheritance, it will belong to his sons. It will become their
property by inheritance. [17] But if he gives a gift from his inheritance to one
of his servants, it will belong to that servant until the year of freedom,
when it will revert to the prince. His inheritance belongs only to his sons; it
is theirs. [18] The prince must not take any of the people’s inheritance,
evicting them from their property. He is to provide an inheritance for his
sons from his own property, so that none of My people will be displaced
from his own property.”

The Temple Kitchens

[19†] Then he brought me through the entrance that was at the side of the
gate, into the priests’ holy chambers, which faced north. I saw a place there
at the far western end. [20] He said to me, “This is the place where the priests
will boil the •restitution offering and the •sin offering, and where they will
bake the grain offering, so that they do not bring them into the outer court
and transmit holiness to the people.” [21] Next he brought me into the outer
court and led me past its four corners. There was a separate court in each of
its corners. [22] In the four corners of the outer court there were enclosed [J]
courts, 70 feet [K] long by 52 1/2 feet [L] wide. All four corner areas had the
same dimensions. [23] There was a stone wall [M] around the inside of them,
around the four of them, with ovens built at the base of the walls on all

sides. [24] He said to me: "These are the kitchens where those who minister at the temple will cook the people's sacrifices."

The Life-Giving River

47 [†] Then he brought me back to the entrance of the temple and there
was water flowing from under the threshold of the temple toward the
east, for the temple faced east. The water was coming down from under the
south side of the threshold of the temple, south of the altar. 2 Next he
brought me out by way of the north gate and led me around the outside to
the outer gate that faced east; there the water was trickling from the south
side. 3 As the man went out east with a measuring line in his hand, he
measured off a third of a mile [A] and led me through the water. It came up to
my ankles. 4 Then he measured off a third of a mile [B] and led me through
the water. It came up to my knees. He measured off another third of a mile [C]
and led me through the water. It came up to my waist. 5 Again he measured
off a third of a mile [D], and it was a river that I could not cross on foot. For
the water had risen; it was deep enough to swim in, a river that could not be
crossed on foot.

6 He asked me, “Do you see this, son of man? ” Then he led me back to
the bank of the river. 7 When I had returned, I saw a very large number of
trees along both sides of the riverbank. 8 He said to me, “This water flows
out to the eastern region and goes down to the •Arabah. When it enters the
sea, the sea of foul water, [E] the water of the sea becomes fresh. 9 Every
kind of living creature that swarms will live wherever the river flows, and
there will be a huge number of fish because this water goes there. Since the
water will become fresh, there will be life everywhere the river goes.
10 Fishermen will stand beside it from En-gedi to En-eglaim. These will
become places where nets are spread out to dry. Their fish will consist of
many different kinds, like the fish of the Mediterranean Sea. 11 Yet its
swamps and marshes will not be healed; they will be left for salt. 12 All
kinds of trees providing food will grow along both banks of the river. Their
leaves will not wither, and their fruit will not fail. Each month they will
bear fresh fruit because the water comes from the sanctuary. Their fruit will
be used for food and their leaves for medicine.”

The Borders of the Land

[13][†] This is what the Lord God says: "This is the border you will use to
divide the land as an inheritance for the 12 tribes of Israel. Joseph will
receive two shares. [14] You will inherit it in equal portions, since I swore [F]
to give it to your ancestors. So this land will fall to you as an inheritance.

[15] "This is to be the border of the land:

On the north side it will extend from the Mediterranean Sea by
way of Hethlon and Lebo-hamath to Zedad, [16] Berothah, and
Sibraim (which is between the border of Damascus and the border
of Hamath), as far as Hazer-hatticon, which is on the border of
Hauran. [17] So the border will run from the sea to Hazar-enon at
the border of Damascus, with the territory of Hamath to the
north. This will be the northern side.

[18] On the east side it will run between Hauran and Damascus,
along the Jordan between Gilead and the land of Israel; you will
measure from the northern border to the eastern sea. This will be
the eastern side.

[19] On the south side it will run from Tamar to the waters of
Meribath-kadesh, and on to the Brook of Egypt as far as the
Mediterranean Sea. This will be the southern side.

[20] On the west side the Mediterranean Sea will be the border, from
the southern border up to a point opposite Lebo-hamath. This will
be the western side.

[21] "You are to divide this land among yourselves according to the tribes
of Israel. [22] You will allot it as an inheritance for yourselves and for the
foreigners living among you, who have fathered children among you. You
will treat them [G] like native-born Israelites; along with you, they will be
allotted an inheritance among the tribes of Israel. [23] In whatever tribe the
foreigner lives, you will assign his inheritance there." This is the declaration
of the Lord God.

The Tribal Allotments

48 "Now these are the names of the tribes:

From the northern end, along the road of Hethlon, to Lebo-hamath as far as Hazar-enon, at the northern border of Damascus, alongside Hamath and extending from the eastern side to the sea, will be Dan — one portion.
2 Next to the territory of Dan, from the east side to the west, will be Asher — one portion.
3 Next to the territory of Asher, from the east side to the west, will be Naphtali — one portion.
4 Next to the territory of Naphtali, from the east side to the west, will be Manasseh — one portion.
5 Next to the territory of Manasseh, from the east side to the west, will be Ephraim — one portion.
6 Next to the territory of Ephraim, from the east side to the west, will be Reuben — one portion.
7 Next to the territory of Reuben, from the east side to the west, will be Judah — one portion.

8 "Next to the territory of Judah, from the east side to the west, will be
the portion you donate to the Lord, 8 1/3 miles [A] wide, and as long as one of
the tribal portions from the east side to the west. The sanctuary will be in
the middle of it.

9 "The special portion you donate to the Lord will be 8 1/3 miles [B] long
and 3 1/3 miles [C] wide. 10 This holy donation will be set apart for the priests
alone. It will be 8 1/3 miles [D] long on the northern side, 3 1/3 miles [E] wide
on the western side, 3 1/3 miles [F] wide on the eastern side, and 8 1/3 miles [G]
long on the southern side. The Lord's sanctuary will be in the middle of it.
11 It is for the consecrated priests, the sons of Zadok, who kept My charge
and did not go astray as the Levites did when the Israelites went astray. 12 It
will be a special donation for them out of the holy donation of the land, a
most holy place adjacent to the territory of the Levites.

13 “Next to the territory of the priests, the Levites will have an area 8 1/3
miles [H] long and 3 1/3 miles [I] wide. The total length will be 8 1/3 miles [J] and
the width 3 1/3 miles. [K] 14 They must not sell or exchange any of it, and
they must not transfer this choice part of the land, for it is holy to the LORD.

15 “The remaining area, 1 2/3 of a mile [L] wide and 8 1/3 miles [M] long, will
be for common use by the city, for both residential and open space. The
city will be in the middle of it. 16 These are the city’s measurements:

1 1/2 miles [N] on the north side;
1 1/2 miles [O] on the south side;
1 1/2 miles [P] on the east side;
and 1 1/2 miles [Q] on the west side.

17 The city’s open space will extend:

425 feet [R] to the north,
425 feet [S] to the south,
425 feet [T] to the east,
and 425 feet [U] to the west.

18 “The remainder of the length alongside the holy donation will be 3 1/3
miles [V] to the east and 3 1/3 miles [W] to the west. It will run alongside the
holy donation. Its produce will be food for the workers of the city. 19 The
city’s workers from all the tribes of Israel will cultivate it. 20 The entire
donation will be 8 1/3 miles [X] by 8 1/3 miles; [Y] you are to set apart the holy
donation along with the city property as a square area.

21 “The remaining area on both sides of the holy donation and the city
property will belong to the prince. He will own the land adjacent to the
tribal portions, next to the 8 1/3 miles [Z] of the donation as far as the eastern
border and [A] next to the 8 1/3 miles [B] of the donation as far as the western
border. The holy donation and the sanctuary of the temple will be in the

middle of it. 22 Except for the Levitical property and the city property in the
middle of the area belonging to the prince, the area between the territory of
Judah and that of Benjamin will belong to the prince.

23 “As for the rest of the tribes:

From the east side to the west, will be Benjamin — one portion.
24 Next to the territory of Benjamin, from the east side to the west, will be
Simeon — one portion.
25 Next to the territory of Simeon, from the east side to the west, will be
Issachar — one portion.
26 Next to the territory of Issachar, from the east side to the west, will be
Zebulun — one portion.
27 Next to the territory of Zebulun, from the east side to the west, will be
Gad — one portion.

28 Next to the territory of Gad toward the south side, the border will run
from Tamar to the waters of Meribath-kadesh, to the Brook of Egypt, and
out to the Mediterranean Sea. 29 This is the land you are to allot as an
inheritance to Israel’s tribes, and these will be their portions.” This is the
declaration of the Lord God.

The New City

30[†] “These are the exits of the city:

On the north side, which measures 1 1/2 miles, [C] 31 there will be three
gates facing north, the gates of the city being named for the tribes of
Israel: one, the gate of Reuben; one, the gate of Judah; and one, the gate
of Levi.
32 On the east side, which is 1 1/2 miles, [D] there will be three gates: one,
the gate of Joseph; one, the gate of Benjamin; and one, the gate of Dan.
33 On the south side, which measures 1 1/2 miles, [E] there will be three
gates: one, the gate of Simeon; one, the gate of Issachar; and one, the gate

of Zebulun.
[34] On the west side, which is 1 1/2 miles, [F] there will be three gates: one, the gate of Gad; one, the gate of Asher; and one, the gate of Naphtali.

[35] The perimeter of the city will be six miles, [G] and the name of the city from that day on will be: •Yahweh Is There.”

DANIEL

Introduction to Daniel

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Chapter 12 (Daniel 12:1-13)

DANIEL

Daniel’s Captivity in Babylon

1 †In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah,
Nebuchadnezzar [A], king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and laid siege to
it. 2† The Lord handed Jehoiakim king of Judah over to him, along with
some of the vessels from the house of God. Nebuchadnezzar carried them
to the land of Babylon, [B], to the house of his god, [C] and put the vessels in
the treasury of his god.

3† The king ordered Ashpenaz, the chief of his court officials, [D] to bring
some of the Israelites from the royal family and from the nobility —
4 young men without any physical defect, good-looking, suitable for
instruction in all wisdom, knowledgeable, perceptive, and capable of
serving in the king's palace — and to teach them the Chaldean language
and literature. 5† The king assigned them daily provisions from the royal
food and from the wine that he drank. They were to be trained for three
years, and at the end of that time they were to serve in the king's court. [E],
6† Among them, from the descendants of Judah, were Daniel, Hananiah,
Mishael, and Azariah. 7† The chief official gave them other names: he gave
the name Belteshazzar to Daniel, Shadrach to Hananiah, Meshach to
Mishael, and Abednego to Azariah.

Faithfulness in Babylon

8† Daniel determined that he would not defile himself with the king's
food or with the wine he drank. So he asked permission from the chief
official not to defile himself. 9 God had granted Daniel favor and
compassion from the chief official, 10 yet he said to Daniel, "My lord the
king assigned your food and drink. I'm afraid of what would happen if he
saw your faces looking thinner than those of the other young men your age.
You would endanger my life [F] with the king."

11 So Daniel said to the guard whom the chief official had assigned to
Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, 12 "Please test your servants for 10
days. Let us be given vegetables to eat and water to drink. 13 Then examine
our appearance and the appearance of the young men who are eating the
king's food, and deal with your servants based on what you see." 14 He

agreed with them about this and tested them for 10 days. [15†] At the end of
10 days they looked better and healthier [G] than all the young men who were
eating the king's food. [16] So the guard continued to remove their food and
the wine they were to drink and gave them vegetables.

Faithfulness Rewarded

[17] God gave these four young men knowledge and understanding in
every kind of literature and wisdom. Daniel also understood visions and
dreams of every kind. [18†] At the end of the time that the king had said to
present them, the chief official presented them to Nebuchadnezzar. [19] The
king interviewed them, and among all of them, no one was found equal to
Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. So they began to serve in the
king's court. [20] In every matter of wisdom and understanding that the king
consulted them about, he found them 10 times [H], better than all the diviner-
priests and mediums in his entire kingdom. [21†] Daniel remained there until
the first year of King Cyrus.

Nebuchadnezzar's Dream

2 †In the second year of his reign, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams that
troubled him, and sleep deserted him. 2† So the king gave orders to
summon the diviner-priests, mediums, sorcerers, and Chaldeans to tell the
king his dreams. When they came and stood before the king, 3 he said to
them, “I have had a dream and am anxious to understand it.”

4† The Chaldeans spoke to the king (Aramaic begins here): “May the
king live forever. Tell your servants the dream, and we will give the
interpretation.”

5† The king replied to the Chaldeans, “My word is final: If you don’t tell
me the dream and its interpretation, you will be torn limb from limb, [A] and
your houses will be made a garbage dump. 6 But if you make the dream
and its interpretation known to me, you’ll receive gifts, a reward, and great
honor from me. So make the dream and its interpretation known to me.”

7 They answered a second time, “May the king tell the dream to his
servants, and we will give the interpretation.”

8 The king replied, “I know for certain you are trying to gain some time,
because you see that my word is final. 9 If you don’t tell me the dream,
there is one decree for you. You have conspired to tell me something false
or fraudulent until the situation changes. So tell me the dream and I will
know you can give me its interpretation.”

10 The Chaldeans answered the king, “No one on earth can make known
what the king requests. Consequently, no king, however great and
powerful, has ever asked anything like this of any diviner-priest, medium,
or Chaldean. 11 What the king is asking is so difficult that no one can make
it known to him except the gods, whose dwelling is not with mortals.”
12 Because of this, the king became violently angry and gave orders to
destroy all the wise men of Babylon. 13 The decree was issued that the wise
men were to be executed, and they searched for Daniel and his friends, to
execute them.

ARTICLE

How Does Christitanity Relate to Other Eastern Religions? ⇒

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[14] Then Daniel responded with tact and discretion to Arioch, the
commander of the king’s guard, [B] who had gone out to execute the wise
men of Babylon. [15] He asked Arioch, the king’s officer, “Why is the decree
from the king so harsh? ” [C] Then Arioch explained the situation to Daniel.
[16] So Daniel went and asked the king to give him some time, so that he
could give the king the interpretation.

[17] Then Daniel went to his house and told his friends Hananiah, Mishael,
and Azariah about the matter, [18] urging them to ask the God of heaven for
mercy concerning this mystery, so Daniel and his friends would not be
killed with the rest of Babylon’s wise men. [19] The mystery was then
revealed to Daniel in a vision at night, and Daniel praised the God of
heaven [20] and declared:

May the name of God
be praised forever and ever,
for wisdom and power belong to Him.
[21] He changes the times and seasons;
He removes kings and establishes kings.
He gives wisdom to the wise
and knowledge to those
who have understanding.
[22] He reveals the deep and hidden things;
He knows what is in the darkness,
and light dwells with Him.
[23] I offer thanks and praise to You,
God of my fathers,
because You have given me
wisdom and power.
And now You have let me know
what we asked of You,

for You have let us know
the king's mystery. [D]

24 Therefore Daniel went to Arioch, whom the king had assigned to destroy the wise men of Babylon. He came and said to him, "Don't kill the wise men of Babylon! Bring me before the king, and I will give him the interpretation."

25 Then Arioch quickly brought Daniel before the king and said to him, "I have found a man among the Judean exiles who can let the king know the interpretation."

26 The king said in reply to Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, "Are you able to tell me the dream I had and its interpretation? "

27[†] Daniel answered the king: "No wise man, medium, diviner-priest, or
astrologer is able to make known to the king the mystery he asked about.
28[†] But there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries, and He has let King
Nebuchadnezzar know what will happen in the last days. Your dream and
the visions that came into your mind as you lay in bed were these: 29 Your
Majesty, while you were in your bed, thoughts came to your mind about
what will happen in the future. [E] The revealer of mysteries has let you
know what will happen. 30 As for me, this mystery has been revealed to
me, not because I have more wisdom than anyone living, but in order that
the interpretation might be made known to the king, and that you may
understand the thoughts of your mind.

The Dream's Interpretation

31[†] "My king, as you were watching, a colossal statue appeared. That
statue, tall and dazzling, was standing in front of you, and its appearance
was terrifying. 32 The head of the statue was pure gold, its chest and arms
were silver, its stomach and thighs were bronze, 33 its legs were iron, and its
feet were partly iron and partly fired clay. 34 As you were watching, a stone
broke off without a hand touching it, [F] struck the statue on its feet of iron
and fired clay, and crushed them. 35 Then the iron, the fired clay, the

bronze, the silver, and the gold were shattered and became like chaff from
the summer threshing floors. The wind carried them away, and not a trace
of them could be found. But the stone that struck the statue became a great
mountain and filled the whole earth.

[36] “This was the dream; now we will tell the king its interpretation.
[37] Your Majesty, you are king of kings. The God of heaven has given you
sovereignty, power, strength, and glory. [38] Wherever people live — or wild
animals, or birds of the air — He has handed them over to you and made
you ruler over them all. You are the head of gold.

[39] “After you, there will arise another kingdom, inferior to yours, and
then another, a third kingdom, of bronze, which will rule the whole earth.
[40] A fourth kingdom will be as strong as iron; for iron crushes and shatters
everything, and like iron that smashes, it will crush and smash all the
others. [G], [41] You saw the feet and toes, partly of a potter’s fired clay and
partly of iron — it will be a divided kingdom, though some of the strength
of iron will be in it. You saw the iron mixed with clay, [42] and that the toes of
the feet were partly iron and partly fired clay — part of the kingdom will be
strong, and part will be brittle. [43] You saw the iron mixed with clay — the
peoples will mix with one another [H] but will not hold together, just as iron
does not mix with fired clay.

[44†] “In the days of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom
that will never be destroyed, and this kingdom will not be left to another
people. It will crush all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, but will
itself endure forever. [45] You saw a stone break off from the mountain
without a hand touching it, [I] and it crushed the iron, bronze, fired clay,
silver, and gold. The great God has told the king what will happen in the
future. [J] The dream is true, and its interpretation certain.”

Nebuchadnezzar’s Response

[46†] Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell down, paid homage to Daniel, and
gave orders to present an offering and incense to him. [47] The king said to

Daniel, “Your God is indeed God of gods, Lord of kings, and a revealer of
mysteries, since you were able to reveal this mystery.” [48] Then the king
promoted Daniel and gave him many generous gifts. He made him ruler
over the entire province of Babylon and chief governor over all the wise
men of Babylon. [49] At Daniel’s request, the king appointed Shadrach,
Meshach, and Abednego to manage the province of Babylon. But Daniel
remained at the king’s court.

Nebuchadnezzar's Gold Statue

3 [†]King Nebuchadnezzar made a gold statue, 90 feet high and nine feet
wide. [A] He set it up on the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon.
[2†] King Nebuchadnezzar sent word to assemble the satraps, prefects,
governors, advisers, treasurers, judges, magistrates, and all the rulers of the
provinces to attend the dedication of the statue King Nebuchadnezzar had
set up. [3] So the satraps, prefects, governors, advisers, treasurers, judges,
magistrates, and all the rulers of the provinces assembled for the dedication
of the statue the king had set up. Then they stood before the statue
Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

[4] A herald loudly proclaimed, "People of every nation and language, you
are commanded: [5†] When you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, [B]
lyre, [C] harp, drum, [D] and every kind of music, you are to fall down and
worship the gold statue that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up. [6†] But
whoever does not fall down and worship will immediately be thrown into a
furnace of blazing fire."

[7] Therefore, when all the people heard the sound of the horn, flute, zither,
lyre, harp, and every kind of music, people of every nation and language
fell down and worshiped the gold statue that King Nebuchadnezzar had set
up.

The Furnace of Blazing Fire

[8] Some Chaldeans took this occasion to come forward and maliciously
accuse [E], the Jews. [9] They said to King Nebuchadnezzar, "May the king
live forever. [10] You as king have issued a decree that everyone who hears
the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, drum, and every kind of
music must fall down and worship the gold statue. [11] Whoever does not fall
down and worship will be thrown into a furnace of blazing fire. [12†] There
are some Jews you have appointed to manage the province of Babylon:
Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. These men have ignored you, the
king; they do not serve your gods or worship the gold statue you have set
up."

13 Then in a furious rage Nebuchadnezzar gave orders to bring in
Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. So these men were brought before the
king. 14 Nebuchadnezzar asked them, “Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego,
is it true that you don’t serve my gods or worship the gold statue I have set
up? 15 Now if you’re ready, when you hear the sound of the horn, flute,
zither, lyre, harp, drum, and every kind of music, fall down and worship the
statue I made. But if you don’t worship it, you will immediately be thrown
into a furnace of blazing fire — and who is the god who can rescue you
from my power? ”

16 Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego replied to the king,
“Nebuchadnezzar, we don’t need to give you an answer to this question.
17[†] If the God we serve exists, then He can rescue us from the furnace of
blazing fire, and He can rescue us from the power of you, the king. 18 But
even if He does not rescue us, [F] we want you as king to know that we will
not serve your gods or worship the gold statue you set up.”

19 Then Nebuchadnezzar was filled with rage, and the expression on his
face changed toward Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. He gave orders to
heat the furnace seven times more than was customary, 20 and he
commanded some of the strongest soldiers in his army to tie up Shadrach,
Meshach, and Abednego and throw them into the furnace of blazing fire.
21 So these men, in their trousers, robes, head coverings, and other clothes,
were tied up and thrown into the furnace of blazing fire. 22 Since the king’s
command was so urgent [G], and the furnace extremely hot, the raging
flames [H] killed those men who carried Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego
up. 23 And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego fell, bound,
into the furnace of blazing fire.

Delivered from the Fire

24 Then King Nebuchadnezzar jumped up in alarm. He said to his
advisers, “Didn’t we throw three men, bound, into the fire? ”

“Yes, of course, Your Majesty,” they replied to the king.

[25][†] He exclaimed, “Look! I see four men, not tied, walking around in the fire unharmed; and the fourth looks like a son of the gods.” [I]

[26] Nebuchadnezzar then approached the door of the furnace of blazing
fire and called: “Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, you servants of the
•Most High God — come out! ” So Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego
came out of the fire. [27] When the satraps, prefects, governors, and the
king’s advisers gathered around, they saw that the fire had no effect on [J]
the bodies of these men: not a hair of their heads was singed, their robes
were unaffected, and there was no smell of fire on them. [28] Nebuchadnezzar
exclaimed, “Praise to the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego! He
sent His angel [K], and rescued His servants who trusted in Him. They
violated the king’s command and risked their lives rather than serve or
worship any god except their own God. [29][†] Therefore I issue a decree that
anyone of any people, nation, or language who says anything offensive
against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego will be torn limb
from limb and his house made a garbage dump. For there is no other god
who is able to deliver like this.” [30] Then the king rewarded Shadrach,
Meshach, and Abednego in the province of Babylon.

Chapter 4 *Nebuchadnezzar's Proclamation*

[1]King Nebuchadnezzar,

To those of every people, nation, and language, who live in all the earth:

May your prosperity increase. [2] I am pleased to tell you about the
miracles and wonders the •Most High God has done for me.

[3] How great are His miracles,
and how mighty His wonders!
His kingdom is an eternal kingdom,
and His dominion is from generation to generation.

The Dream

[4] I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at ease in my house and flourishing in my
palace. [5] I had a dream, and it frightened me; while in my bed, the images
and visions in my mind alarmed me. [6] So I issued a decree to bring all the
wise men of Babylon to me in order that they might make the dream's
interpretation known to me. [7] When the diviner-priests, mediums,
Chaldeans, and astrologers came in, I told them the dream, but they could not make its interpretation known to me.

[8] Finally Daniel, named Belteshazzar after the name of my god — and
the spirit of the holy gods is in him — came before me. I told him the
dream: [9] "Belteshazzar, head of the diviners, because I know that you have
a spirit of the holy gods and that no mystery puzzles you, explain to me
the visions of my dream that I saw, and its interpretation. [10] In the visions of
my mind as I was lying in bed, I saw this:

There was a tree in the middle of the earth,
and its height was great.
[11] The tree grew large and strong;
its top reached to the sky,
and it was visible to the ends of the [A] earth.

12 Its leaves were beautiful, its fruit was abundant,
and on it was food for all.
Wild animals found shelter under it,
the birds of the air lived in its branches,
and every creature was fed from it.

13 "As I was lying in my bed, I also saw in the visions of my mind an
observer, a holy one, coming down from heaven. 14 He called out loudly:

Cut down the tree and chop off its branches;
strip off its leaves and scatter its fruit.
Let the animals flee from under it,
and the birds from its branches.
15 But leave the stump with its roots in the ground,
and with a band of iron and bronze around it,
in the tender grass of the field.
Let him be drenched with dew from the sky
and share the plants of the earth
with the animals.
16† Let his mind be changed from that of a man,
and let him be given the mind of an animal
for seven periods of time. [B] ,
17 This word is by decree of the observers;
the matter is a command from the holy ones.
This is so the living will know
that the Most High is ruler
over the kingdom of men.
He gives it to anyone He wants
and sets the lowliest of men over it.

18 This is the dream that I, King Nebuchadnezzar, had. Now, Belteshazzar, tell me the interpretation, because none of the wise men of my kingdom can make the interpretation known to me. But you can, because you have the spirit of the holy gods."

The Dream Interpreted

19 Then Daniel, whose name is Belteshazzar, was stunned for a moment, and his thoughts alarmed him. The king said, “Belteshazzar, don’t let the dream or its interpretation alarm you.”

Belteshazzar answered, “My lord, may the dream apply to those who hate you, and its interpretation to your enemies! 20 The tree you saw, which grew large and strong, whose top reached to the sky and was visible to all the earth, 21 whose leaves were beautiful and its fruit abundant — and on it was food for all, under it the wild animals lived, and in its branches the birds of the air lived — 22 that tree is you, the king. For you have become great and strong: your greatness has grown and even reaches the sky, and your dominion extends to the ends of the earth.

23 “The king saw an observer, a holy one, coming down from heaven and saying, ‘Cut down the tree and destroy it, but leave the stump with its roots in the ground and with a band of iron and bronze around it, in the tender grass of the field. Let him be drenched with dew from the sky, and share food with the wild animals for seven periods of time.’ 24 This is the interpretation, Your Majesty, and this is the sentence of the Most High that has been passed against my lord the king: 25 You will be driven away from people to live with the wild animals. You will feed on grass like cattle and be drenched with dew from the sky for seven periods of time, until you acknowledge that the Most High is ruler over the kingdom of men, and He gives it to anyone He wants. 26 As for the command to leave the tree’s stump with its roots, your kingdom will be restored [C] to you as soon as you acknowledge that Heaven rules. 27 Therefore, may my advice seem good to you my king. Separate yourself from your sins by doing what is right, and from your injustices by showing mercy to the needy. Perhaps there will be an extension of your prosperity.”

The Sentence Executed

28 All this happened to King Nebuchadnezzar. 29 At the end of 12 months, as he was walking on the roof of the royal palace in Babylon,
30[†] the king exclaimed, “Is this not Babylon the Great that I have built by my vast power to be a royal residence and to display my majestic glory? ”

[31] While the words were still in the king's mouth, a voice came from
heaven: "King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is declared that the kingdom has
departed from you. [32] You will be driven away from people to live with the
wild animals, and you will feed on grass like cattle for seven periods of
time, until you acknowledge that the Most High is ruler over the kingdom
of men, and He gives it to anyone He wants."

[33] At that moment the sentence against Nebuchadnezzar was executed. He was driven away from people. He ate grass like cattle, and his body was drenched with dew from the sky, until his hair grew like eagles' feathers and his nails like birds' claws.

Nebuchadnezzar's Praise

[34†] But at the end of those days, I, Nebuchadnezzar, looked up to heaven, and my sanity returned to me. Then I praised the Most High and honored and glorified Him who lives forever:

For His dominion is an everlasting dominion,
and His kingdom is from generation to generation.
[35] All the inhabitants of the earth are counted as nothing,
and He does what He wants with the army of heaven
and the inhabitants of the earth.
There is no one who can hold back His hand
or say to Him, "What have You done? "

[36] At that time my sanity returned to me, and my majesty and splendor
returned to me for the glory of my kingdom. My advisers and my nobles
sought me out, I was reestablished over my kingdom, and even more
greatness came to me. [37] Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise, exalt, and glorify
the King of heaven, because all His works are true and His ways are just.
He is able to humble those who walk in pride.

Belshazzar's Feast

5 [†]King Belshazzar held a great feast for 1,000 of his nobles and drank
wine in their presence. 2[†] Under the influence of [A] the wine, Belshazzar
gave orders to bring in the gold and silver vessels that his predecessor [B]
Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the temple in Jerusalem, so that the king
and his nobles, wives, and concubines could drink from them. 3 So they
brought in the gold vessels that had been taken from the temple, the house
of God in Jerusalem, and the king and his nobles, wives, and concubines
drank from them. 4 They drank the wine and praised their gods made of
gold and silver, bronze, iron, wood, and stone.

The Handwriting on the Wall

5 At that moment the fingers of a man's hand appeared and began writing
on the plaster of the king's palace wall next to the lampstand. As the king
watched the hand [C] that was writing, 6 his face turned pale, [D] and his
thoughts so terrified him that his hip joints shook and his knees knocked
together. 7[†] The king called out to bring in the mediums, Chaldeans, and
astrologers. He said to these wise men of Babylon, "Whoever reads this
inscription and gives me its interpretation will be clothed in purple, have a
gold chain around his neck, and have the third highest position in the
kingdom." 8 So all the king's wise men came in, but none could read the
inscription or make its interpretation known to him. 9 Then King Belshazzar
became even more terrified, his face turned pale, [E] and his nobles were
bewildered.

10 Because of the outcry of the king and his nobles, the queen came to
the banquet hall. "May the king live forever," she said. "Don't let your
thoughts terrify you or your face be pale. [F] 11 There is a man in your
kingdom who has the spirit of the holy gods in him. In the days of your
predecessor he was found to have insight, intelligence, and wisdom like the
wisdom of the gods. Your predecessor, King Nebuchadnezzar, appointed
him chief of the diviners, mediums, Chaldeans, and astrologers. Your own
predecessor, the king, 12 did this because Daniel, the one the king named
Belteshazzar, was found to have an extraordinary spirit, knowledge and

perception, and the ability to interpret dreams, explain riddles, and solve
problems. Therefore, summon Daniel, and he will give the interpretation.”

Daniel before the King

13 Then Daniel was brought before the king. The king said to him, “Are
you Daniel, one of the Judean exiles that my predecessor the king brought
from Judah? 14 I’ve heard that you have the spirit of the gods in you, and
that you have insight, intelligence, and extraordinary wisdom. 15 Now the
wise men and mediums were brought before me to read this inscription and
make its interpretation known to me, but they could not give its
interpretation. 16 However, I have heard about you that you can give
interpretations and solve problems. Therefore, if you can read this
inscription and give me its interpretation, you will be clothed in purple,
have a gold chain around your neck, and have the third highest position in
the kingdom.”

17 Then Daniel answered the king, “You may keep your gifts, and give
your rewards to someone else; however, I will read the inscription for the
king and make the interpretation known to him. 18 Your Majesty, the •Most
High God gave sovereignty, greatness, glory, and majesty to your
predecessor Nebuchadnezzar. 19 Because of the greatness He gave him, all
peoples, nations, and languages were terrified and fearful of him. He killed
anyone he wanted and kept alive anyone he wanted; he exalted anyone he
wanted and humbled anyone he wanted. 20 But when his heart was exalted
and his spirit became arrogant, he was deposed from his royal throne and
his glory was taken from him. 21 He was driven away from people, his
mind was like an animal’s, he lived with the wild donkeys, he was fed
grass like cattle, and his body was drenched with dew from the sky until he
acknowledged that the Most High God is ruler over the kingdom of men
and sets anyone He wants over it.

22 “But you his successor, Belshazzar, have not humbled your heart,
even though you knew all this. 23 Instead, you have exalted yourself against
the Lord of heaven. The vessels from His house were brought to you, and as
you and your nobles, wives, and concubines drank wine from them, you

praised the gods made of silver and gold, bronze, iron, wood, and stone,
which do not see or hear or understand. But you have not glorified the God
who holds your life-breath in His hand and who controls the whole course
of your life. [G] 24 Therefore, He sent the hand, and this writing was
inscribed.

The Inscription's Interpretation

25 "This is the writing that was inscribed:

MENE, MENE, TEKEL, PARSIN.

26 This is the interpretation of the message:

MENE [H] means that God has numbered the days of your kingdom and brought it to an end.

27 TEKEL [I] means that you have been weighed in the balance and found deficient.

28 PERES [J] means that your kingdom has been divided and given to the Medes and Persians."

29 Then Belshazzar gave an order, and they clothed Daniel in purple, placed a gold chain around his neck, and issued a proclamation concerning him that he should be the third ruler in the kingdom.

30† That very night Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans was killed,
31† and Darius the Mede received the kingdom at the age of 62.

The Plot against Daniel

6 [†]Darius decided [A] to appoint 120 satraps over the kingdom, stationed
throughout the realm, 2 and over them three administrators, including
Daniel. These satraps would be accountable to them so that the king would
not be defrauded. 3 Daniel [B] distinguished himself above the administrators
and satraps because he had an extraordinary spirit, so the king planned to
set him over the whole realm. 4 The administrators and satraps, therefore,
kept trying to find a charge against Daniel regarding the kingdom. But they
could find no charge or corruption, for he was trustworthy, and no
negligence or corruption was found in him. 5 Then these men said, "We will
never find any charge against this Daniel unless we find something against
him concerning the law of his God."

6 So the administrators and satraps went together to the king and said to
him, "May King Darius live forever. 7[†] All the administrators of the
kingdom, the prefects, satraps, advisers, and governors have agreed that the
king should establish an ordinance and enforce an edict that for 30 days,
anyone who petitions any god or man except you, the king, will be thrown
into the lions' den. 8[†] Therefore, Your Majesty, establish the edict and sign
the document so that, as a law of the Medes and Persians, it is irrevocable
and cannot be changed." 9 So King Darius signed the document.

Daniel in the Lions' Den

10 When Daniel learned that the document had been signed, he went into
his house. The windows in its upper room opened toward Jerusalem, and
three times a day he got down on his knees, prayed, and gave thanks to his
God, just as he had done before. 11 Then these men went as a group and
found Daniel petitioning and imploring his God. 12 So they approached the
king and asked about his edict: "Didn't you sign an edict that for 30 days
any man who petitions any god or man except you, the king, will be thrown
into the lions' den? "

The king answered, "As a law of the Medes and Persians, the order
stands and is irrevocable."

[13] Then they replied to the king, “Daniel, one of the Judean exiles, has
ignored you, the king, and the edict you signed, for he prays three times a
day.” [14] As soon as the king heard this, he was very displeased; he set his
mind on rescuing Daniel and made every effort until sundown to deliver
him.

[15] Then these men went to the king and said to him, “You as king know it
is a law of the Medes and Persians that no edict or ordinance the king
establishes can be changed.”

[16] So the king gave the order, and they brought Daniel and threw him into
the lions’ den. The king said to Daniel, “May your God, whom you serve
continually, rescue you! ” [17] A stone was brought and placed over the
mouth of the den. The king sealed it with his own signet ring and with the
signet rings of his nobles, so that nothing in regard to Daniel could be
changed. [18] Then the king went to his palace and spent the night fasting.
No diversions [C] were brought to him, and he could not sleep.

Daniel Released

[19] At the first light of dawn the king got up and hurried to the lions’ den.
[20] When he reached the den, he cried out in anguish to Daniel. “Daniel,
servant of the living God,” the king said, [D] “has your God whom you serve
continually been able to rescue you from the lions? ”

[21] Then Daniel spoke with the king: “May the king live forever. [22] My
God sent His angel and shut the lions’ mouths. They haven’t hurt me, for I
was found innocent before Him. Also, I have not committed a crime against
you my king.”

[23] The king was overjoyed and gave orders to take Daniel out of the den.
So Daniel was taken out of the den, uninjured, for he trusted in his God.
[24] The king then gave the command, and those men who had maliciously
accused Daniel [E] were brought and thrown into the lions’ den — they, their
children, and their wives. They had not reached the bottom of the den
before the lions overpowered them and crushed all their bones.

Darius Honors God

[25] Then King Darius wrote to those of every people, nation, and language
who live in all the earth: “May your prosperity abound. [26] I issue a decree
that in all my royal dominion, people must tremble in fear before the God of
Daniel:

For He is the living God,
and He endures forever;
His kingdom will never be destroyed,
and His dominion has no end.
[27] He rescues and delivers;
He performs signs and wonders
in the heavens and on the earth,
for He has rescued Daniel
from the power of the lions.”

[28] So Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius and [F] the reign of
Cyrus the Persian.

Daniel's Vision of the Four Beasts

7 In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon, Daniel had a dream with
visions in his mind as he was lying in his bed. He wrote down the
dream, and here is the summary [A] of his account. 2 Daniel said, “In my
vision at night I was watching, and suddenly the four winds of heaven
stirred up the great sea. 3† Four huge beasts came up from the sea, each
different from the other.

4 “The first was like a lion but had eagle’s wings. I continued watching until its wings were torn off. It was lifted up from the ground, set on its feet like a man, and given a human mind.

5 “Suddenly, another beast appeared, a second one, that looked like a bear. It was raised up on one side, with three ribs in its mouth between its teeth. It was told, ‘Get up! Gorge yourself on flesh.’

6† “While I was watching, another beast appeared. It was like a leopard with four wings of a bird on its back. It had four heads and was given authority to rule.

7 “While I was watching in the night visions, a fourth beast appeared, frightening and dreadful, and incredibly strong, with large iron teeth. It devoured and crushed, and it trampled with its feet whatever was left. It was different from all the beasts before it, and it had 10 horns.

8 “While I was considering the horns, suddenly another horn, a little one, came up among them, and three of the first horns were uprooted before it. There were eyes in this horn like a man’s, and it had a mouth that spoke arrogantly.

The Ancient of Days and the Son of Man

9 “As I kept watching,

thrones were set in place,
and the Ancient of Days took His seat.
His clothing was white like snow,
and the hair of His head like whitest wool.

His throne was flaming fire;
its wheels were blazing fire.
10 A river of fire was flowing,
coming out from His presence.
Thousands upon thousands served Him;
ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him.
The court was convened,
and the books were opened.

11 "I watched, then, because of the sound of the arrogant words the horn
was speaking. As I continued watching, the beast was killed and its body
destroyed and given over to the burning fire. 12 As for the rest of the beasts,
their authority to rule was removed, but an extension of life was granted to
them for a certain period of time. 13† I continued watching in the night
visions,

and I saw One like a son of man
coming with the clouds of heaven.
He approached the Ancient of Days
and was escorted before Him.
14 He was given authority to rule,
and glory, and a kingdom;
so that those of every people,
nation, and language
should serve Him.
His dominion is an everlasting dominion
that will not pass away,
and His kingdom is one
that will not be destroyed.

Interpretation of the Vision

15 "As for me, Daniel, my spirit was deeply distressed within me, [B] and
the visions in my mind terrified me. 16 I approached one of those who were
standing by and asked him the true meaning of all this. So he let me know
the interpretation of these things: 17 'These huge beasts, four in number, are

four kings who will rise from the earth. [18] But the holy ones of the •Most
High will receive the kingdom and possess it forever, yes, forever and
ever.'

[19] "Then I wanted to know the true meaning of the fourth beast, the one
different from all the others, extremely terrifying, with iron teeth and
bronze claws, devouring, crushing, and trampling with its feet whatever was
left. [20] I also wanted to know about the 10 horns on its head and about the
other horn that came up, before which three fell — the horn that had eyes,
and a mouth that spoke arrogantly, and that was more visible than the
others. [21] As I was watching, this horn waged war against the holy ones
and was prevailing over them [22] until the Ancient of Days arrived and a
judgment was given in favor of the holy ones of the Most High, for the
time had come, and the holy ones took possession of the kingdom.

[23] "This is what he said: 'The fourth beast will be a fourth kingdom on
the earth, different from all the other kingdoms. It will devour the whole
earth, trample it down, and crush it. [24] The 10 horns are 10 kings who will
rise from this kingdom. Another, different from the previous ones, will rise
after them and subdue three kings. [25] He will speak words against the Most
High and oppress [C] the holy ones of the Most High. He will intend to
change religious festivals [D] and laws, and the holy ones will be handed
over to him for a time, times, and half a time. [E], [26†] But the court will
convene, and his dominion will be taken away, to be completely destroyed
forever. [27] The kingdom, dominion, and greatness of the kingdoms under
all of heaven will be given to the people, the holy ones of the Most High.
His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all rulers will serve and
obey Him.'

[28] "This is the end of the interpretation. As for me, Daniel, my thoughts
terrified me greatly, and my face turned pale, [F] but I kept the matter to
myself."

The Vision of a Ram and a Goat

8 [†]In the third year of King Belshazzar's reign, a vision appeared to me,
Daniel, after the one that had appeared to me earlier. 2 I saw the vision,
and as I watched, I was in the fortress city of Susa, in the province of
Elam. I saw in the vision that I was beside the Ulai Canal. 3[†] I looked up, [A]
and there was a ram standing beside the canal. He had two horns. The two
horns were long, but one was longer than the other, and the longer one came
up last. 4 I saw the ram charging to the west, the north, and the south. No
animal could stand against him, and there was no rescue from his power. He
did whatever he wanted and became great.

5 As I was observing, a male goat appeared, coming from the west across
the surface of the entire earth without touching the ground. The goat had a
conspicuous horn [B] between his eyes. 6 He came toward the two-horned
ram I had seen standing beside the canal and rushed at him with savage
fury. 7 I saw him approaching the ram, and infuriated with him, he struck
the ram, shattering his two horns, and the ram was not strong enough to
stand against him. The goat threw him to the ground and trampled him, and
there was no one to rescue the ram from his power. 8 Then the male goat
became very great, but when he became powerful, the large horn was
shattered. Four conspicuous horns came up in its place, pointing toward the
four winds of heaven.

The Little Horn

9 From one of them a little horn emerged and grew extensively toward
the south and the east and toward the beautiful land. 10 It grew as high as
the heavenly •host, made some of the stars and some of the host fall to the
earth, and trampled them. 11 It made itself great, even up to the Prince of
the host; it removed His daily sacrifice and overthrew the place of His
sanctuary. 12 Because of rebellion, a host, together with the daily sacrifice,
will be given over. The horn will throw truth to the ground and will be
successful in whatever it does.

13 Then I heard a holy one speaking, and another holy one said to the
speaker, "How long will the events of this vision last — the daily sacrifice,

the rebellion that makes desolate, and the giving over of the sanctuary and of the host to be trampled? ”

14 He said to me, “For 2,300 evenings and mornings; then the sanctuary will be restored.”

TWISTED SCRIPTURE

Daniel 8:14

Daniel's prophetic 2,300 days have interested many throughout history who have sought to predict the date of the Lord's return. By interpreting each day as a year, William Miller, a Baptist pastor from New York, calculated that Christ's second advent would take place between March 21, 1843 and March 21, 1844. As the date approached, a wave of excitement and expectation swept across America. Thousands of Christians from mainline churches, convinced of the accuracy of Miller's prognostication, joined with the new adventist movement. Many of these "Millerites" sold their property to wait anxiously for the arrival of God's kingdom. When the date passed without any cataclysmic event, Miller set October 22, 1844, as the new date for the parousia, or return of Christ. A second failure, known as the "Great Disappointment," led Miller to repent of his errors. Several of his followers, however, said that Miller's latest date was correct but that his explanation was wrong. According to them, on October 22, 1844, Jesus moved from His seat at God's right hand into the Most Holy Place to begin an "investigative judgment" of all professing believers, many of whom will be blotted out of the book of LIfe. This remnant of Millerites eventually founded the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Interpretation of the Vision

15 While I, Daniel, was watching the vision and trying to understand it,
there stood before me someone who appeared to be a man. 16 I heard a
human voice calling from the middle of the Ulai: “Gabriel, explain the vision to this man.”

[17] So he approached where I was standing; when he came near, I was
terrified and fell facedown. “Son of man,” he said to me, “understand that
the vision refers to the time of the end.” [18] While he was speaking to me, I
fell into a deep sleep, with my face to the ground. Then he touched me,
made me stand up, [19] and said, “I am here to tell you what will happen at
the conclusion of the time of wrath, because it refers to the appointed time
of the end. [20] The two-horned ram that you saw represents the kings of
Media and Persia. [21] The shaggy goat represents the king of Greece, and the
large horn between his eyes represents the first king. [22] The four horns that
took the place of the shattered horn represent four kingdoms. They will rise
from that nation, but without its power.

[23] Near the end of their kingdoms,
when the rebels have reached
the full measure of their sin, [C]
an insolent king, skilled in intrigue, [D]
will come to the throne.
[24] His power will be great,
but it will not be his own.
He will cause terrible destruction
and succeed in whatever he does.
He will destroy the powerful
along with the holy people.
[25] He will cause deceit to prosper
through his cunning and by his influence,
and in his own mind he will make himself great.
He will destroy many in a time of peace;
he will even stand against the Prince of princes.
Yet he will be shattered — not by human hands.
[26] The vision of the evenings and the mornings
that has been told is true.
Now you must seal up the vision
because it refers to many days in the future.”

27 I, Daniel, was overcome and lay sick for days. Then I got up and went
about the king's business. I was greatly disturbed by the vision and could
not understand it.

Daniel's Prayer

9 †In the first year of Darius, the son of Ahasuerus, a Mede by birth, who
was ruler over the kingdom of the Chaldeans: 2† In the first year of his
reign, I, Daniel, understood from the books according to the word of the
LORD to Jeremiah the prophet that the number of years for the desolation of
Jerusalem would be 70. 3 So I turned my attention to the Lord God to seek
Him by prayer and petitions, with fasting, •sackcloth, and ashes.

4 I prayed to the LORD my God and confessed:

Ah, Lord — the great and awe-inspiring God who keeps His
gracious covenant with those who love Him and keep His
commands — 5 we have sinned, done wrong, acted wickedly,
rebelled, and turned away from Your commands and ordinances.
6 We have not listened to Your servants the prophets, who spoke
in Your name to our kings, leaders, fathers, and all the people of
the land.

7 Lord, righteousness belongs to You, but this day public shame
belongs to us: the men of Judah, the residents of Jerusalem, and
all Israel — those who are near and those who are far, in all the
countries where You have dispersed them because of the
disloyalty they have shown toward You. 8 LORD, public shame
belongs to us, our kings, our leaders, and our fathers, because we
have sinned against You. 9 Compassion and forgiveness belong to
the Lord our God, though we have rebelled against Him 10 and
have not obeyed the voice of the LORD our God by following His
instructions that He set before us through His servants the
prophets.

11 All Israel has broken Your law and turned away, refusing to
obey You. The promised curse [A] written in the law of Moses, the
servant of God, has been poured out on us because we have
sinned against Him. 12 He has carried out His words that He
spoke against us and against our rulers [B] by bringing on us so
great a disaster that nothing like what has been done to Jerusalem
has ever been done under all of heaven.

ARTICLE

What Does It Mean to Say, "Jesus Is Messiah"? ⇒

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13 Just as it is written in the law of Moses, all this disaster has
come on us, yet we have not appeased the LORD our God by
turning from our iniquities and paying attention to Your truth.
14 So the LORD kept the disaster in mind and brought it on us, for
the LORD our God is righteous in all He has done. But we have not
obeyed Him.

15 Now, Lord our God, who brought Your people out of the land
of Egypt with a mighty hand and made Your name renowned as
it is this day, we have sinned, we have acted wickedly. 16 Lord, in
keeping with all Your righteous acts, may Your anger and wrath
turn away from Your city Jerusalem, Your holy mountain; for
because of our sins and the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and
Your people have become an object of ridicule to all those around
us.

17 Therefore, our God, hear the prayer and the petitions of Your
servant. Show Your favor to Your desolate sanctuary for the
Lord's sake. 18 Listen, [C] my God, and hear. Open Your eyes and
see our desolations and the city called by Your name. For we are
not presenting our petitions before You based on our righteous
acts, but based on Your abundant compassion. 19 Lord, hear!
Lord, forgive! Lord, listen and act! My God, for Your own sake,
do not delay, because Your city and Your people are called by
Your name.

The 70 Weeks of Years

20 While I was speaking, praying, confessing my sin and the sin of my
people Israel, and presenting my petition before •Yahweh my God
concerning the holy mountain of my God — 21 while I was praying,
Gabriel, the man I had seen in the first vision, came to me in my extreme

weariness, about the time of the evening offering. [22] He gave me this
explanation: “Daniel, I’ve come now to give you understanding. [23] At the
beginning of your petitions an answer went out, and I have come to give it,
for you are treasured by God. So consider the message and understand the
vision:

[24†] Seventy weeks are decreed
about your people and your holy city —
to bring the rebellion to an end,
to put a stop to sin,
to wipe away iniquity,
to bring in everlasting righteousness,
to seal up vision and prophecy,
and to anoint the most holy place.
[25] Know and understand this:
From the issuing of the decree
to restore and rebuild Jerusalem
until •Messiah the Prince [D]
will be seven weeks and 62 weeks.
It will be rebuilt with a plaza and a moat,
but in difficult times.
[26] After those 62 weeks
the Messiah will be cut off
and will have nothing.
The people of the coming prince
will destroy the city and the sanctuary.
The [E] end will come with a flood,
and until the end there will be [F] war;
desolations are decreed.
[27] He will make a firm covenant [G]
with many for one week,
but in the middle of the week
he will put a stop to sacrifice and offering.
And the abomination of desolation
will be on a wing of the temple
until the decreed destruction

is poured out on the desolator.”

Vision of a Glorious One

10 In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia, a message was revealed to
Daniel, who was named Belteshazzar. The message was true and was
about a great conflict. He understood the message and had understanding of
the vision.

2 In those days I, Daniel, was mourning for three full weeks. 3 I didn't
eat any rich food, no meat or wine entered my mouth, and I didn't put any
oil on my body until the three weeks were over. 4 On the twenty-fourth day
of the first month, as I was standing on the bank of the great river, the
Tigris, 5 I looked up, and there was a man dressed in linen, with a belt of
gold from Uphaz around his waist. 6 His body was like topaz, his face like
the brilliance of lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and feet
like the gleam of polished bronze, and the sound of his words like the sound
of a multitude.

7 Only I, Daniel, saw the vision. The men who were with me did not see
it, but a great terror fell on them, and they ran and hid. 8 I was left alone,
looking at this great vision. No strength was left in me; my face grew
deathly pale, [A] and I was powerless. 9 I heard the words he said, and when
I heard them I fell into a deep sleep, [B] with my face to the ground.

Angelic Conflict

10 Suddenly, a hand touched me and raised me to my hands and knees.
11 He said to me, "Daniel, you are a man treasured by God. Understand the
words that I'm saying to you. Stand on your feet, for I have now been sent
to you." After he said this to me, I stood trembling.

12[†] "Don't be afraid, Daniel," he said to me, "for from the first day that
you purposed to understand and to humble yourself before your God, your
prayers were heard. I have come because of your prayers. 13 But the prince
of the kingdom of Persia opposed me for 21 days. Then Michael, one of the
chief princes, came to help me after I had been left there with the kings of
Persia. 14 Now I have come to help you understand what will happen to
your people in the last days, for the vision refers to those days."

[15] While he was saying these words to me, I turned my face toward the
ground and was speechless. [16] Suddenly one with human likeness touched
my lips. I opened my mouth and said to the one standing in front of me,
"My lord, because of the vision, anguish overwhelms me and I am
powerless. [17] How can someone like me, your servant, [C] speak with
someone like you, my lord? Now I have no strength, and there is no breath
in me."

[18] Then the one with human likeness touched me again and strengthened
me. [19] He said, "Don't be afraid, you who are [D] treasured by God. Peace
to you; be very strong! "

As he spoke to me, I was strengthened and said, "Let my lord speak, for you have strengthened me."

[20] He said, "Do you know why I've come to you? I must return at once to
fight against the prince of Persia, and when I leave, the prince of Greece
will come. [21] No one has the courage to support me against them except
Michael, your prince. However, I will tell you what is recorded in the book
of truth.

11 In the first year of Darius the Mede, I stood up to strengthen and
protect him. 2[†] Now I will tell you the truth.

Prophecies about Persia and Greece

"Three more kings will arise in Persia, and the fourth will be far richer
than the others. By the power he gains through his riches, he will stir up
everyone against the kingdom of Greece. 3[†] Then a warrior king will arise;
he will rule a vast realm and do whatever he wants. 4 But as soon as he is
established, his kingdom will be broken up and divided to the four winds of
heaven, but not to his descendants; it will not be the same kingdom that he
ruled, because his kingdom will be uprooted and will go to others besides
them.

Kings of the South and the North

5 "The king of the South will grow powerful, but one of his commanders
will grow more powerful and will rule a kingdom greater than his. 6 After
some years they will form an alliance, and the daughter of the king of the
South will go to the king of the North to seal the agreement. She will not
retain power, and his strength will not endure. She will be given up,
together with her entourage, her father, and the one who supported her
during those times. 7 In the place of the king of the South, one from her
family [A] will rise up, come against the army, and enter the fortress of the
king of the North. He will take action against them and triumph. 8 He will
take even their gods captive to Egypt, with their metal images and their
precious articles of silver and gold. For some years he will stay away from
the king of the North, 9 who will enter the kingdom of the king of the South
and then return to his own land.

10 "His sons will mobilize for war and assemble a large number of armed
forces. They will advance, sweeping through like a flood, [B] and will again
wage war as far as his fortress. 11 Infuriated, the king of the South will
march out to fight with the king of the North who will raise a large army but
they will be handed over to his enemy. 12 When the army is carried off, he
will become arrogant and cause tens of thousands to fall, but he will not

triumph. 13 The king of the North will again raise a multitude larger than the
first. After some years [C] he will advance with a great army and many
supplies.

14 "In those times many will rise up against the king of the South. Violent
ones among your own people will assert themselves to fulfill a vision, but
they will fail. 15 Then the king of the North will come, build up an assault
ramp, and capture a well-fortified city. The forces of the South will not
stand; even their select troops will not be able to resist. 16 The king of the
North who comes against him will do whatever he wants, and no one can
oppose him. He will establish himself in the beautiful land with total
destruction in his hand. 17 He will resolve to come with the force of his
whole kingdom and will reach an agreement with him. He will give him a
daughter in marriage [D] to destroy it, but she will not stand with him or
support him. 18 Then he will turn his attention to the coasts and islands and
capture many. But a commander will put an end to his taunting; instead, he
will turn his taunts against him. 19 He will turn his attention back to the
fortresses of his own land, but he will stumble, fall, and be no more.

20 "In his place one will arise who will send out a tax collector for the
glory of the kingdom; but within a few days he will be shattered, though not
in anger [E] or in battle.

21 "In his place a despised person will arise; royal honors will not be
given to him, but he will come during a time of peace [F], and seize the
kingdom by intrigue. 22 A flood of forces will be swept away before him;
they will be shattered, as well as the covenant prince. 23 After an alliance is
made with him, he will act deceitfully. He will rise to power with a small
nation. [G] 24 During a time of peace, [H] he will come into the richest parts of
the province and do what his fathers and predecessors never did. He will
lavish plunder, loot, and wealth on his followers, and he will make plans
against fortified cities, but only for a time.

25 "With a large army he will stir up his power and his courage against
the king of the South. The king of the South will prepare for battle with an

extremely large and powerful army, but he will not succeed, because plots
will be made against him. 26 Those who eat his provisions will destroy him;
his army will be swept away, and many will fall slain. 27 The two kings,
whose hearts are bent on evil, will speak lies at the same table but to no
avail, for still the end will come at the appointed time. 28 The king of the
North will return to his land with great wealth, but his heart will be set
against the holy covenant; [I] he will take action, then return to his own land.

29 "At the appointed time he will come again to the South, but this time [J]
will not be like the first. 30 Ships of Kittim will come against him, and
being intimidated, he will withdraw. Then he will rage against the holy
covenant and take action. On his return, he will favor those who abandon
the holy covenant. 31 His forces will rise up and desecrate the temple
fortress. They will abolish the daily sacrifice and set up the abomination of
desolation. 32 With flattery he will corrupt those who act wickedly toward
the covenant, but the people who know their God will be strong and take
action. 33 Those who are wise among the people will give understanding to
many, yet they will die by sword and flame, and be captured and plundered
for a time. 34 When defeated, they will be helped by some, but many others
will join them insincerely. 35 Some of the wise will fall so that they may be
refined, purified, and cleansed until the time of the end, for it will still
come at the appointed time.

36[†] "Then the king will do whatever he wants. He will exalt and magnify
himself above every god, and he will say outrageous things against the God
of gods. He will be successful until the time of wrath is completed,
because what has been decreed will be accomplished. 37 He will not show
regard for the gods [K] of his fathers, the god longed for by women, or for
any other god, because he will magnify himself above all. 38 Instead, he
will honor a god of fortresses — a god his fathers did not know — with
gold, silver, precious stones, and riches. 39 He will deal with the strongest
fortresses with the help of a foreign god. He will greatly honor those who
acknowledge him, [L] making them rulers over many and distributing land as
a reward.

40 “At the time of the end, the king of the South will engage him in battle,
but the king of the North will storm against him with chariots, horsemen,
and many ships. He will invade countries and sweep through them like a
flood. 41 He will also invade the beautiful land, and many will fall. But
these will escape from his power: Edom, Moab, and the prominent people [M]
of the Ammonites. 42 He will extend his power against the countries, and
not even the land of Egypt will escape. 43 He will get control over the
hidden treasures of gold and silver and over all the riches of Egypt. The
Libyans and •Cushites will also be in submission. [N], 44 But reports from the
east and the north will terrify him, and he will go out with great fury to
annihilate and •completely destroy many. 45[†] He will pitch his royal tents
between the sea and [O] the beautiful holy mountain, but he will meet his end
with no one to help him.

12 At that time
Michael the great prince
who stands watch over your people will rise up.
There will be a time of distress
such as never has occurred
since nations came into being until that time.
But at that time all your people
who are found written in the book will escape.
2† Many of those who sleep in the dust
of the earth will awake,
some to eternal life,
and some to shame and eternal contempt.
3 Those who are wise will shine
like the bright expanse of the heavens,
and those who lead many to righteousness,
like the stars forever and ever.

4 "But you, Daniel, keep these words secret and seal the book until the
time of the end. Many will roam about, and knowledge will increase."

5 Then I, Daniel, looked, and two others were standing there, one on this
bank of the river and one on the other. 6 One of them said to the man
dressed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, "How long until
the end of these extraordinary things? " 7 Then I heard the man dressed in
linen, who was above the waters of the river. He raised both his hands [A]
toward heaven and swore by Him who lives eternally that it would be for a
time, times, and half a time. When the power of the holy people is
shattered, all these things will be completed.

8 I heard but did not understand. So I asked, "My lord, what will be the
outcome of these things? "

ARTICLE

Does the Bible Teach Annihilationism? ⇒

[9] He said, “Go on your way, Daniel, for the words are secret and sealed
until the time of the end. [10] Many will be purified, cleansed, and refined,
but the wicked will act wickedly; none of the wicked will understand, but
the wise will understand. [11]† From the time the daily sacrifice is abolished
and the abomination of desolation is set up, there will be 1,290 days.
[12] The one who waits for and reaches 1,335 days is blessed. [13] But as for
you, go on your way to the end; you will rest, then rise to your destiny at
the end of the days.”

HOSEA

Introduction to Hosea

HOSEA

1 The word of the LORD that came to Hosea son of Beeri during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and of Jeroboam son of Jehoash, king of Israel.

Hosea's Marriage and Children

2† When the LORD first spoke to Hosea, He said this to him:

Go and marry a promiscuous wife
and have children of promiscuity,
for the land is committing blatant acts of promiscuity
by abandoning the LORD.

3 So he went and married Gomer daughter of Diblaim, and she conceived
and bore him a son. 4 Then the LORD said to him:

Name him Jezreel, for in a little while
I will bring the bloodshed of Jezreel
on the house of Jehu
and put an end to the kingdom of the house of Israel.
5 On that day I will break the bow of Israel
in the Valley of Jezreel.

6 She conceived again and gave birth to a daughter, and the LORD said to him:

Name her No Compassion, [A]
for I will no longer have compassion
on the house of Israel.
I will certainly take them away.
7 But I will have compassion on the house of Judah,
and I will deliver them by the LORD their God.
I will not deliver them by bow, sword, or war,
or by horses and cavalry.

8 After Gomer had weaned No Compassion, she conceived and gave birth
to a son. 9 Then the LORD said:

Name him Not My People, [B]
for you are not My people,
and I will not be your God. [C],
10Yet the number of the Israelites
will be like the sand of the sea,
which cannot be measured or counted.
And in the place where they were told:
You are not My people,
they will be called: Sons of the living God.
11 And the Judeans and the Israelites
will be gathered together.
They will appoint for themselves a single ruler
and go up from [D] the land.
For the day of Jezreel will be great.

Chapter 2

[1]Call [A] your brothers: My People
and your sisters: Compassion.

Israel's Adultery Rebuked

[2†] Rebuke your mother; rebuke her.
For she is not My wife and I am not her husband.
Let her remove the promiscuous look from her face
and her adultery from between her breasts.
[3†] Otherwise, I will strip her naked
and expose her as she was on the day of her birth.
I will make her like a desert
and like a parched land,
and I will let her die of thirst.
[4†] I will have no compassion on her children
because they are the children of promiscuity.
[5] Yes, their mother is promiscuous;
she conceived them and acted shamefully.
For she thought, "I will go after my lovers,
the men who give me my food and water,
my wool and flax, my oil and drink."
[6] Therefore, this is what I will do:
I will block her way with thorns;
I will enclose her with a wall,
so that she cannot find her paths.
[7] She will pursue her lovers but not catch them;
she will seek them but not find them.
Then she will think,
"I will go back to my former husband,
for then it was better for me than now."
[8] She does not recognize
that it is I who gave her the grain,
the new wine, and the oil.
I lavished silver and gold on her,
which they used for •Baal.
[9] Therefore, I will take back My grain in its time

and My new wine in its season;
I will take away My wool and linen,
which were to cover her nakedness.
10 Now I will expose her shame
in the sight of her lovers,
and no one will rescue her from My hands.
11 I will put an end to all her celebrations:
her feasts, New Moons, and Sabbaths —
all her festivals.
12 I will devastate her vines and fig trees.
She thinks that these are her wages
that her lovers have given her.
I will turn them into a thicket,
and the wild animals will eat them.
13 And I will punish her for the days of the Baals
when she burned incense to them,
put on her rings and jewelry,
and went after her lovers,
but forgot Me.

This is the LORD's declaration.

Israel's Adultery Forgiven

14 Therefore, I am going to persuade her,
lead her to the wilderness,
and speak tenderly to her. [B]
15 There I will give her vineyards back to her
and make the Valley of Achor
into a gateway of hope.
There she will respond as she did
in the days of her youth,
as in the day she came out of the land of Egypt.
16 In that day —
you will call Me, "My husband," this is the LORD's declaration —
and no longer call Me, "My Baal." [C]
17 For I will remove the names of the Baals

from her mouth;
they will no longer be remembered by their names.
18 On that day I will make a covenant for them
with the wild animals, the birds of the sky,
and the creatures that crawl on the ground.
I will shatter bow, sword,
and weapons of war in the land [D],
and will enable the people to rest securely.
19 I will take you to be My wife forever.
I will take you to be My wife in righteousness,
justice, love, and compassion.
20 I will take you to be My wife in faithfulness,
and you will know •Yahweh.
21 On that day I will respond —
I will respond to the sky, this is the LORD's declaration.
and it will respond to the earth.
22 The earth will respond to the grain,
the new wine, and the oil,
and they will respond to Jezreel.
23 I will sow her in the land for Myself,
and I will have compassion
on No Compassion;
I will say to Not My People:
You are My people,
and he will say, "You are My God."

Waiting for Restoration

3 †Then the LORD said to me, "Go again; show love to a woman who is loved by another man and is an adulteress, just as the LORD loves the Israelites though they turn to other gods and love raisin cakes."

2 So I bought her for 15 •shekels of silver and five bushels of barley. , 3 I
said to her, "You must live with me many days. Don't be promiscuous or
belong to any man, and I will act the same way toward you."

4 For the Israelites must live many days without king or prince, without
sacrifice or sacred pillar, and without •ephod or household idols.
5 Afterward, the people of Israel will return and seek the LORD their God
and David their king. They will come with awe to the LORD and to His
goodness in the last days.

God's Case against Israel

4 [†]Hear the word of the LORD, people of Israel,
for the LORD has a case
against the inhabitants of the land:
There is no truth, no faithful love,
and no knowledge of God in the land!
2 Cursing, lying, murder, stealing,
and adultery are rampant;
one act of bloodshed follows another.
3 For this reason the land mourns,
and everyone who lives in it languishes,
along with the wild animals and the birds of the sky;
even the fish of the sea disappear.
4 But let no one dispute; let no one argue,
for My case is against you priests. ,
5 You will stumble by day;
the prophet will also stumble with you by night.
And I will destroy your mother.
6 My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.
Because you have rejected knowledge,
I will reject you from serving as My priest.
Since you have forgotten the law of your God,
I will also forget your sons.

7 The more they multiplied,
the more they sinned against Me.
I will change their honor into disgrace.
8 They feed on the sin [B] of My people;
they have an appetite for their transgressions.
9 The same judgment will happen
to both people and priests.
I will punish them for their ways
and repay them for their deeds.
10 They will eat but not be satisfied;
they will be promiscuous but not multiply.
For they have abandoned their devotion to the LORD.
11 Promiscuity, wine, and new wine

take away one's understanding.

12 My people consult their wooden idols,
and their divining rods inform them.
For a spirit of promiscuity leads them astray;
they act promiscuously
in disobedience to [C] their God.
13 They sacrifice on the mountaintops,
and they burn offerings on the hills,
and under oaks, poplars, and terebinths,
because their shade is pleasant.
And so your daughters act promiscuously
and your daughters-in-law commit adultery.
14 I will not punish your daughters
when they act promiscuously
or your daughters-in-law
when they commit adultery,
for the men themselves go off with prostitutes
and make sacrifices with cult prostitutes.
People without discernment are doomed.

Warnings for Israel and Judah

15 Israel, if you act promiscuously,
don't let Judah become •guilty!
Do not go to Gilgal
or make a pilgrimage to Beth-aven,
and do not swear an oath: As the Lord lives!
16 For Israel is as obstinate as a stubborn cow.
Can the Lord now shepherd them
like a lamb in an open meadow?
17 Ephraim is attached to idols;
leave him alone!
18 When their drinking is over,
they turn to promiscuity.
Israel's leaders [D] fervently love disgrace. [E]
19 A wind with its wings will carry them off, [F]

and they will be ashamed of their sacrifices.

5 Hear this, priests!
Pay attention, house of Israel!
Listen, royal house!
For the judgment applies to you
because you have been a snare at Mizpah
and a net spread out on Tabor.
2 Rebels are deeply involved in slaughter;
I will be a punishment for all of them. [A]
3 I know Ephraim,
and Israel is not hidden from Me.
For now, Ephraim,
you have acted promiscuously;
Israel is defiled.
4 Their actions do not allow them
to return to their God,
for a spirit of promiscuity is among them,
and they do not know the Lord.
5 Israel's arrogance testifies against them. [B]
Both Israel and Ephraim stumble
because of their wickedness;
even Judah will stumble with them.
6 They go with their flocks and herds
to seek the Lord
but do not find Him;
He has withdrawn from them.
7 They betrayed the Lord;
indeed, they gave birth to illegitimate children.
Now the New Moon will devour them
along with their fields.

8 Blow the horn in Gibeah,
the trumpet in Ramah;
raise the war cry in Beth-aven:
After you, Benjamin!
9 Ephraim will become a desolation
on the day of punishment;

I announce what is certain
among the tribes of Israel.
10 The princes of Judah are like those
who move boundary markers;
I will pour out My fury on them like water.
11 Ephraim is oppressed, crushed in judgment,
for he is determined to follow what is worthless. C
12 So I am like rot to Ephraim
and like decay to the house of Judah.
13 When Ephraim saw his sickness
and Judah his wound,
Ephraim went to Assyria
and sent a delegation to the great king. D,
But he cannot cure you or heal your wound.
14 For I am like a lion to Ephraim
and like a young lion to the house of Judah.
Yes, I will tear them to pieces and depart.
I will carry them off,
and no one can rescue them.
15 I will depart and return to My place
until they recognize their •guilt and seek My face;
they will search for Me in their distress.

A Call to Repentance

6 Come, let us return to the LORD.
For He has torn us,
and He will heal us;
He has wounded us,
and He will bind up our wounds.
2[†] He will revive us after two days,
and on the third day He will raise us up
so we can live in His presence.
3 Let us strive to know the LORD.
His appearance is as sure as the dawn.
He will come to us like the rain,
like the spring showers that water the land.

The LORD's First Lament

4 What am I going to do with you, Ephraim?
What am I going to do with you, Judah?
Your loyalty is like the morning mist
and like the early dew that vanishes.
5 This is why I have used the prophets
to cut them down; [A],
I have killed them with the words of My mouth.
My judgment strikes like lightning.
6 For I desire loyalty and not sacrifice,
the knowledge of God rather than •burnt offerings.

7 But they, like Adam, [B] have violated the covenant;
there they have betrayed Me.
8 Gilead is a city of evildoers,
tracked with bloody footprints.
9 Like raiders who wait in ambush for someone,
a band of priests murders on the road to Shechem.
They commit atrocities.
10 I have seen something horrible in the house of Israel:
Ephraim's promiscuity is there; Israel is defiled.
11 A harvest is also appointed for you, Judah.

When I [C] return My people from captivity,

7 when I heal Israel,
the sins of Ephraim and the crimes of Samaria
will be exposed.
For they practice fraud;
a thief breaks in;
a raiding party pillages outside.
2 But they never consider that I remember all their evil.
Now their sins are all around them;
they are right in front of My face.

Israel's Corruption

3 They please the king with their evil,
the princes with their lies.
4 All of them commit adultery;
they are like an oven heated by a baker
who stops stirring the fire
from the kneading of the dough until it is leavened.
5 On the day of our king,
the princes are sick with the heat of wine —
there is a conspiracy with traitors. [A]
6 For they — their hearts like an oven —
draw him into their oven.
Their anger smolders all night;
in the morning it blazes like a flaming fire.
7 All of them are as hot as an oven,
and they consume their rulers.
All their kings fall;
not one of them calls on Me. [B]

8 Ephraim has allowed himself to get mixed up with the nations.
Ephraim is unturned bread baked on a griddle.
9 Foreigners consume his strength,
but he does not notice.
Even his hair is streaked with gray,
but he does not notice.

10 Israel's arrogance testifies against them, [C],
yet they do not return to •Yahweh their God,
and for all this, they do not seek Him.

11 So Ephraim has become like a silly, senseless dove;
they call to Egypt, and they go to Assyria.
12 As they are going, I will spread My net over them;
I will bring them down like birds of the sky.
I will discipline them in accordance
with the news that reaches [D] their assembly.

The LORD's Second Lament

13 Woe to them, for they fled from Me;
destruction to them, for they rebelled against Me!
Though I want to redeem them,
they speak lies against Me.
14 They do not cry to Me from their hearts;
rather, they wail on their beds.
They slash themselves for grain and new wine;
they turn away from Me.
15 I trained and strengthened their arms,
but they plot evil against Me.
16 They turn, but not to what is above;
they are like a faulty bow.
Their leaders will fall by the sword
because of the cursing of their tongue.
They will be ridiculed for this in the land of Egypt.

Israel's False Hopes

8 Put the horn to your mouth!
One like an eagle comes
against the house of the LORD,
because they transgress My covenant
and rebel against My law.
2 Israel cries out to Me,
"My God, we know You!"
3 Israel has rejected what is good;
an enemy will pursue him.

4 They have installed kings,
but not through Me.
They have appointed leaders,
but without My approval.
They make their silver and gold
into idols for themselves
for their own destruction. [A]
5 Your calf-idol [B] is rejected, Samaria.
My anger burns against them.
How long will they be incapable of innocence?
6 For this thing is from Israel —
a craftsman made it, and it is not God.
The calf of Samaria will be smashed to bits!

7 Indeed, they sow the wind
and reap the whirlwind.
There is no standing grain;
what sprouts fails to yield flour.
Even if they did,
foreigners would swallow it up.
8 Israel is swallowed up!
Now they are among the nations
like discarded pottery.
9 For they have gone up to Assyria
like a wild donkey going off on its own.
Ephraim has paid for love.
10 Even though they hire lovers among the nations,

I will now round them up,
and they will begin to decrease in number
under the burden of the king and leaders.

11 When Ephraim multiplied his altars for sin,
they became his altars for sinning.
12 Though I were to write out for him
ten thousand points of My instruction,
they would be [C] regarded as something strange.
13† Though they offer sacrificial gifts [D],
and eat the flesh,
the LORD does not accept them.
Now He will remember their •guilt
and punish their sins;
they will return to Egypt.
14 Israel has forgotten his Maker and built palaces;
Judah has also multiplied fortified cities.
I will send fire on their cities,
and it will consume their citadels.

The Coming Exile

9 Israel, do not rejoice jubilantly as the nations do,
for you have acted promiscuously, leaving your God.
You have loved the wages of a prostitute
on every grain-threshing floor.
2 Threshing floor and wine vat will not sustain them,
and the new wine will fail them.
3 They will not stay in the land of the LORD.
Instead, Ephraim will return to Egypt,
and they will eat •unclean food in Assyria.

4 They will not pour out
their wine offerings to the LORD,
and their sacrifices will not please Him.
Their food will be like the bread of mourners;
all who eat it become defiled.
For their bread will be for their appetites alone;
it will not enter the house of the LORD.
5 What will you do on a festival day,
on the day of the LORD's feast?
6 For even if they flee from devastation,
Egypt will gather them, and Memphis will bury them.
Thistles will take possession of their precious silver;
thorns will invade their tents.

7 The days of punishment have come;
the days of retribution have come.
Let Israel recognize it!
The prophet is a fool,
and the inspired man is insane,
because of the magnitude
of your •guilt and hostility.
8 Ephraim's watchman is with my God.
The prophet encounters a fowler's snare
on all his ways.
Hostility is in the house of his God!
9 They have deeply corrupted themselves
as in the days of Gibeah.

He will remember their guilt;
He will punish their sins.

Ephraim Bereaved of Offspring

10 I discovered Israel
like grapes in the wilderness.
I saw your fathers
like the first fruit of the fig tree in its first season.
But they went to Baal-peor,
consecrated themselves to Shame,
and became detestable,
like the thing they loved.
11 Ephraim's glory will fly away like a bird:
no birth, no gestation, no conception.
12 Even if they raise children,
I will bereave them of each one.
Yes, woe to them when I depart from them!
13 I have seen Ephraim like Tyre,
planted in a meadow,
so Ephraim will bring out his children
to the executioner.
14 Give them, LORD —
What should You give?
Give them a womb that miscarries
and breasts that are dry!

15 All their evil appears at Gilgal,
for there I came to hate them.
I will drive them from My house
because of their evil, wicked actions.
I will no longer love them;
all their leaders are rebellious.
16 Ephraim is struck down;
their roots are withered;
they cannot bear fruit.
Even if they bear children,

I will kill the precious offspring of their wombs.
17 My God will reject them
because they have not listened to Him;
they will become wanderers among the nations.

The Vine and the Calf

10 Israel is a lush [A] vine;
it yields fruit for itself.
The more his fruit increased,
the more he increased the altars.
The better his land produced,
the better they made the sacred pillars.
2 Their hearts are devious; [B],
now they must bear their •guilt.
The LORD will break down their altars
and demolish their sacred pillars.
3 In fact, they are now saying,
"We have no king!
For we do not •fear the LORD.
What can a king do for us? "
4 They speak mere words,
taking false oaths while making covenants.
So lawsuits break out
like poisonous weeds in the furrows of a field.

5 The residents of Samaria will have anxiety
over the calf of Beth-aven.
Indeed, its idolatrous priests rejoiced over it;
the people will mourn over it,
over its glory.
It will certainly depart from them.
6 The calf itself will be taken to Assyria
as an offering to the great king. [C],
Ephraim will experience shame;
Israel will be ashamed of its counsel.
7 Samaria's king will disappear [D]
like foam [E] on the surface of the water.
8 The •high places of Aven, the sin of Israel,
will be destroyed;
thorns and thistles will grow over their altars.
They will say to the mountains, "Cover us! "
and to the hills, "Fall on us! "

Israel’s Defeat because of Sin

9 Israel, you have sinned
since the days of Gibeah;
they have taken their stand there.
Will not war against the unjust
overtake them in Gibeah?
10 I will discipline them at My discretion;
nations will be gathered against them
to put them in bondage
for their two crimes.

11 Ephraim is a well-trained calf
that loves to thresh,
but I will place a yoke on [F] her fine neck.
I will harness Ephraim;
Judah will plow;
Jacob will do the final plowing.
12 Sow righteousness for yourselves
and reap faithful love;
break up your unplowed ground.
It is time to seek the LORD
until He comes and sends righteousness
on you like the rain.

13 You have plowed wickedness and reaped injustice;
you have eaten the fruit of lies.
Because you have trusted in your own way
and in your large number of soldiers,
14 the roar of battle will rise against your people,
and all your fortifications will be demolished
in a day of war,
like Shalman’s destruction of Beth-arbel.
Mothers will be dashed to pieces
along with their children.
15 So it will be done to you, Bethel,
because of your extreme evil.

At dawn the king of Israel will be totally destroyed.

The LORD's Love for Israel

11 When Israel was a child, I loved him,
and out of Egypt I called My son.
2 The more they called them,
the more they departed from Me.
They kept sacrificing to the •Baals
and burning offerings to idols.
3 It was I who taught Ephraim to walk,
taking them in My arms,
but they never knew that I healed them.
4 I led them with human cords,
with ropes of love.
To them I was like one
who eases the yoke from their jaws;
I bent down to give them food.
5 Israel will not return to the land of Egypt
and Assyria will be his king,
because they refused to repent.
6 A sword will whirl through his cities;
it will destroy and devour the bars of his gates, [A]
because of their schemes.
7 My people are bent on turning from Me.
Though they call to Him on high,
He will not exalt them at all.

8 How can I give you up, Ephraim?
How can I surrender you, Israel?
How can I make you like Admah?
How can I treat you like Zeboiim?
I have had a change of heart;
My compassion is stirred!
9 I will not vent the full fury of My anger;
I will not turn back to destroy Ephraim.
For I am God and not man,
the Holy One among you;
I will not come in rage. [B]
10 They will follow the LORD;

He will roar like a lion.
When He roars,
His children will come trembling from the west.
11 They will be roused like birds from Egypt
and like doves from the land of Assyria.
Then I will settle them in their homes.

This is the LORD's declaration.

12 Ephraim surrounds me with lies,
the house of Israel, with deceit.
Judah still wanders with God
and is faithful to the holy ones. [C]

God's Case against Jacob's Heirs

12 Ephraim chases [A] the wind
and pursues the east wind.
He continually multiplies lies and violence.
He makes a covenant with Assyria,
and olive oil is carried to Egypt.

2 The LORD also has a dispute with Judah.
He is about to punish Jacob according to his ways;
He will repay him based on his actions.
3 In the womb he grasped his brother's heel,
and as an adult he wrestled with God.
4 Jacob struggled with the Angel and prevailed;
he wept and sought His favor.
He found him [B] at Bethel,
and there He spoke with him.
5 •Yahweh is the God of •Hosts;
Yahweh is His name.
6 But you must return to your God.
Maintain love and justice,
and always put your hope in God.

7 A merchant loves to extort
with dishonest scales in his hands.
8 But Ephraim says:
"How rich I have become;
I made it all myself.
In all my earnings,
no one can find any crime in me
that I can be punished for! " [C]

Judgment on Apostate Israel

9 I have been Yahweh your God
ever since the land of Egypt.
I will make you live in tents again,
as in the festival days.
10 I spoke through the prophets

and granted many visions;
I gave parables through the prophets.
11 Since Gilead is full of evil,
they will certainly come to nothing.
They sacrifice bulls in Gilgal;
even their altars will be like heaps of rocks
on the furrows of a field.

Further Indictment of Jacob's Heirs

12 Jacob fled to the land of Aram.
Israel worked to earn a wife;
he tended flocks for a wife.
13 The LORD brought Israel from Egypt by a prophet,
and Israel was tended by a prophet.

ARTICLE

Does the "New Physics" Conflict with Christianity? ⇒

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14 Ephraim has provoked bitter anger,
so his Lord will leave his bloodguilt on him
and repay him for his contempt.

13 When Ephraim spoke, there was trembling;
he was exalted in Israel.
But he incurred •guilt through •Baal and died.

2 Now they continue to sin
and make themselves a cast image,
idols skillfully made from their silver,
all of them the work of craftsmen.
People say about them,
"Let the men who sacrifice [A] kiss the calves."
3 Therefore, they will be like the morning mist,
like the early dew that vanishes,
like chaff blown from a threshing floor,
or like smoke from a window.

Death and Resurrection

4 I have been •Yahweh your God
ever since the land of Egypt;
you know no God but Me,
and no Savior exists besides Me.
5 I knew you in the wilderness,
in the land of drought.
6 When they had pasture,
they became satisfied;
they were satisfied,
and their hearts became proud.
Therefore they forgot Me.
7 So I will be like a lion to them;
I will lurk like a leopard on the path.
8 I will attack them
like a bear robbed of her cubs
and tear open the rib cage over their hearts.
I will devour them there like a lioness,
like a wild beast that would rip them open.
9 I will destroy you, Israel;

you have no help but Me.

[10] Where now is your king,
that he may save you in all your cities,
and the [B] rulers [C] you demanded, saying,
“Give me a king and leaders”?
[11] I give you a king in My anger
and take away a king in My wrath.
[12] Ephraim’s guilt is preserved;
his sin is stored up.
[13] Labor pains come on him.
He is not a wise son;
when the time comes,
he will not be born. [D]

[14] I will ransom them from the power of •Sheol.
I will redeem [E] them from death.
Death, where are your barbs?
Sheol, where is your sting?
Compassion is hidden from My eyes.

The Coming Judgment

[15] Although he flourishes among his brothers, [F]
an east wind will come,
a wind from the LORD rising up from the desert.
His water source will fail,
and his spring will run dry.
The wind will plunder the treasury
of every precious item.

[16] Samaria will bear her guilt
because she has rebelled against her God.
They will fall by the sword;
their little ones will be dashed to pieces,
and their pregnant women ripped open.

A Plea to Repent

14 Israel, return to •Yahweh your God,
for you have stumbled in your sin.
2 Take words of repentance with you
and return to the LORD.
Say to Him: "Forgive all our sin
and accept what is good,
so that we may repay You
with praise from our [A] lips.
3 Assyria will not save us,
we will not ride on horses,
and we will no longer proclaim, 'Our gods! '
to the work of our hands.
For the fatherless receives compassion in You."

A Promise of Restoration

4 I will heal their apostasy;
I will freely love them,
for My anger will have turned from him.
5 I will be like the dew to Israel;
he will blossom like the lily
and take root like the cedars of Lebanon.
6 His new branches will spread,
and his splendor will be like the olive tree,
his fragrance, like the forest of Lebanon.
7 The people will return and live beneath his shade.
They will grow grain
and blossom like the vine.
His renown will be like the wine of Lebanon.

8 Ephraim, why should I have anything more
to do with idols?
It is I who answer and watch over him.
I am like a flourishing pine tree;
your fruit comes from Me.

9 Let whoever is wise understand these things,

and whoever is insightful recognize them.
For the ways of the LORD are right,
and the righteous walk in them,
but the rebellious stumble in them.

JOEL

Joel 1 Joel 2 Joel 3

Introduction to Joel

JOEL

1 The word of the LORD that came to Joel son of Pethuel:

A Plague of Locusts

2 Hear this, you elders;
listen, all you inhabitants of the land.
Has anything like this ever happened in your days
or in the days of your ancestors?
3 Tell your children about it,
and let your children tell their children,
and their children the next generation.
4 What the devouring locust has left,
the swarming locust has eaten;
what the swarming locust has left,
the young locust has eaten;
and what the young locust has left,
the destroying locust has eaten.

5 Wake up, you drunkards, and weep;
wail, all you wine drinkers,
because of the sweet wine,
for it has been taken from your mouth.
6 For a nation has invaded My land,
powerful and without number;
its teeth are the teeth of a lion,
and it has the fangs of a lioness.
7 It has devastated My grapevine
and splintered My fig tree.
It has stripped off its bark and thrown it away;
its branches have turned white.
8 Grieve like a young woman dressed in •sackcloth,
mourning for the husband of her youth.
9 •Grain and •drink offerings have been cut off
from the house of the LORD;
the priests, who are ministers of the LORD, mourn.
10 The fields are destroyed;
the land grieves;

indeed, the grain is destroyed;
the new wine is dried up;
and the olive oil fails.
11 Be ashamed, you farmers,
wail, you vinedressers, [A]
over the wheat and the barley,
because the harvest of the field has perished.
12 The grapevine is dried up,
and the fig tree is withered;
the pomegranate, the date palm, and the apple —
all the trees of the orchard — have withered.
Indeed, human joy has dried up.

13 Dress in sackcloth and lament, you priests;
wail, you ministers of the altar.
Come and spend the night in sackcloth,
you ministers of my God,
because grain and drink offerings
are withheld from the house of your God.
14 Announce a sacred fast;
proclaim an assembly!
Gather the elders
and all the residents of the land
at the house of the LORD your God,
and cry out to the LORD.

The Day of the LORD

15† Woe because of that day!
For the Day of the LORD is near
and will come as devastation from the •Almighty.
16 Hasn't the food been cut off
before our eyes,
joy and gladness
from the house of our God?
17 The seeds lie shriveled in their casings. [B],
The storehouses are in ruin,

and the granaries are broken down,
because the grain has withered away.
18 How the animals groan!
The herds of cattle wander in confusion
since they have no pasture.
Even the flocks of sheep suffer punishment.
19 I call to You, LORD,
for fire has consumed
the pastures of the wilderness,
and flames have devoured
all the trees of the countryside.
20 Even the wild animals cry out to [C] You,
for the river beds are dried up,
and fire has consumed
the pastures of the wilderness.

JOEL

2 [†]Blow the horn in •Zion;
sound the alarm on My holy mountain!
Let all the residents of the land tremble,
for the Day of the LORD is coming;
in fact, it is near —
2 a day of darkness and gloom,
a day of clouds and dense overcast,
like the dawn spreading over the mountains;
a great and strong people appears,
such as never existed in ages past
and never will again
in all the generations to come.

ARTICLE

What Is the Relationship Between Science and the Bible? ⇒

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3 A fire destroys [A] in front of them,
and behind them a flame devours.
The land in front of them
is like the Garden of Eden,
but behind them,
it is like a desert wasteland;
there is no escape from them.
4 Their appearance is like that of horses,
and they gallop like war horses.
5 They bound on the tops of the mountains.
Their sound is like the sound of chariots,
like the sound of fiery flames consuming stubble,
like a mighty army deployed for war.

6 Nations writhe in horror before them;
all faces turn pale.
7 They attack as warriors attack;

they scale walls as men of war do.
Each goes on his own path,
and they do not change their course.
8 They do not push each other;
each man proceeds on his own path.
They dodge the arrows, never stopping.
9 They storm the city;
they run on the wall;
they climb into the houses;
they enter through the windows like thieves.

10 The earth quakes before them;
the sky shakes.
The sun and moon grow dark,
and the stars cease their shining.
11 The LORD raises His voice
in the presence of His army.
His camp is very large;
Those who carry out His command are powerful.
Indeed, the Day of the LORD is terrible and dreadful —
who can endure it?

God's Call for Repentance

12 Even now —
this is the LORD's declaration —
turn to Me with all your heart,
with fasting, weeping, and mourning.
13 Tear your hearts,
not just your clothes,
and return to the LORD your God.
For He is gracious and compassionate,
slow to anger, rich in faithful love,
and He relents from sending disaster.
14 Who knows? He may turn and relent
and leave a blessing behind Him,
so you can offer grain and wine
to the LORD your God.

15 Blow the horn in Zion!
Announce a sacred fast;
proclaim an assembly.
16 Gather the people;
sanctify the congregation;
assemble the aged; [B]
gather the children,
even those nursing at the breast.
Let the groom leave his bedroom,
and the bride her honeymoon chamber.
17 Let the priests, the LORD's ministers,
weep between the portico and the altar.
Let them say:
"Have pity on Your people, LORD,
and do not make Your inheritance a disgrace,
an object of scorn among the nations.
Why should it be said among the peoples,
'Where is their God? ' "

God's Response to His People

18[†] Then the LORD became jealous for His land and spared His people.
19 The LORD answered His people:

Look, I am about to send you
grain, new wine, and olive oil.
You will be satiated with them,
and I will no longer make you
a disgrace among the nations.

20 I will drive the northerner far from you
and banish him to a dry and desolate land,
his front ranks into the Dead Sea,
and his rear guard into the Mediterranean Sea.
His stench will rise;
yes, his rotten smell will rise,
for he has done catastrophic things.

21 Don't be afraid, land;
rejoice and be glad,
for the LORD has done great things.
22 Don't be afraid, wild animals,
for the wilderness pastures have turned green,
the trees bear their fruit,
and the fig tree and grapevine yield their riches.
23 Children of Zion, rejoice and be glad
in the LORD your God,
because He gives you the autumn rain
for your vindication. [C]
He sends showers for you,
both autumn and spring rain as before.
24 The threshing floors will be full of grain,
and the vats will overflow
with new wine and olive oil.

25 I will repay you for the years
that the swarming locust ate,
the young locust, the destroying locust,
and the devouring locust —
My great army that I sent against you.
26 You will have plenty to eat and be satisfied.
You will praise the name of •Yahweh your God,
who has dealt wondrously with you.
My people will never again be put to shame.
27 You will know that I am present in Israel
and that I am Yahweh your God,
and there is no other.
My people will never again be put to shame.

God's Promise of His Spirit

28 After this
I will pour out My Spirit on all humanity;
then your sons and your daughters will prophesy,
your old men will have dreams,

and your young men will see visions.
29 I will even pour out My Spirit
on the male and female slaves in those days.
30 I will display wonders
in the heavens and on the earth:
blood, fire, and columns of smoke.
31 The sun will be turned to darkness
and the moon to blood
before the great and awe-inspiring Day of the LORD comes.
32 Then everyone who calls
on the name of Yahweh will be saved,
for there will be an escape
for those on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem,
as the LORD promised,
among the survivors the LORD calls.

JOEL

Judgment of the Nations

1 Yes, in those days and at that time,
when I restore the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem,
2 I will gather all the nations
and take them to the Valley of Jehoshaphat.
I will enter into judgment with them there
because of My people, My inheritance Israel.
The nations have scattered the Israelites
in foreign countries
and divided up My land.
3 They cast lots for My people;
they bartered a boy for a prostitute
and sold a girl for wine to drink.

4 And also: Tyre, Sidon, and all the territories of Philistia — what are
you to Me? Are you paying Me back or trying to get even with Me? I will
quickly bring retribution on your heads. 5 For you took My silver and gold
and carried My finest treasures to your temples. 6 You sold the people of
Judah and Jerusalem to the Greeks to remove them far from their own
territory. 7 Look, I am about to rouse them up from the place where you
sold them; I will bring retribution on your heads. 8 I will sell your sons and
daughters into the hands of the people of Judah, and they will sell them to
the Sabeans, to a distant nation, for the LORD has spoken.

9 Proclaim this among the nations:
Prepare for holy war;
rouse the warriors;
let all the men of war advance and attack!
10 Beat your plows into swords
and your pruning knives into spears.
Let even the weakling say, “I am a warrior.”
11 Come quickly, all you surrounding nations;

gather yourselves.
Bring down Your warriors there, Lord.

12 Let the nations be roused
and come to the Valley of Jehoshaphat,
for there I will sit down
to judge all the surrounding nations.
13 Swing the sickle
because the harvest is ripe.
Come and trample the grapes
because the winepress is full;
the wine vats overflow
because the wickedness of the nations is great.

14 Multitudes, multitudes
in the valley of decision!
For the Day of the Lord is near
in the valley of decision.
15 The sun and moon will grow dark,
and the stars will cease their shining.
16 The Lord will roar from •Zion
and raise His voice from Jerusalem;
heaven and earth will shake.
But the Lord will be a refuge for His people,
a stronghold for the Israelites.

Israel Blessed

17 Then you will know
that I am •Yahweh your God,
who dwells in Zion, My holy mountain.
Jerusalem will be holy,
and foreigners will never overrun it again.
18 In that day
the mountains will drip with sweet wine,
and the hills will flow with milk.
All the streams of Judah will flow with water,
and a spring will issue from the Lord's house,

watering the Valley of Acacias. [A]
19 Egypt will become desolate,
and Edom a desert wasteland,
because of the violence done to the people of Judah
in whose land they shed innocent blood.
20 But Judah will be inhabited forever,
and Jerusalem from generation to generation.
21 I will pardon their bloodguilt,
which I have not pardoned,
for the LORD dwells in Zion.

AMOS

Introduction to Amos

Chapter 9

AMOS

1 The words of Amos, who was one of the sheep breeders [A] from
Tekoa — what he saw regarding Israel in the days of Uzziah, king of Judah, and Jeroboam son of Jehoash, king of Israel, two years before the earthquake.

2 He said:

The LORD roars from •Zion
and raises His voice from Jerusalem;
the pastures of the shepherds mourn, [B]
and the summit of Carmel withers.

Judgment on Israel's Neighbors

3 The LORD says:

I will not relent from punishing Damascus
for three crimes, even four,
because they threshed Gilead with iron sledges.
4 Therefore, I will send fire against Hazael's palace,
and it will consume Ben-hadad's citadels.
5 I will break down the gates [C] of Damascus.
I will cut off the ruler from the Valley of Aven,
and the one who wields the scepter from Beth-eden.
The people of Aram will be exiled to Kir.
The LORD has spoken.

6 The LORD says:

I will not relent from punishing Gaza
for three crimes, even four,
because they exiled a whole community,
handing them over to Edom.
7 Therefore, I will send fire against the walls of Gaza,
and it will consume its citadels.
8 I will cut off the ruler from Ashdod,
and the one who wields the scepter from Ashkelon.

I will also turn My hand against Ekron,
and the remainder of the Philistines will perish.
The Lord GOD has spoken.

9 The LORD says:

I will not relent from punishing Tyre
for three crimes, even four,
because they handed over
a whole community of exiles to Edom
and broke [D] a treaty of brotherhood.
10 Therefore, I will send fire against the walls of Tyre,
and it will consume its citadels.

11 The LORD says:

I will not relent from punishing Edom
for three crimes, even four,
because he pursued his brother with the sword.
He stifled his compassion,
his anger tore at them continually,
and he harbored his rage incessantly.
12 Therefore, I will send fire against Teman,
and it will consume the citadels of Bozrah.

13 The LORD says:

I will not relent from punishing the Ammonites
for three crimes, even four,
because they ripped open
the pregnant women of Gilead
in order to enlarge their territory.
14 Therefore, I will set fire to the walls of Rabbah,
and it will consume its citadels.
There will be shouting on the day of battle
and a violent wind on the day of the storm.
15 Their king and his princes

will go into exile together.
The LORD has spoken.

2 The LORD says:

I will not relent from punishing Moab
for three crimes, even four,
because he burned the bones
of the king of Edom to lime.
2 Therefore, I will send fire against Moab,
and it will consume the citadels of Kerioth.
Moab will die with a tumult,
with shouting and the sound of the ram's horn.
3 I will cut off the judge from the land
and kill all its officials with him.
The LORD has spoken.

Judgment on Judah

4 The LORD says:

I will not relent from punishing Judah
for three crimes, even four,
because they have rejected the instruction of the LORD
and have not kept His statutes.
The lies that their ancestors followed
have led them astray.
5 Therefore, I will send fire against Judah,
and it will consume the citadels of Jerusalem.

Judgment on Israel

6 The LORD says:

I will not relent from punishing Israel
for three crimes, even four,
because they sell a righteous person for silver
and a needy person for a pair of sandals.
7 They trample the heads of the poor
on the dust of the ground

and block the path of the needy.
A man and his father have sexual relations
with the same girl,
profaning My holy name.
8 They stretch out beside every altar
on garments taken as collateral,
and in the house of their God,
they drink wine obtained through fines.

9 Yet I destroyed the Amorite as Israel advanced;
his height was like the cedars,
and he was as sturdy as the oaks;
I destroyed his fruit above and his roots beneath.
10 And I brought you from the land of Egypt
and led you 40 years in the wilderness
in order to possess the land of the Amorite.
11 I raised up some of your sons as prophets
and some of your young men as Nazirites.
Is this not the case, Israelites?

This is the LORD's declaration.

12 But you made the Nazirites drink wine
and commanded the prophets,
"Do not prophesy."
13 Look, I am about to crush [A] you in your place
as a wagon full of sheaves crushes grain.
14 Escape will fail the swift,
the strong one will not prevail by his strength,
and the brave will not save his life.
15 The archer will not stand his ground,
the one who is swift of foot
will not save himself,
and the one riding a horse will not save his life.
16 Even the most courageous of the warriors
will flee naked on that day —

this is the LORD's declaration.

God's Reasons for Punishing Israel

3 †Listen to this message that the LORD has spoken against you, Israelites,
against the entire clan that I brought from the land of Egypt:

2 I have known only you
out of all the clans of the earth;
therefore, I will punish you for all your iniquities.
3 Can two walk together
without agreeing to meet?
4 Does a lion roar in the forest
when it has no prey?
Does a young lion growl from its lair
unless it has captured something?
5 Does a bird land in a trap on the ground
if there is no bait for it?
Does a trap spring from the ground
when it has caught nothing?
6 If a ram's horn is blown in a city,
aren't people afraid?
If a disaster occurs in a city,
hasn't the LORD done it?
7 Indeed, the Lord GOD does nothing
without revealing His counsel
to His servants the prophets.
8 A lion has roared;
who will not fear?
The Lord GOD has spoken;
who will not prophesy?

9 Proclaim on the citadels in Ashdod
and on the citadels in the land of Egypt:
Assemble on the mountains of Samaria
and see the great turmoil in the city
and the acts of oppression within it.
10 The people are incapable of doing right —
this is the LORD's declaration —
those who store up violence and destruction

in their citadels.

[11] Therefore, the Lord GOD says:

An enemy will surround the land;
he will destroy your strongholds
and plunder your citadels.

[12] The LORD says:

As the shepherd snatches two legs
or a piece of an ear
from the lion's mouth,
so the Israelites who live in Samaria
will be rescued
with only the corner of a bed
or the [A] cushion [B] of a couch.

[13] Listen and testify against the house of Jacob —
[14] I will punish the God of •Hosts.this is the declaration of the Lord GOD,
the altars of Bethel
on the day I punish Israel for its crimes;
the horns of the altar will be cut off
and fall to the ground.
[15] I will demolish the winter house
and the summer house;
the houses inlaid with ivory will be destroyed,
and the great houses will come to an end.

This is the LORD's declaration.

Social and Spiritual Corruption

4 Listen to this message, you cows of Bashan
who are on the hill of Samaria,
women who oppress the poor
and crush the needy,
who say to their husbands,
"Bring us something to drink."

2 The Lord God has sworn by His holiness:

Look, the days are coming [A]
when you will be taken away with hooks,
every last one of you with fishhooks.
3 You will go through breaches in the wall,
each woman straight ahead,
and you will be driven along toward Harmon.

This is the LORD's declaration.

4 Come to Bethel and rebel;
rebel even more at Gilgal!
Bring your sacrifices every morning,
your tenths every three days.
5 Offer leavened bread as a thank offering,
and loudly proclaim your freewill offerings,
for that is what you Israelites love to do!

This is the LORD's declaration.

God's Discipline and Israel's Apostasy

6 I gave you absolutely nothing to eat [B]
in all your cities,
a shortage of food in all your communities,
yet you did not return to Me.

This is the LORD's declaration.

7 I also withheld the rain from you
while there were still three months until harvest.
I sent rain on one city

but no rain on another.
One field received rain
while a field with no rain withered.
[8] Two or three cities staggered
to another city to drink water
but were not satisfied,
yet you did not return to Me.

This is the LORD's declaration.

[9] I struck you with blight and mildew;
the locust devoured
your many gardens and vineyards,
your fig trees and olive trees,
yet you did not return to Me.

This is the LORD's declaration.

[10] I sent plagues like those of Egypt;
I killed your young men with the sword,
along with your captured horses.
I caused the stench of your camp
to fill your nostrils,
yet you did not return to Me.

This is the LORD's declaration.

[11] I overthrew some of you
as I [C] overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah,
and you were like a burning stick
snatched from a fire,
yet you did not return to Me —

this is the LORD's declaration.

[12] Therefore, Israel, that is what I will do to you,
and since I will do that to you,
Israel, prepare to meet your God!
[13] He is here:
the One who forms the mountains,
creates the wind,

and reveals His [D] thoughts to man,
the One who makes the dawn out of darkness
and strides on the heights of the earth.
•Yahweh, the God of •Hosts, is His name.

Lamentation for Israel

5 Listen to this message that I am singing for you, a lament, house of Israel:

[2] She has fallen;
Virgin Israel will never rise again.
She lies abandoned on her land,
with no one to raise her up.

[3] For the Lord God says:

The city that marches out a thousand strong
will have only a hundred left,
and the one that marches out a hundred strong
will have only ten left in the house of Israel.

Seek God and Live

[4] For the Lord says to the house of Israel:

Seek Me and live!
[5] Do not seek Bethel
or go to Gilgal
or journey to Beer-sheba,
for Gilgal will certainly go into exile,
and Bethel will come to nothing.
[6] Seek •Yahweh and live,
or He will spread like fire
throughout the house of Joseph;
it will consume everything,
with no one at Bethel to extinguish it.
[7] Those who turn justice into •wormwood
throw righteousness to the ground.

[8] The One who made the Pleiades and Orion,
who turns darkness [A] into dawn
and darkens day into night,
who summons the waters of the sea

and pours them out over the face of the earth —
Yahweh is His name.
9 He brings destruction [B] on the strong, [C]
and it falls on the stronghold.

ARTICLE

Does the Design Argument Show There Is a God? ⇒

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10 They hate the one who convicts the •guilty
at the city •gate
and despise the one who speaks with integrity.
11 Therefore, because you trample on the poor
and exact a grain tax from him,
you will never live in the houses of cut stone
you have built;
you will never drink the wine
from the lush vineyards
you have planted.
12 For I know your crimes are many
and your sins innumerable.
They oppress the righteous, take a bribe,
and deprive the poor of justice at the gates.
13 Therefore, the wise person will keep silent [D]
at such a time,
for the days are evil.

14 Seek good and not evil
so that you may live,
and the LORD, the God of •Hosts,
will be with you,
as you have claimed.
15 Hate evil and love good;
establish justice in the gate.

Perhaps the LORD, the God of Hosts, will be gracious
to the remnant of Joseph.

16 Therefore Yahweh, the God of Hosts, the Lord, says:

There will be wailing in all the public squares;
they will cry out in anguish [E] in all the streets.
The farmer will be called on to mourn,
and professional mourners [F] to wail.
17 There will be wailing in all the vineyards,
for I will pass among you.
The LORD has spoken.

The Day of the LORD

18† Woe to you who long for the Day of the LORD!
What will the Day of the LORD be for you?
It will be darkness and not light.
19 It will be like a man who flees from a lion
only to have a bear confront him.
He goes home and rests his hand against the wall
only to have a snake bite him.
20 Won't the Day of the LORD
be darkness rather than light,
even gloom without any brightness in it?
21 I hate, I despise your feasts!
I can't stand the stench
of your solemn assemblies.
22 Even if you offer Me
your •burnt offerings and •grain offerings,
I will not accept them;
I will have no regard
for your •fellowship offerings of fattened cattle.
23 Take away from Me the noise of your songs!
I will not listen to the music of your harps.
24 But let justice flow like water,

and righteousness, like an unfailing stream.

25† “House of Israel, was it sacrifices and grain offerings that you
presented to Me during the 40 years in the wilderness? 26 But you have
taken up G Sakkuth your king and Kaiwan your star god, images you have
made for yourselves. 27 So I will send you into exile beyond Damascus.”
Yahweh, the God of Hosts, is His name. He has spoken.

Woe to the Complacent

6 Woe to those who are at ease in •Zion
and to those who feel secure on the hill of Samaria —
the notable people in this first of the nations,
those the house of Israel comes to.
2 Cross over to Calneh and see;
go from there to great Hamath;
then go down to Gath of the Philistines.
Are you better than these kingdoms?
Is their territory larger than yours?
3 You dismiss any thought of the evil day
and bring in a reign of violence.

4 They lie on beds inlaid with ivory,
sprawled out on their couches,
and dine on lambs from the flock
and calves from the stall.
5 They improvise songs [A] to the sound of the harp
and invent [B] their own musical instruments like David.
6 They drink wine by the bowlful
and anoint themselves with the finest oils
but do not grieve over the ruin of Joseph.
7 Therefore, they will now go into exile
as the first of the captives,
and the feasting of those who sprawl out
will come to an end.

Israel's Pride Judged

8 The Lord God has sworn by Himself — this is the declaration of •Yahweh, the God of •Hosts:

I loathe Jacob's pride
and hate his citadels,
so I will hand over the city and everything in it.

9 And if there are 10 men left in one house, they will die. 10 A close
relative [C] and burner will remove his corpse [D] from the house. He will call

to someone in the inner recesses of the house, “Any more with you? ”

That person will reply, “None.”

Then he will say, “Silence, because Yahweh’s name must not be invoked.”

11 For the LORD commands:

The large house will be smashed to pieces,
and the small house to rubble.

12 Do horses gallop on the cliffs;
does anyone plow there with oxen?
Yet you have turned justice into poison
and the fruit of righteousness into •wormwood —
13 you who rejoice over Lo-debar
and say, “Didn’t we capture Karnaim
for ourselves by our own strength? ”
14 But look, I am raising up a nation
against you, house of Israel —
and they will oppress you the GOD of Hosts —this is the declaration of the Lord,
from the entrance of Hamath [E],
to the Brook of the •Arabah.

First Vision: Locusts

7 The Lord God showed me this: He was forming a swarm of locusts at
the time the spring crop first began to sprout — after the cutting of the
king's hay. 2 When the locusts finished eating the vegetation of the land, I
said, "Lord God, please forgive! How will Jacob survive since he is so
small? "

3 The Lord relented concerning this. "It will not happen," He said.

Second Vision: Fire

4 The Lord God showed me this: The Lord God was calling for a
judgment by fire. It consumed the great deep and devoured the land. 5 Then
I said, "Lord God, please stop! How will Jacob survive since he is so
small? "

6 The Lord relented concerning this. "This will not happen either," said
the Lord God.

Third Vision: A Plumb Line

7 He showed me this: The Lord was standing there by a vertical wall with
a plumb line in His hand. 8 The Lord asked me, "What do you see,
Amos? "

I replied, "A plumb line."

Then the Lord said, "I am setting a plumb line among My people Israel;
I will no longer spare them:

9 Isaac's •high places will be deserted,
and Israel's sanctuaries will be in ruins;
I will rise up against the house of Jeroboam
with a sword."

Amaziah's Opposition

10† Amaziah the priest of Bethel sent word to Jeroboam king of Israel,
saying, “Amos has conspired against you right here in the house of Israel.
The land cannot endure all his words, 11 for Amos has said this: ‘Jeroboam
will die by the sword, and Israel will certainly go into exile from its
homeland.’ ”

12 Then Amaziah said to Amos, “Go away, you seer! Flee to the land of
Judah. Earn your living [A] and give your prophecies there, 13 but don’t ever
prophesy at Bethel again, for it is the king’s sanctuary and a royal temple.”

14 So Amos answered Amaziah, “I was [B] not a prophet or the son of a
prophet; rather, I was [C] a herdsman, and I took care of sycamore figs.
15 But the LORD took me from following the flock and said to me, ‘Go,
prophesy to My people Israel.’ ”

16 Now hear the word of the LORD. You say:

Do not prophesy against Israel;
do not preach against the house of Isaac.

17† Therefore, this is what the LORD says:

Your wife will be a prostitute in the city,
your sons and daughters will fall by the sword,
and your land will be divided up
with a measuring line.
You yourself will die on pagan [D] soil,
and Israel will certainly go into exile
from its homeland.

Fourth Vision: A Basket of Summer Fruit

8 The Lord GOD showed me this: A basket of summer fruit. 2 He asked me, “What do you see, Amos? ”

I replied, “A basket of summer fruit.”

The LORD said to me, “The end has come for My people Israel; I will no
longer spare them. 3 In that day the temple [A] songs will become
wailing” — this is the Lord GOD’s declaration. “Many dead bodies, thrown
everywhere! Silence! ”

4 Hear this, you who trample on the needy
and do away with the poor of the land,
5 asking, “When will the New Moon be over
so we may sell grain,
and the Sabbath,
so we may market wheat?
We can reduce the measure
while increasing the price [B]
and cheat with dishonest scales.
6 We can buy the poor with silver
and the needy for a pair of sandals
and even sell the chaff! ”

7 The LORD has sworn by the Pride of Jacob:

I will never forget all their deeds.
8 Because of this, won’t the land quake
and all who dwell in it mourn?
All of it will rise like the Nile;
it will surge and then subside
like the Nile in Egypt.

9 And in that day —
I will make the sun go down at noon; this is the declaration of the Lord GOD —
I will darken the land in the daytime.
10 I will turn your feasts into mourning

and all your songs into lamentation;
I will cause everyone [C] to wear •sackcloth
and every head to be shaved.
I will make that grief
like mourning for an only son
and its outcome like a bitter day.

11 Hear this! The days are coming —
when I will send a famine this is the declaration of the Lord God —
through the land:
not a famine of bread or a thirst for water,
but of hearing the words of the Lord.
12 People will stagger from sea to sea
and roam from north to east,
seeking the word of the Lord,
but they will not find it.
13 In that day the beautiful young women,
the young men also, will faint from thirst.
14 Those who swear by the •guilt of Samaria
and say, "As your god lives, Dan,"
or "As the way of Beer-sheba lives" —
they will fall, never to rise again.

Fifth Vision: The LORD beside the Altar

9 I saw the Lord standing beside the altar, and He said:

Strike the capitals of the pillars
so that the thresholds shake;
knock them down on the heads of all the people.
Then I will kill the rest of them with the sword.
None of those who flee will get away;
none of the fugitives will escape.
2 If they dig down to •Sheol,
from there My hand will take them;
if they climb up to heaven,
from there I will bring them down.
3 If they hide themselves
on the top of Carmel,
from there I will track them down
and seize them;
if they conceal themselves
from My sight on the sea floor,
from there I will command
the sea serpent to bite them.
4 And if they are driven
by their enemies into captivity,
from there I will command
the sword to kill them.
I will fix My eyes on them
for harm and not for good.

5 The Lord, the God of •Hosts —
He touches the earth;
it melts, and all who dwell in it mourn;
all of it rises like the Nile
and subsides like the Nile of Egypt.
6 He builds His upper chambers
in the heavens
and lays the foundation of His vault
on the earth.
He summons the waters of the sea

and pours them out on the face of the earth.
•Yahweh is His name.

Announcement of Judgment

7† Israelites, are you not like the •Cushites to Me?
Didn't I bring Israel from the land of Egypt, This is the LORD's declaration.
the Philistines from Caphtor,
and the Arameans from Kir?
8 Look, the eyes of the Lord GOD
are on the sinful kingdom,
and I will destroy it
from the face of the earth.
However, I will not totally destroy
the house of Jacob —
9 for I am about to give the command, this is the LORD's declaration —
and I will shake the house of Israel
among all the nations,
as one shakes a sieve,
but not a pebble will fall to the ground.
10 All the sinners among My people
who say: "Disaster will never overtake [A]
or confront us,"
will die by the sword.

Announcement of Restoration

11 In that day
I will restore the fallen booth of David:
I will repair its gaps,
restore its ruins,
and rebuild it as in the days of old,
12 so that they may possess
the remnant of Edom
and all the nations
that are called by My name —

this is the LORD's declaration —

He will do this.

13 Hear this! The days are coming —
this is the LORD's declaration —
when the plowman will overtake the reaper
and the one who treads grapes,
the sower of seed.
The mountains will drip with sweet wine,
and all the hills will flow with it.
14 I will restore the fortunes of My people Israel. [B]
They will rebuild and occupy ruined cities,
plant vineyards and drink their wine,
make gardens and eat their produce.
15 I will plant them on their land,
and they will never again be uprooted
from the land I have given them.
Yahweh your God has spoken.

OBADIAH

Obadiah 1

Introduction to Obadiah

Edom's Certain Judgment (Obadiah 1:1-9)
Edom's Sins against Judah (Obadiah 1:10-14)
Judgment of the Nations (Obadiah 1:15-18)
Future Blessing for Israel (Obadiah 1:19-21)

OBADIAH

1 The vision of Obadiah.

Edom's Certain Judgment

This is what the Lord God has said about Edom:

We have heard a message from the Lord;
a messenger has been sent among the nations:
"Rise up, and let us go to war against her."
2 Look, I will make you insignificant
among the nations;
you will be deeply despised.
3 Your presumptuous heart has deceived you,
you who live in clefts of the rock [A], ,
in your home on the heights,
who say to yourself,
"Who can bring me down to the ground? "
4 Though you seem to soar [B] like an eagle
and make your nest among the stars,
even from there I will bring you down.

This is the Lord's declaration.

5 If thieves came to you,
if marauders by night —
how ravaged you would be! —
wouldn't they steal only what they wanted?
If grape pickers came to you,
wouldn't they leave some grapes?
6 How Esau will be pillaged,
his hidden treasures searched out!
7 Everyone who has a treaty with you
will drive you to the border;
everyone at peace with you
will deceive and conquer you.
Those who eat your bread
will set a trap for you.
He will be unaware of it.

8 In that day —
will I not eliminate the wise ones of Edom — this is the LORD's declaration —
and those who understand
from the hill country of Esau?
9 Teman, your warriors will be terrified
so that everyone from the hill country of Esau
will be destroyed by slaughter.

Edom's Sins against Judah

10† You will be covered with shame
and destroyed forever
because of violence done to your brother Jacob.
11 On the day you stood aloof,
on the day strangers captured his wealth, [C]
while foreigners entered his •gate
and cast lots for Jerusalem,
you were just like one of them.
12 Do not [D] gloat over your brother
in the day of his calamity;
do not rejoice over the people of Judah
in the day of their destruction;
do not boastfully mock [E]
in the day of distress.
13 Do not enter the gate of My people
in the day of their disaster.
Yes, you — do not gloat over their misery
in the day of their disaster
and do not appropriate their possessions
in the day of their disaster.
14 Do not stand at the crossroads [F]
to cut off their fugitives,
and do not hand over their survivors
in the day of distress.

Judgment of the Nations

15 For the Day of the LORD is near,
against all the nations.
As you have done, so it will be done to you;
what you deserve will return on your own head.
16 As you have drunk on My holy mountain,
so all the nations will drink continually.
They will drink and gulp down
and be as though they had never been.
17 But there will be a deliverance on Mount •Zion,
and it will be holy;
the house of Jacob will dispossess
those who dispossessed them.
18 Then the house of Jacob will be a blazing fire,
and the house of Joseph, a burning flame,
but the house of Esau will be stubble;
Jacob [G] will set them on fire and consume Edom. [H]
Therefore no survivor will remain
of the house of Esau,
for the LORD has spoken.

Future Blessing for Israel

19 People from the •Negev will possess
the hill country of Esau;
those from the Judean foothills will possess
the land of the Philistines.
They will possess
the territories of Ephraim and Samaria,
while Benjamin will possess Gilead.
20 The exiles of the Israelites who are in Halah [I]
and who are among the Canaanites as far as Zarephath
as well as the exiles of Jerusalem who are in Sepharad
will possess the cities of the Negev.
21 Saviors [J] will ascend Mount Zion
to rule over the hill country of Esau,
but the kingdom will be the LORD's.

JONAH

Jonah 1 Jonah 2 Jonah 3 Jonah 4

Introduction to Jonah

JONAH

Jonah’s Flight

1 The word of the LORD came to Jonah son of Amittai: 2 “Get up! Go to
the great city of Nineveh and preach against it, because their
wickedness has confronted [A] Me.” 3† However, Jonah got up to flee to
Tarshish from the LORD’s presence. He went down to Joppa and found a
ship going to Tarshish. He paid the fare and went down into it to go with
them to Tarshish, from the LORD’s presence.

4 Then the LORD hurled a violent wind on the sea, and such a violent
storm arose on the sea that the ship threatened to break apart. 5 The sailors
were afraid, and each cried out to his god. They threw the ship’s cargo into
the sea to lighten the load. Meanwhile, Jonah had gone down to the lowest
part of the vessel and had stretched out and fallen into a deep sleep.

6 The captain approached him and said, “What are you doing sound
asleep? Get up! Call to your god. [B] Maybe this god will consider us, and
we won’t perish.”

7 “Come on! ” the sailors said to each other. “Let’s cast lots. Then we’ll
know who is to blame for this trouble we’re in.” So they cast lots, and the
lot singled out Jonah. 8 Then they said to him, “Tell us who is to blame for
this trouble we’re in. What is your business and where are you from?
What is your country and what people are you from? ”

9 He answered them, “I’m a Hebrew. I worship [C] •Yahweh, the God of
the heavens, who made the sea and the dry land.”

10 Then the men were even more afraid and said to him, “What is this
you’ve done? ” The men knew he was fleeing from the LORD’s presence,
because he had told them. 11 So they said to him, “What should we do to
you to calm this sea that’s against us? ” For the sea was getting worse and
worse.

12 He answered them, “Pick me up and throw me into the sea [D] so it may
quiet down for you, for I know that I’m to blame for this violent storm that
is against you.” 13 Nevertheless, the men rowed hard to get back to dry

land, but they couldn't because the sea was raging against them more and more.

[14] So they called out to the LORD: "Please, Yahweh, don't let us perish
because of this man's life, and don't charge us with innocent blood! For
You, Yahweh, have done just as You pleased." [15] Then they picked up
Jonah and threw him into the sea, and the sea stopped its raging. [16] The
men •feared the LORD even more, and they offered a sacrifice to the LORD
and made vows.

[17]† Now the LORD had appointed a huge fish to swallow Jonah, and
Jonah was in [E] the fish three days and three nights.

Jonah's Prayer

2 Jonah prayed to the LORD his God from inside [A] the fish:

[2] I called to the LORD in my distress,
and He answered me.
I cried out for help in the belly of •Sheol;
You heard my voice.
[3] You threw me into the depths,
into the heart of the seas,
and the current [B] overcame me.
All Your breakers and Your billows swept over me.
[4] But I said: I have been banished
from Your sight,
yet I will look once more
toward Your holy temple.
[5] The waters engulfed me up to the neck; [C],
the watery depths overcame me;
seaweed was wrapped around my head.
[6] I sank to the foundations of the mountains;
the earth with its prison bars closed behind me forever!
But You raised my life from the •Pit, LORD my God!
[7] As my life was fading away,
I remembered •Yahweh.
My prayer came to You,
to Your holy temple.
[8] Those who cling to worthless idols
forsake faithful love,
[9] but as for me, I will sacrifice to You
with a voice of thanksgiving.
I will fulfill what I have vowed.
Salvation [D] is from the LORD!

[10] Then the LORD commanded the fish, and it vomited Jonah onto dry land.

Jonah's Preaching

3 Then the word of the LORD came to Jonah a second time: [2] "Get up! Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach the message that I tell you."
[3] So Jonah got up and went to Nineveh according to the LORD's command.

Now Nineveh was an extremely large city, [A], a three-day walk. [4] Jonah set out on the first day of his walk in the city and proclaimed, "In 40 days Nineveh will be demolished! " [5] The men of Nineveh believed in God. [B] They proclaimed a fast and dressed in •sackcloth — from the greatest of them to the least.

[6] When word reached the king of Nineveh, he got up from his throne, took off his royal robe, put on sackcloth, and sat in ashes. [7] Then he issued a decree in Nineveh:

> By order of the king and his nobles: No man or beast, herd or flock, is to taste anything at all. They must not eat or drink water. [8] Furthermore, both man and beast must be covered with sackcloth, and everyone must call out earnestly to God. Each must turn from his evil ways and from the violence [C] he is doing. [D] [9] Who knows? God may turn and relent; He may turn from His burning anger so that we will not perish.

[10†] Then God saw their actions — that they had turned from their evil ways — so God relented from the disaster He had threatened to do to them. And He did not do it.

Jonah's Anger

4 But Jonah was greatly displeased and became furious. [2] He prayed to
the LORD: “Please, LORD, isn’t this what I said while I was still in my
own country? That’s why I fled toward Tarshish in the first place. I knew
that You are a merciful and compassionate God, slow to become angry, rich
in faithful love, and One who relents from sending disaster. [3] And now,
LORD, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to
live.”

[4] The LORD asked, “Is it right for you to be angry? ”

[5] Jonah left the city and sat down east of it. He made himself a shelter
there and sat in its shade to see what would happen to the city. [6] Then the
LORD God appointed a plant, and it grew up to provide shade over Jonah’s
head to ease his discomfort. [A] Jonah was greatly pleased with the plant.
[7] When dawn came the next day, God appointed a worm that attacked the
plant, and it withered.

[8] As the sun was rising, God appointed a scorching east wind. The sun
beat down so much on Jonah’s head that he almost fainted, and he wanted
to die. He said, “It’s better for me to die than to live.”

[9] Then God asked Jonah, “Is it right for you to be angry about the
plant? ”

“Yes,” he replied. “It is right. I’m angry enough to die! ”

[10] So the LORD said, “You cared about the plant, which you did not labor
over and did not grow. It appeared in a night and perished in a night.
[11] Should I not care about the great city of Nineveh, which has more than
120,000 people [B] who cannot distinguish between their right and their left,
as well as many animals? ”

MICAH

Introduction to Micah

MICAH

1 The word of the LORD that came to Micah the Moreshite — what he saw regarding Samaria and Jerusalem in the days of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah.

Coming Judgment on Israel

2 Listen, all you peoples;
pay attention, earth [A] and everyone in it!
The Lord GOD will be a witness against you,
the Lord, from His holy temple.
3 Look, the LORD is leaving His place
and coming down to trample
the heights [B] of the earth.
4 The mountains will melt beneath Him,
and the valleys will split apart,
like wax near a fire,
like water cascading down a mountainside.
5 All this will happen because of Jacob's rebellion
and the sins of the house of Israel.
What is the rebellion of Jacob?
Isn't it Samaria?
And what is the •high place of Judah?
Isn't it Jerusalem?
6 Therefore, I will make Samaria
a heap of ruins in the countryside,
a planting area for a vineyard.
I will roll her stones into the valley
and expose her foundations.
7 All her carved images will be smashed to pieces;
all her wages will be burned in the fire,
and I will destroy all her idols.
Since she collected the wages of a prostitute,
they will be used again for a prostitute.

Micah's Lament

8 Because of this I will lament and wail;
I will walk barefoot and naked.
I will howl like the jackals
and mourn like ostriches. [C]
9 For her wound is incurable
and has reached even Judah;
it has approached the gate of my people,
as far as Jerusalem.

10 Don't announce it in Gath,
don't weep at all.
Roll in the dust in Beth-leaphrah.
11 Depart in shameful nakedness,
you residents of Shaphir;
the residents of Zaanan will not come out.
Beth-ezel is lamenting;
its support [D] is taken from you.
12 Though the residents of Maroth
anxiously wait for something good,
disaster has come from the Lord
to the gate of Jerusalem.
13 Harness the horses to the chariot,
you residents of Lachish.
This was the beginning of sin for Daughter •Zion,
because Israel's acts of rebellion can be traced to you.
14 Therefore, send farewell gifts to Moresheth-gath;
the houses of Achzib are a deception
to the kings of Israel.
15 I will again bring a conqueror
against you who live in Mareshah.
The nobility [E] of Israel will come to Adullam.
16 Shave yourselves bald and cut off your hair
in sorrow for your precious children;
make yourselves as bald as an eagle,
for they have been taken from you into exile.

Oppressors Judged

2 Woe to those who dream up wickedness
and prepare evil plans on their beds!
At morning light they accomplish it
because the power is in their hands.
2 They covet fields and seize them;
they also take houses.
They deprive a man of his home,
a person of his inheritance.

3 Therefore, the LORD says:

I am now planning a disaster
against this nation;
you cannot free your necks from it.
Then you will not walk so proudly
because it will be an evil time.
4 In that day one will take up a taunt against you,
and lament mournfully, saying,
"We are totally ruined!
He measures out the allotted land of my people.
How He removes it from me!
He allots our fields to traitors."
5 Therefore, there will be no one
in the assembly of the LORD
to divide the land by casting lots. [A]

God's Word Rejected

6 "Quit your preaching," they preach.
"They should not preach these things;
shame will not overtake us."
7 House of Jacob, should it be asked,
"Is the Spirit of the LORD impatient?
Are these the things He does? "
Don't My words bring good
to the one who walks uprightly?
8 But recently My people have risen up

like an enemy:
You strip off the splendid robe
from those who are passing through confidently,
like those returning from war.
9 You force the women of My people
out of their comfortable homes,
and you take My blessing
from their children forever.
10 Get up and leave,
for this is not your place of rest,
because defilement brings destruction —
a grievous destruction!
11 If a man of wind [B] comes
and invents lies:
"I will preach to you about wine and beer,"
he would be just the preacher for this people!

The Remnant Regathered

12 I will indeed gather all of you, Jacob;
I will collect the remnant of Israel.
I will bring them together like sheep in a pen,
like a flock in the middle of its fold.
It will be noisy with people.
13 One who breaks open the way
will advance before them;
they will break out, pass through the gate,
and leave by it.
Their King will pass through before them,
the LORD as their leader.

Unjust Leaders Judged

3 Then I said, "Now listen, leaders of Jacob,
you rulers of the house of Israel.
Aren't you supposed to know what is just?
2 You hate good and love evil.
You tear off people's skin
and strip their flesh from their bones.
3 You eat the flesh of my people
after you strip their skin from them
and break their bones.
You chop them up
like flesh for the cooking pot,
like meat in a cauldron."
4 Then they will cry out to the LORD,
but He will not answer them.
He will hide His face from them at that time
because of the crimes they have committed.

False Prophets Judged

5 This is what the LORD says
concerning the prophets
who lead my people astray,
who proclaim peace
when they have food to sink their teeth into
but declare war against the one
who puts nothing in their mouths.
6 Therefore, it will be night for you —
without visions;
it will grow dark for you —
without •divination.
The sun will set on these prophets,
and the daylight will turn black over them.
7 Then the seers will be ashamed
and the diviners disappointed.
They will all cover their mouths [A]
because there will be no answer from God.

8 As for me, however, I am filled with power
by the Spirit of the LORD,
with justice and courage,
to proclaim to Jacob his rebellion
and to Israel his sin.

Zion's Destruction

9 Listen to this, leaders of the house of Jacob,
you rulers of the house of Israel,
who abhor justice
and pervert everything that is right,
10 who build •Zion with bloodshed
and Jerusalem with injustice.
11 Her leaders issue rulings for a bribe,
her priests teach for payment,
and her prophets practice divination for money.
Yet they lean on the LORD, saying,
"Isn't the LORD among us?
No disaster will overtake us."
12 Therefore, because of you,
Zion will be plowed like a field,
Jerusalem will become ruins,
and the hill of the temple mount
will be a thicket.

The Lord's Rule from Restored Zion

4 †In the last days
the mountain of the LORD's house
will be established
at the top of the mountains
and will be raised above the hills.
Peoples will stream to it,
2 and many nations will come and say,
"Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD,
to the house of the God of Jacob.
He will teach us about His ways
so we may walk in His paths."
For instruction will go out of •Zion
and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.
3 He will settle disputes among many peoples
and provide arbitration for strong nations
that are far away.
They will beat their swords into plows,
and their spears into pruning knives.
Nation will not take up the sword against nation,
and they will never again train for war.
4 But each man will sit under his grapevine
and under his fig tree
with no one to frighten him.
For the mouth of the LORD of •Hosts
has promised this.
5 Though all the peoples each walk
in the name of their gods,
we will walk in the name of •Yahweh our God
forever and ever.

6 On that day —
I will assemble the lame this is the LORD's declaration —
and gather the scattered,
those I have injured.
7 I will make the lame into a remnant,
those far removed into a strong nation.
Then the LORD will rule over them in Mount Zion

from this time on and forever.
[8] And you, watchtower for the flock,
fortified hill [A] of Daughter Zion,
the former rule will come to you,
sovereignty will come to Daughter Jerusalem.

From Exile to Victory

[9] Now, why are you shouting loudly?
Is there no king with you?
Has your counselor perished
so that anguish grips you like a woman in labor?
[10] Writhe and cry out, [B], Daughter Zion,
like a woman in labor,
for now you will leave the city
and camp in the open fields.
You will go to Babylon;
there you will be rescued;
there the LORD will redeem you
from the power of your enemies!
[11] Many nations have now assembled against you;
they say, "Let her be defiled,
and let us feast our eyes on Zion."
[12] But they do not know the LORD's intentions
or understand His plan,
that He has gathered them
like sheaves to the threshing floor.
[13] Rise and thresh, Daughter Zion,
for I will make your horns iron
and your hooves bronze,
so you can crush many peoples.
Then you will •set apart their plunder
to the LORD for destruction,
their wealth to the Lord of all the earth.

Chapter 5 *From Defeated Ruler to Conquering King*

1 Now, daughter who is under attack,
you slash yourself in grief;
a siege is set against us!
They are striking the judge of Israel
on the cheek with a rod.
2† Bethlehem Ephrathah,
you are small among the clans of Judah;
One will come from you
to be ruler over Israel for Me.
His origin [A] is from antiquity,
from eternity. [B]
3† Therefore, He will abandon them until the time
when she who is in labor has given birth;
then the rest of His brothers will return
to the people of Israel.
4† He will stand and shepherd them
in the strength of •Yahweh,
in the majestic name of Yahweh His God.
They will live securely,
for then His greatness will extend
to the ends of the earth.
5 He will be their peace.
When Assyria invades our land,
when it marches against our fortresses,
we will raise against it seven shepherds,
even eight leaders of men.
6 They will shepherd the land of Assyria with the sword,
the land of Nimrod with a drawn blade.
So He will rescue us from Assyria
when it invades our land,
when it marches against our territory.

ARTICLE

What Does the Hebrew Bible Say About the Coming Messiah? ⇒

The Glorious and Purified Remnant

7 Then the remnant of Jacob
will be among many peoples
like dew from the LORD,
like showers on the grass,
which do not wait for anyone
or linger for •mankind.
8 Then the remnant of Jacob
will be among the nations, among many peoples,
like a lion among animals of the forest,
like a young lion among flocks of sheep,
which tramples and tears as it passes through,
and there is no one to rescue them.
9 Your hand will be lifted up against your adversaries,
and all your enemies will be destroyed.

10 In that day —
I will remove your horses from you this is the LORD's declaration —
and wreck your chariots.
11 I will remove the cities of your land
and tear down all your fortresses.
12 I will remove sorceries from your hands,
and you will not have any more fortune-tellers.
13 I will remove your carved images
and sacred pillars from you
so that you will not bow down again
to the work of your hands.
14 I will pull up the •Asherah poles from among you
and demolish your cities. [C]
15 I will take vengeance in anger and wrath

against the nations that have not obeyed Me.

God's Lawsuit against Judah

6 Now listen to what the LORD is saying:

Rise, plead your case before the mountains,
and let the hills hear your voice.
2 Listen to the LORD's lawsuit,
you mountains and enduring foundations of the earth,
because the LORD has a case against His people,
and He will argue it against Israel.
3 My people, what have I done to you,
or how have I wearied you?
Testify against Me!
4 Indeed, I brought you up from the land of Egypt
and redeemed you from that place of slavery.
I sent Moses, Aaron, and Miriam ahead of you.
5 My people,
remember what Balak king of Moab proposed,
what Balaam son of Beor answered him,
and what happened from the Acacia Grove [A] to Gilgal
so that you may acknowledge
the LORD's righteous acts.

6 What should I bring before the LORD
when I come to bow before God on high?
Should I come before Him with •burnt offerings,
with year-old calves?
7 Would the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams
or with ten thousand streams of oil?
Should I give my firstborn for my transgression,
the child of my body for my own sin?

8 Mankind, He has told you what is good
and what it is the LORD requires of you:
to act justly,
to love faithfulness,
and to walk humbly with your God.

Verdict of Judgment

9 The voice of •Yahweh calls out to the city
(and it is wise to •fear Your name):
“Pay attention to the rod
and the One who ordained it. [B]
10 Are there still [C] the treasures of wickedness
and the accursed short measure
in the house of the wicked?
11 Can I excuse wicked scales
or bags of deceptive weights?
12 For the wealthy of the city are full of violence,
and its residents speak lies;
the tongues in their mouths are deceitful.

13 “As a result, I have begun to strike you severely,
bringing desolation because of your sins.
14 You will eat but not be satisfied,
for there will be hunger within you.
What you acquire, you cannot save,
and what you do save,
I will give to the sword. [D]
15 You will sow but not reap;
you will press olives
but not anoint yourself with oil;
and you will tread grapes
but not drink the wine.
16 The statutes of Omri
and all the practices of Ahab’s house
have been observed;
you have followed their policies.
Therefore, I will make you a desolate place
and the city’s [E] residents an object of contempt; [F]
you will bear the scorn of My people.”

Israel's Moral Decline

7 How sad for me!
For I am like one who —
when the summer fruit has been gathered
after the gleaning of the grape harvest —
finds no grape cluster to eat,
no early fig, which I crave.
2 Godly people have vanished from the land;
there is no one upright among the people.
All of them wait in ambush to shed blood;
they hunt each other with a net.
3 Both hands are good at accomplishing evil:
the official and the judge demand a bribe;
when the powerful man communicates his evil desire,
they plot it together.
4 The best of them is like a brier;
the most upright is worse than a hedge of thorns.
The day of your watchmen,
the day of your punishment, is coming;
at this time their panic is here.
5 Do not rely on a friend;
don't trust in a close companion.
Seal your mouth
from the woman who lies in your arms.
6 Surely a son considers his father a fool,
a daughter opposes her mother,
and a daughter-in-law is against her mother-in-law;
a man's enemies are the men of his own household.
7 But I will look to the LORD;
I will wait for the God of my salvation.
My God will hear me.

Zion's Vindication

8 Do not rejoice over me, my enemy!
Though I have fallen, I will stand up;
though I sit in darkness,

the LORD will be my light.
[9] Because I have sinned against Him,
I must endure the LORD's rage
until He argues my case
and establishes justice for me.
He will bring me into the light;
I will see His salvation. [A]
[10] Then my enemy will see,
and she will be covered with shame,
the one who said to me,
"Where is the LORD your God? "
My eyes will look at her in triumph;
at that time she will be trampled
like mud in the streets.

[11] A day will come for rebuilding your walls;
on that day your boundary will be extended.
[12] On that day people will come to you
from Assyria and the cities of Egypt,
even from Egypt to the Euphrates River
and from sea to sea
and mountain to mountain.
[13] Then the earth will become a wasteland
because of its inhabitants
and as a result of their actions.

Micah's Prayer Answered

[14] Shepherd Your people with Your staff,
the flock that is Your possession.
They live alone in a woodland
surrounded by pastures.
Let them graze in Bashan and Gilead
as in ancient times.

[15] I will perform miracles for them
as in the days of your exodus

from the land of Egypt.
16 Nations will see and be ashamed
of [B] all their power.
They will put their hands over their mouths,
and their ears will become deaf.
17 They will lick the dust like a snake;
they will come trembling out of their hiding places
like reptiles slithering on the ground.
They will tremble in the presence of •Yahweh our God;
they will stand in awe of You.

18 Who is a God like You,
removing iniquity and passing over rebellion
for the remnant of His inheritance?
He does not hold on to His anger forever,
because He delights in faithful love.
19 He will again have compassion on us;
He will vanquish our iniquities.
You will cast all our sins
into the depths of the sea.
20 You will show loyalty to Jacob
and faithful love to Abraham,
as You swore to our fathers
from days long ago.

NAHUM

Nahum 1 Nahum 2 Nahum 3

Introduction to Nahum

NAHUM

1 The •oracle concerning Nineveh. The book of the vision of Nahum the Elkoshite.

God's Vengeance

2† The LORD is a jealous and avenging God;
the LORD takes vengeance
and is fierce in [A] wrath.
The LORD takes vengeance against His foes;
He is furious with His enemies.
3 The LORD is slow to anger but great in power;
the LORD will never leave the •guilty unpunished.
His path is in the whirlwind and storm,
and clouds are the dust beneath His feet.
4 He rebukes the sea so that it dries up,
and He makes all the rivers run dry.
Bashan and Carmel wither;
even the flower of Lebanon withers.
5 The mountains quake before Him,
and the hills melt;
the earth trembles at His presence —
the world and all who live in it.
6 Who can withstand His indignation?
Who can endure His burning anger?
His wrath is poured out like fire,
even rocks are shattered before Him.

Destruction of Nineveh

7 The LORD is good,
a stronghold in a day of distress;
He cares for those who take refuge in Him.
8 But He will completely destroy Nineveh [C]
with an overwhelming flood,
and He will chase His enemies into darkness.

9 Whatever you plot against the LORD,

He will bring it to complete destruction;
oppression will not rise up a second time.
10 For they will be consumed
like entangled thorns,
like the drink of a drunkard
and like straw that is fully dry. [D]
11 One has gone out from you,
who plots evil against •Yahweh,
and is a wicked counselor.

Promise of Judah's Deliverance

12 This is what the LORD says:

Though they are strong [E] and numerous,
they will still be mowed down,
and he will pass away.
Though I have afflicted you,
I will afflict you no longer.
13 For I will now break off his yoke from you
and tear off your shackles.

The Assyrian King's Demise

14 The LORD has issued an order concerning you:

There will be no offspring
to carry on your name. [F]
I will eliminate the carved idol and cast image
from the house of your gods;
I will prepare your grave,
for you are contemptible.

15 Look to the mountains —
the feet of one bringing good news
and proclaiming peace!
Celebrate your festivals, Judah;

fulfill your vows.
For the wicked one will never again
march through you;
he will be entirely wiped out.

Attack against Nineveh

2 One who scatters is coming up against you.
Man the fortifications!
Watch the road!
Brace [A] yourself!
Summon all your strength!

2 For the LORD will restore the majesty of Jacob,
yes, [B] the majesty of Israel,
though ravagers have ravaged them
and ruined their vine branches.

3 The shields of his warriors are dyed red;
the valiant men are dressed in scarlet.
The fittings of the chariot flash like fire
on the day of its battle preparations,
and the spears are brandished.
4 The chariots dash madly through the streets;
they rush around in the plazas.
They look like torches;
they dart back and forth like lightning.
5 He gives orders to his officers;
they stumble as they advance.
They race to its wall;
the protective shield is set in place.
6 The river gates are opened,
and the palace erodes away.

7 Beauty is stripped, [C]
she is carried away;
her ladies-in-waiting moan
like the sound of doves,
and beat their breasts.
8 Nineveh has been like a pool of water
from her first days, [D]
but they are fleeing.
“Stop! Stop! ” they cry,
but no one turns back.

9 “Plunder the silver! Plunder the gold! ”
There is no end to the treasure,
an abundance of every precious thing.
10 Desolation, decimation, devastation!
Hearts melt,
knees tremble,
loins shake,
every face grows pale!

11 Where is the lions’ lair,
or the feeding ground of the young lions,
where the lion and lioness prowled,
and the lion’s cub,
with nothing to frighten them away?
12 The lion mauled whatever its cubs needed
and strangled prey for its lionesses.
It filled up its dens with the kill,
and its lairs with mauled prey.
13 Beware, I am against you.
I will make your chariots go This is the declaration of the Lord of •Hosts.
up in smoke [E]
and the sword will devour your young lions.
I will cut off your prey from the earth,
and the sound of your messengers
will never be heard again.

Nineveh's Downfall

3 Woe to the city of blood,
totally deceitful,
full of plunder,
never without prey.
2 The crack of the whip
and rumble of the wheel,
galloping horse
and jolting chariot!
3 Charging horseman,
flashing sword,
shining spear;
heaps of slain,
mounds of corpses,
dead bodies without end —
they stumble over their dead.
4 Because of the continual prostitution of the prostitute,
the attractive mistress of sorcery,
who betrays nations by her prostitution
and clans by her witchcraft,
5 I am against you.
I will lift your skirts over your face
This is the declaration of the Lord of •Hosts.
and display your nakedness to nations,
your shame to kingdoms.
6 I will throw filth on you
and treat you with contempt;
I will make a spectacle of you.
7 Then all who see you will recoil from you, saying,
"Nineveh is devastated;
who will show sympathy to her? "
Where can I find anyone to comfort you?

8 Are you better than Thebes [A],
that sat along the Nile
with water surrounding her,
whose rampart was the sea,
the river her wall?

9 •Cush and Egypt were her endless source of strength;
Put and Libya were among her [C] allies.
10 Yet she became an exile;
she went into captivity.
Her children were also dashed to pieces
at the head of every street.
They cast lots for her dignitaries,
and all her nobles were bound in chains.
11 You also will become drunk;
you will hide yourself. [D]
You also will seek refuge from the enemy.

12 All your fortresses are fig trees
with figs that ripened first;
when shaken, they fall —
right into the mouth of the eater!

13 Look, your troops are like women among you;
the gates of your land
are wide open to your enemies.
Fire will devour the bars of your gates.

14 Draw water for the siege;
strengthen your fortresses.
Step into the clay and tread the mortar;
take hold of the brick-mold!
15 The fire will devour you there;
the sword will cut you down.
It will devour you like the young locust.
Multiply yourselves like the young locust,
multiply like the swarming locust!
16 You have made your merchants
more numerous than the stars of the sky.
The young locust strips [E] the land
and flies away.
17 Your court officials are like the swarming locust,
and your scribes like clouds of locusts,

which settle on the walls on a cold day;
when the sun rises, they take off,
and no one knows where they are.

18 King of Assyria, your shepherds slumber;
your officers sleep.
Your people are scattered across the mountains
with no one to gather them together.
19 There is no remedy for your injury;
your wound is severe.
All who hear the news about you
will clap their hands because of you,
for who has not experienced
your constant cruelty?

HABAKKUK

Habakkuk 1 Habakkuk 2 Habakkuk 3

Introduction to Habakkuk

HABAKKUK

1 The •oracle that Habakkuk the prophet saw.

Habakkuk's First Prayer

[2] How long, LORD, must I call for help
and You do not listen
or cry out to You about violence
and You do not save?
[3] Why do You force me to look at injustice?
Why do You tolerate [A] wrongdoing?
Oppression and violence are right in front of me.
Strife is ongoing, and conflict escalates.
[4] This is why the law is ineffective
and justice never emerges.
For the wicked restrict the righteous;
therefore, justice comes out perverted.

God's First Answer

[5] Look at the nations and observe —
be utterly astounded!
For something is taking place in your days
that you will not believe
when you hear about it.
[6] Look! I am raising up the Chaldeans,
that bitter, impetuous nation
that marches across the earth's open spaces
to seize territories not its own.
[7] They are fierce and terrifying;
their views of justice and sovereignty
stem from themselves.
[8] Their horses are swifter than leopards
and more fierce [B] than wolves of the night.
Their horsemen charge ahead;
their horsemen come from distant lands.
They fly like an eagle, swooping to devour.

9 All of them come to do violence;
their faces are set in determination. [C]
They gather prisoners like sand.
10 They mock kings,
and rulers are a joke to them.
They laugh at every fortress
and build siege ramps to capture it.
11 Then they sweep by like the wind
and pass through.
They are •guilty; [D] their strength is their god.

Habakkuk's Second Prayer

12 Are You not from eternity, •Yahweh my God?
My Holy One, You will not die.
LORD, You appointed them to execute judgment;
my Rock, You destined them to punish us.
13 Your eyes are too pure to look on evil,
and You cannot tolerate wrongdoing.
So why do You tolerate those who are treacherous?
Why are You silent
while one who is wicked swallows up
one who is more righteous than himself?
14 You have made mankind
like the fish of the sea,
like marine creatures that have no ruler.
15 The Chaldeans pull them all up with a hook,
catch them in their dragnet,
and gather them in their fishing net;
that is why they are glad and rejoice.
16 That is why they sacrifice to their dragnet
and burn incense to their fishing net,
for by these things their portion is rich
and their food plentiful.
17 Will they therefore empty their net
and continually slaughter nations without mercy?

Habakkuk Waits for God's Response

2 I will stand at my guard post
and station myself on the lookout tower.
I will watch to see what He will say to me
and what I should reply about my complaint.

God's Second Answer

[2†] The LORD answered me:

Write down this vision;
clearly inscribe it on tablets
so one may easily read it. [A]
3 For the vision is yet for the appointed time;
it testifies about the end and will not lie.
Though it delays, wait for it,
since it will certainly come and not be late.
4† Look, his ego is inflated; [B]
he is without integrity.
But the righteous one will live by his faith. [C],
5 Moreover, wine betrays;
an arrogant man is never at rest. [D]
He enlarges his appetite like •Sheol,
and like Death he is never satisfied.
He gathers all the nations to himself;
he collects all the peoples for himself.

The Five Woe Oracles

6 Won't all of these take up a taunt against him,
with mockery and riddles about him?
They will say:

Woe to him who amasses what is not his —
how much longer? —
and loads himself with goods taken in pledge.
7 Won't your creditors suddenly arise,
and those who disturb you wake up?

Then you will become spoil for them.
8 Since you have plundered many nations,
all the peoples who remain will plunder you —
because of human bloodshed
and violence against lands, cities,
and all who live in them.

9 Woe to him who dishonestly makes
wealth for his house [E]
to place his nest on high,
to escape from the reach of disaster!
10 You have planned shame for your house
by wiping out many peoples
and sinning against your own self.
11 For the stones will cry out from the wall,
and the rafters will answer them
from the woodwork.

12 Woe to him who builds a city with bloodshed
and founds a town with injustice!
13 Is it not from the LORD of •Hosts
that the peoples labor only to fuel the fire
and countries exhaust themselves for nothing?
14 For the earth will be filled
with the knowledge of the LORD's glory,
as the waters cover the sea.

15 Woe to him who gives his neighbors drink,
pouring out your wrath [F]
and even making them drunk,
in order to look at their nakedness!
16 You will be filled with disgrace instead of glory.
You also — drink,
and expose your uncircumcision!
The cup in the LORD's right hand
will come around to you,
and utter disgrace will cover your glory.

17 For your violence against Lebanon
will overwhelm you;
the destruction of animals will terrify you
because of your human bloodshed and violence
against lands, cities, and all who live in them.

18 What use is a carved idol
after its craftsman carves it?
It is only a cast image, a teacher of lies.
For the one who crafts its shape trusts in it
and makes idols that cannot speak.
19 Woe to him who says to wood: Wake up!
or to mute stone: Come alive!
Can it teach?
Look! It may be plated with gold and silver,
yet there is no breath in it at all.

20 But the Lord is in His holy temple;
let everyone on earth
be silent in His presence.

Habakkuk's Third Prayer

3 A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet. According to *Shigionoth*.

2 LORD, I have heard the report about You;
LORD, I stand in awe of Your deeds.
Revive Your work in these years;
make it known in these years.
In Your wrath remember mercy!

3 God comes from Teman,
the Holy One from Mount Paran.

•*Selah*

His splendor covers the heavens,
and the earth is full of His praise.
4 His brilliance is like light;
rays are flashing from His hand.
This is where His power is hidden.
5 Plague goes before Him,
and pestilence follows in His steps.
6 He stands and shakes [A] the earth;
He looks and startles the nations.
The age-old mountains break apart;
the ancient hills sink down.
His pathways are ancient.
7 I see the tents of Cushan in distress;
the tent curtains of the land of Midian tremble.
8 Are You angry at the rivers, LORD?
Is Your wrath against the rivers?
Or is Your rage against the sea
when You ride on Your horses,
Your victorious chariot?
9 You took the sheath from Your bow;
the arrows are ready [B] to be used with an oath. [C]

Selah

You split the earth with rivers.
10 The mountains see You and shudder;

a downpour of water sweeps by.
The deep roars with its voice
and lifts its waves [D] high.
11 Sun and moon stand still in their lofty residence,
at the flash of Your flying arrows,
at the brightness of Your shining spear.
12 You march across the earth with indignation;
You trample down the nations in wrath.
13 You come out to save Your people,
to save Your anointed.
You crush the leader of the house of the wicked
and strip him from foot [E] to neck.

Selah

14 You pierce his head
with his own spears;
his warriors storm out to scatter us,
gloating as if ready to secretly devour the weak.
15 You tread the sea with Your horses,
stirring up the great waters.

Habakkuk's Confidence in God Expressed

16† I heard, and I trembled within;
my lips quivered at the sound.
Rottenness entered my bones;
I trembled where I stood.
Now I must quietly wait for the day of distress
to come against the people invading us.
17 Though the fig tree does not bud
and there is no fruit on the vines,
though the olive crop fails
and the fields produce no food,
though there are no sheep in the pen
and no cattle in the stalls,
18 yet I will triumph in •Yahweh;

I will rejoice in the God of my salvation!
19† Yahweh my Lord is my strength;
He makes my feet like those of a deer
and enables me to walk on mountain heights!

For the choir director: on [F] stringed instruments.

ZEPHANIAH

Zephaniah 1 Zephaniah 2 Zephaniah 3

Introduction to Zephaniah

ZEPHANIAH

1 The word of the LORD that came to Zephaniah son of Cushi, son of Gedaliah, son of Amariah, son of Hezekiah, in the days of Josiah son of Amon, king of Judah.

The Great Day of the LORD

2 I will completely sweep away everything
from the face of the earth —
this is the LORD's declaration.
3 I will sweep away man and animal;
I will sweep away the birds of the sky
and the fish of the sea,
and the ruins along with the wicked.
I will cut off mankind
from the face of the earth.

This is the LORD's declaration.

4 I will stretch out My hand against Judah
and against all the residents of Jerusalem.
I will cut off every vestige of •Baal
from this place,
the names of the pagan priests
along with the priests;
5 those who bow in worship on the rooftops
to the heavenly host;
those who bow and pledge loyalty to the LORD
but also pledge loyalty to •Milcom;
6 and those who turn back from following the LORD,
who do not seek the LORD or inquire of Him.
7 Be silent in the presence of the Lord GOD,
for the Day of the LORD is near.
Indeed, the LORD has prepared a sacrifice;
He has consecrated His guests.

8 On the day of the LORD's sacrifice
I will punish the officials, the king's sons,
and all who are dressed in foreign clothing.
9 On that day I will punish

all who skip over the threshold, [A]
who fill their master’s house
with violence and deceit.

10 On that day —
there will be an outcry from this is the LORD’s declaration —
the Fish Gate,
a wailing from the Second District,
and a loud crashing from the hills.
11 Wail, you residents of the Hollow, [B]
for all the merchants [C] will be silenced;
all those loaded with silver will be cut off.

12 And at that time I will search Jerusalem with lamps
and punish the men who settle down comfortably, [D]
who say to themselves:
The LORD will not do good or evil.
13 Their wealth will become plunder
and their houses a ruin.
They will build houses but never live in them,
plant vineyards but never drink their wine.

14 The great Day of the LORD is near,
near and rapidly approaching.
Listen, the Day of the LORD —
then the warrior’s cry is bitter.
15 That day is a day of wrath,
a day of trouble and distress,
a day of destruction and desolation,
a day of darkness and gloom,
a day of clouds and blackness,
16 a day of trumpet blast and battle cry
against the fortified cities,
and against the high corner towers.
17 I will bring distress on mankind,
and they will walk like the blind
because they have sinned against the LORD.

Their blood will be poured out like dust
and their flesh like dung.
18 Their silver and their gold
will not be able to rescue them
on the day of the LORD's wrath.
The whole earth will be consumed
by the fire of His jealousy.
For He will make a complete,
yes, a horrifying end
of all the inhabitants of the earth.

A Call to Repentance

2 [†]Gather yourselves together;
gather together, undesirable [A] nation,
2 before the decree takes effect
and the day passes like chaff,
before the burning of the LORD's anger overtakes you,
before the day of the LORD's anger overtakes you.
3 Seek the LORD, all you humble of the earth,
who carry out what He commands.
Seek righteousness, seek humility;
perhaps you will be concealed
on the day of the LORD's anger.

Judgment against the Nations

4 For Gaza will be abandoned,
and Ashkelon will become a ruin.
Ashdod will be driven out at noon,
and Ekron will be uprooted.
5 Woe, inhabitants of the seacoast,
nation of the Cherethites!
The word of the LORD is against you,
Canaan, land of the Philistines:
I will destroy you until there is no one left.
6 The seacoast will become pasturelands
with caves for shepherds and folds for sheep.
7 The coastland will belong
to the remnant of the house of Judah;
they will find pasture there.
They will lie down in the evening
among the houses of Ashkelon,
for the LORD their God will return to them
and restore their fortunes.

8 I have heard the taunting of Moab
and the insults of the Ammonites,
who have taunted My people
and threatened their territory.

9 Therefore, as I live —
Moab the God of Israel —this is the declaration of the LORD of •Hosts,
will be like Sodom
and the Ammonites like Gomorrah —
a place overgrown with weeds,
a salt pit, and a perpetual wasteland.
The remnant of My people will plunder them;
the remainder of My nation will dispossess them.
10 This is what they get for their pride,
because they have taunted and acted arrogantly
against the people of the LORD of Hosts.
11 The LORD will be terrifying to them
when He starves all the gods of the earth.
Then all the distant coastlands of the nations
will bow in worship to Him,
each in its own place.

12 You •Cushites will also be slain by My sword.

13 He will also stretch out His hand against the north
and destroy Assyria;
He will make Nineveh a desolate ruin,
dry as the desert.
14 Herds will lie down in the middle of it,
every kind of wild animal. [B]
Both the desert owl [C] and the screech owl [D]
will roost in the capitals of its pillars.
Their calls will sound [E] from the window,
but devastation will be on the threshold,
for He will expose the cedar work. [F]
15 This is the self-assured city
that lives in security,
that thinks to herself:
I exist, and there is no one else.
What a desolation she has become,
a place for wild animals to lie down!
Everyone who passes by her

jeers [G] and shakes his fist.

Woe to Oppressive Jerusalem

3 Woe to the city that is rebellious [A], and defiled,
the oppressive city!
2 She has not obeyed;
she has not accepted discipline.
She has not trusted in •Yahweh;
she has not drawn near to her God.
3 The [B] princes within her are roaring lions;
her judges are wolves of the night,
which leave nothing for [C] the morning.
4 Her prophets are reckless —
treacherous men.
Her priests profane the sanctuary;
they do violence to instruction.
5 The righteous LORD is in her;
He does no wrong.
He applies His justice morning by morning;
He does not fail at dawn,
yet the one who does wrong knows no shame.

6 I have cut off nations;
their corner towers are destroyed.
I have laid waste their streets,
with no one to pass through.
Their cities lie devastated,
without a person, without an inhabitant.
7 I thought: You will certainly •fear Me
and accept correction.
Then her dwelling place
would not be cut off
based on all that I had allocated to her.
However, they became more corrupt
in all their actions.
8 Therefore, wait for Me —
this is the LORD's declaration —
until the day I rise up for plunder.
For My decision is to gather nations,
to assemble kingdoms,

in order to pour out My indignation on them,
all My burning anger;
for the whole earth will be consumed
by the fire of My jealousy.

Final Restoration Promised

9 For I will then restore
pure speech to the peoples
so that all of them may call
on the name of Yahweh
and serve Him with a single purpose. [D]
10 From beyond the rivers of •Cush
My supplicants, My dispersed people,
will bring an offering to Me.
11 On that day you will not be put to shame
because of everything you have done
in rebelling against Me.
For then I will remove
your proud, arrogant people from among you,
and you will never again be haughty
on My holy mountain.
12 I will leave
a meek and humble people among you,
and they will take refuge in the name of Yahweh.
13 The remnant of Israel will no longer
do wrong or tell lies;
a deceitful tongue will not be found
in their mouths.
But they will pasture and lie down,
with nothing to make them afraid.

14† Sing for joy, Daughter •Zion;
shout loudly, Israel!
Be glad and rejoice with all your heart,
Daughter Jerusalem!
15 The LORD has removed your punishment;

He has turned back your enemy.
The King of Israel, Yahweh, is among you;
you need no longer fear harm.
16 On that day it will be said to Jerusalem:
“Do not fear;
Zion, do not let your hands grow weak.
17 Yahweh your God is among you,
a warrior who saves.
He will rejoice over you with gladness.
He will bring you quietness with His love.
He will delight in you with shouts of joy.”

18 I will gather those who have been driven
from the appointed festivals;
they will be a tribute from you
and a reproach on her. [E]
19 Yes, at that time
I will deal with all who afflict you.
I will save the lame and gather the scattered;
I will make those who were disgraced
throughout the earth
receive praise and fame.
20 At that time I will bring you back,
yes, at the time I will gather you.
I will give you fame and praise
among all the peoples of the earth,
when I restore your fortunes before your eyes.
Yahweh has spoken.

HAGGAI

Introduction to Haggai

HAGGAI

Command to Rebuild the Temple

1 †In the second year of King Darius, on the first day of the sixth month,
the word of the LORD came through Haggai the prophet to Zerubbabel
son of Shealtiel, the governor of Judah, and to Joshua son of Jehozadak, the
high priest:

2 “The LORD of •Hosts says this: These people say: The time has not
come for the house of the LORD to be rebuilt.”

3 The word of the LORD came through Haggai the prophet: 4 “Is it a time
for you yourselves to live in your paneled houses, while this house lies in
ruins? ” 5† Now, the LORD of Hosts says this: “Think carefully about [A] your
ways:

6 You have planted much
but harvested little.
You eat
but never have enough to be satisfied.
You drink
but never have enough to become drunk.
You put on clothes
but never have enough to get warm.
The wage earner puts his wages
into a bag with a hole in it.”

7 The LORD of Hosts says this: “Think carefully about [B] your ways. 8 Go
up into the hills, bring down lumber, and build the house. Then I will be
pleased with it and be glorified,” says the LORD. 9 “You expected much, but
then it amounted to little. When you brought the harvest to your house, I
ruined [C] it. Why? ” This is the declaration of the LORD of Hosts. “Because
My house still lies in ruins, while each of you is busy with his own house.

10 So on your account, [D]
the skies have withheld the dew
and the land its crops.
11 I have summoned a drought
on the fields and the hills,

on the grain, new wine, olive oil,
and whatever the ground yields,
on man and beast,
and on all that your hands produce.”

The People’s Response

[12] Then Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, the high priest Joshua son of Jehozadak, and the entire remnant of the people obeyed the voice of the LORD their God and the words of the prophet Haggai, because the LORD their God had sent him. So the people •feared the LORD.

[13] Haggai, the LORD’s messenger, delivered the LORD’s message to the people, “I am with you” — this is the LORD’s declaration.

[14] The LORD stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, the spirit of the high priest Joshua son of Jehozadak, and the spirit of all the remnant of the people. They began work on the house of •Yahweh
of Hosts, their God, [15] on the twenty-fourth day of the sixth month, in the
second year of King Darius.

Encouragement and Promise

2 On the twenty-first day of the seventh month, the word of the LORD
came through Haggai the prophet: 2[†] “Speak to Zerubbabel son of
Shealtiel, governor of Judah, to the high priest Joshua son of Jehozadak,
and to the remnant of the people: 3 Who is left among you who saw this
house in its former glory? How does it look to you now? Doesn’t it seem
like nothing to you? [A], 4 Even so, be strong, Zerubbabel” — this is the
LORD’s declaration. “Be strong, Joshua son of Jehozadak, high priest. Be
strong, all you people of the land” — this is the LORD’s declaration. “Work!
For I am with you” — the declaration of the LORD of •Hosts. 5 “This is the
promise I made to you when you came out of Egypt, and My Spirit is
present among you; don’t be afraid.”

6 For the LORD of Hosts says this: “Once more, in a little while, I am
going to shake the heavens and the earth, the sea and the dry land. 7 I will
shake all the nations so that the treasures of all the nations will come, and I
will fill this house with glory,” says the LORD of Hosts. 8 “The silver and
gold belong to Me” — this is the declaration of the LORD of Hosts. 9 “The
final glory of this house [B] will be greater than the first,” says the LORD of
Hosts. “I will provide peace in this place” — this is the declaration of the
LORD of Hosts.

From Deprivation to Blessing

10 On the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month, in the second year of
Darius, the word of the LORD came to Haggai the prophet: 11 “This is what
the LORD of Hosts says: Ask the priests for a ruling. 12 If a man is carrying
consecrated meat in the fold of his garment, and it touches bread, stew,
wine, oil, or any other food, does it become holy? ”

The priests answered, “No.”

13 Then Haggai asked, “If someone defiled by contact with a corpse
touches any of these, does it become defiled? ”

The priests answered, “It becomes defiled.”

14 Then Haggai replied, “So is this people, and so is this nation before
Me” — this is the LORD’s declaration. “And so is every work of their hands;
even what they offer there is defiled.

15 “Now, reflect back from this day: Before one stone was placed on
another in the LORD’s temple, 16 what state were you in? [C] When someone
came to a grain heap of 20 measures, it only amounted to 10; when one
came to the winepress to dip 50 measures from the vat, it only amounted to
20. 17 I struck you — all the work of your hands — with blight, mildew,
and hail, but you didn’t turn to Me” — this is the LORD’s declaration.
18 “Consider carefully from this day forward; from the twenty-fourth day
of the ninth month, from the day the foundation of the LORD’s temple was
laid; consider it carefully. 19 Is there still seed left in the granary? The vine,
the fig, the pomegranate, and the olive tree have not yet produced. But from
this day on I will bless you.”

Promise to Zerubbabel

20 The word of the LORD came to Haggai a second time on the twenty-
fourth day of the month: 21 “Speak to Zerubbabel, governor of Judah: I am
going to shake the heavens and the earth. 22 I will overturn royal thrones
and destroy the power of the Gentile kingdoms. I will overturn chariots and
their riders. Horses and their riders will fall, each by his brother’s sword.
23 On that day” — this is the declaration of the LORD of Hosts — “I will
take you, Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, My servant” — this is the LORD’s
declaration — “and make you like My signet ring, for I have chosen you.”
This is the declaration of the LORD of Hosts.

ZECHARIAH

Introduction to Zechariah

ZECHARIAH

A Plea for Repentance

1 †In the eighth month, in the second year of Darius, the word of the
LORD came to the prophet Zechariah son of Berechiah, son of Iddo:
2 "The LORD was extremely angry with your ancestors. 3 So tell the people:
This is what the LORD of •Hosts says: Return to Me" — this is the
declaration of the LORD of Hosts — "and I will return to you, says the LORD
of Hosts. 4 Do not be like your ancestors; the earlier prophets proclaimed to
them: This is what the LORD of Hosts says: Turn from your evil ways and
your evil deeds. But they did not listen or pay attention to Me" — this is
the LORD's declaration. 5 "Where are your ancestors now? And do the
prophets live forever? 6 But didn't My words and My statutes that I
commanded My servants the prophets overtake your ancestors? They
repented and said: As the LORD of Hosts purposed to deal with us for our
ways and deeds, so He has dealt with us."

THE NIGHT VISIONS

7 On the twenty-fourth day of the eleventh month, which is the month of Shebat, in the second year of Darius, the word of the LORD came to the prophet Zechariah son of Berechiah, son of Iddo:

First Vision: Horsemen

8 I looked out in the night and saw a man riding on a red horse. He was
standing among the myrtle trees in the valley. Behind him were red, sorrel,
and white horses. 9 I asked, "What are these, my lord? "

The angel who was talking to me replied, "I will show you what they are."

10 Then the man standing among the myrtle trees explained, "They are the ones the LORD has sent to patrol the earth."

11 They reported to the Angel of the LORD standing among the myrtle trees, "We have patrolled the earth, and right now the whole earth is calm and quiet."

[12] Then the Angel of the LORD responded, “How long, LORD of Hosts, will You withhold mercy from Jerusalem and the cities of Judah that You have been angry with these 70 years? ” [13] The LORD replied with kind and comforting words to the angel who was speaking with me.

[14] So the angel who was speaking with me said, “Proclaim: The LORD of Hosts says: I am extremely jealous for Jerusalem and •Zion. [15] I am fiercely angry with the nations that are at ease, for I was a little angry, but they made it worse. [16] Therefore, this is what the LORD says: In mercy, I have returned to Jerusalem; My house will be rebuilt within it” — this is the declaration of the LORD of Hosts — “and a measuring line will be stretched out over Jerusalem.

[17] “Proclaim further: This is what the LORD of Hosts says: My cities will again overflow with prosperity; the LORD will once more comfort Zion and again choose Jerusalem.”

Second Vision: Four Horns and Craftsmen

[18] Then I looked up and saw four •horns. [19] So I asked the angel who was speaking with me, “What are these? ”

And he said to me, “These are the horns that scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem.”

[20] Then the LORD showed me four craftsmen. [21] I asked, “What are they coming to do? ”

He replied, “These are the horns that scattered Judah so no one could raise his head. These craftsmen have come to terrify them, to cut off the horns of the nations that raised their horns against the land of Judah to scatter it.”

Chapter 2 *Third Vision: Surveyor*

1 I looked up and saw a man with a measuring line in his hand. 2 I asked,
“Where are you going? ”

He answered me, “To measure Jerusalem to determine its width and length.”

3 Then the angel who was speaking with me went out, and another angel
went out to meet him. 4 He said to him, “Run and tell this young man:
Jerusalem will be inhabited without walls because of the number of people
and livestock in it.” 5 The declaration of the LORD: “I will be a wall of fire
around it, and I will be the glory within it.”

6 “Get up! Leave the land of the north” — this is the LORD’s
declaration — “for I have scattered you like the four winds of
heaven” — this is the LORD’s declaration. 7 “Go, •Zion! Escape, you who
are living with Daughter Babylon.” 8 For the LORD of •Hosts says this: “He
has sent Me [A] for His glory against the nations who are plundering you, for
anyone who touches you touches the pupil [B] of His eye. 9 I will move
against them with My [C] power, and they will become plunder for their own servants. Then you will know that the LORD of Hosts has sent Me. [D]

10 “Daughter Zion, shout for joy and be glad, for I am coming to dwell
among you” — this is the LORD’s declaration. 11 “Many nations will join
themselves to the LORD on that day and become My people. I will dwell among you, and you will know that the LORD of Hosts has sent Me [E] to you.
12 The LORD will take possession of Judah as His portion in the Holy Land,
and He will once again choose Jerusalem. 13 Let all people be silent before
the LORD, for He is coming from His holy dwelling.”

Fourth Vision: High Priest and Branch

3 †Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the Angel of the LORD, with Satan [A] standing at his right side to accuse him.
2 The LORD said to Satan: "The LORD rebuke you, Satan! May the LORD who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Isn't this man a burning stick snatched from the fire? "

3 Now Joshua was dressed with filthy clothes as he stood before the
Angel. 4 So the Angel of the LORD [B] spoke to those standing before Him, "Take off his filthy clothes! " Then He said to him, "See, I have removed your •guilt from you, and I will clothe you with splendid robes."

5 Then I said, "Let them put a •clean turban on his head." So a clean turban was placed on his head, and they clothed him in garments while the Angel of the LORD was standing nearby.

6 Then the Angel of the LORD charged Joshua: 7 "This is what the LORD of •Hosts says: If you walk in My ways and keep My instructions, you will both rule My house and take care of My courts; I will also grant you access among these who are standing here.

8 "Listen, Joshua the high priest, you and your colleagues sitting before you; indeed, these men are a sign that I am about to bring My servant, the
Branch. 9 Notice the stone I have set before Joshua; on that one stone are seven eyes. I will engrave an inscription on it" — this is the declaration of the LORD of Hosts — "and I will take away the guilt of this land in a single
day. 10 On that day, each of you will invite his neighbor to sit under his vine and fig tree." This is the declaration of the LORD of Hosts.

Fifth Vision: Gold Lampstand

4 The angel who was speaking with me then returned and roused me as
one awakened out of sleep. [2] He asked me, “What do you see? ”

I replied, “I see a solid gold lampstand there with a bowl on its top. It has
seven lamps on it and seven channels for each of [A] the lamps on its top.
[3] There are also two olive trees beside it, one on the right of the bowl and
the other on its left.”

[4] Then I asked the angel who was speaking with me, “What are these, my
lord? ”

[5] “Don’t you know what they are? ” replied the angel who was speaking
with me.

I said, “No, my lord.”

[6] So he answered me, “This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: ‘Not
by strength or by might, but by My Spirit,’ says the LORD of •Hosts.
[7] ‘What are you, great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you will become a
plain. And he will bring out the capstone accompanied by shouts of: Grace,
grace to it! ’ ”

[8] Then the word of the LORD came to me: [9] “Zerubbabel’s hands have
laid the foundation of this house, and his hands will complete it. Then you
will know that the LORD of Hosts has sent me to you. [10] For who scorns the
day of small things? These seven eyes of the LORD, which scan throughout
the whole earth, will rejoice when they see the plumb line [B] in Zerubbabel’s
hand.”

[11] I asked him, “What are the two olive trees on the right and left of the
lampstand? ” [12] And I questioned him further, “What are the two olive
branches beside the two gold conduits, from which golden oil pours out? ”

[13] Then he inquired of me, “Don’t you know what these are? ”

“No, my lord,” I replied.

[14] "These are the two anointed ones," he said, "who stand by the Lord of
the whole earth."

Sixth Vision: Flying Scroll

5 I looked up again and saw a flying scroll. 2 "What do you see? " he
asked me.

"I see a flying scroll," I replied, "30 feet [A] long and 15 feet [B] wide."

3 Then he said to me, "This is the curse that is going out over the whole
land, for every thief will be removed according to what is written on one
side, and everyone who swears falsely will be removed according to what is
written on the other side. 4 I will send it out," — this is the declaration of
the Lord of •Hosts — "and it will enter the house of the thief and the house
of the one who swears falsely by My name. It will stay inside his house and
destroy it along with its timbers and stones."

Seventh Vision: Woman in the Basket

5 Then the angel who was speaking with me came forward and told me,
"Look up and see what this is that is approaching."

6 So I asked, "What is it? "

He responded, "It's a measuring basket [C] that is approaching." And he
continued, "This is their iniquity in all the land." 7 Then a lead cover was
lifted, and there was a woman sitting inside the basket. 8 "This is
Wickedness," he said. He shoved her down into the basket and pushed the
lead weight over its opening. 9 Then I looked up and saw two women
approaching with the wind in their wings. Their wings were like those of a
stork, and they lifted up the basket between earth and sky.

10 So I asked the angel who was speaking with me, "Where are they
taking the basket? "

11 "To build a shrine for it in the land of •Shinar," he told me. "When
that is ready, the basket will be placed there on its pedestal."

Eighth Vision: Four Chariots

6 Then I looked up again and saw four chariots coming from between two
mountains. And the mountains were made of bronze. [2] The first chariot
had red horses, the second chariot black horses, [3] the third chariot white
horses, and the fourth chariot dappled horses — all strong horses. [4] So I
inquired of the angel who was speaking with me, "What are these, my
lord? "

[5] The angel told me, "These are the four spirits [A] of heaven going out
after presenting themselves to the Lord of the whole earth. [6] The one with
the black horses is going to the land of the north, the white horses are going
after them, but the dappled horses are going to the land of the south." [7] As
the strong horses went out, they wanted to go patrol the earth, and the LORD
said, "Go, patrol the earth." So they patrolled the earth. [8] Then He
summoned me saying, "See, those going to the land of the north have
pacified My Spirit in the northern land."

Crowning of the Branch

[9] The word of the LORD came to me: [10] "Take an offering from the exiles,
from Heldai, Tobijah, and Jedaiah, who have arrived from Babylon, and go
that same day to the house of Josiah son of Zephaniah. [11] Take silver and
gold, make crowns and place them on the head of Joshua son of Jehozadak,
the high priest. [12] You are to tell him: This is what the LORD of •Hosts says:
Here is a man whose name is Branch; He will branch out from His place
and build the LORD's temple. [13] Yes, He will build the LORD's temple; He
will be clothed in splendor and will sit on His throne and rule. There will
also be a priest on His throne, and there will be peaceful counsel between
the two of them. [14] The crown will reside in the LORD's temple as a
memorial to Heldai, Tobijah, Jedaiah, and Hen son of Zephaniah. [15] People
who are far off will come and build the LORD's temple, and you will know
that the LORD of Hosts has sent Me to you. This will happen when you fully
obey the LORD your God."

Disobedience and Fasting

7 In the fourth year of King Darius, the word of the LORD came to
Zechariah on the fourth day of the ninth month, which is Chislev. 2 Now
the people of Bethel had sent Sharezer, Regem-melech, and their men to
plead for the LORD's favor 3 by asking the priests who were at the house of
the LORD of •Hosts as well as the prophets, "Should we mourn and fast in
the fifth month as we have done these many years? "

4 Then the word of the LORD of Hosts came to me: 5 "Ask all the people
of the land and the priests: When you fasted and lamented in the fifth and in
the seventh months for these 70 years, did you really fast for Me? 6 When
you eat and drink, don't you eat and drink simply for yourselves? 7 Aren't
these the words that the LORD proclaimed through the earlier prophets when
Jerusalem was inhabited and secure, [A] along with its surrounding cities, and
when the southern region and the Judean foothills were inhabited? "

8 The word of the LORD came to Zechariah: 9 "The LORD of Hosts says
this: Make fair decisions. Show faithful love and compassion to one
another. 10 Do not oppress the widow or the fatherless, the foreigner or the
poor, and do not plot evil in your hearts against one another. 11 But they
refused to pay attention and turned a stubborn shoulder; they closed their
ears so they could not hear. 12 They made their hearts like a rock so as not
to obey the law or the words that the LORD of Hosts had sent by His Spirit
through the earlier prophets. Therefore great anger came from the LORD of
Hosts. 13 Just as He had called, and they would not listen, so when they
called, I would not listen," says the LORD of Hosts. 14 "I scattered them with
a windstorm over all the nations that had not known them, and the land was
left desolate behind them, with no one coming or going. They turned a
pleasant land into a desolation."

Obedience and Feasting

8 The word of the LORD of •Hosts came: 2 “The LORD of Hosts says this: I
am extremely jealous for •Zion; I am jealous for her with great wrath.”
3 The LORD says this: “I will return to Zion and live in Jerusalem. Then
Jerusalem will be called the Faithful City, the mountain of the LORD of
Hosts, and the Holy Mountain.” 4 The LORD of Hosts says this: “Old men
and women will again sit along the streets of Jerusalem, each with a staff in
hand because of advanced age. 5 The streets of the city will be filled with
boys and girls playing in them.” 6 The LORD of Hosts says this: “Though it
may seem incredible to the remnant of this people in those days, should it
also seem incredible to Me? ” — this is the declaration of the LORD of
Hosts. 7 The LORD of Hosts says this: “I will save My people from the land
of the east and the land of the west. 8 I will bring them back to live in
Jerusalem. They will be My people, and I will be their faithful and
righteous God.”

9 The LORD of Hosts says this: “Let your hands be strong, you who now
hear these words that the prophets spoke when the foundations were laid for
the rebuilding of the temple, the house of the LORD of Hosts. 10 For prior to
those days neither man nor beast had wages. There was no safety from the
enemy for anyone who came or went, for I turned everyone against his
neighbor. 11 But now, I will not treat the remnant of this people as in the
former days” — this is the declaration of the LORD of Hosts. 12 “For they
will sow in peace: the vine will yield its fruit, the land will yield its
produce, and the skies will yield their dew. I will give the remnant of this
people all these things as an inheritance. 13 As you have been a curse
among the nations, house of Judah and house of Israel, so I will save you,
and you will be a blessing. Don’t be afraid; let your hands be strong.”
14 For the LORD of Hosts says this: “As I resolved to treat you badly when
your fathers provoked Me to anger, and I did not relent,” says the LORD of
Hosts, 15 “so I have resolved again in these days to do what is good to
Jerusalem and the house of Judah. Don’t be afraid. 16 These are the things
you must do: Speak truth to one another; make true and sound decisions
within your •gates. 17 Do not plot evil in your hearts against your neighbor,
and do not love perjury, for I hate all this” — this is the LORD’s declaration.

ARTICLE
How Should a Christian Understand Postmodernism? ⇒

18 Then the word of the Lord of Hosts came to me: 19 “The Lord of
Hosts says this: The fast of the fourth month, the fast of the fifth, the fast of
the seventh, and the fast of the tenth will become times of joy, gladness,
and cheerful festivals for the house of Judah. Therefore, love truth and
peace.” 20 The Lord of Hosts says this: “Peoples will yet come, the
residents of many cities; 21 the residents of one city will go to another,
saying: Let’s go at once to plead for the Lord’s favor and to seek the Lord
of Hosts. I am also going. 22 Many peoples and strong nations will come to
seek the Lord of Hosts in Jerusalem and to plead for the Lord’s
favor.” 23 The Lord of Hosts says this: “In those days, 10 men from nations
of every language will grab the robe of a Jewish man tightly, urging: Let us
go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.”

Judgment of Zion's Enemies

9 An •Oracle

The word of the LORD
is against the land of Hadrach,
and Damascus is its resting place —
for the eyes of men
and all the tribes of Israel
are on the LORD [A] —
2 and also against Hamath, which borders it,
as well as Tyre and Sidon,
though they are very shrewd.
3 Tyre has built herself a fortress;
she has heaped up silver like dust
and gold like the dirt of the streets.
4 Listen! The Lord will impoverish her
and cast her wealth into the sea;
she herself will be consumed by fire.
5 Ashkelon will see it and be afraid;
Gaza too, and will writhe in great pain,
as will Ekron, for her hope will fail.
There will cease to be a king in Gaza,
and Ashkelon will become uninhabited.
6 A mongrel people will live in Ashdod,
and I will destroy the pride of the Philistines.
7 I will remove the blood from their mouths
and the detestable things
from between their teeth.
Then they too will become a remnant for our God;
they will become like a clan in Judah
and Ekron like the Jebusites.
8 I will set up camp at My house against an army, [B]
against those who march back and forth,
and no oppressor will march against them again,
for now I have seen with My own eyes.

The Coming of Zion's King

9† Rejoice greatly, Daughter •Zion!
Shout in triumph, Daughter Jerusalem!
Look, your King is coming to you;
He is righteous and victorious, [C]
humble and riding on a donkey,
on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

ARTICLE

Notable Christian Apologist: Origen ⇒

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10 I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim
and the horse from Jerusalem.
The bow of war will be removed,
and He will proclaim peace to the nations.
His dominion will extend from sea to sea,
from the Euphrates River
to the ends of the earth.
11 As for you,
because of the blood of your covenant,
I will release your prisoners
from the waterless cistern.
12 Return to a stronghold,
you prisoners who have hope;
today I declare that I will restore double to you.
13 For I will bend Judah as My bow;
I will fill that bow with Ephraim.
I will rouse your sons, Zion,
against your sons, Greece. [D],
I will make you like a warrior’s sword.
14 Then the LORD will appear over them,
and His arrow will fly like lightning.
The Lord GOD will sound the trumpet
and advance with the southern storms.

15 The LORD of •Hosts will defend them.
They will consume and conquer with slingstones;
they will drink and be rowdy as if with wine.
They will be as full as the sprinkling basin,
like those at the corners of the altar.
16 The LORD their God will save them on that day
as the flock of His people;
for they are like jewels in a crown,
sparkling over His land.
17 How lovely and beautiful they will be!
Grain will make the young men flourish,
and new wine, the young women.

The LORD Restores His People

10 Ask the LORD for rain
in the season of spring rain.
The LORD makes the rain clouds,
and He will give them showers of rain
and crops in the field for everyone.
2 For the idols speak falsehood,
and the diviners see illusions;
they relate empty dreams
and offer empty comfort.
Therefore the people wander like sheep;
they suffer affliction because there is no shepherd.
3 My anger burns against the shepherds,
so I will punish the leaders. [A]
For the LORD of •Hosts has tended His flock,
the house of Judah;
He will make them like His majestic steed in battle.
4 The cornerstone will come from Judah. [B]
The tent peg will come from them
and also the battle bow and every [C] ruler.
Together 5 they will be like warriors in battle
trampling down the mud of the streets.
They will fight because the LORD is with them,
and they will put horsemen to shame.
6 I will strengthen the house of Judah
and deliver the house of Joseph.
I will restore them
because I have compassion on them,
and they will be
as though I had never rejected them.
For I am •Yahweh their God,
and I will answer them.
7 Ephraim will be like a warrior,
and their hearts will be glad as if with wine.
Their children will see it and be glad;
their hearts will rejoice in Yahweh.

[8] I will whistle and gather them
because I have redeemed them;
they will be as numerous as they once were.
[9] Though I sow them among the nations,
they will remember Me in the distant lands;
they and their children will live and return.
[10] I will bring them back from the land of Egypt
and gather them from Assyria.
I will bring them to the land of Gilead
and to Lebanon,
but it will not be enough for them.
[11] Yahweh [D] will pass through the sea of distress
and strike the waves of the sea;
all the depths of the Nile will dry up.
The pride of Assyria will be brought down,
and the scepter of Egypt will come to an end.
[12] I will strengthen them in Yahweh,
and they will march in His name —

this is Yahweh's declaration.

Israel's Shepherds: Good and Bad

11 Open your gates, Lebanon,
and fire will consume your cedars.
2 Wail, cypress, for the cedar has fallen;
the glorious trees are destroyed!
Wail, oaks of Bashan,
for the stately forest has fallen!
3 Listen to the wail of the shepherds,
for their glory is destroyed.
Listen to the roar of young lions,
for the thickets of the Jordan are [A] destroyed.

4 •Yahweh my God says this: “Shepherd the flock intended for slaughter.
5 Those who buy them slaughter them but are not punished. Those who sell
them say: Praise the LORD because I have become rich! Even their own
shepherds have no compassion for them. 6 Indeed, I will no longer have
compassion on the inhabitants of the land” — this is the LORD’s declaration.
“Instead, I will turn everyone over to his neighbor and his king. They will
devastate the land, and I will not deliver it from them.”

7 So I shepherded the flock intended for slaughter, the afflicted of the
flock. I took two staffs, calling one Favor and the other Union, and I
shepherded the flock. 8 In one month I got rid of three shepherds. I became
impatient with them, and they also detested me. 9 Then I said, “I will no
longer shepherd you. Let what is dying die, and let what is going astray go
astray; let the rest devour each other’s flesh.” 10 Next I took my staff called
Favor and cut it in two, annulling the covenant I had made with all the
peoples. 11 It was annulled on that day, and so the afflicted of the flock who
were watching me knew that it was the word of the LORD. 12 Then I said to
them, “If it seems right to you, give me my wages; but if not, keep them.”
So they weighed my wages, 30 pieces of silver.

13 “Throw it to the potter,” the LORD said to me — this magnificent price
I was valued by them. So I took the 30 pieces of silver and threw it into the
house of the LORD, to the potter. 14 Then I cut in two my second staff,
Union, annulling the brotherhood between Judah and Israel.

15 The LORD also said to me: "Take the equipment of a foolish shepherd.
16 I am about to raise up a shepherd in the land who will not care for those
who are going astray, and he will not seek the lost [B] or heal the broken. He
will not sustain the healthy, [C] but he will devour the flesh of the fat sheep
and tear off their hooves.

17 Woe to the worthless shepherd
who deserts the flock!
May a sword strike [D] his arm
and his right eye!
May his arm wither away
and his right eye go completely blind! "

Judah's Security

12 An •Oracle

The word of the LORD concerning Israel.
A declaration of the LORD,
who stretched out the heavens,
laid the foundation of the earth,
and formed the spirit of man within him.

2 “Look, I will make Jerusalem a cup that causes staggering for the
peoples who surround the city. The siege against Jerusalem will also
involve Judah. 3 On that day I will make Jerusalem a heavy stone for all the
peoples; all who try to lift it will injure themselves severely when all the
nations of the earth gather against her. 4 On that day” — this is the LORD’s
declaration — “I will strike every horse with panic and its rider with
madness. I will keep a watchful eye on the house of Judah but strike all the
horses of the nations with blindness. 5 Then each of the leaders of Judah
will think to himself: The residents of Jerusalem are my strength through
the LORD of •Hosts, their God. 6 On that day I will make the leaders of
Judah like a firepot in a woodpile, like a flaming torch among sheaves; they
will consume all the peoples around them on the right and the left, while
Jerusalem continues to be inhabited on its site, in Jerusalem. 7 The LORD
will save the tents of Judah first, so that the glory of David’s house and the
glory of Jerusalem’s residents may not be greater than that of Judah. 8 On
that day the LORD will defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that on that
day the one who is weakest among them will be like David on that day, and
the house of David will be like God, like the Angel of the LORD, before
them. 9 On that day I will set out to destroy all the nations that come against
Jerusalem.

Mourning for the Pierced One

10 “Then I will pour out a spirit [A], of grace and prayer on the house of
David and the residents of Jerusalem, and they will look at [B] Me whom they
pierced. They will mourn for Him as one mourns for an only child and
weep bitterly for Him as one weeps for a firstborn. 11 On that day the
mourning in Jerusalem will be as great as the mourning of Hadad-rimmon

in the plain of Megiddo. [12] The land will mourn, every family by itself: the
family of David's house by itself and their women by themselves; the
family of Nathan's house by itself and their women by themselves; [13] the
family of Levi's house by itself and their women by themselves; the family
of Shimei by itself and their women by themselves; [14] all the remaining
families, every family by itself, and their women by themselves.

God's People Cleansed

13 “On that day a fountain will be opened for the house of David and for
the residents of Jerusalem, to wash away sin and impurity. 2 On that
day” — this is the declaration of the Lord of •Hosts — “I will erase the
names of the idols from the land, and they will no longer be remembered. I
will remove the prophets and the •unclean spirit from the land. 3 If a man
still prophesies, his father and his mother who bore him will say to him:
You cannot remain alive because you have spoken falsely in the name of
•Yahweh. When he prophesies, his father and his mother who bore him will
pierce him through. 4 On that day every prophet will be ashamed of his
vision when he prophesies; they will not put on a hairy cloak in order to
deceive. 5 He will say: I am not a prophet; I work the land, for a man
purchased [A] me as a servant since my youth. 6 If someone asks him: What
are these wounds on your chest? [B] — then he will answer: I received the
wounds in the house of my friends.

7 Sword, awake against My shepherd,
against the man who is My associate —
this is the declaration of the Lord of Hosts.
Strike the shepherd, and the
sheep will be scattered;
I will also turn My hand against the little ones.
8 In the whole land —
this is the Lord’s declaration —
two-thirds [C] will be cut off and die,
but a third will be left in it.
9 I will put this third through the fire;
I will refine them as silver is refined
and test them as gold is tested.
They will call on My name,
and I will answer them.
I will say: They are My people,
and they will say: Yahweh is our God.”

The Lord's Triumph and Reign

14 A day of the LORD is coming when your plunder will be divided in your presence. [2] I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem for battle. The city will be captured, the houses looted, and the women raped. Half the city will go into exile, but the rest of the people will not be removed from the city.

[3] Then the LORD will go out to fight against those nations as He fights on a day of battle. [4] On that day His feet will stand on the •Mount of Olives, which faces Jerusalem on the east. The Mount of Olives will be split in half from east to west, forming a huge valley, so that half the mountain will move to the north and half to the south. [5] You will flee by My mountain valley, for the valley of the mountains will extend to Azal. You will flee as you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Then the LORD my God will come and all the holy ones with Him.

[6] On that day there will be no light; the sunlight and moonlight [A] will diminish. [7] It will be a day known only to •Yahweh, without day or night, but there will be light at evening.

[8] On that day living water will flow out from Jerusalem, half of it toward the eastern sea and the other half toward the western sea, in summer and winter alike. [9] On that day Yahweh will become King over all the earth — Yahweh alone, and His name alone. [10] All the land from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem will be changed into a plain. But Jerusalem will be raised up and will remain [B] on its site from the Benjamin Gate to the place of the First Gate, [C] to the Corner Gate, and from the Tower of Hananel to the royal winepresses. [11] People will live there, and never again will there be a curse of •complete destruction. So Jerusalem will dwell in security.

[12] This will be the plague the LORD strikes all the peoples with, who have warred against Jerusalem: their flesh will rot while they stand on their feet, their eyes will rot in their sockets, and their tongues will rot in their mouths. [13] On that day a great panic from the LORD will be among them, so that each will seize the hand of another, and the hand of one will rise against the

other. [14] Judah will also fight at Jerusalem, and the wealth of all the surrounding nations will be collected: gold, silver, and clothing in great abundance. [15] The same plague as the previous one will strike [D] the horses, mules, camels, donkeys, and all the animals that are in those camps.

[16] Then all the survivors from the nations that came against Jerusalem will go up year after year to worship the King, the LORD of •Hosts, and to celebrate the Festival of Booths. [17] Should any of the families of the earth not go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of Hosts, rain will not fall on them. [18] And if the people [E] of Egypt will not go up and enter, then rain will not fall on them; this will be the plague the LORD inflicts on the nations who do not go up to celebrate the Festival of Booths. [19] This will be the punishment of Egypt and all the nations that do not go up to celebrate the Festival of Booths.

[20] On that day, the words

HOLY TO THE LORD

will be on the bells of the horses. The pots in the house of the LORD will be like the sprinkling basins before the altar. [21] Every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah will be holy to the LORD of Hosts. Everyone who sacrifices will come and take some of the pots to cook in. And on that day there will no longer be a Canaanite [F] in the house of the LORD of Hosts.

MALACHI

Malachi 1 Malachi 2 Malachi 3 Malachi 4

Introduction to Malachi

MALACHI

The LORD's Love for Israel

1 An •oracle: The word of the LORD to Israel through Malachi.

2† “I have loved you,” says the LORD.

But you ask: “How have You loved us? ”

“Wasn’t Esau Jacob’s brother? ” This is the LORD’s declaration. “Even
so, I loved Jacob, 3 but I hated Esau. I turned his mountains into a
wasteland, and gave his inheritance to the desert jackals.”

4 Though Edom says: “We have been devastated, but we will rebuild [A]
the ruins,” the LORD of •Hosts says this: “They may build, but I will
demolish. They will be called a wicked country and the people the LORD
has cursed [B] forever. 5 Your own eyes will see this, and you yourselves will
say, ‘The LORD is great, even beyond [C] the borders of Israel.’

Disobedience of the Priests

6 “A son honors his father, and a servant his master. But if I am a father,
where is My honor? And if I am a master, where is your •fear of Me? says
•Yahweh of Hosts to you priests, who despise My name.”

Yet you ask: “How have we despised Your name? ”

7 “By presenting defiled food on My altar.”

You ask: “How have we defiled You? ”

When you say: “The LORD’s table is contemptible.”

8 “When you present a blind animal for sacrifice, is it not wrong? And
when you present a lame or sick animal, is it not wrong? Bring it to your
governor! Would he be pleased with you or show you favor? ” asks the
LORD of Hosts. 9 “And now ask for God’s favor. Will He be gracious to us?
Since this has come from your hands, will He show any of you favor? ”
asks the LORD of Hosts. 10 “I wish one of you would shut the temple doors,
so you would no longer kindle a useless fire on My altar! I am not pleased

with you," says the LORD of Hosts, "and I will accept no offering from your hands.

11 "For My name will be great among the nations, from the rising of the sun to its setting. Incense [D] and pure offerings will be presented in My name in every place because My name will be great among the nations," [E] says Yahweh of Hosts.

ARTICLE

Does the Bible Teach That Everyone Will Be Saved? ⇒

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12 But you are profaning it when you say: "The Lord's table is defiled, and its product, its food, is contemptible."
13 You also say: "Look, what a nuisance! " "And you scorn [F] it," says the LORD of Hosts. "You bring stolen, [G] lame, or sick animals. You bring this as an offering! Am I to accept that from your hands? " asks the LORD.

14 "The deceiver is cursed who has an acceptable male in his flock and makes a vow but sacrifices a defective animal to the Lord. For I am a great King," says Yahweh of Hosts, "and My name [H] will be feared among the nations.

Warning to the Priests

2 “Therefore, this decree is for you priests: [2] If you don’t listen, and if
you don’t take it to heart to honor My name,” says •Yahweh of •Hosts,
“I will send a curse among you, and I will curse your blessings. In fact, I
have already begun to curse them because you are not taking it to heart.

[3] “Look, I am going to rebuke your descendants, and I will spread
animal waste over your faces, the waste from your festival sacrifices, and
you will be taken away with it. [4] Then you will know that I sent you this
decree so My covenant with Levi may continue,” says the Lord of Hosts.
[5] “My covenant with him was one of life and peace, and I gave these to
him; it called for reverence, and he revered Me and stood in awe of My
name. [6] True instruction was in his mouth, and nothing wrong was found
on his lips. He walked with Me in peace and fairness and turned many
from sin. [7] For the lips of a priest should guard knowledge, and people
should seek instruction from his mouth, because he is the messenger of the
Lord of Hosts.

[8] “You, on the other hand, have turned from the way. You have caused
many to stumble by your instruction. You have violated [A] the covenant of
Levi,” says the Lord of Hosts. [9] “So I in turn have made you despised and
humiliated before all the people because you are not keeping My ways but
are showing partiality in your instruction.”

Judah’s Marital Unfaithfulness

[10†] Don’t all of us have one Father? Didn’t one God create us? Why
then do we act treacherously against one another, profaning the covenant
of our fathers? [11] Judah has acted treacherously, and a detestable thing has
been done in Israel and in Jerusalem. For Judah has profaned the Lord’s
sanctuary, [B] which He loves, and has married the daughter of a foreign
god. [12] To the man who does this, may the Lord cut off any descendants ,
from the tents of Jacob, even if they present an offering to the Lord of
Hosts.

[13] And this is another thing you do: you cover the Lord’s altar with tears,
with weeping and groaning, because He no longer respects your offerings

or receives them gladly from your hands.

[14] Yet you ask, “For what reason? ” Because the LORD has been a witness
between you and the wife of your youth. You have acted treacherously
against her, though she was your marriage partner and your wife by
covenant. [15] Didn’t the one God make us with a remnant of His life-breath?
And what does the One seek? [D] A godly •offspring. So watch yourselves
carefully, [E] and do not act treacherously against the wife of your youth.

[16] “If he hates and divorces his wife, ” says the LORD God of Israel, “he [F]
covers his garment with injustice,” says the LORD of Hosts. Therefore,
watch yourselves carefully, [G] and do not act treacherously.

Judgment at the LORD’s Coming

[17] You have wearied the LORD with your words.

Yet you ask, “How have we wearied Him? ”

When you say, “Everyone who does what is evil is good in the LORD’s
sight, and He is pleased with them,” or “Where is the God of justice? ”

3 “See, I am going to send My messenger, and he will clear the way
before Me. Then the Lord you seek will suddenly come to His temple,
the Messenger of the covenant you desire — see, He is coming,” says the
LORD of •Hosts. 2 But who can endure the day of His coming? And who will
be able to stand when He appears? For He will be like a refiner’s fire and
like cleansing lye. 3 He will be like a refiner and purifier of silver; He will
purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver. Then they will
present offerings to the LORD in righteousness. 4 And the offerings of Judah
and Jerusalem will please the LORD as in days of old and years gone by.

5 “I will come to you in judgment, and I will be ready to witness against
sorcerers and adulterers; against those who swear falsely; against those who
oppress the widow and the fatherless, and cheat the wage earner; and
against those who deny justice to the foreigner. They do not •fear Me,”
says the LORD of Hosts. 6 “Because I, •Yahweh, have not changed, you
descendants of Jacob have not been destroyed.

Robbing God

7 “Since the days of your fathers, you have turned from My statutes; you
have not kept them. Return to Me, and I will return to you,” says the LORD
of Hosts.

But you ask: “How can we return? ”

8† “Will a man rob God? Yet you are robbing Me! ”

You ask: “How do we rob You? ”

“By not making the payments of the tenth and the contributions. 9 You
are suffering under a curse, yet you — the whole nation — are still robbing
Me. 10 Bring the full tenth into the storehouse so that there may be food in
My house. Test Me in this way,” says the LORD of Hosts. “See if I will not
open the floodgates of heaven and pour out a blessing for you without
measure. 11 I will rebuke the devourer for you, so that it will not ruin the
produce of your land and your vine in your field will not fail to produce

fruit," says the LORD of Hosts. 12 "Then all the nations will consider you
fortunate, for you will be a delightful land," says the LORD of Hosts.

The Righteous and the Wicked

13 "Your words against Me are harsh," says the LORD.

Yet you ask: "What have we spoken against You? "

14 You have said: "It is useless to serve God. What have we gained by
keeping His requirements and walking mournfully before the LORD of
Hosts? 15 So now we consider the arrogant to be fortunate. Not only do
those who commit wickedness prosper, they even test God and escape."

16† At that time those who feared the LORD spoke to one another. The
LORD took notice and listened. So a book of remembrance was written
before Him for those who feared Yahweh and had high regard for His name.
17 "They will be Mine," says the LORD of Hosts, "a special possession on
the day I am preparing. I will have compassion on them as a man has
compassion on his son who serves him. 18 So you will again see the
difference between the righteous and the wicked, between one who serves
God and one who does not serve Him.

The Day of the Lord

Chapter 4
1 “For indeed, the day is coming, burning like a furnace,
when all the arrogant and everyone who commits wickedness will become
stubble. The coming day will consume them,” says the LORD of •Hosts, “not
leaving them root or branches. 2† But for you who •fear My name, the sun
of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings, and you will go out and
playfully jump like calves from the stall. [A] 3 You will trample the wicked,
for they will be ashes under the soles of your feet on the day I am
preparing,” says the LORD of Hosts.

A Final Warning

4 “Remember the instruction of Moses My servant, the statutes and
ordinances I commanded him at Horeb for all Israel. 5 Look, I am going to
send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome Day of the LORD
comes. 6 And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the
hearts of children to their fathers. Otherwise, I will come and strike the
land [B] with a curse.”

MATTHEW

Introduction to Matthew

MATTHEW

The Genealogy of Jesus Christ

1 [†]The historical record [A] of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham:

From Abraham to David

2[†] Abraham fathered Isaac,
Isaac fathered Jacob,
Jacob fathered Judah and his brothers,
3 Judah fathered Perez and Zerah by Tamar,
Perez fathered Hezron,
Hezron fathered Aram,
4 Aram fathered Amminadab,
Amminadab fathered Nahshon,
Nahshon fathered Salmon,
5 Salmon fathered Boaz by Rahab,
Boaz fathered Obed by Ruth,
Obed fathered Jesse,
6 and Jesse fathered King David.

From David to the Babylonian Exile

Then David fathered Solomon by Uriah's wife,
7 Solomon fathered Rehoboam,
Rehoboam fathered Abijah,
Abijah fathered Asa,
8 Asa fathered Jehoshaphat,
Jehoshaphat fathered Joram,
Joram fathered Uzziah,
9 Uzziah fathered Jotham,
Jotham fathered Ahaz,
Ahaz fathered Hezekiah,
10 Hezekiah fathered Manasseh,
Manasseh fathered Amon,
Amon fathered Josiah,

11† and Josiah fathered Jechoniah and his brothers
at the time of the exile to Babylon.

From the Exile to the Messiah

12 Then after the exile to Babylon
Jechoniah fathered Shealtiel,
Shealtiel fathered Zerubbabel,
13 Zerubbabel fathered Abiud,
Abiud fathered Eliakim,
Eliakim fathered Azor,
14 Azor fathered Zadok,
Zadok fathered Achim,
Achim fathered Eliud,
15 Eliud fathered Eleazar,
Eleazar fathered Matthan,
Matthan fathered Jacob,
16† and Jacob fathered Joseph the husband of Mary,
who gave birth to [B] Jesus who is called the •Messiah.

17† So all the generations from Abraham to David were 14 generations; and from David until the exile to Babylon, 14 generations; and from the exile to Babylon until the Messiah, 14 generations.

The Nativity of the Messiah

18† The birth of Jesus Christ came about this way: After His mother Mary had been •engaged to Joseph, it was discovered before they came together that she was pregnant by the Holy Spirit.
19 So her husband Joseph, being a righteous man, and not wanting to disgrace her publicly, decided to divorce her secretly.

20† But after he had considered these things, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, don’t be afraid to take Mary as your wife, because what has been conceived in her

is by the Holy Spirit. 21 She will give birth to a son, and you are to name
Him Jesus, [C] because He will save His people from their sins."

22† Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord
through the prophet:

23 **See, the virgin will become pregnant**
and give birth to a son,
and they will name Him Immanuel,

which is translated "God is with us."

24 When Joseph got up from sleeping, he did as the Lord's angel had
commanded him. He married her 25† but did not know her intimately until
she gave birth to a son. And he named Him Jesus.

Wise Men Seek the King

2 †After Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of King
•Herod, •wise men from the east arrived unexpectedly in Jerusalem,
2 saying, “Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we saw
His star in the east [A], and have come to worship Him.” [B]

3 When King Herod heard this, he was deeply disturbed, and all
Jerusalem with him. 4 So he assembled all the •chief priests and •scribes of
the people and asked them where the •Messiah would be born.

5 “In Bethlehem of Judea,” they told him, “because this is what was
written by the prophet:

6† **And you, Bethlehem,** in the land of Judah,
are by no means **least among the leaders of Judah:**
because out of you will come a leader
who will shepherd My people Israel.”

7 Then Herod secretly summoned the wise men and asked them the exact
time the star appeared. 8 He sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and
search carefully for the child. When you find Him, report back to me so that
I too can go and worship Him.” [C]

9 After hearing the king, they went on their way. And there it was — the
star they had seen in the east! [D] It led them until it came and stopped above
the place where the child was. 10 When they saw the star, they were
overjoyed beyond measure. 11 Entering the house, they saw the child with
Mary His mother, and falling to their knees, they worshiped Him. [E] Then
they opened their treasures and presented Him with gifts: gold,
frankincense, and myrrh. 12 And being warned in a dream not to go back to
Herod, they returned to their own country by another route.

The Flight into Egypt

13 After they were gone, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared to
Joseph in a dream, saying, “Get up! Take the child and His mother, flee to

Egypt, and stay there until I tell you. For Herod is about to search for the
child to destroy Him." 14 So he got up, took the child and His mother
during the night, and escaped to Egypt. 15† He stayed there until Herod's
death, so that what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet might be
fulfilled: **Out of Egypt I called My Son.**

The Massacre of the Innocents

16† Then Herod, when he saw that he had been outwitted by the wise
men, flew into a rage. He gave orders to massacre all the male children in
and around Bethlehem who were two years [F] old and under, in keeping with
the time he had learned from the wise men. 17† Then what was spoken
through Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled:

18 **A voice was heard in Ramah,**
weeping, and great mourning,
Rachel weeping for her children;
and she refused to be consoled,
because they were no more.

The Holy Family in Nazareth

19 After Herod died, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared in a dream
to Joseph in Egypt, 20 saying, "Get up! Take the child and His mother and
go to the land of Israel, because those who sought the child's life are dead."
21 So he got up, took the child and His mother, and entered the land of
Israel. 22 But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling over Judea in place
of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And being warned in a
dream, he withdrew to the region of Galilee. 23† Then he went and settled
in a town called Nazareth to fulfill what was spoken through the prophets,
that He will be called a •Nazarene.

The Messiah's Herald

3 In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the Wilderness of
Judea 2 and saying, “Repent, because the kingdom of heaven has come
near! ” 3 For he is the one spoken of through the prophet Isaiah, who said:

A voice of one crying out in the wilderness:
Prepare the way for the Lord;
make His paths straight!

4 John himself had a camel-hair garment with a leather belt around his
waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. 5 Then people from
Jerusalem, all Judea, and all the vicinity of the Jordan were flocking to him,
6 and they were baptized by him in the Jordan River as they confessed their
sins.

7 When he saw many of the •Pharisees and •Sadducees coming to the
place of his baptism, [A] he said to them, “Brood of vipers! Who warned you
to flee from the coming wrath? 8† Therefore produce fruit consistent
with [B] repentance. 9 And don’t presume to say to yourselves, ‘We have
Abraham as our father.’ For I tell you that God is able to raise up children
for Abraham from these stones! 10 Even now the ax is ready to strike the
root of the trees! Therefore, every tree that doesn’t produce good fruit will
be cut down and thrown into the fire.

11† “I baptize you with [C] water for repentance, but the One who is
coming after me is more powerful than I. I am not worthy to remove [D] His
sandals. He Himself will baptize you with [E] the Holy Spirit and fire. 12 His
winnowing shovel is in His hand, and He will clear His threshing floor and
gather His wheat into the barn. But the chaff He will burn up with fire that
never goes out.”

The Baptism of Jesus

13 Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan, to be baptized by
him. 14 But John tried to stop Him, saying, “I need to be baptized by You,
and yet You come to me? ”

15† Jesus answered him, “Allow it for now, because this is the way for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he allowed Him to be baptized.

ARTICLE

Does the New Testament Misquote the Old Testament? ⇒

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16 After Jesus was baptized, He went up immediately from the water. The heavens suddenly opened for Him, and He saw the Spirit of God
descending like a dove and coming down on Him. 17† And there came a
voice from heaven:

This is My beloved Son.
I take delight in Him!

The Temptation of Jesus

4 Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted
by the Devil. 2† After He had fasted 40 days and 40 nights, He was
hungry. 3 Then the tempter approached Him and said, “If You are the Son of
God, tell these stones to become bread.”

4 But He answered, “It is written:

Man must not live on bread alone
but on every word that comes
from the mouth of God.”

5† Then the Devil took Him to the holy city, had Him stand on the
pinnacle of the temple, 6 and said to Him, “If You are the Son of God,
throw Yourself down. For it is written:

He will give His angels orders concerning you,
and **they will support you with their hands**
so that you will not strike
your foot against a stone.”

7 Jesus told him, “It is also written: **Do not test the Lord your God.**”

8 Again, the Devil took Him to a very high mountain and showed Him all
the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. 9 And he said to Him, “I will
give You all these things if You will fall down and worship me.” [A]

10 Then Jesus told him, “Go away, Satan! For it is written:

Worship the Lord your God,
and serve only Him.”

11 Then the Devil left Him, and immediately angels came and began to
serve Him.

Ministry in Galilee

12† When He heard that John had been arrested, He withdrew into
Galilee. 13 He left Nazareth behind and went to live in Capernaum by the
sea, in the region of Zebulun and Naphtali. 14 This was to fulfill what was
spoken through the prophet Isaiah:

15 **Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali,**
along the sea road, beyond the Jordan,
Galilee of the Gentiles!
16 **The people who live in darkness**
have seen a great light,
and for those living in the shadowland of death,
light has dawned. [B] ,

17† From then on Jesus began to preach, "Repent, because the kingdom of
heaven has come near! "

The First Disciples

18† As He was walking along the Sea of Galilee, He saw two brothers,
Simon, who was called Peter, and his brother Andrew. They were casting a
net into the sea, since they were fishermen. 19 "Follow Me," He told them,
"and I will make you fish for people! " 20 Immediately they left their nets
and followed Him.

21 Going on from there, He saw two other brothers, James the son of
Zebedee, and his brother John. They were in a boat with Zebedee their
father, mending their nets, and He called them. 22 Immediately they left the
boat and their father and followed Him.

Teaching, Preaching, and Healing

23 Jesus was going all over Galilee, teaching in their •synagogues,
preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every [C] disease and
sickness among the people. 24† Then the news about Him spread
throughout Syria. So they brought to Him all those who were afflicted,
those suffering from various diseases and intense pains, the demon-

possessed, the epileptics, and the paralytics. And He healed them. 25 Large
crowds followed Him from Galilee, •Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and
beyond the Jordan.

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

5 [†] When He saw the crowds, He went up on the mountain, and after He
sat down, His disciples came to Him. 2 Then [A] He began to teach them,
saying:

The Beatitudes

3 "The poor in spirit are blessed,
for the kingdom of heaven is theirs.
4 Those who mourn are blessed,
for they will be comforted.
5 The gentle are blessed,
for they will inherit the earth.
6 Those who hunger and thirst for righteousness are blessed,
for they will be filled.
7 The merciful are blessed,
for they will be shown mercy.
8 The pure in heart are blessed,
for they will see God.
9 The peacemakers are blessed,
for they will be called sons of God.
10 Those who are persecuted for righteousness are blessed,
for the kingdom of heaven is theirs.

11 "You are blessed when they insult and persecute you and falsely say
every kind of evil against you because of Me. 12 Be glad and rejoice,
because your reward is great in heaven. For that is how they persecuted the
prophets who were before you.

Believers Are Salt and Light

13[†] "You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt should lose its taste, how
can it be made salty? It's no longer good for anything but to be thrown out
and trampled on by men.

14 "You are the light of the world. A city situated on a hill cannot be
hidden. 15 No one lights a lamp and puts it under a basket, but rather on a

lampstand, and it gives light for all who are in the house. 16† In the same
way, let your light shine before men, so that they may see your good works
and give glory to your Father in heaven.

Christ Fulfills the Law

17† "Don't assume that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did
not come to destroy but to fulfill. 18 For •I assure you: Until heaven and
earth pass away, not the smallest letter or one stroke of a letter will pass
from the law until all things are accomplished. 19† Therefore, whoever
breaks one of the least of these commands and teaches people to do so will
be called least in the kingdom of heaven. But whoever practices and teaches
these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. 20 For I tell
you, unless your righteousness surpasses that of the •scribes and •Pharisees,
you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

Murder Begins in the Heart

21 "You have heard that it was said to our ancestors, **Do not murder**,
and whoever murders will be subject to judgment. 22† But I tell you,
everyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. And
whoever says to his brother, 'Fool! ' will be subject to the •Sanhedrin. But
whoever says, 'You moron! ' will be subject to •hellfire. 23 So if you are
offering your gift on the altar, and there you remember that your brother has
something against you, 24 leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go
and be reconciled with your brother, and then come and offer your gift.
25 Reach a settlement quickly with your adversary while you're on the way
with him, or your adversary will hand you over to the judge, the judge to
the officer, and you will be thrown into prison. 26 I assure you: You will
never get out of there until you have paid the last penny!

ARTICLE
Does the Bible Contain Errors? ⇒

Adultery in the Heart

[27] “You have heard that it was said, **Do not commit adultery.** [28] But I
tell you, everyone who looks at a woman to lust for her has already
committed adultery with her in his heart. [29†] If your right eye •causes you
to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of
the parts of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.
[30] And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For
it is better that you lose one of the parts of your body than for your whole
body to go into hell!

Divorce Practices Censured

[31] “It was also said, **Whoever divorces his wife must give her a
written notice of divorce.** [32] But I tell you, everyone who divorces his
wife, except in a case of sexual immorality, causes her to commit adultery.
And whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

Tell the Truth

[33] “Again, you have heard that it was said to our ancestors, **You must
not break your oath, but you must keep your oaths to the Lord.** [34] But I
tell you, don’t take an oath at all: either by heaven, because it is God’s
throne; [35] or by the earth, because it is His footstool; or by Jerusalem,
because it is the city of the great King. [36] Neither should you swear by your
head, because you cannot make a single hair white or black. [37] But let your
word ‘yes’ be ‘yes,’ and your ‘no’ be ‘no.’ Anything more than this is from
the evil one.

Go the Second Mile

[38†] “You have heard that it was said, **An eye for an eye** and **a tooth for a
tooth.** [39] But I tell you, don’t resist an evildoer. On the contrary, if anyone
slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. [40] As for the one
who wants to sue you and take away your shirt, let him have your coat as
well. [41] And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two. [42] Give

to the one who asks you, and don’t turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.

Love Your Enemies

43 “You have heard that it was said, **Love your neighbor** and hate your
enemy. 44 But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who
persecute you, 45 so that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. For He
causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the
righteous and the unrighteous. 46 For if you love those who love you, what
reward will you have? Don’t even the tax collectors do the same? 47 And if
you greet only your brothers, what are you doing out of the ordinary?
Don’t even the Gentiles do the same? 48† Be perfect, therefore, as your
heavenly Father is perfect.

How to Give

6 †“Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of people, to be
seen by them. Otherwise, you will have no reward from your Father in
heaven. 2 So whenever you give to the poor, don’t sound a trumpet before
you, as the hypocrites do in the •synagogues and on the streets, to be
applauded by people. •I assure you: They’ve got their reward! 3 But when
you give to the poor, don’t let your left hand know what your right hand is
doing, 4 so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in
secret will reward you.

How to Pray

5 “Whenever you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites, because they
love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen
by people. I assure you: They’ve got their reward! 6 But when you pray, go
into your private room, shut your door, and pray to your Father who is in
secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. 7 When you
pray, don’t babble like the idolaters, since they imagine they’ll be heard for
their many words. 8 Don’t be like them, because your Father knows the
things you need before you ask Him.

The Model Prayer

9† “Therefore, you should pray like this:

Our Father in heaven,
Your name be honored as holy.
10 Your kingdom come.
Your will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.
11 Give us today our daily bread.
12† And forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.
13† And do not bring us into temptation,
but deliver us from the evil one.
[For Yours is the kingdom and the power
and the glory forever. •Amen.]

[14] "For if you forgive people their wrongdoing, your heavenly Father
will forgive you as well. [15] But if you don't forgive people, your Father
will not forgive your wrongdoing.

How to Fast

[16] "Whenever you fast, don't be sad-faced like the hypocrites. For they
make their faces unattractive so their fasting is obvious to people. I assure
you: They've got their reward! [17] But when you fast, put oil on your head,
and wash your face, [18] so that you don't show your fasting to people but to
your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will
reward you.

God and Possessions

[19] "Don't collect for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust
destroy and where thieves break in and steal. [20] But collect for yourselves
treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where
thieves don't break in and steal. [21] For where your treasure is, there your
heart will be also.

[22†] "The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eye is good, your whole
body will be full of light. [23] But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be
full of darkness. So if the light within you is darkness — how deep is that
darkness!

[24] "No one can be a •slave of two masters, since either he will hate one
and love the other, or be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot
be slaves of God and of money.

The Cure for Anxiety

[25] "This is why I tell you: Don't worry about your life, what you will eat
or what you will drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Isn't life
more than food and the body more than clothing? [26] Look at the birds of
the sky: They don't sow or reap or gather into barns, yet your heavenly

Father feeds them. Aren't you worth more than they? [27] Can any of you
add a single •cubit to his height by worrying? [28] And why do you worry
about clothes? Learn how the wildflowers of the field grow: they don't
labor or spin thread. [29] Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his
splendor was adorned like one of these! [30] If that's how God clothes the
grass of the field, which is here today and thrown into the furnace
tomorrow, won't He do much more for you — you of little faith? [31] So
don't worry, saying, 'What will we eat? ' or 'What will we drink? ' or
'What will we wear? ' [32] For the idolaters eagerly seek all these things, and
your heavenly Father knows that you need them. [33†] But seek first the
kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be
provided for you. [34] Therefore don't worry about tomorrow, because
tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

Do Not Judge

7 †“Do not judge, so that you won’t be judged. [2] For with the judgment
you use, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be
measured to you. [3] Why do you look at the speck in your brother’s eye but
don’t notice the log in your own eye? [4] Or how can you say to your brother,
‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ and look, there’s a log in your eye?
[5] Hypocrite! First take the log out of your eye, and then you will see clearly
to take the speck out of your brother’s eye. [6] Don’t give what is holy to
dogs or toss your pearls before pigs, or they will trample them with their
feet, turn, and tear you to pieces.

Keep Asking, Searching, Knocking

[7] “Keep asking, and it will be given to you. Keep searching, and you
will find. Keep knocking, and the door will be opened to you. [8] For
everyone who asks receives, and the one who searches finds, and to the one
who knocks, the door will be opened. [9] What man among you, if his son
asks him for bread, will give him a stone? [10] Or if he asks for a fish, will
give him a snake? [11] If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts
to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good
things to those who ask Him! [12] Therefore, whatever you want others to do
for you, do also the same for them — this is the Law and the Prophets.

Entering the Kingdom

[13] “Enter through the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the road is
broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who go through it.
[14] How narrow is the gate and difficult the road that leads to life, and few
find it.

[15] “Beware of false prophets who come to you in sheep’s clothing but
inwardly are ravaging wolves. [16] You’ll recognize them by their fruit. Are
grapes gathered from thornbushes or figs from thistles? [17] In the same way,
every good tree produces good fruit, but a bad tree produces bad fruit. [18] A
good tree can’t produce bad fruit; neither can a bad tree produce good fruit.

[19] Every tree that doesn’t produce good fruit is cut down and thrown into
the fire. [20] So you’ll recognize them by their fruit.

[21]† “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord! ’ will enter the kingdom
of heaven, but only the one who does the will of My Father in heaven.
[22] On that day many will say to Me, ‘Lord, Lord, didn’t we prophesy in
Your name, drive out demons in Your name, and do many miracles in Your
name? ’ [23] Then I will announce to them, ‘I never knew you! **Depart from
Me, you lawbreakers!**’ ,

The Two Foundations

[24] “Therefore, everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on
them will be like a sensible man who built his house on the rock. [25] The rain
fell, the rivers rose, and the winds blew and pounded that house. Yet it
didn’t collapse, because its foundation was on the rock. [26] But everyone
who hears these words of Mine and doesn’t act on them will be like a
foolish man who built his house on the sand. [27] The rain fell, the rivers rose,
the winds blew and pounded that house, and it collapsed. And its collapse
was great! ”

ARTICLE
Who Are You to Judge Others? ⇒

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[28] When Jesus had finished this sermon, [A], the crowds were astonished
at His teaching, [29] because He was teaching them like one who had
authority, and not like their •scribes.

A Man Cleansed

8 When He came down from the mountain, large crowds followed Him.
2 Right away a man with a serious skin disease came up and knelt
before Him, saying, “Lord, if You are willing, You can make me •clean.”

3 Reaching out His hand He touched him, saying, “I am willing; be made
clean.” Immediately his disease was healed. [A] 4† Then Jesus told him, “See
that you don’t tell anyone; but go, show yourself to the priest, and offer the
gift that Moses prescribed, as a testimony to them.”

A Centurion’s Faith

5† When He entered Capernaum, a •centurion came to Him, pleading
with Him, 6 “Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, in terrible
agony! ”

7 “I will come and heal him,” He told him.

8 “Lord,” the centurion replied, “I am not worthy to have You come
under my roof. But only say the word, and my servant will be cured. 9 For I
too am a man under authority, having soldiers under my command. [B] I say
to this one, ‘Go! ’ and he goes; and to another, ‘Come! ’ and he comes; and
to my •slave, ‘Do this! ’ and he does it.”

10 Hearing this, Jesus was amazed and said to those following Him, “•I
assure you: I have not found anyone in Israel with so great a faith! 11 I tell
you that many will come from east and west, and recline at the table with
Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. 12 But the sons of the
kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness. In that place there will be
weeping and gnashing of teeth.” 13 Then Jesus told the centurion, “Go. As
you have believed, let it be done for you.” And his servant was cured that
very moment. [C]

Healings at Capernaum

14 When Jesus went into Peter’s house, He saw his mother-in-law lying
in bed with a fever. 15 So He touched her hand, and the fever left her. Then

she got up and began to serve Him. [16] When evening came, they brought to
Him many who were demon-possessed. He drove out the spirits with a
word and healed all who were sick, [17†] so that what was spoken through
the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled:

He Himself took our weaknesses
and carried our diseases.

Following Jesus

[18] When Jesus saw large crowds around Him, He gave the order to go to
the other side of the sea. [19] A •scribe approached Him and said, "Teacher, I
will follow You wherever You go! "

[20†] Jesus told him, "Foxes have dens and birds of the sky have nests, but
the Son of Man has no place to lay His head."

[21] "Lord," another of His disciples said, "first let me go bury my father."

[22†] But Jesus told him, "Follow Me, and let the dead bury their own
dead."

Wind and Wave Obey the Master

[23] As He got into the boat, His disciples followed Him. [24] Suddenly, a
violent storm arose on the sea, so that the boat was being swamped by the
waves. But He was sleeping. [25] So the disciples came and woke Him up,
saying, "Lord, save us! We're going to die! "

[26†] But He said to them, "Why are you fearful, you of little faith? " Then
He got up and rebuked the winds and the sea. And there was a great calm.

[27] The men were amazed and asked, "What kind of man is this? — even
the winds and the sea obey Him! "

Demons Driven Out by the Master

28† When He had come to the other side, to the region of the Gadarenes,
two demon-possessed men met Him as they came out of the tombs. They
were so violent that no one could pass that way. 29 Suddenly they shouted,
“What do You have to do with us, Son of God? Have You come here to
torment us before the time? ”

30 Now a long way off from them, a large herd of pigs was feeding.
31† “If You drive us out,” the demons begged Him, “send us into the herd of
pigs.”

32 “Go! ” He told them. So when they had come out, they entered the
pigs. And suddenly the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea
and perished in the water. 33 Then the men who tended them fled. They
went into the city and reported everything — especially what had happened
to those who were demon-possessed. 34 At that, the whole town went out to
meet Jesus. When they saw Him, they begged Him to leave their region.

The Son of Man Forgives and Heals

9 So He got into a boat, crossed over, and came to His own town. 2 Just
then some men [A] brought to Him a paralytic lying on a mat. Seeing
their faith, Jesus told the paralytic, “Have courage, son, your sins are
forgiven.”

3 At this, some of the •scribes said among themselves, “He’s
blaspheming! ”

4 But perceiving their thoughts, Jesus said, “Why are you thinking evil
things in your hearts? 5 For which is easier: to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’
or to say, ‘Get up and walk’? 6 But so you may know that the •Son of Man
has authority on earth to forgive sins” — then He told the paralytic, “Get
up, pick up your mat, and go home.” 7 And he got up and went home.
8[†] When the crowds saw this, they were awestruck and gave glory to God
who had given such authority to men.

The Call of Matthew

9[†] As Jesus went on from there, He saw a man named Matthew sitting at
the tax office, and He said to him, “Follow Me! ” So he got up and followed
Him.

10 While He was reclining at the table in the house, many tax collectors
and sinners came as guests to eat [C] with Jesus and His disciples. 11 When
the •Pharisees saw this, they asked His disciples, “Why does your Teacher
eat with tax collectors and sinners? ”

12 But when He heard this, He said, “Those who are well don’t need a
doctor, but the sick do. 13[†] Go and learn what this means: **I desire mercy
and not sacrifice.** For I didn’t come to call the righteous, but sinners.”

A Question about Fasting

14 Then John’s disciples came to Him, saying, “Why do we and the
Pharisees fast often, but Your disciples do not fast? ”

15 Jesus said to them, “Can the wedding guests be sad while the groom is
with them? The time will come when the groom will be taken away from
them, and then they will fast. 16 No one patches an old garment with
unshrunk cloth, because the patch pulls away from the garment and makes
the tear worse. 17 And no one puts new wine into old wineskins. Otherwise,
the skins burst, the wine spills out, and the skins are ruined. But they put
new wine into fresh wineskins, and both are preserved.”

A Girl Restored and a Woman Healed

18[†] As He was telling them these things, suddenly one of the leaders
came and knelt down before Him, saying, “My daughter is near death, [D] but
come and lay Your hand on her, and she will live.” 19 So Jesus and His
disciples got up and followed him.

20 Just then, a woman who had suffered from bleeding for 12 years
approached from behind and touched the •tassel on His robe, 21 for she said
to herself, “If I can just touch His robe, I’ll be made well! ” [E]

22 But Jesus turned and saw her. “Have courage, daughter,” He said.
“Your faith has made you well.” And the woman was made well from that
moment. [F]

23 When Jesus came to the leader’s house, He saw the flute players and a
crowd lamenting loudly. 24 “Leave,” He said, “because the girl isn’t dead,
but sleeping.” And they started laughing at Him. 25 But when the crowd
had been put outside, He went in and took her by the hand, and the girl got
up. 26 And this news spread throughout that whole area.

Healing the Blind

27[†] As Jesus went on from there, two blind men followed Him, shouting,
“Have mercy on us, Son of David! ”

28 When He entered the house, the blind men approached Him, and Jesus
said to them, “Do you believe that I can do this? ”

"Yes, Lord," they answered Him.

29† Then He touched their eyes, saying, "Let it be done for you according
to your faith! " 30 And their eyes were opened. Then Jesus warned them
sternly, "Be sure that no one finds out! " 31 But they went out and spread
the news about Him throughout that whole area.

Driving Out a Demon

32 Just as they were going out, a demon-possessed man who was unable
to speak was brought to Him. 33 When the demon had been driven out, the
man [G] spoke. And the crowds were amazed, saying, "Nothing like this has
ever been seen in Israel! "

34† But the Pharisees said, "He drives out demons by the ruler of the
demons! "

The Lord of the Harvest

35 Then Jesus went to all the towns and villages, teaching in their
•synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every [H]
disease and every sickness. 36 When He saw the crowds, He felt
compassion for them, because they were weary and worn out, like sheep
without a shepherd. 37 Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest is
abundant, but the workers are few. 38 Therefore, pray to the Lord of the
harvest to send out workers into His harvest."

Commissioning the Twelve

10 Summoning His 12 disciples, He gave them authority over •unclean
spirits, to drive them out and to heal every [A] disease and sickness.
2† These are the names of the 12 apostles:

First, Simon, who is called Peter,
and Andrew his brother;
James the son of Zebedee,
and John his brother;
3 Philip and Bartholomew;
Thomas and Matthew the tax collector;
James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus;
4 Simon the Zealot, [B] and Judas Iscariot, [C]
who also betrayed Him.

5† Jesus sent out these 12 after giving them instructions: “Don’t take the
road leading to other nations, and don’t enter any •Samaritan town.
6 Instead, go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. 7 As you go, announce
this: ‘The kingdom of heaven has come near.’ 8† Heal the sick, raise the
dead, cleanse those with skin diseases, drive out demons. You have
received free of charge; give free of charge. 9† Don’t take along gold, silver,
or copper for your money-belts. 10 Don’t take a traveling bag for the road,
or an extra shirt, sandals, or a walking stick, for the worker is worthy of his
food.

11 “When you enter any town or village, find out who is worthy, and stay
there until you leave. 12 Greet a household when you enter it, 13 and if the
household is worthy, let your peace be on it. But if it is unworthy, let your
peace return to you. 14 If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your
words, shake the dust off your feet when you leave that house or town. 15 •I
assure you: It will be more tolerable on the day of judgment for the land of
Sodom and Gomorrah than for that town.

Persecutions Predicted

[16]† "Look, I'm sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be
as shrewd as serpents and as harmless as doves. [17] Because people will
hand you over to sanhedrins and flog you in their •synagogues, beware of
them. [18] You will even be brought before governors and kings because of
Me, to bear witness to them and to the nations. [19] But when they hand you
over, don't worry about how or what you should speak. For you will be
given what to say at that hour, [20] because you are not speaking, but the
Spirit of your Father is speaking through you.

[21] "Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child. Children
will even rise up against their parents and have them put to death. [22] You
will be hated by everyone because of My name. But the one who endures
to the end will be delivered. [23]† When they persecute you in one town,
escape to another. For I assure you: You will not have covered the towns of
Israel before the •Son of Man comes. [24] A disciple is not above his teacher,
or a •slave above his master. [25] It is enough for a disciple to become like
his teacher and a slave like his master. If they called the head of the house
'•Beelzebul,' how much more the members of his household!

Fear God

[26] "Therefore, don't be afraid of them, since there is nothing covered that
won't be uncovered and nothing hidden that won't be made known.
[27] What I tell you in the dark, speak in the light. What you hear in a
whisper, proclaim on the housetops. [28] Don't fear those who kill the body
but are not able to kill the soul; rather, fear Him who is able to destroy both
soul and body in •hell. [29] Aren't two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not
one of them falls to the ground without your Father's consent. [30] But even
the hairs of your head have all been counted. [31] So don't be afraid
therefore; you are worth more than many sparrows.

Acknowledging Christ

[32] "Therefore, everyone who will acknowledge Me before men, I will
also acknowledge him before My Father in heaven. [33] But whoever denies

Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father in heaven. [34†] Don't
assume that I came to bring peace on the earth. I did not come to bring
peace, but a sword. [35] For I came to turn

a man against his father,
a daughter against her mother,
a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law;
[36] **and a man's enemies will be**
the members of his household.

[37] The person who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of
Me; the person who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of
Me. [38] And whoever doesn't take up his cross and follow Me is not worthy
of Me. [39] Anyone finding his life will lose it, and anyone losing his life
because of Me will find it.

A Cup of Cold Water

[40†] "The one who welcomes you welcomes Me, and the one who
welcomes Me welcomes Him who sent Me. [41] Anyone who welcomes a
prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet's reward. And
anyone who welcomes a righteous person because he's righteous will
receive a righteous person's reward. [42] And whoever gives just a cup of
cold water to one of these little ones because he is a disciple — I assure
you: He will never lose his reward! "

In Praise of John the Baptist

11 When Jesus had finished giving orders to His 12 disciples, He moved
on from there to teach and preach in their towns. [2] When John heard
in prison what the •Messiah was doing, he sent a message by his disciples
[3†] and asked Him, “Are You the One who is to come, or should we expect
someone else? ”

[4] Jesus replied to them, “Go and report to John what you hear and see:
[5] the blind see, the lame walk, those with skin diseases are healed, the deaf
hear, the dead are raised, and the poor are told the good news. [6] And if
anyone is not •offended because of Me, he is blessed.”

[7] As these men went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about
John: “What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed swaying in
the wind? [8] What then did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft
clothes? Look, those who wear soft clothes are in kings’ palaces. [9] But what
did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and far more than a
prophet. [10] This is the one it is written about:

Look, I am sending My messenger ahead of You;
he will prepare Your way before You.

[11†] “•I assure you: Among those born of women no one greater than John
the Baptist has appeared, but the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater
than he. [12] From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of
heaven has been suffering violence, and the violent have been seizing it by
force. [13] For all the prophets and the Law prophesied until John; [14†] if
you’re willing to accept it, he is the Elijah who is to come. [15] Anyone who
has ears should listen!

TWISTED SCRIPTURE

Matthew 11:14

Those advocating the doctrine of reincarnation point to this passage for support. Since Elijah escaped death, however, his could not be a case of reincarnation. In 17:3 we read that Elijah himself appeared on the Mount of Transfiguration. In Lk 1:17 we discover that the Jews were waiting for a prophet to come "in the spirit and power of Elijah"; that is, one possessing God's Spirit and authority.

An Unresponsive Generation

16 “To what should I compare this generation? It’s like children sitting in the marketplaces who call out to each other:

17 We played the flute for you,
but you didn’t dance;
we sang a lament,
but you didn’t mourn!

18 For John did not come eating or drinking, and they say, ‘He has a
demon!’ 19† The •Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say,
‘Look, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’
Yet wisdom is vindicated by her deeds.”

20 Then He proceeded to denounce the towns where most of His miracles
were done, because they did not repent: 21 “Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to
you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles that were done in you had been done in
Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented in •sackcloth and ashes long
ago! 22 But I tell you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon on the
day of judgment than for you. 23 And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted
to heaven? You will go down to •Hades. For if the miracles that were done
in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until today. 24 But
I tell you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom on the day of
judgment than for you.”

The Son Gives Knowledge and Rest

25† At that time Jesus said, “I praise You, Father, Lord of heaven and
earth, because You have hidden these things from the wise and learned and
revealed them to infants. 26 Yes, Father, because this was Your good
pleasure. 27† All things have been entrusted to Me by My Father. No one
knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the
Son and anyone to whom the Son desires to reveal Him.

28 “Come to Me, all of you who are weary and burdened, and I will give
you rest. 29 All of you, take up My yoke and learn from Me, because I am
gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for yourselves. 30 For My
yoke is easy and My burden is light.”

Lord of the Sabbath

12 †At that time Jesus passed through the grainfields on the Sabbath. His
disciples were hungry and began to pick and eat some heads of grain.
2 But when the •Pharisees saw it, they said to Him, "Look, Your disciples
are doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath! "

3 He said to them, "Haven't you read what David did when he and those
who were with him were hungry — 4 how he entered the house of God, and
they ate the •sacred bread, which is not lawful for him or for those with
him to eat, but only for the priests? 5 Or haven't you read in the Law that
on Sabbath days the priests in the temple violate the Sabbath and are
innocent? 6 But I tell you that something greater than the temple is here!
7 If you had known what this means: **I desire mercy and not sacrifice**,
you would not have condemned the innocent. 8 For the •Son of Man is Lord
of the Sabbath."

The Man with the Paralyzed Hand

9 Moving on from there, He entered their •synagogue. 10 There He saw a
man who had a paralyzed hand. And in order to accuse Him they asked
Him, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath? "

11 But He said to them, "What man among you, if he had a sheep that
fell into a pit on the Sabbath, wouldn't take hold of it and lift it out? 12 A
man is worth far more than a sheep, so it is lawful to do what is good on
the Sabbath."

13 Then He told the man, "Stretch out your hand." So he stretched it out,
and it was restored, as good as the other. 14 But the Pharisees went out and
plotted against Him, how they might destroy Him.

The Servant of the Lord

15 When Jesus became aware of this, He withdrew from there. Huge
crowds followed Him, and He healed them all. 16 He warned them not to
make Him known, 17 so that what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah
might be fulfilled:

[18]† **Here is My Servant whom I have chosen,**
My beloved in whom My soul delights;
I will put My Spirit on Him,
and He will proclaim justice to the nations.
[19] **He will not argue or shout,**
and no one will hear His voice in the streets.
[20] **He will not break a bruised reed,**
and He will not put out a smoldering wick,
until He has led justice to victory. [A]
[21] **The nations will put their hope in His name.**

A House Divided

[22] Then a demon-possessed man who was blind and unable to speak was
brought to Him. He healed him, so that the man [B] could both speak and
see. [23] And all the crowds were astounded and said, "Perhaps this is the
Son of David! "

[24] When the Pharisees heard this, they said, "The man drives out demons
only by •Beelzebul, the ruler of the demons."

[25] Knowing their thoughts, He told them: "Every kingdom divided
against itself is headed for destruction, and no city or house divided against
itself will stand. [26] If Satan drives out Satan, he is divided against himself.
How then will his kingdom stand? [27] And if I drive out demons by
Beelzebul, who is it your sons drive them out by? For this reason they will
be your judges. [28] If I drive out demons by the Spirit of God, then the
kingdom of God has come to you. [29] How can someone enter a strong
man's house and steal his possessions unless he first ties up the strong
man? Then he can rob his house. [30]† Anyone who is not with Me is against
Me, and anyone who does not gather with Me scatters. [31]† Because of this,
I tell you, people will be forgiven every sin and blasphemy, but the
blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. [32] Whoever speaks a
word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him. But whoever speaks

against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either in this age or in
the one to come.

A Tree and Its Fruit

[33] “Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and
its fruit bad; for a tree is known by its fruit. [34] Brood of vipers! How can
you speak good things when you are evil? For the mouth speaks from the
overflow of the heart. [35] A good man produces good things from his
storeroom of good, and an evil man produces evil things from his
storeroom of evil. [36] I tell you that on the day of judgment people will
have to account for every careless word they speak. [37] For by your words
you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned.”

The Sign of Jonah

[38]† Then some of the •scribes and Pharisees said to Him, “Teacher, we
want to see a sign from You.”

[39] But He answered them, “An evil and adulterous generation demands a
sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah.
[40] For as Jonah was in the belly of the huge fish three days and three
nights, so the Son of Man will be in the heart of the earth three days and
three nights. [41] The men of Nineveh will stand up at the judgment with this
generation and condemn it, because they repented at Jonah’s proclamation;
and look — something greater than Jonah is here! [42] The queen of the
south will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it,
because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of
Solomon; and look — something greater than Solomon is here!

An Unclean Spirit’s Return

[43] “When an •unclean spirit comes out of a man, it roams through
waterless places looking for rest but doesn’t find any. [44] Then it says, ‘I’ll
go back to my house that I came from.’ And returning, it finds the house
vacant, swept, and put in order. [45] Then off it goes and brings with it seven

other spirits more evil than itself, and they enter and settle down there. As a
result, that man's last condition is worse than the first. That's how it will
also be with this evil generation."

True Relationships

46 He was still speaking to the crowds when suddenly His mother and
brothers were standing outside wanting to speak to Him. 47 Someone told
Him, "Look, Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside, wanting
to speak to You."

48† But He replied to the one who told Him, "Who is My mother and who
are My brothers? " 49 And stretching out His hand toward His disciples, He
said, "Here are My mother and My brothers! 50 For whoever does the will
of My Father in heaven, that person is My brother and sister and mother."

The Parable of the Sower

13 On that day Jesus went out of the house and was sitting by the sea.
2 Such large crowds gathered around Him that He got into a boat and
sat down, while the whole crowd stood on the shore.

3 Then He told them many things in parables, saying: “Consider the
sower who went out to sow. 4 As he was sowing, some seed fell along the
path, and the birds came and ate them up. 5 Others fell on rocky ground,
where there wasn’t much soil, and they sprang up quickly since the soil
wasn’t deep. 6 But when the sun came up they were scorched, and since
they had no root, they withered. 7 Others fell among thorns, and the thorns
came up and choked them. 8 Still others fell on good ground and produced a
crop: some 100, some 60, and some 30 times what was sown. 9 Anyone
who has ears should listen! ”

Why Jesus Used Parables

10† Then the disciples came up and asked Him, “Why do You speak to
them in parables? ”

11 He answered them, “Because the •secrets of the kingdom of heaven
have been given for you to know, but it has not been given to them. 12 For
whoever has, more will be given to him, and he will have more than
enough. But whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away
from him. 13 For this reason I speak to them in parables, because looking
they do not see, and hearing they do not listen or understand. 14 Isaiah’s
prophecy is fulfilled in them, which says:

You will listen and listen,
yet never understand;
and you will look and look,
yet never perceive.
15 **For this people’s heart has grown callous;**
their ears are hard of hearing,
and they have shut their eyes;
otherwise they might see with their eyes
and hear with their ears,

understand with their hearts
and turn back —
and I would cure them.

[16] “But your eyes are blessed because they do see, and your ears because
they do hear! [17] For •I assure you: Many prophets and righteous people
longed to see the things you see yet didn’t see them; to hear the things you
hear yet didn’t hear them.

The Parable of the Sower Explained

[18] “You, then, listen to the parable of the sower: [19] When anyone hears
the word about the kingdom and doesn’t understand it, the evil one comes
and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is the one sown along
the path. [20] And the one sown on rocky ground — this is one who hears the
word and immediately receives it with joy. [21] Yet he has no root in himself,
but is short-lived. When pressure or persecution comes because of the
word, immediately he stumbles. [22] Now the one sown among the
thorns — this is one who hears the word, but the worries of this age and the
seduction of wealth choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful. [23] But the
one sown on the good ground — this is one who hears and understands the
word, who does bear fruit and yields: some 100, some 60, some 30 times
what was sown.”

The Parable of the Wheat and the Weeds

[24] He presented another parable to them: “The kingdom of heaven may
be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field. [25] But while
people were sleeping, his enemy came, sowed weeds among the wheat, and
left. [26] When the plants sprouted and produced grain, then the weeds also
appeared. [27] The landowner’s •slaves came to him and said, ‘Master, didn’t
you sow good seed in your field? Then where did the weeds come from? ’

[28] “ ‘An enemy did this! ’ he told them.

“ ‘So, do you want us to go and gather them up? ’ the slaves asked him.

29 “ ‘No,’ he said. ‘When you gather up the weeds, you might also uproot
the wheat with them. 30 Let both grow together until the harvest. At harvest
time I’ll tell the reapers: Gather the weeds first and tie them in bundles to
burn them, but store the wheat in my barn.’ ”

The Parables of the Mustard Seed and of the Yeast

31 He presented another parable to them: “The kingdom of heaven is
like a mustard seed that a man took and sowed in his field. 32† It’s the
smallest of all the seeds, but when grown, it’s taller than the vegetables and
becomes a tree, so that the birds of the sky come and nest in its branches.”

33 He told them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like yeast
that a woman took and mixed into 50 pounds of flour until it spread
through all of it.”

Using Parables Fulfills Prophecy

34 Jesus told the crowds all these things in parables, and He would not
speak anything to them without a parable, 35† so that what was spoken
through the prophet might be fulfilled:

I will open My mouth in parables;
I will declare things kept secret
from the foundation of the world.

Jesus Interprets the Wheat and the Weeds

36 Then He dismissed the crowds and went into the house. His disciples
approached Him and said, “Explain the parable of the weeds in the field to
us.”

37 He replied: “The One who sows the good seed is the •Son of Man;
38 the field is the world; and the good seed — these are the sons of the
kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one, 39 and the enemy who
sowed them is the Devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the
harvesters are angels. 40 Therefore, just as the weeds are gathered and

burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age. [41] The Son of Man will
send out His angels, and they will gather from His kingdom everything that
causes sin and those •guilty of lawlessness. [42] They will throw them into
the blazing furnace where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.
[43] Then the righteous will shine like the sun in their Father's kingdom.
Anyone who has ears should listen!

The Parables of the Hidden Treasure and of the Priceless Pearl

[44] "The kingdom of heaven is like treasure, buried in a field, that a man
found and reburied. Then in his joy he goes and sells everything he has and
buys that field.

[45] "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine
pearls. [46] When he found one priceless pearl, he went and sold everything
he had, and bought it.

The Parable of the Net

[47] "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a large net thrown into the sea.
It collected every kind of fish, [48] and when it was full, they dragged it
ashore, sat down, and gathered the good fish into containers, but threw out
the worthless ones. [49] So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will go
out, separate the evil people from the righteous, [50] and throw them into the
blazing furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

The Storehouse of Truth

[51] "Have you understood all these things? "

"Yes," they told Him.

[52] "Therefore," He said to them, "every student of Scripture instructed in
the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who brings out of his storeroom
what is new and what is old." [53] When Jesus had finished these parables,
He left there.

Rejection at Nazareth

54 He went to His hometown and began to teach them in their
•synagogue, so that they were astonished and said, “How did this wisdom
and these miracles come to Him? 55† Isn’t this the carpenter’s son? Isn’t
His mother called Mary, and His brothers James, Joseph, Simon, and
Judas? 56 And His sisters, aren’t they all with us? So where does He get all
these things? ” 57 And they were •offended by Him.

But Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not without honor except in his
hometown and in his household.” 58 And He did not do many miracles
there because of their unbelief.

John the Baptist Beheaded

14 At that time •Herod the tetrarch heard the report about Jesus. 2 “This
is John the Baptist! ” he told his servants. “He has been raised from
the dead, and that’s why supernatural powers are at work in him.”

3[†] For Herod had arrested John, chained [A] him, and put him in prison on
account of Herodias, his brother Philip’s wife, 4 since John had been telling
him, “It’s not lawful for you to have her! ” 5 Though he wanted to kill him,
he feared the crowd, since they regarded him as a prophet.

6 But when Herod’s birthday celebration came, Herodias’s daughter
danced before them [B] and pleased Herod. 7 So he promised with an oath to
give her whatever she might ask. 8 And prompted by her mother, she
answered, “Give me John the Baptist’s head here on a platter! ” 9 Although
the king regretted it, he commanded that it be granted because of his oaths
and his guests. 10 So he sent orders and had John beheaded in the prison.
11 His head was brought on a platter and given to the girl, who carried it to
her mother. 12 Then his disciples came, removed the corpse, buried it, and
went and reported to Jesus.

Feeding 5,000

13 When Jesus heard about it, He withdrew from there by boat to a
remote place to be alone. When the crowds heard this, they followed Him
on foot from the towns. 14 As He stepped ashore, [C] He saw a huge crowd,
felt compassion for them, and healed their sick.

15[†] When evening came, the disciples approached Him and said, “This
place is a wilderness, and it is already late. [D] Send the crowds away so they
can go into the villages and buy food for themselves.”

16 “They don’t need to go away,” Jesus told them. “You give them
something to eat.”

17 “But we only have five loaves and two fish here,” they said to Him.

[18] “Bring them here to Me,” He said. [19] Then He commanded the crowds to sit down [E] on the grass. He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, He blessed them. He broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. [20] Everyone ate and was filled. Then they picked up 12 baskets full of leftover pieces!
[21] Now those who ate were about 5,000 men, besides women and children.

Walking on the Water

[22] Immediately He made the disciples get into the boat and go ahead of Him to the other side, while He dismissed the crowds. [23] After dismissing the crowds, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray. When evening came, He was there alone. [24] But the boat was already over a mile [F] from land, battered by the waves, because the wind was against them. [25] Around three in the morning, [G] He came toward them walking on the sea. [26] When the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were terrified. “It’s a ghost! ” they said, and cried out in fear.

[27] Immediately Jesus spoke to them. “Have courage! It is I. Don’t be afraid.”

ARTICLE

Are Biblical Miracles Imitations of Pagan Myths? ⇒

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[28] “Lord, if it’s You,” Peter answered Him, “command me to come to You on the water.”

[29] “Come! ” He said.

And climbing out of the boat, Peter started walking on the water and came toward Jesus. [30] But when he saw the strength of the wind, he was afraid. And beginning to sink he cried out, “Lord, save me! ”

[31] Immediately Jesus reached out His hand, caught hold of him, and said
to him, “You of little faith, why did you doubt? ” [32] When they got into the
boat, the wind ceased. [33] Then those in the boat worshiped Him and said,
“Truly You are the Son of God! ”

Miraculous Healings

[34] Once they crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret. [35] When the
men of that place recognized Him, they alerted [H] the whole vicinity and
brought to Him all who were sick. [36] They were begging Him that they
might only touch the •tassel on His robe. And as many as touched it were
made perfectly well.

The Tradition of the Elders

15 Then •Pharisees and •scribes came from Jerusalem to Jesus and
asked, [2] "Why do Your disciples break the tradition of the elders?
For they don't wash their hands when they eat! " [A]

[3] He answered them, "And why do you break God's commandment
because of your tradition? [4] For God said:

Honor your father and your mother; and,
The one who speaks evil of father or mother
must be put to death.

[5] But you say, 'Whoever tells his father or mother, "Whatever benefit you
might have received from me is a gift committed to the temple" — [6] he
does not have to honor his father.' In this way, you have revoked God's
word because of your tradition. [7] Hypocrites! Isaiah prophesied correctly
about you when he said:

[8] **These people honor Me with their lips,**
but their heart is far from Me.
[9] **They worship Me in vain,**
teaching as doctrines the commands of men."

Defilement Is from Within

[10] Summoning the crowd, He told them, "Listen and understand: [11] It's
not what goes into the mouth that defiles a man, but what comes out of the
mouth, this defiles a man."

[12] Then the disciples came up and told Him, "Do You know that the
Pharisees took offense when they heard this statement? "

[13] He replied, "Every plant that My heavenly Father didn't plant will be
uprooted. [14] Leave them alone! They are blind guides. And if the blind
guide the blind, both will fall into a pit."

[15] Then Peter replied to Him, "Explain this parable to us."

[16] "Are even you still lacking in understanding? " He asked. [17] "Don't
you realize that whatever goes into the mouth passes into the stomach and
is eliminated? [18] But what comes out of the mouth comes from the heart,
and this defiles a man. [19] For from the heart come evil thoughts, murders,
adulteries, sexual immoralities, thefts, false testimonies, blasphemies.
[20†] These are the things that defile a man, but eating with unwashed hands
does not defile a man."

A Gentile Mother's Faith

[21] When Jesus left there, He withdrew to the area of Tyre and Sidon.
[22†] Just then a Canaanite woman from that region came and kept crying
out, "Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David! My daughter is cruelly
tormented by a demon."

[23] Yet He did not say a word to her. So His disciples approached Him
and urged Him, "Send her away because she cries out after us." [B]

[24] He replied, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

[25] But she came, knelt before Him, and said, "Lord, help me! "

[26] He answered, "It isn't right to take the children's bread and throw it to
their dogs."

[27] "Yes, Lord," she said, "yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from
their masters' table! "

[28] Then Jesus replied to her, "•Woman, your faith is great. Let it be done
for you as you want." And from that moment [C] her daughter was cured.

Healing Many People

[29] Moving on from there, Jesus passed along the Sea of Galilee. He
went up on a mountain and sat there, [30] and large crowds came to Him,
having with them the lame, the blind, the deformed, those unable to speak,

and many others. They put them at His feet, and He healed them. 31 So the crowd was amazed when they saw those unable to speak talking, the deformed restored, the lame walking, and the blind seeing. And they gave glory to the God of Israel.

Feeding 4,000

32† Now Jesus summoned His disciples and said, “I have compassion on the crowd, because they’ve already stayed with Me three days and have nothing to eat. I don’t want to send them away hungry; otherwise they might collapse on the way.”

33 The disciples said to Him, “Where could we get enough bread in this desolate place to fill such a crowd? ”

34 “How many loaves do you have? ” Jesus asked them.

“Seven,” they said, “and a few small fish.”

35 After commanding the crowd to sit down on the ground, 36 He took the seven loaves and the fish, and He gave thanks, broke them, and kept on giving them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. 37 They all ate and were filled. Then they collected the leftover pieces — seven large baskets full. 38 Now those who ate were 4,000 men, besides women and children. 39† After dismissing the crowds, He got into the boat and went to the region of Magadan.

The Yeast of the Pharisees and the Sadducees

16 The •Pharisees and •Sadducees approached, and as a test, asked Him to show them a sign from heaven.

2 He answered them: "When evening comes you say, 'It will be good
weather because the sky is red.' 3 And in the morning, 'Today will be
stormy because the sky is red and threatening.' You know how to read the
appearance of the sky, but you can't read the signs of the times. 4 An evil
and adulterous generation demands a sign, but no sign will be given to it
except the sign of Jonah." Then He left them and went away.

5 The disciples reached the other shore, [A] and they had forgotten to take bread.

6 Then Jesus told them, "Watch out and beware of the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees."

7 And they discussed among themselves, "We didn't bring any bread."

8 Aware of this, Jesus said, "You of little faith! Why are you discussing
among yourselves that you do not have bread? 9 Don't you understand yet?
Don't you remember the five loaves for the 5,000 and how many baskets
you collected? 10 Or the seven loaves for the 4,000 and how many large
baskets you collected? 11 Why is it you don't understand that when I told
you, 'Beware of the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees,' it wasn't about
bread? " 12 Then they understood that He did not tell them to beware of the
yeast in bread, but of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

Peter's Confession of the Messiah

13 When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, "Who do people say that the •Son of Man is? "

14 And they said, "Some say John the Baptist; others, Elijah; still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets."

15 "But you," He asked them, "who do you say that I am? "

16† Simon Peter answered, "You are the •Messiah, the Son of the living
God! "

17 And Jesus responded, "Simon son of Jonah, you are blessed because
flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father in heaven. 18† And
I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My
church, and the forces of •Hades will not overpower it. 19† I will give you
the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth is
already bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth is already
loosed in heaven."

20 And He gave the disciples orders to tell no one that He was the
Messiah.

His Death and Resurrection Predicted

21† From then on Jesus began to point out to His disciples that He must
go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders, •chief priests, and
•scribes, be killed, and be raised the third day. 22 Then Peter took Him
aside and began to rebuke Him, "Oh no, [B] Lord! This will never happen to
You! "

23 But He turned and told Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are an
offense to Me because you're not thinking about God's concerns, but
man's."

Take Up Your Cross

24 Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone wants to come with Me, he
must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Me. 25 For whoever wants
to save his •life will lose it, but whoever loses his life because of Me will
find it. 26 What will it benefit a man if he gains the whole world yet loses
his life? Or what will a man give in exchange for his life? 27 For the Son of
Man is going to come with His angels in the glory of His Father, and then
He will reward each according to what he has done. 28† •I assure you: There

are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom.”

The Transfiguration

17 [†]After six days Jesus took Peter, James, and his brother John and led
them up on a high mountain by themselves. 2 He was transformed [A]
in front of them, and His face shone like the sun. Even His clothes became
as white as the light. 3 Suddenly, Moses and Elijah appeared to them,
talking with Him.

TWISTED SCRIPTURE

Matthew 17:1-13

Spiritualists and trance mediums refer to these verses as an example of communicating with the dead. They fail to note that Elijah never died but rather was raptured to heaven. Jude 9 hints that the body of Moses was possibly taken to heaven, placing him in a unique category. While Jesus may have had the ability to communicate with the dead, such a practice is strictly forbidden to us (Lv 19:31; 20:27; Dt 18:10-12; Is 8:19; Gl 5:20; Rv 21:8).

4 Then Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it's good for us to be here! If You want,
I will make three •tabernacles here: one for You, one for Moses, and one
for Elijah."

5 While he was still speaking, suddenly a bright cloud covered [B] them,
and a voice from the cloud said:

This is My beloved Son.
I take delight in Him.
Listen to Him!

6 When the disciples heard it, they fell facedown and were terrified.

7 Then Jesus came up, touched them, and said, "Get up; don't be afraid."
8 When they looked up they saw no one except Him — Jesus alone. 9 As
they were coming down from the mountain, Jesus commanded them,

"Don't tell anyone about the vision until the •Son of Man is raised from the dead."

[10]† So the disciples questioned Him, "Why then do the •scribes say that Elijah must come first? "

[11] "Elijah is coming and will restore everything," He replied. [12] "But I
tell you: Elijah has already come, and they didn't recognize him. On the contrary, they did whatever they pleased to him. In the same way the Son of
Man is going to suffer at their hands." [13] Then the disciples understood that
He spoke to them about John the Baptist.

The Power of Faith over a Demon

[14] When they reached the crowd, a man approached and knelt down
before Him. [15] "Lord," he said, "have mercy on my son, because he has seizures [C] and suffers severely. He often falls into the fire and often into the
water. [16] I brought him to Your disciples, but they couldn't heal him."

[17] Jesus replied, "You unbelieving and rebellious generation! How long will I be with you? How long must I put up with you? Bring him here to
Me." [18] Then Jesus rebuked the demon, [D] and it [E] came out of him, and from that moment [F] the boy was healed.

[19] Then the disciples approached Jesus privately and said, "Why couldn't we drive it out? "

[20]† "Because of your little faith," He told them. "For •I assure you: If you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will tell this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for
you. [[21] However, this kind does not come out except by prayer and fasting.]"

The Second Prediction of His Death

22 As they were meeting in Galilee, Jesus told them, “The Son of Man is about to be betrayed into the hands of men. 23 They will kill Him, and on the third day He will be raised up.” And they were deeply distressed.

Paying the Temple Tax

24† When they came to Capernaum, those who collected the double-drachma tax approached Peter and said, “Doesn’t your Teacher pay the double-drachma tax? ”

25 “Yes,” he said.

When he went into the house, Jesus spoke to him first, [G] “What do you think, Simon? Who do earthly kings collect tariffs or taxes from? From their sons or from strangers? ”

26 “From strangers,” he said.

“Then the sons are free,” Jesus told him. 27 “But, so we won’t •offend them, go to the sea, cast in a fishhook, and take the first fish that you catch. When you open its mouth you’ll find a coin. Take it and give it to them for Me and you.”

Who Is the Greatest?

18 At that time [A] the disciples came to Jesus and said, “Who is greatest
in the kingdom of heaven? ”

2 Then He called a child to Him and had him stand among them. 3 “•I
assure you,” He said, “unless you are converted and become like children,
you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. 4 Therefore, whoever humbles
himself like this child — this one is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.
5 And whoever welcomes one child like this in My name welcomes Me.

6 “But whoever •causes the downfall of one of these little ones who
believe in Me — it would be better for him if a heavy millstone were hung
around his neck and he were drowned in the depths of the sea! 7 Woe to the
world because of •offenses. For offenses must come, but woe to that man by
whom the offense comes. 8† If your hand or your foot causes your
downfall, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life
maimed or lame, than to have two hands or two feet and be thrown into the
eternal fire. 9 And if your eye causes your downfall, gouge it out and throw
it away. It is better for you to enter life with one eye, rather than to have two
eyes and be thrown into •hellfire!

The Parable of the Lost Sheep

10† “See that you don’t look down on one of these little ones, because I
tell you that in heaven their angels continually view the face of My Father
in heaven. [11 For the •Son of Man has come to save the lost.] 12† What do
you think? If a man has 100 sheep, and one of them goes astray, won’t he
leave the 99 on the hillside and go and search for the stray? 13 And if he
finds it, I assure you: He rejoices over that sheep more than over the 99 that
did not go astray. 14 In the same way, it is not the will of your Father in
heaven that one of these little ones perish.

Restoring a Brother

15 “If your brother sins against you, go and rebuke him in private. If he
listens to you, you have won your brother. 16 But if he won’t listen, take
one or two more with you, so that **by the testimony of two or three**

witnesses every fact may be established. [17†] If he pays no attention to
them, tell the church. But if he doesn't pay attention even to the church, let
him be like an unbeliever and a tax collector to you. [18†] I assure you:
Whatever you bind on earth is already bound in heaven, and whatever you
loose on earth is already loosed in heaven. [19] Again, I assure you: If two of
you on earth agree about any matter that you pray for, it will be done for
you by My Father in heaven. [20] For where two or three are gathered
together in My name, I am there among them."

The Parable of the Unforgiving Slave

[21] Then Peter came to Him and said, "Lord, how many times could my
brother sin against me and I forgive him? As many as seven times? "

[22] "I tell you, not as many as seven," Jesus said to him, "but 70 times
seven. [23] For this reason, the kingdom of heaven can be compared to a king
who wanted to settle accounts with his •slaves. [24] When he began to settle
accounts, one who owed 10,000 talents was brought before him. [25] Since
he had no way to pay it back, his master commanded that he, his wife, his
children, and everything he had be sold to pay the debt.

[26] "At this, the slave fell facedown before him and said, 'Be patient with
me, and I will pay you everything! ' [27] Then the master of that slave had
compassion, released him, and forgave him the loan.

[28] "But that slave went out and found one of his fellow slaves who owed
him 100 •denarii. He grabbed him, started choking him, and said, 'Pay
what you owe! '

[29] "At this, his fellow slave fell down and began begging him, 'Be
patient with me, and I will pay you back.' [30] But he wasn't willing. On the
contrary, he went and threw him into prison until he could pay what was
owed. [31] When the other slaves saw what had taken place, they were deeply
distressed and went and reported to their master everything that had
happened.

[32] “Then, after he had summoned him, his master said to him, ‘You
wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me.
[33] Shouldn’t you also have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy
on you? ’ [34] And his master got angry and handed him over to the jailers to
be tortured until he could pay everything that was owed. [35†] So My
heavenly Father will also do to you if each of you does not forgive his
brother from his heart.”

The Question of Divorce

19 When Jesus had finished this instruction, He departed from Galilee
and went to the region of Judea across the Jordan. 2 Large crowds
followed Him, and He healed them there. 3 Some •Pharisees approached
Him to test Him. They asked, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife on
any grounds? "

4 "Haven't you read," He replied, "that He who created them in the
beginning **made them male and female**," 5 and He also said:

"**For this reason a man will leave**
his father and mother
and be joined to his wife,
and the two will become one flesh?

6 So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined
together, man must not separate."

7 "Why then," they asked Him, "did Moses command us to give divorce
papers and to send her away? "

8 He told them, "Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because of
the hardness of your hearts. But it was not like that from the beginning.
9† And I tell you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality,
and marries another, commits adultery."

10 His disciples said to Him, "If the relationship of a man with his wife is
like this, it's better not to marry! "

11 But He told them, "Not everyone can accept this saying, but only those
it has been given to. 12† For there are eunuchs who were born that way
from their mother's womb, there are eunuchs who were made by men, and
there are eunuchs who have made themselves that way because of the
kingdom of heaven. Let anyone accept this who can."

Blessing the Children

[13] Then children were brought to Him so He might put His hands on
them and pray. But the disciples rebuked them. [14] Then Jesus said, “Leave
the children alone, and don’t try to keep them from coming to Me, because
the kingdom of heaven is made up of people like this.” [15] After putting His
hands on them, He went on from there.

The Rich Young Ruler

[16†] Just then someone came up and asked Him, “Teacher, what good
must I do to have eternal life? ”

[17] “Why do you ask Me about what is good? ” He said to him. “There is
only One who is good. If you want to enter into life, keep the
commandments.”

[18] “Which ones? ” he asked Him. Jesus answered:

Do not murder;
do not commit adultery;
do not steal;
do not bear false witness;
[19] **honor your father and your mother;**
and love your neighbor as yourself.

[20] “I have kept all these,” the young man told Him. “What do I still
lack? ”

[21†] “If you want to be perfect,” Jesus said to him, “go, sell your
belongings and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven.
Then come, follow Me.”

[22] When the young man heard that command, he went away grieving,
because he had many possessions.

Possessions and the Kingdom

23 Then Jesus said to His disciples, "•I assure you: It will be hard for a rich person to enter the kingdom of heaven! 24 Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God."

25 When the disciples heard this, they were utterly astonished and asked, "Then who can be saved? "

26 But Jesus looked at them and said, "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

27 Then Peter responded to Him, "Look, we have left everything and followed You. So what will there be for us? "

28 Jesus said to them, "I assure you: In the Messianic Age, when the
•Son of Man sits on His glorious throne, you who have followed Me will
also sit on 12 thrones, judging the 12 tribes of Israel. 29† And everyone who
has left houses, brothers or sisters, father or mother, children, or fields
because of My name will receive 100 times more and will inherit eternal
life. 30 But many who are first will be last, and the last first.

The Parable of the Vineyard Workers

20 †“For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early
in the morning to hire workers for his vineyard. 2 After agreeing with
the workers on one •denarius for the day, he sent them into his vineyard.
3 When he went out about nine in the morning, he saw others standing in
the marketplace doing nothing. 4 To those men he said, ‘You also go to my
vineyard, and I’ll give you whatever is right.’ So off they went. 5 About
noon and at three, he went out again and did the same thing. 6 Then about
five he went and found others standing around, and said to them, ‘Why
have you been standing here all day doing nothing? ’

7 “ ‘Because no one hired us,’ they said to him.

“ ‘You also go to my vineyard,’ he told them. 8 When evening came, the
owner of the vineyard told his foreman, ‘Call the workers and give them
their pay, starting with the last and ending with the first.’

9 “When those who were hired about five came, they each received one
denarius. 10 So when the first ones came, they assumed they would get
more, but they also received a denarius each. 11 When they received it, they
began to complain to the landowner: 12 ‘These last men put in one hour, and
you made them equal to us who bore the burden of the day and the burning
heat! ’

13 “He replied to one of them, ‘Friend, I’m doing you no wrong. Didn’t
you agree with me on a denarius? 14 Take what’s yours and go. I want to
give this last man the same as I gave you. 15 Don’t I have the right to do
what I want with my business? Are you jealous because I’m generous? ’

16 “So the last will be first, and the first last.”

The Third Prediction of His Death

17 While going up to Jerusalem, Jesus took the 12 disciples aside
privately and said to them on the way: 18 “Listen! We are going up to
Jerusalem. The •Son of Man will be handed over to the •chief priests and

•scribes, and they will condemn Him to death. [19] Then they will hand Him over to the Gentiles to be mocked, flogged, and crucified, and He will be resurrected on the third day."

Suffering and Service

[20†] Then the mother of Zebedee's sons approached Him with her sons. She knelt down to ask Him for something. [21] "What do you want? " He asked her.

"Promise," [A] she said to Him, "that these two sons of mine may sit, one on Your right and the other on Your left, in Your kingdom."

[22] But Jesus answered, "You don't know what you're asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink?"

"We are able," they said to Him.

[23] He told them, "You will indeed drink My cup. But to sit at My right and left is not Mine to give; instead, it belongs to those for whom it has been prepared by My Father." [24] When the 10 disciples heard this, they became indignant with the two brothers. [25] But Jesus called them over and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles dominate them, and the men of high position exercise power over them. [26] It must not be like that among you. On the contrary, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, [27] and whoever wants to be first among you must be your •slave; [28†] just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life — a ransom for many."

Two Blind Men Healed

[29] As they were leaving Jericho, a large crowd followed Him. [30†] There were two blind men sitting by the road. When they heard that Jesus was passing by, they cried out, "Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David! " [31] The crowd told them to keep quiet, but they cried out all the more, "Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David! "

32 Jesus stopped, called them, and said, “What do you want Me to do for
you? ”

33 “Lord,” they said to Him, “open our eyes! ”
34 Moved with
compassion, Jesus touched their eyes. Immediately they could see, and they
followed Him.

The Triumphal Entry

21 When they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage at the
•Mount of Olives, Jesus then sent two disciples, 2† telling them, "Go
into the village ahead of you. At once you will find a donkey tied there, and
a colt with her. Untie them and bring them to Me. 3 If anyone says anything
to you, you should say that the Lord needs them, and immediately he will
send them."

ARTICLE

How Should We Treat New Challenges to the Christian Faith? ⇒

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4 This took place so that what was spoken through the prophet might be fulfilled:

5 **Tell Daughter •Zion,**
"Look, your King is coming to you,
gentle, and mounted on a donkey,
even on a colt,
the foal of a beast of burden."

6 The disciples went and did just as Jesus directed them. 7 They brought
the donkey and the colt; then they laid their robes on them, and He sat on
them. 8 A very large crowd spread their robes on the road; others were
cutting branches from the trees and spreading them on the road. 9 Then the
crowds who went ahead of Him and those who followed kept shouting:

•*Hosanna* to the Son of David!
He who comes in the name
of the Lord is the blessed One!
Hosanna in the highest heaven!

10 When He entered Jerusalem, the whole city was shaken, saying, "Who is
this? " 11 And the crowds kept saying, "This is the prophet Jesus from
Nazareth in Galilee! "

Cleansing the Temple Complex

[12]† Jesus went into the •temple complex and drove out all those buying
and selling in the temple. He overturned the money changers’ tables and the
chairs of those selling doves. [13] And He said to them, “It is written, **My
house will be called a house of prayer.** But you are making it **a den of
thieves**!”

Children Praise Jesus

[14] The blind and the lame came to Him in the temple complex, and He
healed them. [15] When the •chief priests and the •scribes saw the wonders
that He did and the children shouting in the temple complex, “*Hosanna* to
the Son of David! ” they were indignant [16] and said to Him, “Do You hear
what these children are saying? ”

“Yes,” Jesus told them. “Have you never read:

You have prepared praise
from the mouths of children and nursing infants? ”

[17] Then He left them, went out of the city to Bethany, and spent the night
there.

The Barren Fig Tree

[18] Early in the morning, as He was returning to the city, He was hungry.
[19] Seeing a lone fig tree by the road, He went up to it and found nothing on
it except leaves. And He said to it, “May no fruit ever come from you
again! ” At once the fig tree withered.

[20] When the disciples saw it, they were amazed and said, “How did the
fig tree wither so quickly? ”

[21] Jesus answered them, “•I assure you: If you have faith and do not
doubt, you will not only do what was done to the fig tree, but even if you

tell this mountain, ‘Be lifted up and thrown into the sea,’ it will be done.
[22]† And if you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer.”

Messiah’s Authority Challenged

[23] When He entered the temple complex, the chief priests and the elders
of the people came up to Him as He was teaching and said, “By what
authority are You doing these things? Who gave You this authority? ”

[24] Jesus answered them, “I will also ask you one question, and if you
answer it for Me, then I will tell you by what authority I do these things.
[25] Where did John’s baptism come from? From heaven or from men? ”

They began to argue among themselves, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ He
will say to us, ‘Then why didn’t you believe him? ’ [26] But if we say, ‘From
men,’ we’re afraid of the crowd, because everyone thought John was a
prophet.” [27] So they answered Jesus, “We don’t know.”

And He said to them, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.

The Parable of the Two Sons

[28] “But what do you think? A man had two sons. He went to the first and
said, ‘My son, go, work in the vineyard today.’

[29] “He answered, ‘I don’t want to! ’ Yet later he changed his mind and
went. [30] Then the man went to the other and said the same thing.

“ ‘I will, sir,’ he answered. But he didn’t go.

[31] “Which of the two did his father’s will? ”

“The first,” they said.

Jesus said to them, “I assure you: Tax collectors and prostitutes are
entering the kingdom of God before you! [32] For John came to you in the

way of righteousness, and you didn’t believe him. Tax collectors and
prostitutes did believe him, but you, when you saw it, didn’t even change
your minds then and believe him.

The Parable of the Vineyard Owner

33† “Listen to another parable: There was a man, a landowner, who
planted a vineyard, put a fence around it, dug a winepress in it, and built a
watchtower. He leased it to tenant farmers and went away. 34 When the
grape harvest drew near, he sent his •slaves to the farmers to collect his
fruit. 35 But the farmers took his slaves, beat one, killed another, and stoned
a third. 36 Again, he sent other slaves, more than the first group, and they
did the same to them. 37 Finally, he sent his son to them. ‘They will respect
my son,’ he said.

38 “But when the tenant farmers saw the son, they said among
themselves, ‘This is the heir. Come, let’s kill him and take his inheritance! ’
39 So they seized him, threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him.
40 Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to
those farmers? ”

41 “He will completely destroy those terrible men,” they told Him, “and
lease his vineyard to other farmers who will give him his produce at the
harvest.” [A]

42 Jesus said to them, “Have you never read in the Scriptures:

The stone that the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone.
This came from the Lord
and is wonderful in our eyes?

43 Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you
and given to a nation producing its fruit. [44 Whoever falls on this stone
will be broken to pieces; but on whoever it falls, it will grind him to
powder!]”

45 When the chief priests and the •Pharisees heard His parables, they knew He was speaking about them. 46 Although they were looking for a way to arrest Him, they feared the crowds, because they regarded Him as a prophet.

The Parable of the Wedding Banquet

22 Once more Jesus spoke to them in parables: 2 “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding banquet for his son. 3 He sent out his •slaves to summon those invited to the banquet, but they didn’t want to come. 4 Again, he sent out other slaves, and said, ‘Tell those who are invited: Look, I’ve prepared my dinner; my oxen and fattened cattle have been slaughtered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding banquet.’

5 “But they paid no attention and went away, one to his own farm, another to his business. 6 And the others seized his slaves, treated them outrageously and killed them. 7 The king was enraged, so he sent out his troops, destroyed those murderers, and burned down their city.

8 “Then he told his slaves, ‘The banquet is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy. 9 Therefore go to where the roads exit the city and invite everyone you find to the banquet.’ 10 So those slaves went out on the roads and gathered everyone they found, both evil and good. The wedding banquet was filled with guests. 11† But when the king came in to view the guests, he saw a man there who was not dressed for a wedding. 12 So he said to him, ‘Friend, how did you get in here without wedding clothes? ’ The man was speechless.

13 “Then the king told the attendants, ‘Tie him up hand and foot, and throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’

14† “For many are invited, but few are chosen.”

God and Caesar

15 Then the •Pharisees went and plotted how to trap Him by what He said. [A], 16 They sent their disciples to Him, with the •Herodians. “Teacher,” they said, “we know that You are truthful and teach truthfully the way of God. You defer to no one, for You don’t show partiality. [B]

[17] Tell us, therefore, what You think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar or
not? ”

[18] But perceiving their malice, Jesus said, “Why are you testing Me,
hypocrites? [19] Show Me the coin used for the tax.” So they brought Him a
•denarius. [20] “Whose image and inscription is this? ” He asked them.

[21] “Caesar’s,” they said to Him.

Then He said to them, “Therefore give back to Caesar the things that are
Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.” [22] When they heard this,
they were amazed. So they left Him and went away.

The Sadducees and the Resurrection

[23] The same day some •Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection,
came up to Him and questioned Him: [24] “Teacher, Moses said, **if a man
dies, having no children, his brother is to marry his wife and raise up
offspring for his brother.** [25] Now there were seven brothers among us.
The first got married and died. Having no offspring, he left his wife to his
brother. [26] The same happened to the second also, and the third, and so to
all seven. [C] [27] Then last of all the woman died. [28] In the resurrection,
therefore, whose wife will she be of the seven? For they all had married
her.” [D]

[29] Jesus answered them, “You are deceived, because you don’t know the
Scriptures or the power of God. [30†] For in the resurrection they neither
marry nor are given in marriage but are like angels in heaven. [31] Now
concerning the resurrection of the dead, haven’t you read what was spoken
to you by God: [32] **I am the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and
the God of Jacob**? He is not the God of the dead, but of the living.”

[33] And when the crowds heard this, they were astonished at His teaching.

The Primary Commandments

[34] When the Pharisees heard that He had silenced the Sadducees, they
came together. [35] And one of them, an expert in the law, asked a question to
test Him: [36] “Teacher, which command in the law is the greatest? ” [E]

[37] He said to him, “**Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with
all your soul, and with all your mind.** [38] This is the greatest and most
important command. [39] The second is like it: **Love your neighbor as
yourself.** [40] All the Law and the Prophets depend on these two
commands.”

The Question about the Messiah

[41] While the Pharisees were together, Jesus questioned them, [42] “What
do you think about the •Messiah? Whose Son is He? ”

“David’s,” they told Him.

[43] He asked them, “How is it then that David, inspired by the Spirit, calls
Him ‘Lord’ :

[44] **The Lord declared to my Lord,**
‘Sit at My right hand
until I put Your enemies under Your feet’? ,

[45†] “If David calls Him ‘Lord,’ how then can the Messiah be his Son? ”
[46] No one was able to answer Him at all, [F] and from that day no one dared
to question Him anymore.

Religious Hypocrites Denounced

23 Then Jesus spoke to the crowds and to His disciples: 2† “The •scribes
and the •Pharisees are seated in the chair of Moses. 3 Therefore do
whatever they tell you, and observe it. But don’t do what they do, because
they don’t practice what they teach. 4 They tie up heavy loads that are hard
to carry and put them on people’s shoulders, but they themselves aren’t
willing to lift a finger to move them. 5 They do everything to be observed
by others: They enlarge their phylacteries and lengthen their •tassels.
6 They love the place of honor at banquets, the front seats in the
•synagogues, 7 greetings in the marketplaces, and to be called ‘•Rabbi’ by
people.

8† “But as for you, do not be called ‘Rabbi,’ because you have one
Teacher, and you are all brothers. 9 Do not call anyone on earth your
father, because you have one Father, who is in heaven. 10 And do not be
called masters either, because you have one Master, the •Messiah. 11 The
greatest among you will be your servant. 12 Whoever exalts himself will be
humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.

13 “But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! You lock up the
kingdom of heaven from people. For you don’t go in, and you don’t allow
those entering to go in.

[14 “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! You devour widows’
houses and make long prayers just for show. This is why you will receive a
harsher punishment.]

15 “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! You travel over land
and sea to make one •proselyte, and when he becomes one, you make him
twice as fit for •hell as you are!

16 “Woe to you, blind guides, who say, ‘Whoever takes an oath by the
sanctuary, it means nothing. But whoever takes an oath by the gold of the
sanctuary is bound by his oath.’ 17† Blind fools! For which is greater, the
gold or the sanctuary that sanctified the gold? 18 Also, ‘Whoever takes an
oath by the altar, it means nothing. But whoever takes an oath by the gift

that is on it is bound by his oath.' [19] Blind people! For which is greater,
the gift or the altar that sanctifies the gift? [20] Therefore, the one who takes
an oath by the altar takes an oath by it and by everything on it. [21] The one
who takes an oath by the sanctuary takes an oath by it and by Him who
dwells in it. [22] And the one who takes an oath by heaven takes an oath by
God's throne and by Him who sits on it.

[23] "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! You pay a tenth of
mint, dill, and cumin, yet you have neglected the more important matters of
the law — justice, mercy, and faith. These things should have been done
without neglecting the others. [24] Blind guides! You strain out a gnat, yet
gulp down a camel!

[25] "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! You •clean the outside
of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence!
[26] Blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup, so the outside of it may
also become clean.

[27] "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! You are like
whitewashed tombs, which appear beautiful on the outside, but inside are
full of dead men's bones and every impurity. [28] In the same way, on the
outside you seem righteous to people, but inside you are full of hypocrisy
and lawlessness.

[29] "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! You build the tombs of
the prophets and decorate the monuments of the righteous, [30] and you say,
'If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we wouldn't have taken part with
them in shedding the prophets' blood.' [31] You, therefore, testify against
yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. [32] Fill up,
then, the measure of your fathers' sins!

[33] "Snakes! Brood of vipers! How can you escape being condemned to
hell? [34†] This is why I am sending you prophets, sages, and scribes. Some
of them you will kill and crucify, and some of them you will flog in your
synagogues and hound from town to town. [35†] So all the righteous blood

shed on the earth will be charged to you, from the blood of righteous Abel
to the blood of Zechariah, son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between
the sanctuary and the altar. 36 •I assure you: All these things will come on
this generation!

Jesus' Lamentation over Jerusalem

37 "Jerusalem, Jerusalem! She who kills the prophets and stones those
who are sent to her. How often I wanted to gather your children together, as
a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, yet you were not willing!
38† See, your house is left to you desolate. 39 For I tell you, you will never
see Me again until you say, **'He who comes in the name of the Lord is the
blessed One'**! "

Destruction of the Temple Predicted

24 As Jesus left and was going out of the •temple complex, His
disciples came up and called His attention to the temple buildings.
2 Then He replied to them, “Don’t you see all these things? •I assure you:
Not one stone will be left here on another that will not be thrown down! ”

Signs of the End of the Age

3 While He was sitting on the •Mount of Olives, the disciples approached
Him privately and said, “Tell us, when will these things happen? And what
is the sign of Your coming and of the end of the age? ”

4 Then Jesus replied to them: “Watch out that no one deceives you. 5 For
many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the •Messiah,’ and they will
deceive many. 6 You are going to hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that
you are not alarmed, because these things must take place, but the end is not
yet. 7 For nation will rise up against nation, and kingdom against kingdom.
There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. 8 All these events
are the beginning of birth pains.

Persecutions Predicted

9† “Then they will hand you over for persecution, and they will kill you.
You will be hated by all nations because of My name. 10 Then many will
•take offense, betray one another and hate one another. 11 Many false
prophets will rise up and deceive many. 12 Because lawlessness will
multiply, the love of many will grow cold. 13 But the one who endures to
the end will be delivered. 14 This good news of the kingdom will be
proclaimed in all the world as a testimony to all nations. And then the end
will come.

The Great Tribulation

15† “So when you see **the abomination that causes desolation**, spoken
of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place” (let the reader
understand), 16 “then those in Judea must flee to the mountains! 17 A man
on the housetop must not come down to get things out of his house. 18 And

a man in the field must not go back to get his clothes. 19 Woe to pregnant
women and nursing mothers in those days! 20 Pray that your escape may not
be in winter or on a Sabbath. 21 For at that time there will be great
tribulation, the kind that hasn't taken place from the beginning of the world
until now and never will again! 22 Unless those days were limited, no one
would survive. But those days will be limited because of the elect.

23 "If anyone tells you then, 'Look, here is the Messiah! ' or, 'Over
here! ' do not believe it! 24 False messiahs and false prophets will arise
and perform great signs and wonders to lead astray, if possible, even the
elect. 25 Take note: I have told you in advance. 26 So if they tell you, 'Look,
He's in the wilderness! ' don't go out; 'Look, He's in the inner rooms! ' do
not believe it. 27 For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes as far
as the west, so will be the coming of the •Son of Man. 28 Wherever the
carcass is, there the vultures will gather.

The Coming of the Son of Man

29† "Immediately after the tribulation of those days:

The sun will be darkened,
and the moon will not shed its light;
the stars will fall from the sky,
and the celestial powers will be shaken.

30 "Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the
peoples of the earth will mourn; and they will see the Son of Man coming
on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. 31 He will send out His
angels with a loud trumpet, and they will gather His elect from the four
winds, from one end of the sky to the other.

The Parable of the Fig Tree

32 "Now learn this parable from the fig tree: As soon as its branch
becomes tender and sprouts leaves, you know that summer is near. 33 In the
same way, when you see all these things, recognize that He is near — at

the door! [34†] I assure you: This generation will certainly not pass away
until all these things take place. [35] Heaven and earth will pass away, but
My words will never pass away.

No One Knows the Day or Hour

[36] “Now concerning that day and hour no one knows — neither the
angels in heaven, nor the Son — except the Father only. [37] As the days of
Noah were, so the coming of the Son of Man will be. [38] For in those days
before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in
marriage, until the day Noah boarded the ark. [39] They didn’t know until
the flood came and swept them all away. So this is the way the coming of
the Son of Man will be: [40] Then two men will be in the field: one will be
taken and one left. [41] Two women will be grinding at the mill: one will be
taken and one left. [42] Therefore be alert, since you don’t know what day
your Lord is coming. [43] But know this: If the homeowner had known what
time the thief was coming, he would have stayed alert and not let his house
be broken into. [44] This is why you also must be ready, because the Son of
Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

Faithful Service to the Messiah

[45†] “Who then is a faithful and sensible •slave, whom his master has put
in charge of his household, to give them food at the proper time? [46] That
slave whose master finds him working when he comes will be rewarded.
[47] I assure you: He will put him in charge of all his possessions. [48] But if
that wicked slave says in his heart, ‘My master is delayed,’ [49] and starts to
beat his fellow slaves, and eats and drinks with drunkards, [50] that slave’s
master will come on a day he does not expect and at an hour he does not
know. [51] He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the
hypocrites. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

The Parable of the 10 Virgins

25 "Then the kingdom of heaven will be like 10 virgins who took their
lamps and went out to meet the groom. 2 Five of them were foolish
and five were sensible. 3 When the foolish took their lamps, they didn't
take olive oil with them. 4 But the sensible ones took oil in their flasks with
their lamps. 5 Since the groom was delayed, they all became drowsy and
fell asleep.

6 "In the middle of the night there was a shout: 'Here's the groom! Come
out to meet him.'

7 "Then all those virgins got up and trimmed their lamps. 8 But the
foolish ones said to the sensible ones, 'Give us some of your oil, because
our lamps are going out.'

9 "The sensible ones answered, 'No, there won't be enough for us and for
you. Go instead to those who sell, and buy oil for yourselves.'

10 "When they had gone to buy some, the groom arrived. Then those who
were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet, and the door was
shut.

11 "Later the rest of the virgins also came and said, 'Master, master, open
up for us! '

12 "But he replied, '•I assure you: I do not know you! '

13 "Therefore be alert, because you don't know either the day or the
hour.

The Parable of the Talents

14† "For it is just like a man going on a journey. He called his own
•slaves and turned over his possessions to them. 15 To one he gave five
talents; to another, two; and to another, one — to each according to his own
ability. Then he went on a journey. Immediately 16 the man who had
received five talents went, put them to work, and earned five more. 17 In the

same way the man with two earned two more. 18 But the man who had
received one talent went off, dug a hole in the ground, and hid his master’s
money.

19 “After a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts
with them. 20 The man who had received five talents approached, presented
five more talents, and said, ‘Master, you gave me five talents. Look, I’ve
earned five more talents.’

21 “His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful slave! You were
faithful over a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Share
your master’s joy! ’

22 “Then the man with two talents also approached. He said, ‘Master, you
gave me two talents. Look, I’ve earned two more talents.’

23 “His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful slave! You were
faithful over a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Share
your master’s joy! ’

24 “Then the man who had received one talent also approached and said,
‘Master, I know you. You’re a difficult man, reaping where you haven’t
sown and gathering where you haven’t scattered seed. 25 So I was afraid
and went off and hid your talent in the ground. Look, you have what is
yours.’

26† “But his master replied to him, ‘You evil, lazy slave! If you knew
that I reap where I haven’t sown and gather where I haven’t scattered,
27 then you should have deposited my money with the bankers. And when I
returned I would have received my money back with interest.

28 “ ‘So take the talent from him and give it to the one who has 10 talents.
29 For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have more than
enough. But from the one who does not have, even what he has will be
taken away from him. 30 And throw this good-for-nothing slave into the
outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’

The Sheep and the Goats

31† "When the •Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with
Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. 32 All the nations will be
gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, just as a
shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. 33 He will put the sheep on
His right and the goats on the left. 34 Then the King will say to those on His
right, 'Come, you who are blessed by My Father, inherit the kingdom
prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

35 For I was hungry
and you gave Me something to eat;
I was thirsty
and you gave Me something to drink;
I was a stranger and you took Me in;
36 I was naked and you clothed Me;
I was sick and you took care of Me;
I was in prison and you visited Me.'

37 "Then the righteous will answer Him, 'Lord, when did we see You
hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You something to drink? 38 When
did we see You a stranger and take You in, or without clothes and clothe
You? 39 When did we see You sick, or in prison, and visit You? '

40 "And the King will answer them, 'I assure you: Whatever you did for
one of the least of these brothers of Mine, you did for Me.' 41 Then He will
also say to those on the left, 'Depart from Me, you who are cursed, into the
eternal fire prepared for the Devil and his angels!

42 For I was hungry
and you gave Me nothing to eat;
I was thirsty
and you gave Me nothing to drink;
43 I was a stranger
and you didn't take Me in;
I was naked

and you didn’t clothe Me,
sick and in prison
and you didn’t take care of Me.’

44 “Then they too will answer, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or without clothes, or sick, or in prison, and not help You? ’

45 “Then He will answer them, ‘I assure you: Whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for Me either.’

46 “And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

The Plot to Kill Jesus

26 When Jesus had finished saying all this, He told His disciples, 2 “You
know that the •Passover takes place after two days, and the •Son of
Man will be handed over to be crucified.”

3 Then the •chief priests and the elders of the people assembled in the
palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas, 4 and they conspired to
arrest Jesus in a treacherous way and kill Him. 5 “Not during the festival,”
they said, “so there won’t be rioting among the people.”

The Anointing at Bethany

6† While Jesus was in Bethany at the house of Simon, a man who had a
serious skin disease, 7 a woman approached Him with an alabaster jar of
very expensive fragrant oil. She poured it on His head as He was reclining
at the table. 8 When the disciples saw it, they were indignant. “Why this
waste? ” they asked. 9 “This might have been sold for a great deal and given
to the poor.”

10 But Jesus, aware of this, said to them, “Why are you bothering this
woman? She has done a noble thing for Me. 11† You always have the poor
with you, but you do not always have Me. 12 By pouring this fragrant oil on
My body, she has prepared Me for burial. 13 •I assure you: Wherever this
gospel is proclaimed in the whole world, what this woman has done will
also be told in memory of her.”

14 Then one of the Twelve — the man called Judas Iscariot — went to
the chief priests 15 and said, “What are you willing to give me if I hand
Him over to you? ” So they weighed out 30 pieces of silver for him. 16 And
from that time he started looking for a good opportunity to betray Him.

Betrayal at the Passover

17† On the first day of •Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus
and asked, “Where do You want us to prepare the Passover so You may eat
it? ”

[18] "Go into the city to a certain man," He said, "and tell him, 'The
Teacher says: My time is near; I am celebrating the Passover at your place
with My disciples.' " [19] So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them and
prepared the Passover. [20] When evening came, He was reclining at the table
with the Twelve. [21] While they were eating, He said, "I assure you: One of
you will betray Me."

[22] Deeply distressed, each one began to say to Him, "Surely not I,
Lord? "

[23] He replied, "The one who dipped his hand with Me in the bowl — he
will betray Me. [24†] The Son of Man will go just as it is written about Him,
but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have
been better for that man if he had not been born."

[25] Then Judas, His betrayer, replied, "Surely not I, •Rabbi? "

"You have said it," He told him.

The First Lord's Supper

[26†] As they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, gave it to
the disciples, and said, "Take and eat it; this is My body." [27] Then He took
a cup, and after giving thanks, He gave it to them and said, "Drink from it,
all of you. [28] For this is My blood that establishes the covenant; it is shed
for many for the forgiveness of sins. [29] But I tell you, from this moment I
will not drink of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it in a new
way in My Father's kingdom with you." [30] After singing psalms, they
went out to the •Mount of Olives.

Peter's Denial Predicted

[31†] Then Jesus said to them, "Tonight all of you will run away because of
Me, for it is written:

I will strike the shepherd,

and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.

32 But after I have been resurrected, I will go ahead of you to Galilee."

33 Peter told Him, "Even if everyone runs away because of You, I will never run away! "

34 "I assure you," Jesus said to him, "tonight, before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times! "

35 "Even if I have to die with You," Peter told Him, "I will never deny You! " And all the disciples said the same thing.

The Prayer in the Garden

36† Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and He
told the disciples, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." 37 Taking along
Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, He began to be sorrowful and deeply
distressed. 38 Then He said to them, "My soul is swallowed up in
sorrow — to the point of death. Remain here and stay awake with Me."
39 Going a little farther, He fell facedown and prayed, "My Father! If it is
possible, let this cup pass from Me. Yet not as I will, but as You will."

ARTICLE

Is the New Testament Trustworthy? ⇒

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40 Then He came to the disciples and found them sleeping. He asked
Peter, "So, couldn't you stay awake with Me one hour? 41 Stay awake and
pray, so that you won't enter into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the
flesh is weak."

42 Again, a second time, He went away and prayed, "My Father, if this
cannot pass unless I drink it, Your will be done." 43 And He came again

and found them sleeping, because they could not keep their eyes open. [A]

[44] After leaving them, He went away again and prayed a third time,
saying the same thing once more. [45] Then He came to the disciples and said
to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? Look, the time is near. The
Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners. [46] Get up; let's go!
See, My betrayer is near."

The Judas Kiss

[47] While He was still speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, suddenly
arrived. A large mob, with swords and clubs, was with him from the chief
priests and elders of the people. [48] His betrayer had given them a sign: "The
One I kiss, He's the One; arrest Him! " [49] So he went right up to Jesus and
said, "Greetings, Rabbi! " and kissed Him.

[50] "Friend," Jesus asked him, "why have you come? "

Then they came up, took hold of Jesus, and arrested Him. [51] At that
moment one of those with Jesus reached out his hand and drew his sword.
He struck the high priest's •slave and cut off his ear.

[52] Then Jesus told him, "Put your sword back in its place because all who
take up a sword will perish by a sword. [53] Or do you think that I cannot call
on My Father, and He will provide Me at once with more than 12 legions
of angels? [54] How, then, would the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must
happen this way? "

[55] At that time Jesus said to the crowds, "Have you come out with swords
and clubs, as if I were a criminal, to capture Me? Every day I used to sit,
teaching in the •temple complex, and you didn't arrest Me. [56] But all this
has happened so that the prophetic Scriptures would be fulfilled." Then all
the disciples deserted Him and ran away.

Jesus Faces the Sanhedrin

[57†] Those who had arrested Jesus led Him away to Caiaphas the high
priest, where the •scribes and the elders had convened. [58] Meanwhile, Peter
was following Him at a distance right to the high priest's courtyard. [B] He
went in and was sitting with the temple police [C] to see the outcome. [D]

[59] The chief priests and the whole •Sanhedrin were looking for false
testimony against Jesus so they could put Him to death. [60] But they could
not find any, even though many false witnesses came forward. Finally,
two who came forward [61] stated, "This man said, 'I can demolish God's
sanctuary and rebuild it in three days.' "

[62] The high priest then stood up and said to Him, "Don't You have an
answer to what these men are testifying against You? " [63] But Jesus kept
silent. Then the high priest said to Him, "By the living God I place You
under oath: tell us if You are the •Messiah, the Son of God! "

[64†] "You have said it," Jesus told him. "But I tell you, in the future you
will see **the Son of Man seated at the right hand** of the Power and
coming on the clouds of heaven."

[65†] Then the high priest tore his robes and said, "He has blasphemed!
Why do we still need witnesses? Look, now you've heard the blasphemy!
[66] What is your decision? " [E]

They answered, "He deserves death! " [67] Then they spit in His face and
beat Him; others slapped Him [68] and said, "Prophesy to us, Messiah! Who
hit You? "

Peter Denies His Lord

[69] Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. A servant approached
him and she said, "You were with Jesus the Galilean too."

[70] But he denied it in front of everyone: "I don't know what you're
talking about! "

[71†] When he had gone out to the gateway, another woman saw him and
told those who were there, “This man was with Jesus the •Nazarene! ”

[72] And again he denied it with an oath, “I don’t know the man! ”

[73] After a little while those standing there approached and said to Peter,
“You certainly are one of them, since even your accent [F] gives you away.”

[74†] Then he started to curse and to swear with an oath, “I do not know
the man! ” Immediately a rooster crowed, [75] and Peter remembered the
words Jesus had spoken, “Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three
times.” And he went outside and wept bitterly.

Jesus Handed Over to Pilate

27 When daybreak came, all the •chief priests and the elders of the
people plotted against Jesus to put Him to death. 2 After tying Him
up, they led Him away and handed Him over to •Pilate, the governor.

Judas Hangs Himself

3 Then Judas, His betrayer, seeing that He had been condemned, was full
of remorse and returned the 30 pieces of silver to the chief priests and
elders. 4 "I have sinned by betraying innocent blood," he said.

"What's that to us? " they said. "See to it yourself! "

5† So he threw the silver into the sanctuary and departed. Then he went
and hanged himself.

6 The chief priests took the silver and said, "It's not lawful to put it into
the temple treasury, since it is blood money." [A] 7 So they conferred
together and bought the potter's field with it as a burial place for foreigners.
8 Therefore that field has been called "Blood Field" to this day. 9† Then
what was spoken through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled:

> **They took the 30 pieces of silver, the price of Him whose price**
> **was set by the Israelites, 10 and they gave them for the potter's**
> **field, as the Lord directed me.**

Jesus Faces the Governor

11† Now Jesus stood before the governor. "Are You the King of the
Jews? " the governor asked Him.

Jesus answered, "You have said it." 12 And while He was being accused
by the chief priests and elders, He didn't answer.

13 Then Pilate said to Him, "Don't You hear how much they are testifying
against You? " 14 But He didn't answer him on even one charge, so that the
governor was greatly amazed.

Jesus or Barabbas

15† At the festival the governor's custom was to release to the crowd a
prisoner they wanted. 16 At that time they had a notorious prisoner called
Barabbas. 17 So when they had gathered together, Pilate said to them,
"Who is it you want me to release for you — Barabbas, or Jesus who is
called •Messiah? " 18 For he knew they had handed Him over because of
envy.

19 While he was sitting on the judge's bench, his wife sent word to him,
"Have nothing to do with that righteous man, for today I've suffered
terribly in a dream because of Him! "

20 The chief priests and the elders, however, persuaded the crowds to ask
for Barabbas and to execute Jesus. 21 The governor asked them, "Which of
the two do you want me to release for you? "

"Barabbas! " they answered.

22 Pilate asked them, "What should I do then with Jesus, who is called
Messiah? "

They all answered, "Crucify Him! " [B]

23 Then he said, "Why? What has He done wrong? "

But they kept shouting, "Crucify Him! " all the more.

24† When Pilate saw that he was getting nowhere, [C] but that a riot was
starting instead, he took some water, washed his hands in front of the
crowd, and said, "I am innocent of this man's blood. See to it yourselves! "

25 All the people answered, "His blood be on us and on our children! "
26 Then he released Barabbas to them. But after having Jesus flogged, he
handed Him over to be crucified.

Mocked by the Military

27 Then the governor's soldiers took Jesus into •headquarters and
gathered the whole •company around Him. 28† They stripped Him and
dressed Him in a scarlet military robe. 29 They twisted together a crown of
thorns, put it on His head, and placed a reed in His right hand. And they
knelt down before Him and mocked Him: "Hail, King of the Jews! "
30 Then they spit on Him, took the reed, and kept hitting Him on the head.
31 When they had mocked Him, they stripped Him of the robe, put His
clothes on Him, and led Him away to crucify Him.

Crucified Between Two Criminals

32 As they were going out, they found a Cyrenian man named Simon.
They forced this man to carry His cross. 33 When they came to a place
called *Golgotha* (which means Skull Place), 34† they gave Him wine
mixed with gall to drink. But when He tasted it, He would not drink it.
35 After crucifying Him they divided His clothes by casting lots. 36 Then
they sat down and were guarding Him there. 37† Above His head they put up
the charge against Him in writing:

THIS IS JESUS
THE KING OF THE JEWS.

38† Then two criminals [D] were crucified with Him, one on the right and
one on the left. 39 Those who passed by were yelling insults at [E] Him,
shaking their heads 40 and saying, "The One who would demolish the
sanctuary and rebuild it in three days, save Yourself! If You are the Son of
God, come down from the cross! " 41 In the same way the chief priests,
with the •scribes and elders, mocked Him and said, 42 "He saved others,
but He cannot save Himself! He is the King of Israel! Let Him come down
now from the cross, and we will believe in Him. 43 He has put His trust in
God; let God rescue Him now — if He wants Him! [F] For He said, 'I am
God's Son.' " 44† In the same way even the criminals who were crucified
with Him kept taunting Him.

The Death of Jesus

[45] From noon until three in the afternoon [G] darkness came over the whole
land. [H], [46†] About three in the afternoon Jesus cried out with a loud voice,
"Elí, Elí, lemá sabachtháni?" that is, "**My God, My God, why have You
forsaken Me?**"

[47] When some of those standing there heard this, they said, "He's calling
for Elijah! "

[48†] Immediately one of them ran and got a sponge, filled it with sour
wine, fixed it on a reed, and offered Him a drink. [49] But the rest said, "Let's
see if Elijah comes to save Him! "

[50] Jesus shouted again with a loud voice and gave up His spirit.
[51†] Suddenly, the curtain of the sanctuary was split in two from top to
bottom; the earth quaked and the rocks were split. [52] The tombs were also
opened and many bodies of the •saints who had fallen •asleep were raised.
[53] And they came out of the tombs after His resurrection, entered the holy
city, and appeared to many.

TWISTED SCRIPTURE

Matthew 27:50

Muslims do not believe that Jesus actually died on the cross. Rather, they theorize that a substitute died in His place (Sura 4:156-158). But the Gospel writers are unanimous in attesting that Jesus Himself hung on the cross and expired. The Apostle Paul wrote that "He was buried" (1 Co 15:4), attesting to His death.

[54†] When the •centurion and those with him, who were guarding Jesus,
saw the earthquake and the things that had happened, they were terrified
and said, "This man really was God's Son! " [I]

[55] Many women who had followed Jesus from Galilee and ministered to
Him were there, looking on from a distance. [56] Among them were •Mary
Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of
Zebedee's sons.

The Burial of Jesus

[57] When it was evening, a rich man from Arimathea named Joseph came,
who himself had also become a disciple of Jesus. [58] He approached Pilate
and asked for Jesus' body. Then Pilate ordered that it be released. [59] So
Joseph took the body, wrapped it in •clean, fine linen, [60] and placed it in his
new tomb, which he had cut into the rock. He left after rolling a great stone
against the entrance of the tomb. [61] Mary Magdalene and the other Mary
were seated there, facing the tomb.

The Closely Guarded Tomb

[62†] The next day, which followed the preparation day, the chief priests
and the •Pharisees gathered before Pilate [63†] and said, "Sir, we remember
that while this deceiver was still alive He said, 'After three days I will rise
again.' [64] Therefore give orders that the tomb be made secure until the third
day. Otherwise, His disciples may come, steal Him, and tell the people, 'He
has been raised from the dead.' Then the last deception will be worse than
the first."

[65] "You have [J] a guard of soldiers," Pilate told them. "Go and make it as
secure as you know how." [66] Then they went and made the tomb secure by
sealing the stone and setting the guard. [K]

Resurrection Morning

28 [†]After the Sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, •Mary
Magdalene and the other Mary went to view the tomb. 2[†] Suddenly
there was a violent earthquake, because an angel of the Lord descended
from heaven and approached the tomb. He rolled back the stone and was
sitting on it. 3 His appearance was like lightning, and his robe was as white
as snow. 4 The guards were so shaken from fear of him that they became
like dead men.

ARTICLE

The Trinity: Is It Possible That God Be Both One and Three? ⇒

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5 But the angel told the women, "Don't be afraid, because I know you are
looking for Jesus who was crucified. 6 He is not here! For He has been
resurrected, just as He said. Come and see the place where He lay. 7 Then
go quickly and tell His disciples, 'He has been raised from the dead. In
fact, He is going ahead of you to Galilee; you will see Him there.' Listen, I
have told you."

8[†] So, departing quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, they ran
to tell His disciples the news. 9 Just then Jesus met them and said, "Good
morning! " They came up, took hold of His feet, and worshiped Him.
10 Then Jesus told them, "Do not be afraid. Go and tell My brothers to leave
for Galilee, and they will see Me there."

The Soldiers Are Bribed to Lie

11[†] As they were on their way, some of the guards came into the city and
reported to the •chief priests everything that had happened. 12 After the
priests [A] had assembled with the elders and agreed on a plan, they gave the
soldiers a large sum of money 13[†] and told them, "Say this, 'His disciples
came during the night and stole Him while we were sleeping.' 14 If this
reaches the governor's ears, [B] we will deal with [C] him and keep you out of

trouble.” 15 So they took the money and did as they were instructed. And
this story has been spread among Jewish people to this day.

The Great Commission

16† The 11 disciples traveled to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had
directed them. 17† When they saw Him, they worshiped, but some doubted.
18† Then Jesus came near and said to them, “All authority has been given to
Me in heaven and on earth. 19† Go, therefore, and make disciples of all
nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the
Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you.
And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

MARK

Introduction to Mark

MARK

The Messiah's Herald

1 [†]The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. 2[†] As it
is written in Isaiah the prophet:

Look, I am sending My messenger ahead of You,
who will prepare Your way.
3 **A voice of one crying out in the wilderness:**
Prepare the way for the Lord;
make His paths straight!

4 John came baptizing [A], in the wilderness and preaching a baptism of
repentance [B] for the forgiveness of sins. 5[†] The whole Judean countryside
and all the people of Jerusalem were flocking to him, and they were
baptized by him in the Jordan River as they confessed their sins. 6 John
wore a camel-hair garment with a leather belt around his waist and ate
locusts and wild honey. 7[†] He was preaching: "Someone more powerful
than I will come after me. I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the
strap of His sandals. 8 I have baptized you with [C] water, but He will
baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

The Baptism of Jesus

9 In those days Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized
in the Jordan by John. 10 As soon as He came up out of the water, He saw
the heavens being torn open and the Spirit descending to Him like a dove.
11[†] And a voice came from heaven:

You are My beloved Son;
I take delight in You! [D]

The Temptation of Jesus

12 Immediately the Spirit drove Him into the wilderness. 13 He was in
the wilderness 40 days, being tempted by Satan. He was with the wild
animals, and the angels began to serve Him.

Ministry in Galilee

[14†] After John was arrested, Jesus went to Galilee, preaching the good
news , of God: [F], [15†] “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has
come near. Repent and believe in the good news! ”

ARTICLE

Has Historical Criticism Proved the Bible False? ⇒

The First Disciples

[16†] As He was passing along by the Sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and
Andrew, Simon’s brother. They were casting a net into the sea, since they
were fishermen.

[17] “Follow Me,” Jesus told them, “and I will make you fish for
people! ” [18] Immediately they left their nets and followed Him. [19] Going
on a little farther, He saw James the son of Zebedee and his brother John.
They were in their boat mending their nets. [20] Immediately He called them,
and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and
followed Him.

Driving Out an Unclean Spirit

[21†] Then they went into Capernaum, and right away He entered the
•synagogue on the Sabbath and began to teach. [22] They were astonished
at His teaching because, unlike the •scribes, He was teaching them as one
having authority.

[23] Just then a man with an •unclean spirit was in their synagogue. He
cried out, [24] “What do You have to do with us, [G] Jesus — Nazarene? Have
You come to destroy us? I know who You are — the Holy One of God! ”

[25] But Jesus rebuked him and said, “Be quiet, and come out of him! ”
[26] And the unclean spirit convulsed him, shouted with a loud voice, and

came out of him.

[27] Then they were all amazed, so they began to argue with one another,
saying, "What is this? A new teaching with authority! He commands even
the unclean spirits, and they obey Him." [28] News about Him then spread
throughout the entire vicinity of Galilee.

Healings at Capernaum

[29]† As soon as they left the synagogue, they went into Simon and
Andrew's house with James and John. [30] Simon's mother-in-law was
lying in bed with a fever, and they told Him about her at once. [31] So He
went to her, took her by the hand, and raised her up. The fever left her,
and she began to serve them.

[32] When evening came, after the sun had set, they began bringing to Him
all those who were sick and those who were demon-possessed. [33] The
whole town was assembled at the door, [34] and He healed many who were
sick with various diseases and drove out many demons. But He would not
permit the demons to speak, because they knew Him.

Preaching in Galilee

[35] Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, He got up, went out,
and made His way to a deserted place. And He was praying there.
[36] Simon and his companions went searching for Him. [37] They found Him
and said, "Everyone's looking for You! "

[38] And He said to them, "Let's go on to the neighboring villages so that I
may preach there too. This is why I have come." [39] So He went into all of
Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and driving out demons.

A Man Cleansed

[40] Then a man with a serious skin disease came to Him and, on his
knees, begged Him: "If You are willing, You can make me •clean."

41 Moved with compassion, Jesus reached out His hand and touched
him. “I am willing,” He told him. “Be made clean.” 42 Immediately the
disease left him, and he was healed. [H] 43 Then He sternly warned him and
sent him away at once, 44[†] telling him, “See that you say nothing to
anyone; but go and show yourself to the priest, and offer what Moses
prescribed for your cleansing, as a testimony to them.” 45 Yet he went out
and began to proclaim it widely and to spread the news, with the result that
Jesus could no longer enter a town openly. But He was out in deserted
places, and they would come to Him from everywhere.

The Son of Man Forgives and Heals

2 When He entered Capernaum again after some days, it was reported
that He was at home. 2 So many people gathered together that there was
no more room, not even in the doorway, and He was speaking the message
to them. 3 Then they came to Him bringing a paralytic, carried by four
men. 4 Since they were not able to bring him to Jesus because of the crowd,
they removed the roof above where He was. And when they had broken
through, they lowered the mat on which the paralytic was lying.

5 Seeing their faith, Jesus told the paralytic, “Son, your sins are
forgiven.”

6 But some of the •scribes were sitting there, thinking to themselves: [A]
7 “Why does He speak like this? He’s blaspheming! Who can forgive sins
but God alone? ”

8 Right away Jesus understood in His spirit that they were thinking like
this within themselves and said to them, “Why are you thinking these things
in your hearts? 9 Which is easier: to say to the paralytic, ‘Your sins are
forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Get up, pick up your mat, and walk’? 10[†] But so you
may know that the •Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins,” He
told the paralytic, 11 “I tell you: get up, pick up your mat, and go home.”

12 Immediately he got up, picked up the mat, and went out in front of
everyone. As a result, they were all astounded and gave glory to God,
saying, “We have never seen anything like this! ”

The Call of Matthew

13 Then Jesus went out again beside the sea. The whole crowd was
coming to Him, and He taught them. 14[†] Then, moving on, He saw Levi
the son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax office, and He said to him, “Follow
Me! ” So he got up and followed Him.

Dining with Sinners

15 While He was reclining at the table in Levi's house, many tax collectors and sinners were also guests [B], with Jesus and His disciples, because there were many who were following Him. 16 When the scribes of the •Pharisees saw that He was eating with sinners and tax collectors, they asked His disciples, "Why does He eat with tax collectors and sinners? "

17 When Jesus heard this, He told them, "Those who are well don't need a doctor, but the sick do need one. I didn't come to call the righteous, but sinners."

A Question about Fasting

18 Now John's disciples and the Pharisees were fasting. People came and asked Him, "Why do John's disciples and the Pharisees' disciples fast, but Your disciples do not fast? "

19 Jesus said to them, "The wedding guests cannot fast while the groom is with them, can they? As long as they have the groom with them, they cannot fast. 20 But the time will come when the groom is taken away from them, and then they will fast in that day. 21 No one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment. Otherwise, the new patch pulls away from the old cloth, and a worse tear is made. 22 And no one puts new wine into old wineskins. Otherwise, the wine will burst the skins, and the wine is lost as well as the skins. But new wine is for fresh wineskins."

Lord of the Sabbath

23 On the Sabbath He was going through the grainfields, and His disciples began to make their way picking some heads of grain. 24 The Pharisees said to Him, "Look, why are they doing what is not lawful on the Sabbath? "

25 He said to them, "Have you never read what David and those who were with him did when he was in need and hungry — 26[†] how he entered the house of God in the time of Abiathar the high priest and ate the •sacred

bread — which is not lawful for anyone to eat except the priests — and also gave some to his companions? ” [27] Then He told them, “The Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath. [28] Therefore, the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath.”

The Man with the Paralyzed Hand

3 Now He entered the •synagogue again, and a man was there who had a
paralyzed hand. 2† In order to accuse Him, they were watching Him
closely to see whether He would heal him on the Sabbath. 3 He told the
man with the paralyzed hand, "Stand before us." 4 Then He said to them,
"Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do what is good or to do what is evil, to
save life or to kill? " But they were silent. 5 After looking around at them
with anger and sorrow at the hardness of their hearts, He told the man,
"Stretch out your hand." So he stretched it out, and his hand was restored.
6 Immediately the •Pharisees went out and started plotting with the
•Herodians against Him, how they might destroy Him.

Ministering to the Multitude

7 Jesus departed with His disciples to the sea, and a large crowd
followed from Galilee, Judea, 8 Jerusalem, Idumea, beyond the Jordan,
and around Tyre and Sidon. The large crowd came to Him because they
heard about everything He was doing. 9 Then He told His disciples to have
a small boat ready for Him, so the crowd would not crush Him. 10 Since He
had healed many, all who had diseases were pressing toward Him to touch
Him. 11† Whenever the •unclean spirits saw Him, those possessed fell
down before Him and cried out, "You are the Son of God! " 12† And He
would strongly warn them not to make Him known.

The 12 Apostles

13† Then He went up the mountain and summoned those He wanted, and
they came to Him. 14 He also appointed 12 — He also named them
apostles — to be with Him, to send them out to preach, 15 and to have
authority to drive out demons.

16 He appointed the Twelve:

To Simon, He gave the name Peter;
17 and to James the son of Zebedee,

and to his brother John,
He gave the name “Boanerges”
(that is, “Sons of Thunder”);
18 Andrew;
Philip and Bartholomew;
Matthew and Thomas;
James the son of Alphaeus,
and Thaddaeus;
Simon the Zealot, [A]
19 and Judas Iscariot, [B]
who also betrayed Him.

A House Divided

20 Then He went home, and the crowd gathered again so that they were
not even able to eat. [C] 21 When His family heard this, they set out to
restrain Him, because they said, “He’s out of His mind.”

22† The •scribes who had come down from Jerusalem said, “He has •Beelzebul in Him! ” and, “He drives out demons by the ruler of the demons! ”

23 So He summoned them and spoke to them in parables: “How can
Satan drive out Satan? 24 If a kingdom is divided against itself, that
kingdom cannot stand. 25 If a house is divided against itself, that house
cannot stand. 26 And if Satan rebels against himself and is divided, he
cannot stand but is finished!

27 “On the other hand, no one can enter a strong man’s house and rob his
possessions unless he first ties up the strong man. Then he will rob his
house. 28 •I assure you: People will be forgiven for all sins and whatever
blasphemies they may blaspheme. 29 But whoever blasphemes against the
Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is •guilty of an eternal sin” —
30 because they were saying, “He has an unclean spirit.”

True Relationships

31† Then His mother and His brothers came, and standing outside, they
sent word to Him and called Him. 32 A crowd was sitting around Him and
told Him, “Look, Your mother, Your brothers, and Your sisters are outside
asking for You.”

33 He replied to them, “Who are My mother and My brothers? ” 34 And
looking about at those who were sitting in a circle around Him, He said,
“Here are My mother and My brothers! 35 Whoever does the will of God is
My brother and sister and mother.”

The Parable of the Sower

4 Again He began to teach by the sea, and a very large crowd gathered
around Him. So He got into a boat on the sea and sat down, while the
whole crowd was on the shore facing the sea. 2 He taught them many things
in parables, and in His teaching He said to them: 3 “Listen! Consider the
sower who went out to sow. 4 As he sowed, this occurred: Some seed fell
along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. 5 Other seed fell on rocky
ground where it didn’t have much soil, and it sprang up right away, since it
didn’t have deep soil. 6 When the sun came up, it was scorched, and since it
didn’t have a root, it withered. 7 Other seed fell among thorns, and the
thorns came up and choked it, and it didn’t produce a crop. 8 Still others fell
on good ground and produced a crop that increased 30, 60, and 100 times
what was sown.” 9 Then He said, “Anyone who has ears to hear should
listen! ”

Why Jesus Used Parables

10 When He was alone with the Twelve, those who were around Him
asked Him about the parables. 11† He answered them, “The •secret of the
kingdom of God has been given to you, but to those outside, everything
comes in parables 12 so that

they may look and look,
yet not perceive;
they may listen and listen,
yet not understand;
otherwise, they might turn back —
and be forgiven.” ,

The Parable of the Sower Explained

13 Then He said to them: “Don’t you understand this parable? How then
will you understand any of the parables? 14 The sower sows the word.
15 These are the ones along the path where the word is sown: when they
hear, immediately Satan comes and takes away the word sown in them.
16 And these are the ones sown on rocky ground: when they hear the word,
immediately they receive it with joy. 17 But they have no root in

themselves; they are short-lived. When pressure or persecution comes
because of the word, they immediately •stumble. [18] Others are sown among
thorns; these are the ones who hear the word, [19] but the worries of this age,
the seduction of wealth, and the desires for other things enter in and choke
the word, and it becomes unfruitful. [20] But the ones sown on good ground
are those who hear the word, welcome it, and produce a crop: 30, 60, and
100 times what was sown."

Using Your Light

[21] He also said to them, "Is a lamp brought in to be put under a basket or
under a bed? Isn't it to be put on a lampstand? [22] For nothing is concealed
except to be revealed, and nothing hidden except to come to light. [23] If
anyone has ears to hear, he should listen! " [24] Then He said to them, "Pay
attention to what you hear. By the measure you use, it will be measured
and added to you. [25] For to the one who has, it will be given, and from the
one who does not have, even what he has will be taken away."

The Parable of the Growing Seed

[26] "The kingdom of God is like this," He said. "A man scatters seed on
the ground; [27] he sleeps and rises — night and day, and the seed sprouts
and grows — he doesn't know how. [28] The soil produces a crop by
itself — first the blade, then the head, and then the ripe grain on the head.
[29] But as soon as the crop is ready, he sends for the sickle, because the
harvest has come."

The Parable of the Mustard Seed

[30] And He said: "How can we illustrate the kingdom of God, or what
parable can we use to describe it? [31]† It's like a mustard seed that, when
sown in the soil, is smaller than all the seeds on the ground. [32] And when
sown, it comes up and grows taller than all the vegetables, and produces
large branches, so that the birds of the sky can nest in its shade."

Using Parables

[33] He would speak the word to them with many parables like these, as
they were able to understand. [34] And He did not speak to them without a
parable. Privately, however, He would explain everything to His own
disciples.

Wind and Wave Obey the Master

[35] On that day, when evening had come, He told them, “Let’s cross over
to the other side of the sea.” [36] So they left the crowd and took Him along
since He was already in the boat. And other boats were with Him. [37] A
fierce windstorm arose, and the waves were breaking over the boat, so that
the boat was already being swamped. [38] But He was in the stern, sleeping
on the cushion. So they woke Him up and said to Him, “Teacher! Don’t
you care that we’re going to die? ”

[39†] He got up, rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, “Silence! Be still! ”
The wind ceased, and there was a great calm. [40] Then He said to them,
“Why are you fearful? Do you still have no faith? ”

[41] And they were terrified and asked one another, “Who then is this?
Even the wind and the sea obey Him! ”

Demons Driven Out by the Master

5 †Then they came to the other side of the sea, to the region of the
Gerasenes. 2† As soon as He got out of the boat, a man with an
•unclean spirit came out of the tombs and met Him. 3 He lived in the
tombs. No one was able to restrain him anymore — even with chains —
4 because he often had been bound with shackles and chains, but had
snapped off the chains and smashed the shackles. No one was strong
enough to subdue him. 5 And always, night and day, he was crying out
among the tombs and in the mountains and cutting himself with stones.

ARTICLE

Can We Still Believe in Demons Today? ⇒

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6 When he saw Jesus from a distance, he ran and knelt down before Him.
7 And he cried out with a loud voice, "What do You have to do with me, [A]
Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg [B] You before God, don't torment
me! " 8 For He had told him, "Come out of the man, you unclean spirit! "

9 "What is your name? " He asked him.

"My name is Legion," he answered Him, "because we are many." 10 And
he kept begging Him not to send them out of the region.

11† Now a large herd of pigs was there, feeding on the hillside. 12 The
demons begged Him, "Send us to the pigs, so we may enter them." 13 And
He gave them permission. Then the unclean spirits came out and entered
the pigs, and the herd of about 2,000 rushed down the steep bank into the
sea and drowned there. 14 The men who tended them ran off and reported
it in the town and the countryside, and people went to see what had
happened. 15 They came to Jesus and saw the man who had been demon-
possessed by the legion, sitting there, dressed and in his right mind; and
they were afraid. 16 The eyewitnesses described to them what had

happened to the demon-possessed man and told about the pigs. [17] Then they began to beg Him to leave their region.

[18] As He was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon-possessed kept begging Him to be with Him. [19] But He would not let him; instead, He told him, "Go back home to your own people, and report to them how much the Lord has done for you and how He has had mercy on you." [20] So he went out and began to proclaim in the •Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him, and they were all amazed.

A Girl Restored and a Woman Healed

[21] When Jesus had crossed over again by boat to the other side, a large crowd gathered around Him while He was by the sea. [22] One of the •synagogue leaders, named Jairus, came, and when he saw Jesus, he fell at His feet [23] and kept begging Him, "My little daughter is at death's door. [C] Come and lay Your hands on her so she can get well and live."

[24] So Jesus went with him, and a large crowd was following and pressing against Him. [25] A woman suffering from bleeding for 12 years [26] had endured much under many doctors. She had spent everything she had and was not helped at all. On the contrary, she became worse. [27] Having heard about Jesus, she came behind Him in the crowd and touched His robe.
[28] For she said, "If I can just touch His robes, I'll be made well! "
[29] Instantly her flow of blood ceased, and she sensed in her body that she was cured of her affliction.

[30] At once Jesus realized in Himself that power had gone out from Him. He turned around in the crowd and said, "Who touched My robes? "

[31] His disciples said to Him, "You see the crowd pressing against You, and You say, 'Who touched Me? ' "

[32] So He was looking around to see who had done this. [33] Then the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came with fear and trembling, fell down before Him, and told Him the whole truth. [34†] "Daughter," He

said to her, “your faith has made you well. Go in peace and be free from
your affliction.”

35 While He was still speaking, people came from the synagogue leader’s
house and said, “Your daughter is dead. Why bother the Teacher
anymore? ”

36 But when Jesus overheard what was said, He told the synagogue
leader, “Don’t be afraid. Only believe.” 37 He did not let anyone
accompany Him except Peter, James, and John, James’s brother. 38 They
came to the leader’s house, and He saw a commotion — people weeping
and wailing loudly. 39 He went in and said to them, “Why are you making a
commotion and weeping? The child is not dead but asleep.”

40 They started laughing at Him, but He put them all outside. He took the
child’s father, mother, and those who were with Him, and entered the place
where the child was. 41 Then He took the child by the hand and said to her,
“Talitha koum!” (which is translated, “Little girl, I say to you, get up! ”).
42 Immediately the girl got up and began to walk. (She was 12 years old.)
At this they were utterly astounded. 43 Then He gave them strict orders that
no one should know about this and said that she should be given something
to eat.

Rejection at Nazareth

6 He went away from there and came to His hometown, and His
disciples followed Him. 2 When the Sabbath came, He began to teach
in the •synagogue, and many who heard Him were astonished. “Where did
this man get these things? ” they said. “What is this wisdom given to Him,
and how are these miracles performed by His hands? 3 Isn’t this the
carpenter, the son of Mary, and the brother of James, Joses, Judas, and
Simon? And aren’t His sisters here with us? ” So they were •offended by
Him.

4 Then Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not without honor except in his
hometown, among his relatives, and in his household.” 5† So He was not
able to do any miracles [A] there, except that He laid His hands on a few
sick people and healed them. 6 And He was amazed at their unbelief.

Commissioning the Twelve

Now He was going around the villages in a circuit, teaching. 7 He
summoned the Twelve and began to send them out in pairs and gave them
authority over •unclean spirits. 8† He instructed them to take nothing for
the road except a walking stick: no bread, no traveling bag, no money in
their belts. 9 They were to wear sandals, but not put on an extra shirt.
10 Then He said to them, “Whenever you enter a house, stay there until you
leave that place. 11 If any place does not welcome you and people refuse to
listen to you, when you leave there, shake the dust off your feet as a
testimony against them.”

12 So they went out and preached that people should repent. 13 And they
were driving out many demons, anointing many sick people with olive
oil, and healing them.

John the Baptist Beheaded

14† King •Herod heard of this, because Jesus’ name had become well
known. Some said, “John the Baptist has been raised from the dead, and
that’s why supernatural powers are at work in him.” 15 But others said,

“He’s Elijah.” Still others said, “He’s a prophet [B] — like one of the prophets.”

16 When Herod heard of it, he said, “John, the one I beheaded, has been
raised! ” 17[†] For Herod himself had given orders to arrest John and to chain him in prison on account of Herodias, his brother Philip’s wife, whom he had married.
18 John had been telling Herod, “It is not lawful for you to have your brother’s wife! ”
19 So Herodias held a grudge against him and wanted to kill him. But she could not,
20 because Herod was in awe of [C] John and was protecting him, knowing he was a righteous and holy man. When Herod heard him he would be very disturbed, yet would hear him gladly.

21 Now an opportune time came on his birthday, when Herod gave a banquet for his nobles, military commanders, and the leading men of Galilee.
22 When Herodias’s own daughter came in and danced, she pleased Herod and his guests. The king said to the girl, “Ask me whatever you want, and I’ll give it to you.”
23 So he swore oaths to her: “Whatever you ask me I will give you, up to half my kingdom.”

24 Then she went out and said to her mother, “What should I ask for? ”

“John the Baptist’s head! ” she said.

25 Immediately she hurried to the king and said, “I want you to give me John the Baptist’s head on a platter — right now! ”

26 Though the king was deeply distressed, because of his oaths and the guests [D] he did not want to refuse her.
27 The king immediately sent for an executioner and commanded him to bring John’s head. So he went and beheaded him in prison,
28 brought his head on a platter, and gave it to the girl. Then the girl gave it to her mother.
29 When his disciples heard about it, they came and removed his corpse and placed it in a tomb.

Feeding 5,000

30 The apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to Him all that they
had done and taught. 31 He said to them, “Come away by yourselves to a
remote place and rest a while.” For many people were coming and going,
and they did not even have time to eat. 32† So they went away in the boat by
themselves to a remote place, 33 but many saw them leaving and recognized
them. People ran there by land from all the towns and arrived ahead of
them. 34† So as He stepped ashore, He saw a huge crowd and had
compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd.
Then He began to teach them many things.

35 When it was already late, His disciples approached Him and said,
“This place is a wilderness, and it is already late! 36 Send them away, so
they can go into the surrounding countryside and villages to buy themselves
something to eat.”

37 “You give them something to eat,” He responded.

They said to Him, “Should we go and buy 200 •denarii worth of bread and give them something to eat? ”

38 And He asked them, “How many loaves do you have? Go look.”

When they found out they said, “Five, and two fish.”

39 Then He instructed them to have all the people sit down [E] in groups on
the green grass. 40 So they sat down in ranks of hundreds and fifties.
41 Then He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven,
He blessed and broke the loaves. He kept giving them to His disciples to set
before the people. He also divided the two fish among them all. 42 Everyone
ate and was filled. 43 Then they picked up 12 baskets full of pieces of bread
and fish. 44 Now those who ate the loaves were 5,000 men.

Walking on the Water

45 Immediately He made His disciples get into the boat and go ahead of
Him to the other side, to Bethsaida, while He dismissed the crowd. 46 After

He said good-bye to them, He went away to the mountain to pray. 47 When
evening came, the boat was in the middle of the sea, and He was alone on
the land. 48[†] He saw them being battered as they rowed, [F] because the wind
was against them. Around three in the morning [G] He came toward them
walking on the sea and wanted to pass by them. 49 When they saw Him
walking on the sea, they thought it was a ghost and cried out; 50[†] for they
all saw Him and were terrified. Immediately He spoke with them and said,
"Have courage! It is I. Don't be afraid." 51 Then He got into the boat with
them, and the wind ceased. They were completely astounded, [H] 52 because
they had not understood about the loaves. Instead, their hearts were
hardened.

Miraculous Healings

53 When they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret and
beached the boat. 54 As they got out of the boat, people immediately
recognized Him. 55 They hurried throughout that vicinity and began to carry
the sick on mats to wherever they heard He was. 56[†] Wherever He would
go, into villages, towns, or the country, they laid the sick in the
marketplaces and begged Him that they might touch just the •tassel of His
robe. And everyone who touched it was made well.

The Traditions of the Elders

7 The •Pharisees and some of the •scribes who had come from
Jerusalem gathered around Him. [2] They observed that some of His
disciples were eating their bread with •unclean — that is,
unwashed — hands. [3] (For the Pharisees, in fact all the Jews, will not eat
unless they wash their hands ritually, keeping the tradition of the elders.
[4] When they come from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they have
washed. And there are many other customs they have received and keep,
like the washing of cups, jugs, copper utensils, and dining couches.) [5] Then
the Pharisees and the scribes asked Him, "Why don't Your disciples live
according to the tradition of the elders, instead of eating bread with ritually
unclean hands? "

[6] He answered them, "Isaiah prophesied correctly about you hypocrites,
as it is written:

These people honor Me with their lips,
but their heart is far from Me.
[7] **They worship Me in vain,**
teaching as doctrines the commands of men.

[8] Disregarding the command of God, you keep the tradition of men." [9] He
also said to them, "You completely invalidate God's command in order to
maintain your tradition! [10] For Moses said:

Honor your father and your mother; and
Whoever speaks evil of father or mother
must be put to death.

[11] But you say, 'If a man tells his father or mother: Whatever benefit you
might have received from me is Corban' " (that is, a gift committed to the
temple), [12] "you no longer let him do anything for his father or mother.
[13] You revoke God's word by your tradition that you have handed down.
And you do many other similar things." [14] Summoning the crowd again,
He told them, "Listen to Me, all of you, and understand: [15] Nothing that
goes into a person from outside can defile him, but the things that come out

of a person are what defile him. [16 If anyone has ears to hear, he should
listen!]"

17 When He went into the house away from the crowd, the disciples
asked Him about the parable. 18 And He said to them, "Are you also as
lacking in understanding? Don't you realize that nothing going into a man
from the outside can defile him? 19† For it doesn't go into his heart but into
the stomach and is eliminated." (As a result, He made all foods •clean.)
20 Then He said, "What comes out of a person — that defiles him. 21 For
from within, out of people's hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual
immoralities, thefts, murders, 22 adulteries, greed, evil actions, deceit,
promiscuity, stinginess, blasphemy, pride, and foolishness. 23 All these
evil things come from within and defile a person."

TWISTED SCRIPTURE

Mark 7:15

Many Adventist sects who view themselves as the true Israel observe OT food laws. This includes abstaining from eating unclean animals. New Testament believers, however, were never required to avoid unclean foods. During Peter's vision of a sheet filled with unclean animals, God said, "Get up, Peter; kill and eat!" When Peter refused, God replied, "What God has made clean, you must not call common" (Ac 10:13,15). Galatians 2:12 finds Peter eating with Gentiles. The Apostle Paul indicated that believers were free to eat whatever their conscience allowed (Rm 14:6; 1 Co 10:31). He also warned that no one should judge another with regard to food (Col 2:16,21). To Timothy, Paul said that the command to abstain from certain foods was a doctrine of demons and that "everything created by God is good, and nothing should be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, since it is sanctified by the word of God and by prayer" (1 Tm 4:1-5). Jesus clearly taught that it is not what goes into a body, but rather what comes out of the heart, that defiles a person (Mk 7:15).

A Gentile Mother's Faith

[24]† He got up and departed from there to the region of Tyre and Sidon.
He entered a house and did not want anyone to know it, but He could not
escape notice. [25] Instead, immediately after hearing about Him, a woman
whose little daughter had an unclean spirit came and fell at His feet.
[26]† Now the woman was Greek, a Syrophoenician by birth, and she kept
asking Him to drive the demon out of her daughter. [27] He said to her,
“Allow the children to be satisfied first, because it isn’t right to take the
children’s bread and throw it to the dogs.”

[28] But she replied to Him, “Lord, even the dogs under the table eat the
children’s crumbs.”

[29] Then He told her, “Because of this reply, you may go. The demon has
gone out of your daughter.” [30] When she went back to her home, she found
her child lying on the bed, and the demon was gone.

Jesus Does Everything Well

[31]† Again, leaving the region of Tyre, He went by way of Sidon to the
Sea of Galilee, through [A] the region of the •Decapolis. [32] They brought to
Him a deaf man who also had a speech difficulty, and begged Jesus to lay
His hand on him. [33]† So He took him away from the crowd privately. After
putting His fingers in the man’s ears and spitting, He touched his tongue.
[34] Then, looking up to heaven, He sighed deeply and said to him,
“Ephphatha!” (that is, “Be opened! ”). [35] Immediately his ears were
opened, his speech difficulty was removed, [B] and he began to speak
clearly. [36] Then He ordered them to tell no one, but the more He would
order them, the more they would proclaim it.

[37] They were extremely astonished and said, “He has done everything
well! He even makes deaf people hear, and people unable to speak, talk! ”

Feeding 4,000

8 †In those days there was again a large crowd, and they had nothing to
eat. He summoned the disciples and said to them, 2 “I have
compassion on the crowd, because they’ve already stayed with Me three
days and have nothing to eat. 3 If I send them home hungry, they will
collapse on the way, and some of them have come a long distance.”

4 His disciples answered Him, “Where can anyone get enough bread here
in this desolate place to fill these people? ”

5 “How many loaves do you have? ” He asked them.

“Seven,” they said. 6 Then He commanded the crowd to sit down on the
ground. Taking the seven loaves, He gave thanks, broke the loaves, and
kept on giving them to His disciples to set before the people. So they served
the loaves to the crowd. 7 They also had a few small fish, and when He had
blessed them, He said these were to be served as well. 8 They ate and were
filled. Then they collected seven large baskets of leftover pieces. 9 About
4,000 men were there. He dismissed them 10† and immediately got into the
boat with His disciples and went to the district of Dalmanutha.

The Yeast of the Pharisees and Herod

11 The •Pharisees came out and began to argue with Him, demanding of
Him a sign from heaven to test Him. 12† But sighing deeply in His spirit,
He said, “Why does this generation demand a sign? •I assure you: No sign
will be given to this generation! ” 13 Then He left them, got on board the
boat again, and went to the other side.

14 They had forgotten to take bread and had only one loaf with them in
the boat. 15 Then He commanded them: “Watch out! Beware of the yeast
of the Pharisees and the yeast of •Herod.”

16 They were discussing among themselves that they did not have any
bread. 17 Aware of this, He said to them, “Why are you discussing that you
do not have any bread? Don’t you understand or comprehend? Is your heart

hardened? [18] **Do you have eyes, and not see, and do you have ears, and
not hear?** And do you not remember? [19] When I broke the five loaves for
the 5,000, how many baskets full of pieces of bread did you collect? ”

“Twelve,” they told Him.

[20] “When I broke the seven loaves for the 4,000, how many large baskets
full of pieces of bread did you collect? ”

“Seven,” they said.

[21] And He said to them, “Don’t you understand yet? ”

Healing a Blind Man

[22] Then they came to Bethsaida. They brought a blind man to Him and
begged Him to touch him. [23] He took the blind man by the hand and
brought him out of the village. Spitting on his eyes and laying His hands
on him, He asked him, “Do you see anything? ”

[24] He looked up and said, “I see people — they look to me like trees
walking.”

[25] Again Jesus placed His hands on the man’s eyes, and he saw distinctly.
He was cured and could see everything clearly. [26] Then He sent him home,
saying, “Don’t even go into the village.”

Peter’s Confession of the Messiah

[27] Jesus went out with His disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi.
And on the road He asked His disciples, “Who do people say that I am? ”

[28] They answered Him, “John the Baptist; others, Elijah; still others, one
of the prophets.”

[29]† “But you,” He asked them again, “who do you say that I am? ”

Peter answered Him, “You are the •Messiah! ”

30† And He strictly warned them to tell no one about Him.

His Death and Resurrection Predicted

31 Then He began to teach them that the •Son of Man must suffer many
things and be rejected by the elders, the •chief priests, and the •scribes, be
killed, and rise after three days. 32 He was openly talking about this. So
Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him.

33† But turning around and looking at His disciples, He rebuked Peter and
said, “Get behind Me, Satan, because you’re not thinking about God’s
concerns, but man’s! ”

Take Up Your Cross

34 Summoning the crowd along with His disciples, He said to them, “If
anyone wants to be My follower, he must deny himself, take up his cross,
and follow Me. 35 For whoever wants to save his •life will lose it, but
whoever loses his life because of Me and the gospel will save it. 36 For
what does it benefit a man to gain the whole world yet lose his life?
37 What can a man give in exchange for his life? 38 For whoever is
ashamed of Me and of My words in this adulterous and sinful generation,
the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when He comes in the glory of
His Father with the holy angels.”

9 †Then He said to them, "•I assure you: There are some standing here
who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God come in
power."

ARTICLE

Why Would a Good God Send People to an Everlasting Hell? ⇒

The Transfiguration

2† After six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John and led them up on
a high mountain by themselves to be alone. He was transformed [A] in front
of them, 3 and His clothes became dazzling — extremely white as no
launderer on earth could whiten them. 4 Elijah appeared to them with
Moses, and they were talking with Jesus.

5 Then Peter said to Jesus, "•Rabbi, it's good for us to be here! Let us
make three •tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for
Elijah" — 6 because he did not know what he should say, since they were
terrified.

7 A cloud appeared, overshadowing them, and a voice came from the
cloud:

This is My beloved Son;
listen to Him!

8 Then suddenly, looking around, they no longer saw anyone with them
except Jesus alone.

9 As they were coming down from the mountain, He ordered them to tell
no one what they had seen until the •Son of Man had risen from the dead.

[10] They kept this word to themselves, discussing what "rising from the dead" meant.

[11] Then they began to question Him, "Why do the •scribes say that Elijah must come first? "

[12†] "Elijah does come first and restores everything," He replied. "How then is it written about the Son of Man that He must suffer many things
and be treated with contempt? [13] But I tell you that Elijah really has come,
and they did whatever they pleased to him, just as it is written about him."

The Power of Faith over a Demon

[14] When they came to the disciples, they saw a large crowd around them
and scribes disputing with them. [15] All of a sudden, when the whole crowd
saw Him, they were amazed [B] and ran to greet Him. [16] Then He asked
them, "What are you arguing with them about? "

[17] Out of the crowd, one man answered Him, "Teacher, I brought my son
to You. He has a spirit that makes him unable to speak. [18] Wherever it
seizes him, it throws him down, and he foams at the mouth, grinds his teeth, and becomes rigid. So I asked Your disciples to drive it out, but they couldn't."

[19] He replied to them, "You unbelieving generation! How long will I be
with you? How long must I put up with you? Bring him to Me." [20] So they
brought him to Him. When the spirit saw Him, it immediately convulsed the boy. He fell to the ground and rolled around, foaming at the mouth.
[21] "How long has this been happening to him? " Jesus asked his father.

"From childhood," he said. [22] "And many times it has thrown him into fire or water to destroy him. But if You can do anything, have compassion on us and help us."

[23†] Then Jesus said to him, " 'If You can? ' Everything is possible to the one who believes."

[24] Immediately the father of the boy cried out, “I do believe! Help my
unbelief.”

[25] When Jesus saw that a crowd was rapidly coming together, He
rebuked the •unclean spirit, saying to it, “You mute and deaf spirit, I
command you: come out of him and never enter him again! ”

[26] Then it came out, shrieking and convulsing him violently. The boy
became like a corpse, so that many said, “He’s dead.” [27] But Jesus, taking
him by the hand, raised him, and he stood up.

[28] After He went into a house, His disciples asked Him privately, “Why
couldn’t we drive it out? ”

[29]† And He told them, “This kind can come out by nothing but prayer
[and fasting].”

The Second Prediction of His Death

[30] Then they left that place and made their way through Galilee, but He
did not want anyone to know it. [31] For He was teaching His disciples and
telling them, “The Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of men.
They will kill Him, and after He is killed, He will rise three days later.”
[32] But they did not understand this statement, and they were afraid to ask
Him.

Who is the Greatest?

[33] Then they came to Capernaum. When He was in the house, He asked
them, “What were you arguing about on the way? ” [34] But they were
silent, because on the way they had been arguing with one another about
who was the greatest. [35] Sitting down, He called the Twelve and said to
them, “If anyone wants to be first, he must be last of all and servant of all.”
[36] Then He took a child, had him stand among them, and taking him in His
arms, He said to them, [37] “Whoever welcomes one little child such as this

in My name welcomes Me. And whoever welcomes Me does not welcome
Me, but Him who sent Me."

In His Name

[38] John said to Him, "Teacher, we saw someone driving out demons in
Your name, and we tried to stop him because he wasn't following us."

[39] "Don't stop him," said Jesus, "because there is no one who will
perform a miracle in My name who can soon afterward speak evil of Me.
[40†] For whoever is not against us is for us. [41] And whoever gives you a cup
of water to drink because of My name, since you belong to the
•Messiah — I assure you: He will never lose his reward.

Warnings from Jesus

[42] "But whoever •causes the downfall of one of these little ones who
believe in Me — it would be better for him if a heavy millstone were hung
around his neck and he were thrown into the sea. [43†] And if your hand
causes your downfall, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life maimed
than to have two hands and go to •hell — the unquenchable fire, [[44] where

Their worm does not die,
and the fire is not quenched.] ,

[45] And if your foot causes your downfall, cut it off. It is better for you to
enter life lame than to have two feet and be thrown into hell — [the
unquenchable fire, [46] where

Their worm does not die,
and the fire is not quenched.] ,

[47] And if your eye causes your downfall, gouge it out. It is better for you to
enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and be
thrown into hell, [48] where

Their worm does not die,

and the fire is not quenched.

[49] For everyone will be salted with fire. , [50]† Salt is good, but if the salt should lose its flavor, how can you make it salty? Have salt among yourselves and be at peace with one another.”

The Question of Divorce

10 He set out from there and went to the region of Judea and across the
Jordan. Then crowds converged on Him again and, as He usually did,
He began teaching them once more. 2 Some •Pharisees approached Him to
test Him. They asked, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife? ”

3 He replied to them, “What did Moses command you? ”

4 They said, “Moses permitted us to write divorce papers and send her
away.”

5 But Jesus told them, “He wrote this command for you because of the
hardness of your hearts. 6 But from the beginning of creation God **made
them male and female.**

7 **For this reason a man will leave**
his father and mother
[**and be joined to his wife**],
8 **and the two will become one flesh.**

So they are no longer two, but one flesh. 9 Therefore what God has joined
together, man must not separate.”

10 Now in the house the disciples questioned Him again about this matter.
11 And He said to them, “Whoever divorces his wife and marries another
commits adultery against her. 12 Also, if she divorces her husband and
marries another, she commits adultery.”

Blessing the Children

13 Some people were bringing little children to Him so He might touch
them, but His disciples rebuked them. 14 When Jesus saw it, He was
indignant and said to them, “Let the little children come to Me. Don’t stop
them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. 15† •I assure you:
Whoever does not welcome the kingdom of God like a little child will
never enter it.” 16 After taking them in His arms, He laid His hands on them
and blessed them.

The Rich Young Ruler

[17] As He was setting out on a journey, a man ran up, knelt down before Him, and asked Him, "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life? "

[18†] "Why do you call Me good? " Jesus asked him. "No one is good but One — God. [19†] You know the commandments:

Do not murder;
do not commit adultery;
do not steal;
do not bear false witness;
do not defraud;
honor your father and mother."

[20] He said to Him, "Teacher, I have kept all these from my youth."

[21†] Then, looking at him, Jesus loved him and said to him, "You lack one thing: Go, sell all you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow Me." [22] But he was stunned [A] at this demand, and he went away grieving, because he had many possessions.

Possessions and the Kingdom

[23] Jesus looked around and said to His disciples, "How hard it is for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God! " [24] But the disciples were astonished at His words. Again Jesus said to them, "Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! [25] It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God."

[26] So they were even more astonished, saying to one another, "Then who can be saved? "

[27] Looking at them, Jesus said, "With men it is impossible, but not with God, because all things are possible with God."

28 Peter began to tell Him, “Look, we have left everything and followed
You.”

29† “I assure you,” Jesus said, “there is no one who has left house,
brothers or sisters, mother or father, children, or fields because of Me and
the gospel,
30 who will not receive 100 times more, now at this
time — houses, brothers and sisters, mothers and children, and fields, with
persecutions — and eternal life in the age to come.
31 But many who are
first will be last, and the last first.”

ARTICLE

Can God Create a Stone Too Heavy for Him to Lift? ⇒

The Third Prediction of His Death

32 They were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was walking
ahead of them. They were astonished, but those who followed Him were
afraid. Taking the Twelve aside again, He began to tell them the things that
would happen to Him.

33 “Listen! We are going up to Jerusalem. The •Son of Man will be
handed over to the •chief priests and the •scribes, and they will condemn
Him to death. Then they will hand Him over to the Gentiles,
34 and they
will mock Him, spit on Him, flog Him, and kill Him, and He will rise after
three days.”

Suffering and Service

35† Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, approached Him and
said, “Teacher, we want You to do something for us if we ask You.”

36 “What do you want Me to do for you? ” He asked them.

[37] They answered Him, “Allow us to sit at Your right and at Your left in Your glory.”

[38] But Jesus said to them, “You don’t know what you’re asking. Are you able to drink the cup I drink or to be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with? ”

[39] “We are able,” they told Him.

Jesus said to them, “You will drink the cup I drink, and you will be
baptized with the baptism I am baptized with. [40] But to sit at My right or
left is not Mine to give; instead, it is for those it has been prepared for.”
[41] When the other 10 disciples heard this, they began to be indignant with
James and John.

[42] Jesus called them over and said to them, “You know that those who are
regarded as rulers of the Gentiles dominate them, and their men of high
positions exercise power over them. [43] But it must not be like that among
you. On the contrary, whoever wants to become great among you must be
your servant, [44] and whoever wants to be first among you must be a •slave
to all. [45†] For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve,
and to give His life — a ransom for many.”

A Blind Man Healed

[46†] They came to Jericho. And as He was leaving Jericho with His
disciples and a large crowd, Bartimaeus (the son of Timaeus), a blind
beggar, was sitting by the road. [47†] When he heard that it was Jesus the
•Nazarene, he began to cry out, “Son of David, Jesus, have mercy on
me! ” [48] Many people told him to keep quiet, but he was crying out all the
more, “Have mercy on me, Son of David! ”

[49] Jesus stopped and said, “Call him.”

So they called the blind man and said to him, “Have courage! Get up;
He’s calling for you.” [50] He threw off his coat, jumped up, and came to

Jesus.

51 Then Jesus answered him, “What do you want Me to do for you? ”

“Rabbouni,” [B] the blind man told Him, “I want to see! ”

52 “Go your way,” Jesus told him. “Your faith has healed you.”
Immediately he could see and began to follow Him on the road.

The Triumphal Entry

11 When they approached Jerusalem, at Bethphage and Bethany near
the •Mount of Olives, He sent two of His disciples 2† and told them,
"Go into the village ahead of you. As soon as you enter it, you will find a
young donkey tied there, on which no one has ever sat. Untie it and bring it
here. 3 If anyone says to you, 'Why are you doing this? ' say, 'The Lord
needs it and will send it back here right away.' "

4 So they went and found a young donkey outside in the street, tied by a
door. They untied it, 5 and some of those standing there said to them, "What
are you doing, untying the donkey? " 6 They answered them just as Jesus
had said, so they let them go. 7 Then they brought the donkey to Jesus and
threw their robes on it, and He sat on it.

8 Many people spread their robes on the road, and others spread leafy
branches cut from the fields. 9 Then those who went ahead and those who
followed kept shouting:

•***Hosanna!***
He who comes in the name
of the Lord is the blessed One!
10 The coming kingdom
of our father David is blessed!
Hosanna in the highest heaven!

11 And He went into Jerusalem and into the •temple complex. After
looking around at everything, since it was already late, He went out to
Bethany with the Twelve.

The Barren Fig Tree Is Cursed

12† The next day when they came out from Bethany, He was hungry.
13 After seeing in the distance a fig tree with leaves, He went to find out if
there was anything on it. When He came to it, He found nothing but leaves,
because it was not the season for figs. 14 He said to it, "May no one ever eat
fruit from you again! " And His disciples heard it.

Cleansing the Temple Complex

15† They came to Jerusalem, and He went into the temple complex and
began to throw out those buying and selling in the temple. He overturned
the money changers' tables and the chairs of those selling doves, 16 and
would not permit anyone to carry goods through the temple complex.

17 Then He began to teach them: "Is it not written, **My house will be
called a house of prayer for all nations**? But you have made it **a den of
thieves**! " 18 Then the •chief priests and the •scribes heard it and started
looking for a way to destroy Him. For they were afraid of Him, because the
whole crowd was astonished by His teaching.

19 And whenever evening came, they would go out of the city.

The Barren Fig Tree Is Withered

20 Early in the morning, as they were passing by, they saw the fig tree
withered from the roots up. 21 Then Peter remembered and said to Him,
"•Rabbi, look! The fig tree that You cursed is withered."

22† Jesus replied to them, "Have faith in God. 23 •I assure you: If anyone
says to this mountain, 'Be lifted up and thrown into the sea,' and does not
doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says will happen, it will be
done for him. 24 Therefore I tell you, all the things you pray and ask
for — believe that you have received them, and you will have them.
25† And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone,
forgive him, so that your Father in heaven will also forgive you your
wrongdoing. [26 But if you don't forgive, neither will your Father in heaven
forgive your wrongdoing.]"

Messiah's Authority Challenged

27 They came again to Jerusalem. As He was walking in the temple
complex, the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders came 28 and asked

Him, “By what authority are You doing these things? Who gave You this
authority to do these things? ”

[29] Jesus said to them, “I will ask you one question; then answer Me, and
I will tell you by what authority I am doing these things. [30] Was John’s
baptism from heaven or from men? Answer Me.”

[31] They began to argue among themselves: “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ He
will say, ‘Then why didn’t you believe him? ’ [32] But if we say, ‘From
men’ ” — they were afraid of the crowd, because everyone thought that
John was a genuine prophet. [33†] So they answered Jesus, “We don’t know.”

And Jesus said to them, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I do
these things.”

The Parable of the Vineyard Owner

12 Then He began to speak to them in parables: “A man planted a
vineyard, put a fence around it, dug out a pit for a winepress, and
built a watchtower. Then he leased it to tenant farmers and went away. [2] At
harvest time he sent a •slave to the farmers to collect some of the fruit of
the vineyard from the farmers. [3] But they took him, beat him, and sent him
away empty-handed. [4] Again he sent another slave to them, and they hit
him on the head and treated him shamefully. [5] Then he sent another, and
they killed that one. He also sent many others; they beat some and they
killed some.

[6†] “He still had one to send, a beloved son. Finally he sent him to them,
saying, ‘They will respect my son.’

[7] “But those tenant farmers said among themselves, ‘This is the heir.
Come, let’s kill him, and the inheritance will be ours! ’ [8] So they seized
him, killed him, and threw him out of the vineyard.

[9] “Therefore, what will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and
destroy the farmers and give the vineyard to others. [10] Haven’t you read this
Scripture:

The stone that the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone.
[11] **This came from the Lord**
and is wonderful in our eyes? ”

[12] Because they knew He had said this parable against them, they were
looking for a way to arrest Him, but they were afraid of the crowd. So they
left Him and went away.

God and Caesar

[13] Then they sent some of the •Pharisees and the •Herodians to Him to
trap Him by what He said. [A] [14] When they came, they said to Him,
“Teacher, we know You are truthful and defer to no one, for You don’t show

partiality [B] but teach truthfully the way of God. Is it lawful to pay taxes to
Caesar or not? [15] Should we pay, or should we not pay? "

But knowing their hypocrisy, He said to them, "Why are you testing
Me? Bring Me a •denarius to look at." [16] So they brought one. "Whose
image and inscription is this? " He asked them.

"Caesar's," they said.

[17] Then Jesus told them, "Give back to Caesar the things that are
Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." And they were amazed at
Him.

The Sadducees and the Resurrection

[18] Some •Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to Him and
questioned Him: [19] "Teacher, Moses wrote for us that **if a man's brother
dies**, leaves his wife behind, and **leaves no child, his brother should take
the wife and produce** •offspring **for his brother.** [20] There were seven
brothers. The first took a wife, and dying, left no offspring. [21] The second
also took her, and he died, leaving no offspring. And the third likewise.
[22] So the seven left no offspring. Last of all, the woman died too. [23] In the
resurrection, when they rise, whose wife will she be, since the seven had
married her? " [C]

[24] Jesus told them, "Are you not deceived because you don't know the
Scriptures or the power of God? [25†] For when they rise from the dead,
they neither marry nor are given in marriage but are like angels in heaven.
[26] Now concerning the dead being raised — haven't you read in the book of
Moses, in the passage about the burning bush, how God spoke to him: **I am
the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob**?
[27] He is not God of the dead but of the living. You are badly deceived."

The Primary Commandments

[28] One of the •scribes approached. When he heard them debating and
saw that Jesus answered them well, he asked Him, "Which command is the
most important of all? " D

[29] "This is the most important," Jesus answered:

> **Listen, Israel! The Lord our God, the Lord is One.** [30†] **Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.** ,

[31] "The second is: **Love your neighbor as yourself.** There is no other
command greater than these."

[32] Then the scribe said to Him, "You are right, Teacher! You have
correctly said that He is One, and there is no one else except Him. [33] And
to love Him with all your heart, with all your understanding, and with all
your strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself, is far more important
than all the burnt offerings and sacrifices."

[34] When Jesus saw that he answered intelligently, He said to him, "You
are not far from the kingdom of God." And no one dared to question Him
any longer.

The Question about the Messiah

[35] So Jesus asked this question as He taught in the •temple complex,
"How can the scribes say that the •Messiah is the Son of David? [36] David
himself says by the Holy Spirit:

> **The Lord declared to my Lord,**
> **'Sit at My right hand**
> **until I put Your enemies under Your feet.'**

[37†] David himself calls Him 'Lord'; how then can the Messiah be his Son? "
And the large crowd was listening to Him with delight.

Warning against the Scribes

[38] He also said in His teaching, “Beware of the scribes, who want to go
around in long robes, and who want greetings in the marketplaces, [39] the
front seats in the •synagogues, and the places of honor at banquets.
[40] They devour widows’ houses and say long prayers just for show. These
will receive harsher punishment.”

The Widow’s Gift

[41] Sitting across from the temple treasury, He watched how the crowd
dropped money into the treasury. Many rich people were putting in large
sums. [42] And a poor widow came and dropped in two tiny coins worth very
little. [E] [43] Summoning His disciples, He said to them, “•I assure you: This
poor widow has put in more than all those giving to the temple treasury.
[44] For they all gave out of their surplus, but she out of her poverty has put
in everything she possessed — all she had to live on.”

Destruction of the Temple Predicted

13 As He was going out of the •temple complex, one of His disciples
said to Him, "Teacher, look! What massive stones! What impressive
buildings! "

2† Jesus said to him, "Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone
will be left here on another that will not be thrown down! "

Signs of the End of the Age

3 While He was sitting on the •Mount of Olives across from the temple
complex, Peter, James, John, and Andrew asked Him privately, 4 "Tell
us, when will these things happen? And what will be the sign when all these
things are about to take place? "

5 Then Jesus began by telling them: "Watch out that no one deceives you.
6 Many will come in My name, saying, 'I am He,' and they will deceive
many. 7 When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, don't be alarmed;
these things must take place, but the end is not yet. 8 For nation will rise up
against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be earthquakes in
various places, and famines. These are the beginning of birth pains.

Persecutions Predicted

9 "But you, be on your guard! They will hand you over to sanhedrins,
and you will be flogged in the •synagogues. You will stand before
governors and kings because of Me, as a witness to them. 10 And the
good news must first be proclaimed to all nations. 11 So when they arrest
you and hand you over, don't worry beforehand what you will say. On the
contrary, whatever is given to you in that hour — say it. For it isn't you
speaking, but the Holy Spirit. 12 Then brother will betray brother to death,
and a father his child. Children will rise up against parents and put them to
death. 13 And you will be hated by everyone because of My name. But the
one who endures to the end will be delivered.

The Great Tribulation

[14] "When you see the **abomination that causes desolation** standing
where it should not" (let the reader understand), "then those in Judea must
flee to the mountains! [15] A man on the housetop must not come down or go
in to get anything out of his house. [16] And a man in the field must not go
back to get his clothes. [17] Woe to pregnant women and nursing mothers in
those days! [18] Pray it won't happen in winter. [19] For those will be days of
tribulation, the kind that hasn't been from the beginning of the world,
which God created, until now and never will be again! [20] Unless the Lord
limited those days, no one would survive. But He limited those days
because of the elect, whom He chose.

[21] "Then if anyone tells you, 'Look, here is the •Messiah!
Look — there! ' do not believe it! [22] For false messiahs and false prophets
will rise up and will perform signs and wonders to lead astray, if possible,
the elect. [23] And you must watch! I have told you everything in advance.

The Coming of the Son of Man

[24†] "But in those days, after that tribulation:

The sun will be darkened,
and the moon will not shed its light;
[25] the stars will be falling from the sky,
and the celestial powers will be shaken.

[26] Then they will see the •Son of Man coming in clouds with great power
and glory. [27] He will send out the angels and gather His elect from the
four winds, from the end of the earth to the end of the sky.

The Parable of the Fig Tree

[28] "Learn this parable from the fig tree: As soon as its branch becomes
tender and sprouts leaves, you know that summer is near. [29] In the same
way, when you see these things happening, know that He is near — at the
door! [30†] •I assure you: This generation will certainly not pass away until

all these things take place. [31] Heaven and earth will pass away, but My
words will never pass away.

No One Knows the Day or Hour

[32]† "Now concerning that day or hour no one knows — neither the
angels in heaven nor the Son — except the Father. [33] Watch! Be alert!
For you don't know when the time is coming. [34] It is like a man on a
journey, who left his house, gave authority to his •slaves, gave each one his
work, and commanded the doorkeeper to be alert. [35] Therefore be alert,
since you don't know when the master of the house is coming — whether
in the evening or at midnight or at the crowing of the rooster or early in the
morning. [36] Otherwise, he might come suddenly and find you sleeping.
[37] And what I say to you, I say to everyone: Be alert! "

The Plot to Kill Jesus

14 After two days it was the •Passover and the Festival of •Unleavened
Bread. The •chief priests and the •scribes were looking for a
treacherous way to arrest and kill Him. [2] “Not during the festival,” they
said, “or there may be rioting among the people.”

The Anointing at Bethany

[3†] While He was in Bethany at the house of Simon who had a serious
skin disease, as He was reclining at the table, a woman came with an
alabaster jar of pure and expensive fragrant oil of nard. She broke the jar
and poured it on His head. [4] But some were expressing indignation to one
another: “Why has this fragrant oil been wasted? [5] For this oil might have
been sold for more than 300 •denarii and given to the poor.” And they
began to scold her.

[6] Then Jesus said, “Leave her alone. Why are you bothering her? She has
done a noble thing for Me. [7†] You always have the poor with you, and you
can do what is good for them whenever you want, but you do not always
have Me. [8] She has done what she could; she has anointed My body in
advance for burial. [9] •I assure you: Wherever the gospel is proclaimed in
the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told in memory of
her.”

[10] Then Judas Iscariot, one of the Twelve, went to the chief priests to
hand Him over to them. [11] And when they heard this, they were glad and
promised to give him silver. [A] So he started looking for a good opportunity
to betray Him.

Preparation for Passover

[12†] On the first day of Unleavened Bread, when they sacrifice the
Passover lamb, His disciples asked Him, “Where do You want us to go and
prepare the Passover so You may eat it? ”

[13] So He sent two of His disciples and told them, “Go into the city, and a
man carrying a water jug will meet you. Follow him. [14] Wherever he enters,

tell the owner of the house, 'The Teacher says, "Where is the guest room
for Me to eat the Passover with My disciples? " ' 15 He will show you a
large room upstairs, furnished and ready. Make the preparations for us
there." 16 So the disciples went out, entered the city, and found it just as He
had told them, and they prepared the Passover.

Betrayal at the Passover

17 When evening came, He arrived with the Twelve. 18 While they were
reclining and eating, Jesus said, "I assure you: One of you will betray
Me — one who is eating with Me! "

19 They began to be distressed and to say to Him one by one, "Surely not
I? "

20 He said to them, "It is one of the Twelve — the one who is dipping
bread with Me in the bowl. 21† For the •Son of Man will go just as it is
written about Him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is
betrayed! It would have been better for that man if he had not been born."

The First Lord's Supper

22† As they were eating, He took bread, blessed and broke it, gave it to
them, and said, "Take it; this is My body."

23 Then He took a cup, and after giving thanks, He gave it to them, and
so they all drank from it. 24 He said to them, "This is My blood that
establishes the covenant; it is shed for many. 25 I assure you: I will no
longer drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it in a new
way in the kingdom of God." 26 After singing psalms, they went out to the
•Mount of Olives.

Peter's Denial Predicted

27† Then Jesus said to them, "All of you will run away, because it is
written:

I will strike the shepherd,
and the sheep will be scattered.

[28] But after I have been resurrected, I will go ahead of you to Galilee."

[29] Peter told Him, "Even if everyone runs away, I will certainly not! "

[30†] "I assure you," Jesus said to him, "today, this very night, before the rooster crows twice, you will deny Me three times! "

[31] But he kept insisting, "If I have to die with You, I will never deny You! " And they all said the same thing.

The Prayer in the Garden

[32] Then they came to a place named Gethsemane, and He told His
disciples, "Sit here while I pray." [33] He took Peter, James, and John with
Him, and He began to be deeply distressed and horrified. [34] Then He said to
them, "My soul is swallowed up in sorrow — to the point of death. Remain
here and stay awake." [35] Then He went a little farther, fell to the ground,
and began to pray that if it were possible, the hour might pass from Him.
[36] And He said, "•*Abba*, Father! All things are possible for You. Take this
cup away from Me. Nevertheless, not what I will, but what You will."

[37] Then He came and found them sleeping. "Simon, are you sleeping? "
He asked Peter. "Couldn't you stay awake one hour? [38] Stay awake and
pray so that you won't enter into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the
flesh is weak."

[39] Once again He went away and prayed, saying the same thing. [40] And
He came again and found them sleeping, because they could not keep their
eyes open. [B] They did not know what to say to Him. [41] Then He came a
third time and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? Enough!
The time has come. Look, the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands
of sinners. [42] Get up; let's go! See — My betrayer is near."

The Judas Kiss

43 While He was still speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, suddenly
arrived. With him was a mob, with swords and clubs, from the chief priests,
the scribes, and the elders. 44 His betrayer had given them a signal. “The
One I kiss,” he said, “He’s the One; arrest Him and take Him away under
guard.” 45 So when he came, he went right up to Him and said,
“•Rabbi! ” — and kissed Him. 46 Then they took hold of Him and arrested
Him. 47 And one of those who stood by drew his sword, struck the high
priest’s •slave, and cut off his ear.

48 But Jesus said to them, “Have you come out with swords and clubs, as
though I were a criminal, to capture Me? 49 Every day I was among you,
teaching in the •temple complex, and you didn’t arrest Me. But the
Scriptures must be fulfilled.” 50 Then they all deserted Him and ran away.

51 Now a certain young man, having a linen cloth wrapped around his
naked body, was following Him. They caught hold of him, 52 but he left the
linen cloth behind and ran away naked.

Jesus Faces the Sanhedrin

53[†] They led Jesus away to the high priest, and all the chief priests, the
elders, and the scribes convened. 54 Peter followed Him at a distance,
right into the high priest’s courtyard. He was sitting with the temple
police, [C], warming himself by the fire. [D]

55 The chief priests and the whole •Sanhedrin were looking for testimony
against Jesus to put Him to death, but they could find none. 56 For many
were giving false testimony against Him, but the testimonies did not agree.
57 Some stood up and were giving false testimony against Him, stating,
58 “We heard Him say, ‘I will demolish this sanctuary made by human
hands, and in three days I will build another not made by hands.’ ” 59 Yet
their testimony did not agree even on this.

60 Then the high priest stood up before them all and questioned Jesus,
"Don't You have an answer to what these men are testifying against You? "
61† But He kept silent and did not answer anything. Again the high priest
questioned Him, "Are You the •Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One? "

62 "I am," said Jesus, "and all of you will see **the Son of Man seated at the right hand** of the Power and **coming with the clouds of heaven**."

63† Then the high priest tore his robes and said, "Why do we still need
witnesses? 64 You have heard the blasphemy! What is your decision? " E

And they all condemned Him to be deserving of death. 65 Then some
began to spit on Him, to blindfold Him, and to beat Him, saying,
"Prophesy! " The temple police also took Him and slapped Him.

Peter Denies His Lord

66 While Peter was in the courtyard below, one of the high priest's
servants came. 67 When she saw Peter warming himself, she looked at him
and said, "You also were with that •Nazarene, Jesus."

68† But he denied it: "I don't know or understand what you're talking about! " Then he went out to the entryway, and a rooster crowed.

69 When the servant saw him again she began to tell those standing nearby, "This man is one of them! "

70 But again he denied it. After a little while those standing there said to Peter again, "You certainly are one of them, since you're also a Galilean! "

71 Then he started to curse and to swear with an oath, "I don't know this man you're talking about! "

72 Immediately a rooster crowed a second time, and Peter remembered when Jesus had spoken the word to him, "Before the rooster crows twice,

you will deny Me three times.” When he thought about it, he began to weep. [F]

Jesus Faces Pilate

15 †As soon as it was morning, the •chief priests had a meeting with the
elders, •scribes, and the whole •Sanhedrin. After tying Jesus up,
they led Him away and handed Him over to •Pilate.

2 So Pilate asked Him, “Are You the King of the Jews? ”

He answered him, “You have said it.”

3 And the chief priests began to accuse Him of many things. 4 Then
Pilate questioned Him again, “Are You not answering anything? Look how
many things they are accusing You of! ” 5 But Jesus still did not answer
anything, so Pilate was amazed.

Jesus or Barabbas

6† At the festival it was Pilate’s custom to release for the people a
prisoner they requested. 7 There was one named Barabbas, who was in
prison with rebels who had committed murder during the rebellion. 8 The
crowd came up and began to ask Pilate to do for them as was his custom.
9 So Pilate answered them, “Do you want me to release the King of the
Jews for you? ” 10 For he knew it was because of envy that the chief
priests had handed Him over. 11 But the chief priests stirred up the crowd so
that he would release Barabbas to them instead.

12 Pilate asked them again, “Then what do you want me to do with the
One you call the King of the Jews? ”

13 Again they shouted, “Crucify Him! ”

14 Then Pilate said to them, “Why? What has He done wrong? ”

But they shouted, “Crucify Him! ” all the more.

15† Then, willing to gratify the crowd, Pilate released Barabbas to them.
And after having Jesus flogged, he handed Him over to be crucified.

Mocked by the Military

[16] Then the soldiers led Him away into the courtyard (that is,
•headquarters) and called the whole •company together. [17†] They dressed
Him in a purple robe, twisted together a crown of thorns, and put it on
Him. [18] And they began to salute Him, "Hail, King of the Jews! " [19] They
kept hitting Him on the head with a reed and spitting on Him. Getting down
on their knees, they were paying Him homage. [20] When they had mocked
Him, they stripped Him of the purple robe, put His clothes on Him, and led
Him out to crucify Him.

Crucified between Two Criminals

[21] They forced a man coming in from the country, who was passing by,
to carry Jesus' cross. He was Simon, a Cyrenian, the father of Alexander
and Rufus. [22] And they brought Jesus to the place called *Golgotha* (which
means Skull Place). [23†] They tried to give Him wine mixed with myrrh,
but He did not take it. [24] Then they crucified Him and divided His clothes,
casting lots for them to decide what each would get. [25†] Now it was nine in
the morning [A] when they crucified Him. [26†] The inscription of the charge
written against Him was:

THE KING OF THE JEWS.

[27†] They crucified two criminals [B], with Him, one on His right and one
on His left. [[28] So the Scripture was fulfilled that says: **And He was
counted among outlaws.**] , [29] Those who passed by were yelling insults
at [C] Him, shaking their heads, and saying, "Ha! The One who would
demolish the sanctuary and build it in three days, [30] save Yourself by
coming down from the cross! " [31] In the same way, the chief priests with
the scribes were mocking Him to one another and saying, "He saved
others; He cannot save Himself! [32†] Let the •Messiah, the King of Israel,
come down now from the cross, so that we may see and believe." Even
those who were crucified with Him were taunting Him.

The Death of Jesus

33† When it was noon, [D] darkness came over the whole land [E] until three
in the afternoon. [F], 34† And at three [G] Jesus cried out with a loud voice,
“Eloi, Eloi, lemá sabachtháni?” which is translated, “**My God, My God,
why have You forsaken Me?**”

35 When some of those standing there heard this, they said, “Look, He’s
calling for Elijah! ” 36† Someone ran and filled a sponge with sour wine,
fixed it on a reed, offered Him a drink, and said, “Let’s see if Elijah comes
to take Him down! ”

37 But Jesus let out a loud cry and breathed His last. 38† Then the curtain
of the sanctuary was split in two from top to bottom. 39 When the
•centurion, who was standing opposite Him, saw the way He breathed His
last, he said, “This man really was God’s Son! ” [H]

40 There were also women looking on from a distance. Among them
were •Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the younger and of
Joses, and Salome. 41 When He was in Galilee, they would follow Him and
help Him. Many other women had come up with Him to Jerusalem.

The Burial of Jesus

42† When it was already evening, because it was preparation day (that is,
the day before the Sabbath), 43 Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent member
of the Sanhedrin who was himself looking forward to the kingdom of God,
came and boldly went in to Pilate and asked for Jesus’ body. 44 Pilate was
surprised that He was already dead. Summoning the centurion, he asked
him whether He had already died. 45 When he found out from the centurion,
he gave the corpse to Joseph. 46 After he bought some fine linen, he took
Him down and wrapped Him in the linen. Then he placed Him in a tomb
cut out of the rock, and rolled a stone against the entrance to the tomb.
47† Now Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses were watching
where He was placed.

Resurrection Morning

16 †When the Sabbath was over, •Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so they could go and anoint Him.
2† Very early in the morning, on the first day of the week, they went to the
tomb at sunrise. 3 They were saying to one another, “Who will roll away
the stone from the entrance to the tomb for us? ” 4 Looking up, they
observed that the stone — which was very large — had been rolled away.
5† When they entered the tomb, they saw a young man dressed in a long
white robe sitting on the right side; they were amazed and alarmed.

ARTICLE

What About "Gospels" Not in our New Testament? ⇒

6† “Don’t be alarmed,” he told them. “You are looking for Jesus the
•Nazarene, who was crucified. He has been resurrected! He is not here!
See the place where they put Him. 7 But go, tell His disciples and Peter,
‘He is going ahead of you to Galilee; you will see Him there just as He told
you.’ ”

8† So they went out and started running from the tomb, because trembling and astonishment overwhelmed them. And they said nothing to anyone, since they were afraid.

Appearances of the Risen Lord

[9 Early on the first day of the week, after He had risen, He appeared
first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom He had driven seven demons.
10 She went and reported to those who had been with Him, as they were
mourning and weeping. 11 Yet, when they heard that He was alive and had
been seen by her, they did not believe it. 12 Then after this, He appeared in
a different form to two of them walking on their way into the country.
13 And they went and reported it to the rest, who did not believe them either.

The Great Commission

[14] Later, He appeared to the Eleven themselves as they were reclining at
the table. He rebuked their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they did
not believe those who saw Him after He had been resurrected. [15] Then He
said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole
creation. [16] Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever
does not believe will be condemned. [17] And these signs will accompany
those who believe: In My name they will drive out demons; they will speak
in new languages; [18] they will pick up snakes; if they should drink anything
deadly, it will never harm them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they
will get well.”

TWISTED SCRIPTURE

Mark 16:18

In 1910, after reading Mk 16:18, George Went Hensley introduced snake handling to churches throughout the Appalachian region. Although this passage is a part of the ending of Mk that is considered by many not to be original, much of the church for 18 centuries viewed this passage as authoritative. Therefore, if it is interpreted literally, one would expect to hear that early Christians obeyed the directive to "pick up snakes." No evidence exists that this ever happened, although the Apostle Paul was protected when bitten by a venomous viper (Ac 28:1-6).

The Ascension

[19] Then after speaking to them, the Lord Jesus was taken up into heaven
and sat down at the right hand of God. [20] And they went out and preached
everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word by the
accompanying signs.]

LUKE

Introduction to Luke

LUKE

The Dedication to Theophilus

1 [†]Many have undertaken to compile a narrative about the events that
have been fulfilled [A] among us, 2 just as the original eyewitnesses and
servants of the word handed them down to us. 3 It also seemed good to me,
since I have carefully investigated everything from the very first, to write to
you in an orderly sequence, most honorable Theophilus, 4 so that you may
know the certainty of the things about which you have been instructed. [B]

Gabriel Predicts John's Birth

5[†] In the days of King •Herod of Judea, there was a priest of Abijah's
division named Zechariah. His wife was from the daughters of Aaron, and
her name was Elizabeth. 6 Both were righteous in God's sight, living
without blame according to all the commands and requirements of the
Lord. 7 But they had no children [C] because Elizabeth could not conceive, [D]
and both of them were well along in years. [E]

8 When his division was on duty and he was serving as priest before
God, 9 it happened that he was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the
priesthood, to enter the sanctuary of the Lord and burn incense. 10 At the
hour of incense the whole assembly of the people was praying outside.
11 An angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing to the right of the altar of
incense. 12 When Zechariah saw him, he was startled and overcome with
fear. [F] 13 But the angel said to him:

Do not be afraid, Zechariah,
because your prayer has been heard.
Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son,
and you will name him John.
14 There will be joy and delight for you,
and many will rejoice at his birth.
15 For he will be great in the sight of the Lord
and will never drink wine or beer.
He will be filled with the Holy Spirit
while still in his mother's womb.
16[†] He will turn many of the sons of Israel

to the Lord their God.
[17] And he will go before Him
in the spirit and power of Elijah,
to turn the hearts of fathers
to their children,
and the disobedient
to the understanding of the righteous,
to make ready for the Lord a prepared people.

[18] “How can I know this? ” Zechariah asked the angel. “For I am an old
man, and my wife is well along in years.” [G]

[19] The angel answered him, “I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of
God, and I was sent to speak to you and tell you this good news. [20] Now
listen! You will become silent and unable to speak until the day these things take place, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their proper time.”

[21] Meanwhile, the people were waiting for Zechariah, amazed that he
stayed so long in the sanctuary. [22] When he did come out, he could not
speak to them. Then they realized that he had seen a vision in the sanctuary.
He kept making signs to them and remained speechless. [23] When the days
of his ministry were completed, he went back home.

[24] After these days his wife Elizabeth conceived and kept herself in
seclusion for five months. She said, [25] “The Lord has done this for me. He
has looked with favor in these days to take away my disgrace among the people.”

Gabriel Predicts Jesus’ Birth

[26†] In the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in
Galilee called Nazareth, [27†] to a virgin •engaged to a man named Joseph,
of the house of David. The virgin’s name was Mary. [28] And the angel came
to her and said, “Rejoice, favored woman! The Lord is with you.” [29] But

she was deeply troubled by this statement, wondering what kind of greeting
this could be. 30 Then the angel told her:

Do not be afraid, Mary,
for you have found favor with God.
31 Now listen:
You will conceive and give birth to a son,
and you will call His name Jesus.
32† He will be great
and will be called the Son of the Most High,
and the Lord God will give Him
the throne of His father David.
33† He will reign over the house of Jacob forever,
and His kingdom will have no end.

ARTICLE

Could the Gospel Writers Withstand the Scrutiny of a Lawyer? ⇒

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34 Mary asked the angel, "How can this be, since I have not been intimate
with a man? " H

35† The angel replied to her:

"The Holy Spirit will come upon you,
and the power of the Most High will overshadow you.
Therefore, the holy One to be born
will be called the Son of God.

36 And consider your relative Elizabeth — even she has conceived a son in
her old age, and this is the sixth month for her who was called childless.
37 For nothing will be impossible with God."

[38] “I am the Lord’s •slave,” [I] said Mary. “May it be done to me according
to your word.” Then the angel left her.

Mary’s Visit to Elizabeth

[39] In those days Mary set out and hurried to a town in the hill country of
Judah [40] where she entered Zechariah’s house and greeted Elizabeth.
[41] When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the baby leaped inside her, [J] and
Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. [42] Then she exclaimed with a
loud cry:

“You are the most blessed of women,
and your child will be blessed! [K]

[43] How could this happen to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to
me? [44] For you see, when the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the
baby leaped for joy inside me! [L] [45] She who has believed is blessed because
what was spoken to her by the Lord will be fulfilled! ”

Mary’s Praise

[46†] And Mary said:

My soul proclaims the greatness of [M] the Lord,
[47] and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior,
[48] because He has looked with favor
on the humble condition of His slave.
Surely, from now on all generations
will call me blessed,
[49] because the Mighty One
has done great things for me,
and His name is holy.
[50] His mercy is from generation to generation
on those who fear Him.
[51†] He has done a mighty deed with His arm;
He has scattered the proud

because of the thoughts of their hearts;
[52] He has toppled the mighty from their thrones
and exalted the lowly.
[53] He has satisfied the hungry with good things
and sent the rich away empty.
[54] He has helped His servant Israel,
mindful of His mercy,
[55] just as He spoke to our ancestors,
to Abraham and his descendants [N] forever.

[56] And Mary stayed with her about three months; then she returned to her home.

The Birth and Naming of John

[57] Now the time had come for Elizabeth to give birth, and she had a son.
[58] Then her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown her His
great mercy, [O] and they rejoiced with her.

[59] When they came to circumcise the child on the eighth day, they were
going to name him Zechariah, after his father. [60] But his mother responded,
"No! He will be called John."

[61] Then they said to her, "None of your relatives has that name." [62] So
they motioned to his father to find out what he wanted him to be called.
[63] He asked for a writing tablet and wrote:

HIS NAME IS JOHN.

And they were all amazed. [64] Immediately his mouth was opened and his
tongue set free, and he began to speak, praising God. [65] Fear came on all
those who lived around them, and all these things were being talked about
throughout the hill country of Judea. [66] All who heard about him took it to
heart, saying, "What then will this child become? " For, indeed, the Lord's
hand was with him.

Zechariah's Prophecy

67 Then his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied:

68 Praise the Lord, the God of Israel,
because He has visited
and provided •redemption for His people.
69 He has raised up a •horn of salvation for us
in the house of His servant David,
70 just as He spoke by the mouth
of His holy prophets in ancient times;
71 salvation from our enemies
and from the clutches [P] of those who hate us.
72 He has dealt mercifully with our fathers
and remembered His holy covenant —
73 the oath that He swore to our father Abraham.
He has given us the privilege,
74 since we have been rescued
from our enemies' clutches, [Q]
to serve Him without fear
75 in holiness and righteousness
in His presence all our days.
76 And child, you will be called
a prophet of the Most High,
for you will go before the Lord
to prepare His ways,
77 to give His people knowledge of salvation
through the forgiveness of their sins.
78 Because of our God's merciful compassion,
the Dawn from on high will visit us
79 to shine on those who live in darkness
and the shadow of death,
to guide our feet into the way of peace.

80 The child grew up and became spiritually strong, and he was in the
wilderness until the day of his public appearance to Israel.

The Birth of Jesus

2 [†]In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that the whole
empire [A] should be registered. 2[†] This first registration took place
while [B] Quirinius was governing Syria. 3[†] So everyone went to be
registered, each to his own town.

4 And Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee, to
Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of
the house and family line of David, 5 to be registered along with Mary, who
was •engaged to him and was pregnant. 6 While they were there, the time
came for her to give birth. 7[†] Then she gave birth to her firstborn Son, and
she wrapped Him snugly in cloth and laid Him in a feeding
trough — because there was no room for them at the lodging place.

The Shepherds and the Angels

8 In the same region, shepherds were staying out in the fields and keeping
watch at night over their flock. 9 Then an angel of the Lord stood before [C]
them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were
terrified. [D] 10 But the angel said to them, "Don't be afraid, for look, I
proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people: [E]
11[†] Today a Savior, who is •Messiah the Lord, was born for you in the city
of David. 12 This will be the sign for you: You will find a baby wrapped
snugly in cloth and lying in a feeding trough."

13 Suddenly there was a multitude of the heavenly host with the angel,
praising God and saying:

14 Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and peace on earth to people He favors! ,

15 When the angels had left them and returned to heaven, the shepherds
said to one another, "Let's go straight to Bethlehem and see what has
happened, which the Lord has made known to us."

[16] They hurried off and found both Mary and Joseph, and the baby who
was lying in the feeding trough. [17] After seeing them, they reported the
message they were told about this child, [18] and all who heard it were
amazed at what the shepherds said to them. [19†] But Mary was treasuring up
all these things [G] in her heart and meditating on them. [20] The shepherds
returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had seen and heard, just
as they had been told.

The Circumcision and Presentation of Jesus

[21] When the eight days were completed for His circumcision, He was
named Jesus — the name given by the angel before He was conceived. [H]
[22†] And when the days of their purification according to the law of Moses
were finished, they brought Him up to Jerusalem to present Him to the
Lord [23] (just as it is written in the law of the Lord: **Every firstborn male** [I]
will be dedicated [J] **to the Lord**) [24] and to offer a sacrifice (according to
what is stated in the law of the Lord: **a pair of turtledoves or two young
pigeons**).

Simeon's Prophetic Praise

[25] There was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon. This man was
righteous and devout, looking forward to Israel's consolation, and the
Holy Spirit was on him. [26] It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit
that he would not see death before he saw the Lord's Messiah. [27] Guided
by the Spirit, he entered [K] the •temple complex. When the parents brought
in the child Jesus to perform for Him what was customary under the law,
[28] Simeon took Him up in his arms, praised God, and said:

[29] Now, Master,
You can dismiss Your •slave in peace,
as You promised.
[30] For my eyes have seen Your salvation.
[31] You have prepared it
in the presence of all peoples —

32 a light for revelation to the Gentiles [L]
and glory to Your people Israel.

33 His father and mother were amazed at what was being said about
Him. 34 Then Simeon blessed them and told His mother Mary: “Indeed, this
child is destined to cause the fall and rise of many in Israel and to be a sign
that will be opposed [M] — 35 and a sword will pierce your own soul — that
the thoughts [N] of many hearts may be revealed.”

Anna’s Testimony

36 There was also a prophetess, Anna, a daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe
of Asher. She was well along in years, [O] having lived with her husband
seven years after her marriage, [P], 37 and was a widow for 84 years. [Q] She
did not leave the temple complex, serving God night and day with fasting
and prayers. 38 At that very moment, [R] she came up and began to thank
God and to speak about Him to all who were looking forward to the
•redemption of Jerusalem.

The Family’s Return to Nazareth

39† When they had completed everything according to the law of the
Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. 40 The boy
grew up and became strong, filled with wisdom, and God’s grace was on
Him.

In His Father’s House

41 Every year His parents traveled to Jerusalem for the •Passover
Festival. 42† When He was 12 years old, they went up according to the
custom of the festival. 43 After those days were over, as they were
returning, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but His parents did not
know it. 44 Assuming He was in the traveling party, they went a day’s
journey. Then they began looking for Him among their relatives and
friends. 45 When they did not find Him, they returned to Jerusalem to search

for Him. [46] After three days, they found Him in the temple complex sitting
among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. [47] And all
those who heard Him were astounded at His understanding and His
answers. [48] When His parents saw Him, they were astonished, and His
mother said to Him, "Son, why have You treated us like this? Your father
and I have been anxiously searching for You."

[49] "Why were you searching for Me? " He asked them. "Didn't you know
that I had to be in My Father's house? " [50] But they did not understand
what He said to them.

In Favor with God and with People

[51] Then He went down with them and came to Nazareth and was obedient
to them. His mother kept all these things in her heart. [52] And Jesus
increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and with people.

The Messiah's Herald

3 †In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, while Pontius
•Pilate was governor of Judea, •Herod was tetrarch [A] of Galilee, his
brother Philip tetrarch of the region of Iturea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias
tetrarch of Abilene, 2† during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas,
God's word came to John the son of Zechariah in the wilderness. 3† He
went into all the vicinity of the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance [B]
for the forgiveness of sins, 4 as it is written in the book of the words of the
prophet Isaiah:

A voice of one crying out in the wilderness:
Prepare the way for the Lord;
make His paths straight!
5 **Every valley will be filled,**
and every mountain and hill will be made low; [C]
the crooked will become straight,
the rough ways smooth,
6† **and everyone** [D] **will see the salvation of God.**

7 He then said to the crowds who came out to be baptized by him, "Brood
of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? 8 Therefore
produce fruit consistent with repentance. And don't start saying to
yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father,' for I tell you that God is able
to raise up children for Abraham from these stones! 9 Even now the ax is
ready to strike [E] the root of the trees! Therefore, every tree that doesn't
produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire."

10 "What then should we do? " the crowds were asking him.

11 He replied to them, "The one who has two shirts [F] must share with
someone who has none, and the one who has food must do the same."

12 Tax collectors also came to be baptized, and they asked him, "Teacher,
what should we do? "

[13] He told them, “Don’t collect any more than what you have been authorized.”

[14] Some soldiers also questioned him: “What should we do? ”

He said to them, “Don’t take money from anyone by force or false accusation; be satisfied with your wages.”

[15] Now the people were waiting expectantly, and all of them were
debating in their minds [G] whether John might be the •Messiah. [16] John
answered them all, “I baptize you with [H] water, but One is coming who is more powerful than I. I am not worthy to untie the strap of His sandals. He
will baptize you with [I] the Holy Spirit and fire. [17†] His winnowing shovel is in His hand to clear His threshing floor and gather the wheat into His barn, but the chaff He will burn up with a fire that never goes out.”
[18] Then, along with many other exhortations, he proclaimed good news to
the people. [19] But Herod the tetrarch, being rebuked by him about Herodias, his brother’s wife, and about all the evil things Herod had done,
[20] added this to everything else — he locked John up in prison.

The Baptism of Jesus

[21] When all the people were baptized, Jesus also was baptized. As He
was praying, heaven opened, [22†] and the Holy Spirit descended on Him in a physical appearance like a dove. And a voice came from heaven:

You are My beloved Son.
I take delight in You!

The Genealogy of Jesus Christ

[23†] As He began His ministry, Jesus was about 30 years old and was thought to be the

son of Joseph, son of Heli,

[24] son of Matthat, son of Levi,
son of Melchi, son of Jannai,
son of Joseph, [25] son of Mattathias,
son of Amos, son of Nahum,
son of Esli, son of Naggai,
[26] son of Maath, son of Mattathias,
son of Semein, son of Josech,
son of Joda, [27†] son of Joanan,
son of Rhesa, son of Zerubbabel,
son of Shealtiel, son of Neri,
[28] son of Melchi, son of Addi,
son of Cosam, son of Elmadam,
son of Er, [29] son of Joshua,
son of Eliezer, son of Jorim,
son of Matthat, son of Levi,
[30] son of Simeon, son of Judah,
son of Joseph, son of Jonam,
son of Eliakim, [31] son of Melea,
son of Menna, son of Mattatha,
son of Nathan, son of David,
[32] son of Jesse, son of Obed,
son of Boaz, son of Salmon,
son of Nahshon, [33] son of Amminadab,
son of Ram, son of Hezron,
son of Perez, son of Judah,
[34] son of Jacob, son of Isaac,
son of Abraham, son of Terah,
son of Nahor, [35] son of Serug,
son of Reu, son of Peleg,
son of Eber, son of Shelah,
[36] son of Cainan, son of Arphaxad,
son of Shem, son of Noah,
son of Lamech, [37] son of Methuselah,
son of Enoch, son of Jared,
son of Mahalaleel, son of Cainan,

38† son of Enos, son of Seth,
son of Adam, son of God.

The Temptation of Jesus

4 [†] Then Jesus returned from the Jordan, full of the Holy Spirit, and was
led by the Spirit in the wilderness 2[†] for 40 days to be tempted by the
Devil. He ate nothing during those days, and when they were over, [A] He
was hungry. 3 The Devil said to Him, “If You are the Son of God, tell this
stone to become bread.”

4 But Jesus answered him, “It is written: **Man must not live on bread alone.**” ,

5[†] So he took Him up and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in
a moment of time. 6 The Devil said to Him, “I will give You their splendor
and all this authority, because it has been given over to me, and I can give
it to anyone I want. 7 If You, then, will worship me, [B] all will be Yours.”

8 And Jesus answered him, “It is written:

TWISTED SCRIPTURE

Luke 4:8

For groups rejecting the deity of Jesus Christ, this verse is important. Only God is to be worshiped. When compared with other passages, this verse actually presents a case for Jesus' divine nature, not an argument against it. Scripture is clear in saying that Jesus received worship from a leper (Mt 8:2), from a disciple (Jn 20:28), and from angels (Heb 1:6). If God alone is to be worshiped, then Jesus must be God.

Worship the Lord your God,
and serve Him only.”

9 So he took Him to Jerusalem, had Him stand on the pinnacle of the
temple, and said to Him, “If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down
from here. 10 For it is written:

He will give His angels orders concerning you,
to protect you, [11] and
they will support you with their hands,
so that you will not strike
your foot against a stone.”

[12] And Jesus answered him, “It is said: **Do not test the Lord your**
God.”

[13] After the Devil had finished every temptation, he departed from Him
for a time.

Ministry in Galilee

[14†] Then Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news
about Him spread throughout the entire vicinity. [15] He was teaching in their
•synagogues, being acclaimed [C] by everyone.

Rejection at Nazareth

[16†] He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. As usual, He
entered the synagogue on the Sabbath day and stood up to read. [17] The
scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to Him, and unrolling the scroll, He
found the place where it was written:

[18†] **The Spirit of the Lord is on Me,**
because He has anointed Me
to preach good news to the poor.
He has sent Me
to proclaim freedom to the captives
and recovery of sight to the blind,
to set free the oppressed,
[19] **to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.** ,

[20] He then rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat
down. And the eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fixed on Him.

[21] He began by saying to them, “Today as you listen, this Scripture has been
fulfilled.”

[22] They were all speaking well of Him [D] and were amazed by the
gracious words that came from His mouth, yet they said, “Isn’t this Joseph’s
son? ”

[23] Then He said to them, “No doubt you will quote this proverb to Me:
‘Doctor, heal yourself. So all we’ve heard that took place in Capernaum, do
here in Your hometown also.’ ”

[24] He also said, “•I assure you: No prophet is accepted in his hometown.
[25] But I say to you, there were certainly many widows in Israel in Elijah’s
days, when the sky was shut up for three years and six months while a
great famine came over all the land. [26] Yet Elijah was not sent to any of
them — but to a widow at Zarephath in Sidon. [27] And in the prophet
Elisha’s time, there were many in Israel who had serious skin diseases, yet
not one of them was healed — only Naaman the Syrian.”

[28] When they heard this, everyone in the synagogue was enraged. [29] They
got up, drove Him out of town, and brought Him to the edge [E] of the hill
that their town was built on, intending to hurl Him over the cliff. [30] But He
passed right through the crowd and went on His way.

Driving Out an Unclean Spirit

[31] Then He went down to Capernaum, a town in Galilee, and was
teaching them on the Sabbath. [32] They were astonished at His teaching
because His message had authority. [33] In the synagogue there was a man
with an •unclean demonic spirit who cried out with a loud voice, [34] “Leave
us alone! [F] What do You have to do with us, [G] Jesus — •Nazarene? Have
You come to destroy us? I know who You are — the Holy One of God! ”

[35] But Jesus rebuked him and said, “Be quiet and come out of him! ”

And throwing him down before them, the demon came out of him without hurting him at all. [36] Amazement came over them all, and they kept saying to one another, “What is this message? For He commands the unclean spirits with authority and power, and they come out! ” [37] And news about Him began to go out to every place in the vicinity.

Healings at Capernaum

[38] After He left the synagogue, He entered Simon’s house. Simon’s mother-in-law was suffering from a high fever, and they asked Him about her. [39] So He stood over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her. She got up immediately and began to serve them.

[40] When the sun was setting, all those who had anyone sick with various diseases brought them to Him. As He laid His hands on each one of them, He would heal them. [41†] Also, demons were coming out of many, shouting and saying, “You are the Son of God! ” But He rebuked them and would not allow them to speak, because they knew He was the •Messiah.

Preaching in Galilee

[42] When it was day, He went out and made His way to a deserted place. But the crowds were searching for Him. They came to Him and tried to keep Him from leaving them. [43] But He said to them, “I must proclaim the good news about the kingdom of God to the other towns also, because I was sent for this purpose.” [44] And He was preaching in the synagogues of Galilee.

The First Disciples

5 [†]As the crowd was pressing in on Jesus to hear God’s word, He was
standing by Lake Gennesaret. 2 He saw two boats at the edge of the
lake; [A] the fishermen had left them and were washing their nets. 3 He got
into one of the boats, which belonged to Simon, and asked him to put out a
little from the land. Then He sat down and was teaching the crowds from
the boat.

4 When He had finished speaking, He said to Simon, “Put out into deep
water and let down your nets for a catch.”

5 “Master,” Simon replied, “we’ve worked hard all night long and caught
nothing! But at Your word, I’ll let down the nets.”

6 When they did this, they caught a great number of fish, and their nets
began to tear. 7 So they signaled to their partners in the other boat to come
and help them; they came and filled both boats so full that they began to
sink.

8 When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus’ knees and said, “Go away
from me, because I’m a sinful man, Lord! ” 9 For he and all those with him
were amazed [B] at the catch of fish they took, 10 and so were James and
John, Zebedee’s sons, who were Simon’s partners.

“Don’t be afraid,” Jesus told Simon. “From now on you will be catching
people! ” 11 Then they brought the boats to land, left everything, and
followed Him.

A Man Cleansed

12 While He was in one of the towns, a man was there who had a serious
skin disease all over him. He saw Jesus, fell facedown, and begged Him:
“Lord, if You are willing, You can make me •clean.”

13 Reaching out His hand, He touched him, saying, “I am willing; be
made clean,” and immediately the disease left him. 14 Then He ordered him

to tell no one: “But go and show yourself to the priest, and offer what Moses prescribed for your cleansing as a testimony to them.”

[15] But the news [C] about Him spread even more, and large crowds would
come together to hear Him and to be healed of their sicknesses. [16] Yet He
often withdrew to deserted places and prayed.

The Son of Man Forgives and Heals

[17†] On one of those days while He was teaching, •Pharisees and teachers
of the law were sitting there who had come from every village of Galilee
and Judea, and also from Jerusalem. And the Lord’s power to heal was in
Him. [18] Just then some men came, carrying on a mat a man who was
paralyzed. They tried to bring him in and set him down before Him.
[19†] Since they could not find a way to bring him in because of the crowd,
they went up on the roof and lowered him on the mat through the roof tiles
into the middle of the crowd before Jesus.

[20] Seeing their faith He said, “Friend, your sins are forgiven you.”

[21] Then the •scribes and the Pharisees began to think: “Who is this man who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone? ”

[22] But perceiving their thoughts, Jesus replied to them, “Why are you
thinking this in your hearts? [23] Which is easier: to say, ‘Your sins are
forgiven you,’ or to say, ‘Get up and walk’? [24†] But so you may know that
the •Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins” — He told the
paralyzed man, “I tell you: Get up, pick up your mat, and go home.”

[25] Immediately he got up before them, picked up what he had been lying
on, and went home glorifying God. [26] Then everyone was astounded, and
they were giving glory to God. And they were filled with awe and said,
“We have seen incredible things today! ”

The Call of Matthew

[27]† After this, Jesus went out and saw a tax collector named Levi sitting
at the tax office, and He said to him, “Follow Me! ” [28] So, leaving
everything behind, he got up and began to follow Him.

Dining with Sinners

[29] Then Levi hosted a grand banquet for Him at his house. Now there was
a large crowd of tax collectors and others who were guests [D] with them.
[30] But the Pharisees and their scribes were complaining to His disciples,
“Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners? ”

[31] Jesus replied to them, “The healthy don’t need a doctor, but the sick
do. [32] I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.”

A Question about Fasting

[33] Then they said to Him, “John’s disciples fast often and say prayers,
and those of the Pharisees do the same, but Yours eat and drink.”

[34] Jesus said to them, “You can’t make the wedding guests fast while the
groom is with them, can you? [35] But the time will come when the groom
will be taken away from them — then they will fast in those days.”

[36] He also told them a parable: “No one tears a patch from a new garment
and puts it on an old garment. Otherwise, not only will he tear the new, but
also the piece from the new garment will not match the old. [37] And no one
puts new wine into old wineskins. Otherwise, the new wine will burst the
skins, it will spill, and the skins will be ruined. [38] But new wine should be
put into fresh wineskins. [39] And no one, after drinking old wine, wants
new, because he says, ‘The old is better.’ ”

Lord of the Sabbath

6 †On a Sabbath, He passed through the grainfields. His disciples were
picking heads of grain, rubbing them in their hands, and eating them.
2 But some of the •Pharisees said, “Why are you doing what is not lawful
on the Sabbath? ”

3 Jesus answered them, “Haven’t you read what David and those who
were with him did when he was hungry — 4 how he entered the house of
God, and took and ate the •sacred bread, which is not lawful for any but the
priests to eat? He even gave some to those who were with him.” 5 Then He
told them, “The •Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath.”

The Man with the Paralyzed Hand

6 On another Sabbath He entered the •synagogue and was teaching. A
man was there whose right hand was paralyzed. 7 The •scribes and
Pharisees were watching Him closely, to see if He would heal on the
Sabbath, so that they could find a charge against Him. 8 But He knew their
thoughts and told the man with the paralyzed hand, “Get up and stand
here.” So he got up and stood there. 9 Then Jesus said to them, “I ask you:
Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do what is good or to do what is evil, to save
life or to destroy it? ” 10 After looking around at them all, He told him,
“Stretch out your hand.” He did so, and his hand was restored. 11 They,
however, were filled with rage and started discussing with one another what
they might do to Jesus.

The 12 Apostles

12† During those days He went out to the mountain to pray and spent all
night in prayer to God. 13 When daylight came, He summoned His
disciples, and He chose 12 of them — He also named them apostles:

14 Simon, whom He also named Peter,
and Andrew his brother;
James and John;
Philip and Bartholomew;

[15] Matthew and Thomas;
James the son of Alphaeus,
and Simon called the Zealot;
[16] Judas the son of James,
and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor.

Teaching and Healing

[17]† After coming down with them, He stood on a level place with a large
crowd of His disciples and a great number of people from all Judea and
Jerusalem and from the seacoast of Tyre and Sidon. [18] They came to hear
Him and to be healed of their diseases; and those tormented by •unclean
spirits were made well. [19] The whole crowd was trying to touch Him,
because power was coming out from Him and healing them all.

The Beatitudes

[20]† Then looking up at [A] His disciples, He said:

You who are poor are blessed,
because the kingdom of God is yours.
[21] You who are now hungry are blessed,
because you will be filled.
You who now weep are blessed,
because you will laugh.
[22] You are blessed when people hate you,
when they exclude you, insult you,
and slander your name as evil
because of the Son of Man.

[23] "Rejoice in that day and leap for joy! Take note — your reward is great in heaven, for this is the way their ancestors used to treat the prophets.

Woe to the Self-Satisfied

[24]† But woe to you who are rich,
for you have received your comfort.

25 Woe to you who are now full,
for you will be hungry.
Woe to you who are now laughing,
for you will mourn and weep.
26 Woe to you
when all people speak well of you,
for this is the way their ancestors
used to treat the false prophets.

Love Your Enemies

27 "But I say to you who listen: Love your enemies, do what is good to
those who hate you, 28 bless those who curse you, pray for those who
mistreat you. 29† If anyone hits you on the cheek, offer the other also. And
if anyone takes away your coat, don't hold back your shirt either. 30 Give to
everyone who asks you, and from one who takes your things, don't ask for
them back. 31 Just as you want others to do for you, do the same for them.
32 If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners
love those who love them. 33 If you do what is good to those who are good
to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners do that. 34 And if you lend
to those from whom you expect to receive, what credit is that to you? Even
sinners lend to sinners to be repaid in full. 35 But love your enemies, do
what is good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. Then your reward will
be great, and you will be sons of the Most High. For He is gracious to the
ungrateful and evil. 36 Be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful.

Do Not Judge

37† "Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you
will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven. 38 Give, and it
will be given to you; a good measure — pressed down, shaken together, and
running over — will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you
use, it will be measured back to you."

39 He also told them a parable: "Can the blind guide the blind? Won't
they both fall into a pit? 40 A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone

who is fully trained will be like his teacher.

41 “Why do you look at the speck in your brother’s eye, but don’t notice
the log in your own eye? 42 Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Brother,
let me take out the speck that is in your eye,’ when you yourself don’t see
the log in your eye? Hypocrite! First take the log out of your eye, and then
you will see clearly to take out the speck in your brother’s eye.

A Tree and Its Fruit

43 “A good tree doesn’t produce bad fruit; on the other hand, a bad tree
doesn’t produce good fruit. 44 For each tree is known by its own fruit. Figs
aren’t gathered from thornbushes, or grapes picked from a bramble bush.
45 A good man produces good out of the good storeroom of his heart. An
evil man produces evil out of the evil storeroom, for his mouth speaks from
the overflow of the heart.

The Two Foundations

46 “Why do you call Me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and don’t do the things I say? 47 I
will show you what someone is like who comes to Me, hears My words,
and acts on them: 48 He is like a man building a house, who dug deep and
laid the foundation on the rock. When the flood came, the river crashed
against that house and couldn’t shake it, because it was well built. 49 But the
one who hears and does not act is like a man who built a house on the
ground without a foundation. The river crashed against it, and immediately
it collapsed. And the destruction of that house was great! ”

A Centurion's Faith

7 [†]When He had concluded all His sayings in the hearing of the people,
He entered Capernaum. 2 A •centurion's •slave, who was highly valued
by him, was sick and about to die. 3 When the centurion heard about Jesus,
he sent some Jewish elders to Him, requesting Him to come and save the
life of his slave. 4 When they reached Jesus, they pleaded with Him
earnestly, saying, "He is worthy for You to grant this, 5 because he loves our
nation and has built us a •synagogue." 6 Jesus went with them, and when
He was not far from [A] the house, the centurion sent friends to tell Him,
"Lord, don't trouble Yourself, since I am not worthy to have You come
under my roof. 7 That is why I didn't even consider myself worthy to come
to You. But say the word, and my servant will be cured. 8 For I too am a
man placed under authority, having soldiers under my command. [B] I say to
this one, 'Go! ' and he goes; and to another, 'Come! ' and he comes; and to
my slave, 'Do this! ' and he does it."

9 Jesus heard this and was amazed at him, and turning to the crowd
following Him, He said, "I tell you, I have not found so great a faith even in
Israel! " 10 When those who had been sent returned to the house, they found
the slave in good health.

A Widow's Son Raised to Life

11 Soon afterward He was on His way to a town called Nain. His
disciples and a large crowd were traveling with Him. 12 Just as He neared
the gate of the town, a dead man was being carried out. He was his mother's
only son, and she was a widow. A large crowd from the city was also with
her. 13 When the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her and said, "Don't
cry." 14 Then He came up and touched the open coffin, [C] and the pallbearers
stopped. And He said, "Young man, I tell you, get up! "

15 The dead man sat up and began to speak, and Jesus gave him to his
mother. 16[†] Then fear [D] came over everyone, and they glorified God,
saying, "A great prophet has risen among us," and "God has visited [E] His
people." 17 This report about Him went throughout Judea and all the
vicinity.

In Praise of John the Baptist

[18†] Then John's disciples told him about all these things. So John
summoned two of his disciples [19] and sent them to the Lord, asking, "Are
You the One who is to come, or should we look for someone else? "

[20] When the men reached Him, they said, "John the Baptist sent us to ask
You, 'Are You the One who is to come, or should we look for someone
else? ' "

[21] At that time Jesus healed many people of diseases, plagues, and evil
spirits, and He granted sight to many blind people. [22] He replied to them,
"Go and report to John the things you have seen and heard: The blind
receive their sight, the lame walk, those with skin diseases are healed, the
deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor are told the good news. [23] And
anyone who is not •offended because of Me is blessed." [24] After John's
messengers left, He began to speak to the crowds about John: "What did
you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed swaying in the wind? [25] What
then did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft robes? Look, those who
are splendidly dressed and live in luxury are in royal palaces. [26] What then
did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and far more than a
prophet. [27] This is the one it is written about:

Look, I am sending My messenger
ahead of You;
he will prepare Your way before You.

[28†] I tell you, among those born of women no one is greater than John, but
the least in the kingdom of God is greater than he."

[29] (And when all the people, including the tax collectors, heard this, they
acknowledged God's way of righteousness, [F] because they had been
baptized with John's baptism. [30] But since the •Pharisees and experts in the
law had not been baptized by him, they rejected the plan of God for
themselves.)

An Unresponsive Generation

[31] "To what then should I compare the people of this generation, and
what are they like? [32] They are like children sitting in the marketplace and
calling to each other:

We played the flute for you,
but you didn't dance;
we sang a lament,
but you didn't weep!

[33] For John the Baptist did not come eating bread or drinking wine, and
you say, 'He has a demon!' [34†] The •Son of Man has come eating and
drinking, and you say, 'Look, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax
collectors and sinners!' [35] Yet wisdom is vindicated by all her children."

Much Forgiveness, Much Love

[36†] Then one of the Pharisees invited Him to eat with him. He entered the
Pharisee's house and reclined at the table. [37] And a woman in the town who
was a sinner found out that Jesus was reclining at the table in the Pharisee's
house. She brought an alabaster jar of fragrant oil [38] and stood behind Him
at His feet, weeping, and began to wash His feet with her tears. She wiped
His feet with the hair of her head, kissing them and anointing them with the
fragrant oil.

[39] When the Pharisee who had invited Him saw this, he said to himself,
"This man, if He were a prophet, would know who and what kind of
woman this is who is touching Him — she's a sinner!"

[40] Jesus replied to him, "Simon, I have something to say to you."

"Teacher," he said, "say it."

[41] "A creditor had two debtors. One owed 500 •denarii, and the other 50.
[42] Since they could not pay it back, he graciously forgave them both. So,

which of them will love him more? ”

43 Simon answered, “I suppose the one he forgave more.”

“You have judged correctly,” He told him. 44 Turning to the woman, He
said to Simon, “Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave Me
no water for My feet, but she, with her tears, has washed My feet and
wiped them with her hair. 45 You gave Me no kiss, but she hasn’t stopped
kissing My feet since I came in. 46 You didn’t anoint My head with olive
oil, but she has anointed My feet with fragrant oil. 47† Therefore I tell you,
her many sins have been forgiven; that’s why she loved much. But the one
who is forgiven little, loves little.” 48 Then He said to her, “Your sins are
forgiven.”

49 Those who were at the table with Him began to say among themselves,
“Who is this man who even forgives sins? ”

50 And He said to the woman, “Your faith has saved you. Go in peace.”

Many Women Support Christ's Work

8 Soon afterward He was traveling from one town and village to another,
preaching and telling the good news of the kingdom of God. The
Twelve were with Him, 2 and also some women who had been healed of
evil spirits and sicknesses: Mary, called •Magdalene (seven demons had
come out of her); 3 Joanna the wife of Chuza, •Herod's steward; Susanna;
and many others who were supporting them from their possessions.

The Parable of the Sower

4 As a large crowd was gathering, and people were flocking to Him from
every town, He said in a parable: 5 "A sower went out to sow his seed. As
he was sowing, some fell along the path; it was trampled on, and the birds
of the sky ate it up. 6 Other seed fell on the rock; when it sprang up, it
withered, since it lacked moisture. 7 Other seed fell among thorns; the
thorns sprang up with it and choked it. 8 Still other seed fell on good
ground; when it sprang up, it produced a crop: 100 times what was sown."
As He said this, He called out, "Anyone who has ears to hear should
listen! "

Why Jesus Used Parables

9 Then His disciples asked Him, "What does this parable mean? " 10† So
He said, "The •secrets of the kingdom of God have been given for you to
know, but to the rest it is in parables, so that

Looking they may not see,
and hearing they may not understand.

The Parable of the Sower Explained

11 "This is the meaning of the parable: The seed is the word of God.
12 The seed along the path are those who have heard and then the Devil
comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not
believe and be saved. 13 And the seed on the rock are those who, when they
hear, welcome the word with joy. Having no root, these believe for a while
and depart in a time of testing. 14 As for the seed that fell among thorns,

these are the ones who, when they have heard, go on their way and are
choked with worries, riches, and pleasures of life, and produce no mature
fruit. [15] But the seed in the good ground — these are the ones who, having
heard the word with an honest and good heart, hold on to it and by
enduring, bear fruit.

Using Your Light

[16] "No one, after lighting a lamp, covers it with a basket or puts it under
a bed, but puts it on a lampstand so that those who come in may see its
light. [17] For nothing is concealed that won't be revealed, and nothing
hidden that won't be made known and come to light. [18†] Therefore take
care how you listen. For whoever has, more will be given to him; and
whoever does not have, even what he thinks he has will be taken away from
him."

True Relationships

[19†] Then His mother and brothers came to Him, but they could not meet
with Him because of the crowd. [20] He was told, "Your mother and Your
brothers are standing outside, wanting to see You."

[21] But He replied to them, "My mother and My brothers are those who
hear and do the word of God."

Wind and Wave Obey the Master

[22] One day He and His disciples got into a boat, and He told them, "Let's
cross over to the other side of the lake." So they set out, [23] and as they were
sailing He fell asleep. Then a fierce windstorm came down on the lake; they
were being swamped and were in danger. [24] They came and woke Him up,
saying, "Master, Master, we're going to die! " Then He got up and rebuked
the wind and the raging waves. So they ceased, and there was a calm. [25] He
said to them, "Where is your faith? "

They were fearful and amazed, asking one another, “Who can this be? [A] He commands even the winds and the waves, and they obey Him! ”

Demons Driven Out by the Master

26† Then they sailed to the region of the Gerasenes, which is opposite
Galilee. 27† When He got out on land, a demon-possessed man from the
town met Him. For a long time he had worn no clothes and did not stay in a
house but in the tombs. 28 When he saw Jesus, he cried out, fell down
before Him, and said in a loud voice, “What do You have to do with me, [B],
Jesus, You Son of the Most High God? I beg You, don’t torment me! ”
29 For He had commanded the •unclean spirit to come out of the man. Many
times it had seized him, and though he was guarded, bound by chains and
shackles, he would snap the restraints and be driven by the demon into
deserted places.

30 “What is your name? ” Jesus asked him.

“Legion,” he said — because many demons had entered him. 31 And
they begged Him not to banish them to the •abyss.

32† A large herd of pigs was there, feeding on the hillside. The demons
begged Him to permit them to enter the pigs, and He gave them permission.
33 The demons came out of the man and entered the pigs, and the herd
rushed down the steep bank into the lake and drowned. 34 When the men
who tended them saw what had happened, they ran off and reported it in the
town and in the countryside. 35 Then people went out to see what had
happened. They came to Jesus and found the man the demons had departed
from, sitting at Jesus’ feet, dressed and in his right mind. And they were
afraid. 36 Meanwhile, the eyewitnesses reported to them how the demon-
possessed man was delivered. 37 Then all the people of the Gerasene
region asked Him to leave them, because they were gripped by great fear.
So getting into the boat, He returned.

38 The man from whom the demons had departed kept begging Him to be
with Him. But He sent him away and said, 39 “Go back to your home, and
tell all that God has done for you.” And off he went, proclaiming
throughout the town all that Jesus had done for him.

A Girl Restored and a Woman Healed

40 When Jesus returned, the crowd welcomed Him, for they were all
expecting Him. 41 Just then, a man named Jairus came. He was a leader of
the •synagogue. He fell down at Jesus’ feet and pleaded with Him to come
to his house, 42 because he had an only daughter about 12 years old, and
she was at death’s door. [C]

While He was going, the crowds were nearly crushing Him. 43 A woman
suffering from bleeding for 12 years, who had spent all she had on doctors
yet could not be healed by any, 44 approached from behind and touched the
•tassel of His robe. Instantly her bleeding stopped.

45 “Who touched Me? ” Jesus asked.

When they all denied it, Peter said, “Master, the crowds are hemming
You in and pressing against You.”

46† “Someone did touch Me,” said Jesus. “I know that power has gone
out from Me.” 47 When the woman saw that she was discovered, [D] she
came trembling and fell down before Him. In the presence of all the people,
she declared the reason she had touched Him and how she was instantly
cured. 48 “Daughter,” He said to her, “your faith has made you well. Go in
peace.”

49 While He was still speaking, someone came from the synagogue
leader’s house, saying, “Your daughter is dead. Don’t bother the Teacher
anymore.”

50 When Jesus heard it, He answered him, “Don’t be afraid. Only believe,
and she will be made well.” 51 After He came to the house, He let no one

enter with Him except Peter, John, James, and the child's father and
mother. 52 Everyone was crying and mourning for her. But He said, "Stop
crying, for she is not dead but asleep."

53 They started laughing at Him, because they knew she was dead. 54 So
He took her by the hand and called out, "Child, get up!" 55 Her spirit
returned, and she got up at once. Then He gave orders that she be given
something to eat. 56 Her parents were astounded, but He instructed them to
tell no one what had happened.

Commissioning the Twelve

9 †Summoning the Twelve, He gave them power and authority over all
the demons, and power to heal diseases. 2 Then He sent them to
proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal the sick.

3† "Take nothing for the road," He told them, "no walking stick, no
traveling bag, no bread, no money; and don't take an extra shirt. 4 Whatever
house you enter, stay there and leave from there. 5 If they do not welcome
you, when you leave that town, shake off the dust from your feet as a
testimony against them." 6 So they went out and traveled from village to
village, proclaiming the good news and healing everywhere.

Herod's Desire to See Jesus

7 •Herod the tetrarch heard about everything that was going on. He was
perplexed, because some said that John had been raised from the dead,
8 some that Elijah had appeared, and others that one of the ancient prophets
had risen. 9 "I beheaded John," Herod said, "but who is this I hear such
things about? " And he wanted to see Him.

Feeding 5,000

10† When the apostles returned, they reported to Jesus all that they had
done. He took them along and withdrew privately to a town called
Bethsaida. 11 When the crowds found out, they followed Him. He
welcomed them, spoke to them about the kingdom of God, and cured [A]
those who needed healing.

12 Late in the day, [B] the Twelve approached and said to Him, "Send the
crowd away, so they can go into the surrounding villages and countryside
to find food and lodging, because we are in a deserted place here."

13 "You give them something to eat," He told them.

"We have no more than five loaves and two fish," they said, "unless we
go and buy food for all these people." 14 (For about 5,000 men were there.)

Then He told His disciples, "Have them sit down in groups of about 50
each." [15] They did so, and had them all sit down. [16] Then He took the five
loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, He blessed and broke
them. He kept giving them to the disciples to set before the crowd.
[17†] Everyone ate and was filled. Then they picked up [C] 12 baskets of
leftover pieces.

Peter's Confession of the Messiah

[18] While He was praying in private and His disciples were with Him, He
asked them, "Who do the crowds say that I am? "

[19] They answered, "John the Baptist; others, Elijah; still others, that one
of the ancient prophets has come back." [D]

[20†] "But you," He asked them, "who do you say that I am? "

Peter answered, "God's •Messiah! "

His Death and Resurrection Predicted

[21] But He strictly warned and instructed them to tell this to no one,
[22] saying, "The •Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by
the elders, •chief priests, and •scribes, be killed, and be raised the third
day."

Take Up Your Cross

[23] Then He said to them all, "If anyone wants to come with Me, he must
deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow Me. [24] For whoever
wants to save his •life will lose it, but whoever loses his life because of Me
will save it. [25] What is a man benefited if he gains the whole world, yet
loses or forfeits himself? [26†] For whoever is ashamed of Me and My
words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when He comes in His
glory and that of the Father and the holy angels. [27†] I tell you the truth:

There are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God.”

The Transfiguration

[28†] About eight days after these words, He took along Peter, John, and
James and went up on the mountain to pray. [29] As He was praying, the
appearance of His face changed, and His clothes became dazzling white.
[30] Suddenly, two men were talking with Him — Moses and Elijah. [31] They
appeared in glory and were speaking of His death, [E] which He was about to
accomplish in Jerusalem.

[32] Peter and those with him were in a deep sleep, [F], and when they
became fully awake, they saw His glory and the two men who were
standing with Him. [33] As the two men were departing from Him, Peter said
to Jesus, “Master, it’s good for us to be here! Let us make three
•tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah” — not
knowing what he said.

[34] While he was saying this, a cloud appeared and overshadowed them.
They became afraid as they entered the cloud. [35] Then a voice came from
the cloud, saying:

This is My Son, the Chosen One;
listen to Him!

[36] After the voice had spoken, only Jesus was found. They kept silent,
and in those days told no one what they had seen.

The Power of Faith over a Demon

[37] The next day, when they came down from the mountain, a large crowd
met Him. [38] Just then a man from the crowd cried out, “Teacher, I beg You
to look at my son, because he’s my only child. [39] Often a spirit seizes him;
suddenly he shrieks, and it throws him into convulsions until he foams at

the mouth; [G] wounding [H] him, it hardly ever leaves him. 40 I begged Your disciples to drive it out, but they couldn't."

41 Jesus replied, "You unbelieving and rebellious generation! How long will I be with you and put up with you? Bring your son here."

42 As the boy was still approaching, the demon knocked him down and threw him into severe convulsions. But Jesus rebuked the •unclean spirit, cured the boy, and gave him back to his father. 43 And they were all astonished at the greatness of God.

The Second Prediction of His Death

While everyone was amazed at all the things He was doing, He told His disciples, 44 "Let these words sink in: The Son of Man is about to be betrayed into the hands of men."

45 But they did not understand this statement; it was concealed from them so that they could not grasp it, and they were afraid to ask Him about it. [I]

Who Is the Greatest?

46 Then an argument started among them about who would be the greatest of them. 47 But Jesus, knowing the thoughts of their hearts, took a little child and had him stand next to Him. 48 He told them, "Whoever welcomes this little child in My name welcomes Me. And whoever welcomes Me welcomes Him who sent Me. For whoever is least among you — this one is great."

In His Name

49† John responded, "Master, we saw someone driving out demons in Your name, and we tried to stop him because he does not follow us."

50 "Don't stop him," Jesus told him, "because whoever is not against you is for you."

The Journey to Jerusalem

51† When the days were coming to a close for Him to be taken up, He
determined [J], to journey to Jerusalem. 52† He sent messengers ahead of
Him, and on the way they entered a village of the •Samaritans to make
preparations for Him. 53 But they did not welcome Him, because He
determined to journey to Jerusalem. 54 When the disciples James and John
saw this, they said, “Lord, do You want us to call down fire from heaven to
consume them? ”

55 But He turned and rebuked them, 56 and they went to another village.

Following Jesus

57† As they were traveling on the road someone said to Him, “I will
follow You wherever You go! ”

58 Jesus told him, “Foxes have dens, and birds of the sky have nests, but
the Son of Man has no place to lay His head.” 59 Then He said to another,
“Follow Me.”

“Lord,” he said, “first let me go bury my father.”

60† But He told him, “Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and
spread the news of the kingdom of God.”

61 Another also said, “I will follow You, Lord, but first let me go and say
good-bye to those at my house.”

62 But Jesus said to him, “No one who puts his hand to the plow and
looks back is fit for the kingdom of God.”

Sending Out the Seventy

10 †After this, the Lord appointed 70 others, and He sent them ahead of Him in pairs to every town and place where He Himself was about to go. 2 He told them: "The harvest is abundant, but the workers are few. Therefore, pray to the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest. 3 Now go; I'm sending you out like lambs among wolves. 4 Don't carry a money-bag, traveling bag, or sandals; don't greet anyone along the road. 5 Whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace to this household.' 6† If a son of peace is there, your peace will rest on him; but if not, it will return to you. 7 Remain in the same house, eating and drinking what they offer, for the worker is worthy of his wages. Don't be moving from house to house. 8 When you enter any town, and they welcome you, eat the things set before you. 9 Heal the sick who are there, and tell them, 'The kingdom of God has come near you.' 10† When you enter any town, and they don't welcome you, go out into its streets and say, 11 'We are wiping off as a witness against you even the dust of your town that clings to our feet. Know this for certain: The kingdom of God has come near.' 12 I tell you, on that day it will be more tolerable for Sodom than for that town.

Unrepentant Towns

13 "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles that were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in •sackcloth and ashes! 14 But it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment than for you. 15 And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? No, you will go down to •Hades! 16 Whoever listens to you listens to Me. Whoever rejects you rejects Me. And whoever rejects Me rejects the One who sent Me."

The Return of the Seventy

17 The Seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons submit to us in Your name."

18† He said to them, "I watched Satan fall from heaven like a lightning flash. 19† Look, I have given you the authority to trample on snakes and

scorpions and over all the power of the enemy; nothing will ever harm
you. [20] However, don't rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice
that your names are written in heaven."

The Son Reveals the Father

[21] In that same hour He rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said, "I praise
You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because You have hidden these
things from the wise and the learned and have revealed them to infants.
Yes, Father, because this was Your good pleasure. [22†] All things have been
entrusted to Me by My Father. No one knows who the Son is except the
Father, and who the Father is except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son
desires to reveal Him."

[23] Then turning to His disciples He said privately, "The eyes that see the
things you see are blessed! [24] For I tell you that many prophets and kings
wanted to see the things you see yet didn't see them; to hear the things you
hear yet didn't hear them."

The Parable of the Good Samaritan

[25†] Just then an expert in the law stood up to test Him, saying,
"Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life? "

[26] "What is written in the law? " He asked him. "How do you read it? "

[27] He answered:

> **Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind;** and **your neighbor as yourself.**

[28] "You've answered correctly," He told him. "Do this and you will
live."

[29] But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, "And who is my
neighbor? "

[30] Jesus took up the question and said: “A man was going down from
Jerusalem to Jericho and fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him,
beat him up, and fled, leaving him half dead. [31] A priest happened to be
going down that road. When he saw him, he passed by on the other side.
[32] In the same way, a Levite, when he arrived at the place and saw him,
passed by on the other side. [33] But a •Samaritan on his journey came up to
him, and when he saw the man, he had compassion. [34] He went over to him
and bandaged his wounds, pouring on olive oil and wine. Then he put him
on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. [35] The next
day he took out two •denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, ‘Take
care of him. When I come back I’ll reimburse you for whatever extra you
spend.’

ARTICLE

What About Those Who Have Never Heard About Christ? ⇒

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[36] “Which of these three do you think proved to be a neighbor to the man
who fell into the hands of the robbers? ”

[37] “The one who showed mercy to him,” he said.

Then Jesus told him, “Go and do the same.”

Martha and Mary

[38] While they were traveling, He entered a village, and a woman named
Martha welcomed Him into her home. [39] She had a sister named Mary,
who also sat at the Lord’s feet and was listening to what He said. [A] [40] But
Martha was distracted by her many tasks, and she came up and asked,
“Lord, don’t You care that my sister has left me to serve alone? So tell her
to give me a hand.” [B]

41 The Lord answered her, “Martha, Martha, you are worried and upset
about many things, 42 but one thing is necessary. Mary has made the right
choice, and it will not be taken away from her.”

The Model Prayer

11 He was praying in a certain place, and when He finished, one of His disciples said to Him, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John also taught his disciples."

2† He said to them, "Whenever you pray, say:

Father,
Your name be honored as holy.
Your kingdom come.
3 Give us each day our daily bread.
4 And forgive us our sins,
for we ourselves also forgive everyone
in debt to us.
And do not bring us into temptation."

Keep Asking, Searching, Knocking

5 He also said to them: "Suppose one of you has a friend and goes to him
at midnight and says to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves of bread,
6 because a friend of mine on a journey has come to me, and I don't have
anything to offer him.' 7 Then he will answer from inside and say, 'Don't
bother me! The door is already locked, and my children and I have gone to
bed. I can't get up to give you anything.' 8 I tell you, even though he won't
get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his
friend's persistence, he will get up and give him as much as he needs.

9 "So I say to you, keep asking, and it will be given to you. Keep
searching, and you will find. Keep knocking, and the door will be opened
to you. 10† For everyone who asks receives, and the one who searches finds,
and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. 11 What father among
you, if his son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead of a fish? 12 Or
if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? 13 If you then, who are evil,
know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the
heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him? "

A House Divided

14 Now He was driving out a demon that was mute. When the demon
came out, the man who had been mute, spoke, and the crowds were amazed.
15 But some of them said, “He drives out demons by •Beelzebul, the ruler
of the demons! ” 16 And others, as a test, were demanding of Him a sign
from heaven.

17 Knowing their thoughts, He told them: “Every kingdom divided
against itself is headed for destruction, and a house divided against itself
falls. 18 If Satan also is divided against himself, how will his kingdom
stand? For you say I drive out demons by Beelzebul. 19 And if I drive out
demons by Beelzebul, who is it your sons drive them out by? For this
reason they will be your judges. 20 If I drive out demons by the finger of
God, then the kingdom of God has come to you. 21 When a strong man,
fully armed, guards his estate, his possessions are secure. 22 But when one
stronger than he attacks and overpowers him, he takes from him all his
weapons he trusted in, and divides up his plunder. 23† Anyone who is not
with Me is against Me, and anyone who does not gather with Me scatters.

An Unclean Spirit’s Return

24 “When an •unclean spirit comes out of a man, it roams through
waterless places looking for rest, and not finding rest, it then says, ‘I’ll go
back to my house where I came from.’ 25 And returning, it finds the house
swept and put in order. 26 Then it goes and brings seven other spirits more
evil than itself, and they enter and settle down there. As a result, that man’s
last condition is worse than the first.”

True Blessedness

27 As He was saying these things, a woman from the crowd raised her
voice and said to Him, “The womb that bore You and the one who nursed
You are blessed! ”

28 He said, “Even more, those who hear the word of God and keep it are
blessed! ”

The Sign of Jonah

29† As the crowds were increasing, He began saying: "This generation is
an evil generation. It demands a sign, but no sign will be given to it except
the sign of Jonah. 30 For just as Jonah became a sign to the people of
Nineveh, so also the •Son of Man will be to this generation. 31 The queen
of the south will rise up at the judgment with the men of this generation
and condemn them, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the
wisdom of Solomon, and look — something greater than Solomon is here!
32 The men of Nineveh will rise up at the judgment with this generation and
condemn it, because they repented at Jonah's proclamation, and
look — something greater than Jonah is here!

The Lamp of the Body

33 "No one lights a lamp and puts it in the cellar or under a basket, but
on a lampstand, so that those who come in may see its light. 34† Your eye is
the lamp of the body. When your eye is good, your whole body is also full
of light. But when it is bad, your body is also full of darkness. 35 Take care
then, that the light in you is not darkness. 36 If, therefore, your whole body
is full of light, with no part of it in darkness, it will be entirely illuminated,
as when a lamp shines its light on you."

TWISTED SCRIPTURE

Luke 11:35

Gurus from the East often urge their devotees to look within themselves for the divine spark that pervades the universe. This goal is accomplished through such disciplines as yoga, meditation, and the chanting of mantras. Jesus warned, however, that evil or non-Christian people who see an inward light are actually encountering darkness. Paul added that Satan appears as "an angel of light" (2 Co 11:14). We experience the true light through the preaching of the gospel (2 Co 4:4).

Religious Hypocrisy Denounced

37 As He was speaking, a •Pharisee asked Him to dine with him. So He
went in and reclined at the table. 38 When the Pharisee saw this, he was
amazed that He did not first perform the ritual washing [A], before dinner.
39 But the Lord said to him: "Now you Pharisees •clean the outside of the
cup and dish, but inside you are full of greed and evil. 40† Fools! Didn't
He who made the outside make the inside too? 41 But give from what is
within to the poor, and then everything is clean for you.

42 "But woe to you Pharisees! You give a tenth of mint, rue, and every
kind of herb, and you bypass justice and love for God. These things you
should have done without neglecting the others.

43 "Woe to you Pharisees! You love the front seat in the •synagogues
and greetings in the marketplaces.

44 "Woe to you! You are like unmarked graves; the people who walk
over them don't know it."

45 One of the experts in the law answered Him, "Teacher, when You say
these things You insult us too."

46 Then He said: "Woe also to you experts in the law! You load people
with burdens that are hard to carry, yet you yourselves don't touch these
burdens with one of your fingers.

47† "Woe to you! You build monuments to the prophets, and your fathers
killed them. 48 Therefore, you are witnesses that you approve the deeds of
your fathers, for they killed them, and you build their monuments.
49 Because of this, the wisdom of God said, 'I will send them prophets and
apostles, and some of them they will kill and persecute,' 50 so that this
generation may be held responsible for the blood of all the prophets shed
since the foundation of the world — 51† from the blood of Abel to the
blood of Zechariah, who perished between the altar and the sanctuary.

“Yes, I tell you, this generation will be held responsible.

[52] “Woe to you experts in the law! You have taken away the key of knowledge! You didn’t go in yourselves, and you hindered those who were going in.”

[53] When He left there, the •scribes and the Pharisees began to oppose
Him fiercely and to cross-examine Him about many things; [54] they were
lying in wait for Him to trap Him in something He said.

Beware of Religious Hypocrisy

12 In these circumstances, [A] a crowd of many thousands came together,
so that they were trampling on one another. He began to say to His
disciples first: “Be on your guard against the yeast of the •Pharisees,
which is hypocrisy. 2 There is nothing covered that won’t be uncovered,
nothing hidden that won’t be made known. 3 Therefore, whatever you have
said in the dark will be heard in the light, and what you have whispered in
an ear in private rooms will be proclaimed on the housetops.

Fear God

4 “And I say to you, My friends, don’t fear those who kill the body, and
after that can do nothing more. 5 But I will show you the One to fear: Fear
Him who has authority to throw people into •hell after death. Yes, I say to
you, this is the One to fear! 6 Aren’t five sparrows sold for two pennies?
Yet not one of them is forgotten in God’s sight. 7 Indeed, the hairs of your
head are all counted. Don’t be afraid; you are worth more than many
sparrows!

Acknowledging Christ

8 “And I say to you, anyone who acknowledges Me before men, the •Son
of Man will also acknowledge him before the angels of God, 9 but
whoever denies Me before men will be denied before the angels of God.
10 Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but
the one who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven.
11† Whenever they bring you before •synagogues and rulers and
authorities, don’t worry about how you should defend yourselves or what
you should say. 12 For the Holy Spirit will teach you at that very hour what
must be said.”

The Parable of the Rich Fool

13 Someone from the crowd said to Him, “Teacher, tell my brother to
divide the inheritance with me.”

14 “Friend,” He said to him, “who appointed Me a judge or arbitrator
over you? ” 15 He then told them, “Watch out and be on guard against all
greed because one’s life is not in the abundance of his possessions.”

16 Then He told them a parable: “A rich man’s land was very
productive. 17 He thought to himself, ‘What should I do, since I don’t have
anywhere to store my crops? 18 I will do this,’ he said. ‘I’ll tear down my
barns and build bigger ones and store all my grain and my goods there.
19 Then I’ll say to myself, “You have many goods stored up for many
years. Take it easy; eat, drink, and enjoy yourself.” ’

20† “But God said to him, ‘You fool! This very night your •life is
demanded of you. And the things you have prepared — whose will they
be? ’

21 “That’s how it is with the one who stores up treasure for himself and
is not rich toward God.”

The Cure for Anxiety

22† Then He said to His disciples: “Therefore I tell you, don’t worry
about your life, what you will eat; or about the body, what you will wear.
23 For life is more than food and the body more than clothing. 24 Consider
the ravens: They don’t sow or reap; they don’t have a storeroom or a barn;
yet God feeds them. Aren’t you worth much more than the birds? 25 Can
any of you add a •cubit to his height by worrying? 26 If then you’re not
able to do even a little thing, why worry about the rest?

27 “Consider how the wildflowers grow: They don’t labor or spin thread.
Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was adorned like one of
these! 28 If that’s how God clothes the grass, which is in the field today and
is thrown into the furnace tomorrow, how much more will He do for
you — you of little faith? 29 Don’t keep striving for what you should eat
and what you should drink, and don’t be anxious. 30 For the Gentile world
eagerly seeks all these things, and your Father knows that you need them.

31 “But seek His kingdom, and these things will be provided for you.
32 Don’t be afraid, little flock, because your Father delights to give you
the kingdom. 33 Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Make money-
bags for yourselves that won’t grow old, an inexhaustible treasure in
heaven, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. 34 For where your
treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Ready for the Master’s Return

35 “Be ready for service and have your lamps lit. 36 You must be like
people waiting for their master to return from the wedding banquet so that
when he comes and knocks, they can open the door for him at once.
37† Those •slaves the master will find alert when he comes will be blessed.
•I assure you: He will get ready, have them recline at the table, then come
and serve them. 38 If he comes in the middle of the night, or even near
dawn, and finds them alert, those slaves are blessed. 39 But know this: If
the homeowner had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would
not have let his house be broken into. 40 You also be ready, because the Son
of Man is coming at an hour that you do not expect.”

Rewards and Punishment

41 “Lord,” Peter asked, “are You telling this parable to us or to
everyone? ”

42 The Lord said: “Who then is the faithful and sensible manager his
master will put in charge of his household servants to give them their
allotted food at the proper time? 43 That slave whose master finds him
working when he comes will be rewarded. 44 I tell you the truth: He will put
him in charge of all his possessions. 45 But if that slave says in his heart,
‘My master is delaying his coming,’ and starts to beat the male and female
slaves, and to eat and drink and get drunk, 46† that slave’s master will come
on a day he does not expect him and at an hour he does not know. He will
cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the unbelievers. 47 And that
slave who knew his master’s will and didn’t prepare himself or do it will be

severely beaten. 48 But the one who did not know and did things deserving
of blows will be beaten lightly. Much will be required of everyone who has
been given much. And even more will be expected of the one who has been
entrusted with more.

Not Peace but Division

49† “I came to bring fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already set
ablaze! 50† But I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how it consumes
Me until it is finished! 51 Do you think that I came here to give peace to the
earth? No, I tell you, but rather division! 52 From now on, five in one
household will be divided: three against two, and two against three.

ARTICLE
Does the Bible Teach That There Is a Purgatory? ⇒

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53 **They will be divided, father against son,**
son against father,
mother against daughter,
daughter against mother,
mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law,
and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.”

Interpreting the Time

54 He also said to the crowds: “When you see a cloud rising in the west,
right away you say, ‘A storm is coming,’ and so it does. 55 And when the
south wind is blowing, you say, ‘It’s going to be a scorcher! ’ and it is.
56 Hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of the earth and
the sky, but why don’t you know how to interpret this time?

Settling Accounts

57 “Why don’t you judge for yourselves what is right? 58 As you are
going with your adversary to the ruler, make an effort to settle with him on
the way. Then he won’t drag you before the judge, the judge hand you over
to the bailiff, and the bailiff throw you into prison. 59 I tell you, you will
never get out of there until you have paid the last cent.”

Repent or Perish

13 †At that time, some people came and reported to Him about the
Galileans whose blood •Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices. 2 And
He responded to them, "Do you think that these Galileans were more sinful
than all Galileans because they suffered these things? 3 No, I tell you; but
unless you repent, you will all perish as well! 4 Or those 18 that the tower in
Siloam fell on and killed — do you think they were more sinful than all the
people who live in Jerusalem? 5 No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you
will all perish as well! "

The Parable of the Barren Fig Tree

6† And He told this parable: "A man had a fig tree that was planted in his
vineyard. He came looking for fruit on it and found none. 7 He told the
vineyard worker, 'Listen, for three years I have come looking for fruit on
this fig tree and haven't found any. Cut it down! Why should it even waste
the soil? '

8 "But he replied to him, 'Sir, leave it this year also, until I dig around it
and fertilize it. 9 Perhaps it will bear fruit next year, but if not, you can cut
it down.' "

Healing a Daughter of Abraham

10 As He was teaching in one of the •synagogues on the Sabbath, 11† a
woman was there who had been disabled by a spirit [A], for over 18 years.
She was bent over and could not straighten up at all. [B] 12 When Jesus saw
her, He called out to her, [C] "•Woman, you are free of your disability."
13 Then He laid His hands on her, and instantly she was restored and began
to glorify God.

14 But the leader of the synagogue, indignant because Jesus had healed
on the Sabbath, responded by telling the crowd, "There are six days when
work should be done; therefore come on those days and be healed and not
on the Sabbath day."

15 But the Lord answered him and said, “Hypocrites! Doesn’t each one
of you untie his ox or donkey from the feeding trough on the Sabbath and
lead it to water? 16 Satan has bound this woman, a daughter of Abraham,
for 18 years — shouldn’t she be untied from this bondage on the Sabbath
day? ”

17 When He had said these things, all His adversaries were humiliated,
but the whole crowd was rejoicing over all the glorious things He was
doing.

The Parables of the Mustard Seed and of the Yeast

18 He said, therefore, “What is the kingdom of God like, and what can I
compare it to? 19 It’s like a mustard seed that a man took and sowed in his
garden. It grew and became a tree, and the birds of the sky nested in its
branches.”

20 Again He said, “What can I compare the kingdom of God to? 21 It’s
like yeast that a woman took and mixed into 50 pounds of flour until it
spread through the entire mixture.”

The Narrow Way

22 He went through one town and village after another, teaching and
making His way to Jerusalem. 23 “Lord,” someone asked Him, “are there
few being saved? ” [D]

He said to them, 24 “Make every effort to enter through the narrow door,
because I tell you, many will try to enter and won’t be able 25 once the
homeowner gets up and shuts the door. Then you will stand outside and
knock on the door, saying, ‘Lord, open up for us! ’ He will answer you, ‘I
don’t know you or where you’re from.’ 26 Then you will say, ‘We ate and
drank in Your presence, and You taught in our streets! ’ 27 But He will say,
‘I tell you, I don’t know you or where you’re from. Get away from Me, all
you workers of unrighteousness! ’ 28 There will be weeping and gnashing of
teeth in that place, when you see Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all the

prophets in the kingdom of God but yourselves thrown out. 29 They will
come from east and west, from north and south, and recline at the table in
the kingdom of God. 30 Note this: Some are last who will be first, and some
are first who will be last."

Jesus and Herod Antipas

31 At that time some •Pharisees came and told Him, "Go, get out of here!
•Herod wants to kill You! "

32 He said to them, "Go tell that fox, 'Look! I'm driving out demons and
performing healings today and tomorrow, and on the third day I will
complete My work.' 33† Yet I must travel today, tomorrow, and the next
day, because it is not possible for a prophet to perish outside of Jerusalem!

Jesus' Lamentation over Jerusalem

34 "Jerusalem, Jerusalem! She who kills the prophets and stones those
who are sent to her. How often I wanted to gather your children together,
as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!
35† See, your house is abandoned to you. And I tell you, you will not see
Me until the time comes when you say, **'He who comes in the name of the
Lord is the blessed One'**!"

A Sabbath Controversy

14 One Sabbath, when He went to eat [A] at the house of one of the leading
•Pharisees, they were watching Him closely. [2] There in front of Him
was a man whose body was swollen with fluid. [3] In response, Jesus asked
the law experts and the Pharisees, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath or
not? " [4] But they kept silent. He took the man, healed him, and sent him
away. [5] And to them, He said, "Which of you whose son or ox falls into a
well, will not immediately pull him out on the Sabbath day? " [6] To this they
could find no answer.

Teachings on Humility

[7] He told a parable to those who were invited, when He noticed how they
would choose the best places for themselves: [8] "When you are invited by
someone to a wedding banquet, don't recline at the best place, because a
more distinguished person than you may have been invited by your host.
[9] The one who invited both of you may come and say to you, 'Give your
place to this man,' and then in humiliation, you will proceed to take the
lowest place.

[10] "But when you are invited, go and recline in the lowest place, so that
when the one who invited you comes, he will say to you, 'Friend, move up
higher.' You will then be honored in the presence of all the other guests.
[11] For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and the one who
humbles himself will be exalted."

[12] He also said to the one who had invited Him, "When you give a lunch
or a dinner, don't invite your friends, your brothers, your relatives, or your
rich neighbors, because they might invite you back, and you would be
repaid. [13†] On the contrary, when you host a banquet, invite those who are
poor, maimed, lame, or blind. [14] And you will be blessed, because they
cannot repay you; for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the
righteous."

The Parable of the Large Banquet

15 When one of those who reclined at the table with Him heard these
things, he said to Him, "The one who will eat bread in the kingdom of God
is blessed! "

16 Then He told him: "A man was giving a large banquet and invited
many. 17 At the time of the banquet, he sent his •slave to tell those who were
invited, 'Come, because everything is now ready.'

18 "But without exception they all began to make excuses. The first one said to him, 'I have bought a field, and I must go out and see it. I ask you to excuse me.'

19 "Another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I'm going to try them out. I ask you to excuse me.'

20 "And another said, 'I just got married, and therefore I'm unable to come.'

21 "So the slave came back and reported these things to his master. Then in anger, the master of the house told his slave, 'Go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the city, and bring in here the poor, maimed, blind, and lame! '

22 " 'Master,' the slave said, 'what you ordered has been done, and there's still room.'

23† "Then the master told the slave, 'Go out into the highways and lanes
and make them come in, so that my house may be filled. 24† For I tell you,
not one of those men who were invited will enjoy my banquet! ' "

The Cost of Following Jesus

25 Now great crowds were traveling with Him. So He turned and said to
them: 26† "If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his own father and
mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters — yes, and even his own

life — he cannot be My disciple. 27 Whoever does not bear his own cross
and come after Me cannot be My disciple.

28† "For which of you, wanting to build a tower, doesn't first sit down
and calculate the cost to see if he has enough to complete it? 29 Otherwise,
after he has laid the foundation and cannot finish it, all the onlookers will
begin to make fun of him, 30 saying, 'This man started to build and wasn't
able to finish.'

31 "Or what king, going to war against another king, will not first sit
down and decide if he is able with 10,000 to oppose the one who comes
against him with 20,000? 32 If not, while the other is still far off, he sends a
delegation and asks for terms of peace. 33† In the same way, therefore, every
one of you who does not say good-bye to all his possessions cannot be My
disciple.

34† "Now, salt is good, but if salt should lose its taste, how will it be
made salty? 35 It isn't fit for the soil or for the manure pile; they throw it
out. Anyone who has ears to hear should listen! "

The Parable of the Lost Sheep

15 All the tax collectors and sinners were approaching to listen to Him.
2 And the •Pharisees and •scribes were complaining, “This man
welcomes sinners and eats with them! ”

3 So He told them this parable: 4 “What man among you, who has 100
sheep and loses one of them, does not leave the 99 in the open field and go
after the lost one until he finds it? 5 When he has found it, he joyfully puts it
on his shoulders, 6 and coming home, he calls his friends and neighbors
together, saying to them, ‘Rejoice with me, because I have found my lost
sheep! ’ 7† I tell you, in the same way, there will be more joy in heaven
over one sinner who repents than over 99 righteous people who don’t need
repentance.

The Parable of the Lost Coin

8 “Or what woman who has 10 silver coins, if she loses one coin, does
not light a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully until she finds it?
9 When she finds it, she calls her women friends and neighbors together,
saying, ‘Rejoice with me, because I have found the silver coin I lost! ’ 10 I
tell you, in the same way, there is joy in the presence of God’s angels over
one sinner who repents.”

The Parable of the Lost Son

11 He also said: “A man had two sons. 12 The younger of them said to his
father, ‘Father, give me the share of the estate I have coming to me.’ So he
distributed the assets to them. 13 Not many days later, the younger son
gathered together all he had and traveled to a distant country, where he
squandered his estate in foolish living. 14 After he had spent everything, a
severe famine struck that country, and he had nothing. 15 Then he went to
work for one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to
feed pigs. 16 He longed to eat his fill from the carob pods the pigs were
eating, but no one would give him any. 17 When he came to his senses, he
said, ‘How many of my father’s hired hands have more than enough food,
and here I am dying of hunger! 18 I’ll get up, go to my father, and say to

him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight. [19] I'm no
longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired
hands.' [20] So he got up and went to his father. But while the son was still a
long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion. He ran,
threw his arms around his neck, and kissed him. [21] The son said to him,
'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight. I'm no longer
worthy to be called your son.'

[22] "But the father told his •slaves, 'Quick! Bring out the best robe and
put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. [23] Then
bring the fattened calf and slaughter it, and let's celebrate with a feast,
[24] because this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is
found! ' So they began to celebrate.

[25†] "Now his older son was in the field; as he came near the house, he
heard music and dancing. [26] So he summoned one of the servants and asked
what these things meant. [27] 'Your brother is here,' he told him, 'and your
father has slaughtered the fattened calf because he has him back safe and
sound.'

[28] "Then he became angry and didn't want to go in. So his father came
out and pleaded with him. [29] But he replied to his father, 'Look, I have been
slaving many years for you, and I have never disobeyed your orders, yet
you never gave me a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends.
[30] But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your assets with
prostitutes, you slaughtered the fattened calf for him.'

[31] " 'Son,' he said to him, 'you are always with me, and everything I
have is yours. [32] But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of
yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' "

The Parable of the Dishonest Manager

16 He also said to the disciples: “There was a rich man who received an
accusation that his manager was squandering his possessions. [2] So
he called the manager in and asked, ‘What is this I hear about you? Give an
account of your management, because you can no longer be my manager.’

[3] “Then the manager said to himself, ‘What should I do, since my master
is taking the management away from me? I’m not strong enough to dig; I’m
ashamed to beg. [4] I know what I’ll do so that when I’m removed from
management, people will welcome me into their homes.’

[5] “So he summoned each one of his master’s debtors. ‘How much do you
owe my master? ’ he asked the first one.

[6] “ ‘A hundred measures of olive oil,’ he said.

“ ‘Take your invoice,’ he told him, ‘sit down quickly, and write 50.’

[7] “Next he asked another, ‘How much do you owe? ’

“ ‘A hundred measures of wheat,’ he said.

“ ‘Take your invoice,’ he told him, ‘and write 80.’

[8]† “The master praised the unrighteous manager because he had acted
astutely. For the sons of this age are more astute than the sons of light in
dealing with their own people. [9] And I tell you, make friends for
yourselves by means of the unrighteous money so that when it fails, they
may welcome you into eternal dwellings. [10] Whoever is faithful in very
little is also faithful in much, and whoever is unrighteous in very little is
also unrighteous in much. [11] So if you have not been faithful with the
unrighteous money, who will trust you with what is genuine? [12] And if you
have not been faithful with what belongs to someone else, who will give
you what is your own? [13] No household slave can be the •slave of two
masters, since either he will hate one and love the other, or he will be
devoted to one and despise the other. You can’t be slaves to both God and
money.”

Kingdom Values

14 The •Pharisees, who were lovers of money, were listening to all these
things and scoffing at Him. 15 And He told them: “You are the ones who
justify yourselves in the sight of others, but God knows your hearts. For
what is highly admired by people is revolting in God’s sight.

16 “The Law and the Prophets were until John; since then, the good
news of the kingdom of God has been proclaimed, and everyone is strongly
urged to enter it. 17† But it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than
for one stroke of a letter in the law to drop out.

18 “Everyone who divorces his wife and marries another woman
commits adultery, and everyone who marries a woman divorced from her
husband commits adultery.

The Rich Man and Lazarus

19† “There was a rich man who would dress in purple and fine linen,
feasting lavishly every day. 20 But a poor man named Lazarus, covered with
sores, was left at his gate. 21 He longed to be filled with what fell from the
rich man’s table, but instead the dogs would come and lick his sores.
22 One day the poor man died and was carried away by the angels to
Abraham’s side. The rich man also died and was buried. 23 And being in
torment in •Hades, he looked up and saw Abraham a long way off, with
Lazarus at his side. 24 ‘Father Abraham! ’ he called out, ‘Have mercy on
me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my
tongue, because I am in agony in this flame! ’

25† “ ‘Son,’ Abraham said, ‘remember that during your life you received
your good things, just as Lazarus received bad things, but now he is
comforted here, while you are in agony. 26 Besides all this, a great chasm
has been fixed between us and you, so that those who want to pass over
from here to you cannot; neither can those from there cross over to us.’

27 “ ‘Father,’ he said, ‘then I beg you to send him to my father’s house —
28 because I have five brothers — to warn them, so they won’t also come to
this place of torment.’

29 “But Abraham said, ‘They have Moses and the prophets; they should
listen to them.’

30 “ ‘No, father Abraham,’ he said. ‘But if someone from the dead goes
to them, they will repent.’

31 “But he told him, ‘If they don’t listen to Moses and the prophets, they
will not be persuaded if someone rises from the dead.’ ”

Warnings from Jesus

17 †He said to His disciples, “Offenses will certainly come, but woe to
the one they come through! 2 It would be better for him if a millstone
were hung around his neck and he were thrown into the sea than for him to
cause one of these little ones to •stumble. 3 Be on your guard. If your
brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him. 4 And if he sins
against you seven times in a day, and comes back to you seven times,
saying, ‘I repent,’ you must forgive him.”

Faith and Duty

5 The apostles said to the Lord, “Increase our faith.”

6 “If you have faith the size of a mustard seed,” the Lord said, “you can
say to this mulberry tree, ‘Be uprooted and planted in the sea,’ and it will
obey you.

7 “Which one of you having a •slave tending sheep or plowing will say to
him when he comes in from the field, ‘Come at once and sit down to eat’?
8 Instead, will he not tell him, ‘Prepare something for me to eat, get ready,
and serve me while I eat and drink; later you can eat and drink’? 9 Does he
thank that slave because he did what was commanded? 10† In the same
way, when you have done all that you were commanded, you should say,
‘We are good-for-nothing slaves; we’ve only done our duty.’ ”

Ten Men Healed

11† While traveling to Jerusalem, He passed between [A] Samaria and
Galilee. 12 As He entered a village, 10 men with serious skin diseases met
Him. They stood at a distance 13 and raised their voices, saying, “Jesus,
Master, have mercy on us! ”

14 When He saw them, He told them, “Go and show yourselves to the
priests.” And while they were going, they were healed. [B]

15 But one of them, seeing that he was healed, returned and, with a loud
voice, gave glory to God. 16 He fell facedown at His feet, thanking Him.

And he was a •Samaritan.

[17] Then Jesus said, “Were not 10 cleansed? Where are the nine? [18] Didn’t
any return to give glory to God except this foreigner? ” [19] And He told him,
“Get up and go on your way. Your faith has made you well.”

The Coming of the Kingdom

[20]† Being asked by the •Pharisees when the kingdom of God will come,
He answered them, “The kingdom of God is not coming with something
observable; [21] no one will say, ‘Look here! ’ or ‘There! ’ For you see, the
kingdom of God is among you.”

[22] Then He told the disciples: “The days are coming when you will long
to see one of the days of the •Son of Man, but you won’t see it. [23] They will
say to you, ‘Look there! ’ or ‘Look here! ’ Don’t follow or run after them.
[24] For as the lightning flashes from horizon to horizon and lights up the sky,
so the Son of Man will be in His day. [25] But first He must suffer many
things and be rejected by this generation.

[26] “Just as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be in the days of the Son
of Man: [27] People went on eating, drinking, marrying and giving in
marriage until the day Noah boarded the ark, and the flood came and
destroyed them all. [28] It will be the same as it was in the days of Lot:
People went on eating, drinking, buying, selling, planting, building. [29] But
on the day Lot left Sodom, fire and sulfur rained from heaven and
destroyed them all. [30] It will be like that on the day the Son of Man is
revealed. [31] On that day, a man on the housetop, whose belongings are in
the house, must not come down to get them. Likewise the man who is in the
field must not turn back. [32] Remember Lot’s wife! [33] Whoever tries to
make his •life secure will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve
it. [34] I tell you, on that night two will be in one bed: One will be taken and
the other will be left. [35] Two women will be grinding grain together: One
will be taken and the other left. [[36] Two will be in a field: One will be taken,
and the other will be left.]”

37 “Where, Lord? ” they asked Him.

He said to them, “Where the corpse is, there also the vultures will be gathered.”

The Parable of the Persistent Widow

18 He then told them a parable on the need for them to pray always and
not become discouraged: 2 “There was a judge in a certain town who
didn’t fear God or respect man. 3 And a widow in that town kept coming to
him, saying, ‘Give me justice against my adversary.’

4 “For a while he was unwilling, but later he said to himself, ‘Even
though I don’t fear God or respect man, 5 yet because this widow keeps
pestering me, I will give her justice, so she doesn’t wear me out by her
persistent coming.’ ”

6 Then the Lord said, “Listen to what the unjust judge says. 7† Will not
God grant justice to His elect who cry out to Him day and night? Will He
delay to help them? 8 I tell you that He will swiftly grant them justice.
Nevertheless, when the •Son of Man comes, will He find that faith on
earth? ”

The Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector

9 He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they
were righteous and looked down on everyone else: 10 “Two men went up
to the •temple complex to pray, one a •Pharisee and the other a tax
collector. 11 The Pharisee took his stand and was praying like this: ‘God, I
thank You that I’m not like other people — greedy, unrighteous,
adulterers, or even like this tax collector. 12 I fast twice a week; I give a
tenth of everything I get.’

13 “But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even raise his eyes
to heaven but kept striking his chest and saying, ‘God, turn Your wrath
from me — a sinner! ’ 14 I tell you, this one went down to his house
•justified rather than the other; because everyone who exalts himself will
be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted.”

Blessing the Children

15 Some people were even bringing infants to Him so He might touch
them, but when the disciples saw it, they rebuked them. 16 Jesus, however,

invited them: "Let the little children come to Me, and don't stop them,
because the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. [17†] •I assure you:
Whoever does not welcome the kingdom of God like a little child will
never enter it."

The Rich Young Ruler

[18] A ruler asked Him, "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal
life? "

[19†] "Why do you call Me good? " Jesus asked him. "No one is good but
One — God. [20] You know the commandments:

Do not commit adultery;
do not murder;
do not steal;
do not bear false witness;
honor your father and mother."

[21] "I have kept all these from my youth," he said.

[22†] When Jesus heard this, He told him, "You still lack one thing: Sell all
that you have and distribute it to the poor, and you will have treasure in
heaven. Then come, follow Me."

[23] After he heard this, he became extremely sad, because he was very
rich.

Possessions and the Kingdom

[24] Seeing that he became sad, Jesus said, "How hard it is for those who
have wealth to enter the kingdom of God! [25] For it is easier for a camel to
go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom
of God."

[26] Those who heard this asked, "Then who can be saved? "

[27] He replied, "What is impossible with men is possible with God."

[28] Then Peter said, "Look, we have left what we had and followed You."

[29†] So He said to them, "I assure you: There is no one who has left a
house, wife or brothers, parents or children because of the kingdom of God,
[30] who will not receive many times more at this time, and eternal life in the
age to come."

The Third Prediction of His Death

[31†] Then He took the Twelve aside and told them, "Listen! We are going
up to Jerusalem. Everything that is written through the prophets about the
Son of Man will be accomplished. [32] For He will be handed over to the
Gentiles, and He will be mocked, insulted, spit on; [33] and after they flog
Him, they will kill Him, and He will rise on the third day."

[34†] They understood none of these things. This saying was hidden from
them, and they did not grasp what was said.

A Blind Man Receives His Sight

[35†] As He drew near Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the road
begging. [36] Hearing a crowd passing by, he inquired what this meant.
[37] "Jesus the •Nazarene is passing by," they told him.

[38] So he called out, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me! " [39] Then
those in front told him to keep quiet, [A] but he kept crying out all the more,
"Son of David, have mercy on me! "

[40] Jesus stopped and commanded that he be brought to Him. When he
drew near, He asked him, [41] "What do you want Me to do for you? "

"Lord," he said, "I want to see! "

[42] “Receive your sight! ” Jesus told him. “Your faith has healed you.”
[43] Instantly he could see, and he began to follow Him, glorifying God. All
the people, when they saw it, gave praise to God.

Jesus Visits Zacchaeus

19 He entered Jericho and was passing through. 2 There was a man
named Zacchaeus who was a chief tax collector, and he was rich. 3 He
was trying to see who Jesus was, but he was not able because of the crowd,
since he was a short man. 4 So running ahead, he climbed up a sycamore
tree to see Jesus, since He was about to pass that way. 5 When Jesus came to
the place, He looked up and said to him, “Zacchaeus, hurry and come down
because today I must stay at your house.”

6 So he quickly came down and welcomed Him joyfully. 7 All who saw it
began to complain, “He’s gone to lodge with a sinful man! ”

8 But Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, “Look, I’ll give [A] half
of my possessions to the poor, Lord! And if I have extorted anything from
anyone, I’ll pay [B] back four times as much! ”

9† “Today salvation has come to this house,” Jesus told him, “because he
too is a son of Abraham. 10 For the •Son of Man has come to seek and to
save the lost.”

The Parable of the 10 Minas

11† As they were listening to this, He went on to tell a parable because He was near Jerusalem, and they thought the kingdom of God was going to appear right away.

12 Therefore He said: “A nobleman traveled to a far country to receive for
himself authority to be king and then return. 13 He called 10 of his •slaves,
gave them 10 minas, and told them, ‘Engage in business until I come
back.’

14 “But his subjects hated him and sent a delegation after him, saying, ‘We don’t want this man to rule over us! ’

15 “At his return, having received the authority to be king, he summoned those slaves he had given the money to, so he could find out how much they

had made in business. [16] The first came forward and said, ‘Master, your
mina has earned 10 more minas.’

[17] “ ‘Well done, good slave! ’ he told him. ‘Because you have been
faithful in a very small matter, have authority over 10 towns.’

[18] “The second came and said, ‘Master, your mina has made five minas.’

[19] “So he said to him, ‘You will be over five towns.’

[20] “And another came and said, ‘Master, here is your mina. I have kept it
hidden away in a cloth [21] because I was afraid of you, for you’re a tough
man: you collect what you didn’t deposit and reap what you didn’t sow.’

[22] “He told him, ‘I will judge you by what you have said, you evil slave!
If you knew I was a tough man, collecting what I didn’t deposit and reaping
what I didn’t sow, [23] why didn’t you put my money in the bank? And when
I returned, I would have collected it with interest! ’ [24] So he said to those
standing there, ‘Take the mina away from him and give it to the one who
has 10 minas.’

[25] “But they said to him, ‘Master, he has 10 minas.’

[26†] “ ‘I tell you, that to everyone who has, more will be given; and from
the one who does not have, even what he does have will be taken away.
[27†] But bring here these enemies of mine, who did not want me to rule over
them, and slaughter them in my presence.’ ”

The Triumphal Entry

[28] When He had said these things, He went on ahead, going up to
Jerusalem. [29†] As He approached Bethphage and Bethany, at the place
called the •Mount of Olives, He sent two of the disciples [30] and said, “Go
into the village ahead of you. As you enter it, you will find a young donkey
tied there, on which no one has ever sat. Untie it and bring it here. [31] If
anyone asks you, ‘Why are you untying it? ’ say this: ‘The Lord needs it.’ ”

[32] So those who were sent left and found it just as He had told them.
[33] As they were untying the young donkey, its owners said to them, “Why
are you untying the donkey? ”

[34] “The Lord needs it,” they said. [35] Then they brought it to Jesus, and
after throwing their robes on the donkey, they helped Jesus get on it. [36] As
He was going along, they were spreading their robes on the road. [37] Now
He came near the path down the Mount of Olives, and the whole crowd of
the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the
miracles they had seen:

[38†] **The King who comes**
in the name of the Lord ,
is the blessed One.
Peace in heaven
and glory in the highest heaven!

[39] Some of the •Pharisees from the crowd told Him, “Teacher, rebuke
Your disciples.”

[40] He answered, “I tell you, if they were to keep silent, the stones would
cry out! ”

Jesus’ Love for Jerusalem

[41] As He approached and saw the city, He wept over it, [42†] saying, “If
you knew this day what would bring peace — but now it is hidden from
your eyes. [43] For the days will come on you when your enemies will build
an embankment against you, surround you, and hem you in on every side.
[44] They will crush you and your children within you to the ground, and
they will not leave one stone on another in you, because you did not
recognize the time of your visitation.”

Cleansing the Temple Complex

45† He went into the •temple complex and began to throw out those who were selling, 46 and He said, “It is written, **My house will be a house of prayer,** but you have made it **a den of thieves**! ”

47 Every day He was teaching in the temple complex. The •chief priests, the •scribes, and the leaders of the people were looking for a way to destroy Him, 48 but they could not find a way to do it, because all the people were captivated by what they heard. C

The Authority of Jesus Challenged

20 One day [A] as He was teaching the people in the •temple complex and proclaiming the good news, the •chief priests and the •scribes, with the elders, came up
2 and said to Him: "Tell us, by what authority are You doing these things? Who is it who gave You this authority? "

3 He answered them, "I will also ask you a question. Tell Me,
4 was the baptism of John from heaven or from men? "

5 They discussed it among themselves: "If we say, 'From heaven,' He will say, 'Why didn't you believe him? '
6 But if we say, 'From men,' all the people will stone us, because they are convinced that John was a prophet."

7 So they answered that they did not know its origin. [B]

8† And Jesus said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things."

The Parable of the Vineyard Owner

9† Then He began to tell the people this parable: "A man planted a vineyard, leased it to tenant farmers, and went away for a long time.
10 At harvest time he sent a •slave to the farmers so that they might give him some fruit from the vineyard. But the farmers beat him and sent him away empty-handed.
11 He sent yet another slave, but they beat that one too, treated him shamefully, and sent him away empty-handed.
12 And he sent yet a third, but they wounded this one too and threw him out.

13 "Then the owner of the vineyard said, 'What should I do? I will send my beloved son. Perhaps they will respect him.'

14 "But when the tenant farmers saw him, they discussed it among themselves and said, 'This is the heir. Let's kill him, so the inheritance will be ours! '
15 So they threw him out of the vineyard and killed him.

“Therefore, what will the owner of the vineyard do to them? [16] He will
come and destroy those farmers and give the vineyard to others.”

But when they heard this they said, “No — never! ”

[17] But He looked at them and said, “Then what is the meaning of this
Scripture:

The stone that the builders rejected —
this has become the cornerstone? ,

[18] Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces, and if it falls
on anyone, it will grind him to powder! ”

[19] Then the scribes and the chief priests looked for a way to get their
hands on Him that very hour, because they knew He had told this parable
against them, but they feared the people.

God and Caesar

[20] They watched closely and sent spies who pretended to be
righteous, [C] so they could catch Him in what He said, [D] to hand Him over
to the governor’s rule and authority. [21] They questioned Him, “Teacher, we
know that You speak and teach correctly, and You don’t show partiality, [E]
but teach truthfully the way of God. [22] Is it lawful for us to pay taxes to
Caesar or not? ”

[23] But detecting their craftiness, He said to them, [24] “Show Me a
•denarius. Whose image and inscription does it have? ”

“Caesar’s,” they said.

[25] “Well then,” He told them, “give back to Caesar the things that are
Caesar’s and to God the things that are God’s.”

[26] They were not able to catch Him in what He said [F] in public, [G] and
being amazed at His answer, they became silent.

The Sadducees and the Resurrection

27 Some of the •Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came up
and questioned Him: 28 “Teacher, Moses wrote for us that **if a man’s**
brother has a wife, and **dies childless, his brother should take the wife**
and produce •offspring **for his brother.** 29 Now there were seven brothers.
The first took a wife and died without children. 30 Also the second 31 and
the third took her. In the same way, all seven died and left no children.
32 Finally, the woman died too. 33 In the resurrection, therefore, whose wife
will the woman be? For all seven had married her.” [H]

34 Jesus told them, “The sons of this age marry and are given in
marriage. 35 But those who are counted worthy to take part in that age and
in the resurrection from the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage.
36† For they cannot die anymore, because they are like angels and are sons
of God, since they are sons of the resurrection. 37 Moses even indicated in
the passage about the burning bush that the dead are raised, where he calls
the Lord **the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of**
Jacob. 38 He is not God of the dead but of the living, because all are living
to Him.”

39 Some of the scribes answered, “Teacher, You have spoken well.”
40 And they no longer dared to ask Him anything.

The Question about the Messiah

41 Then He said to them, “How can they say that the •Messiah is the Son
of David? 42 For David himself says in the Book of Psalms:

The Lord declared to my Lord,
‘Sit at My right hand
43 **until I make Your enemies Your footstool.’**

44† David calls Him ‘Lord’; how then can the Messiah be his Son? ”

Warning against the Scribes

45 While all the people were listening, He said to His disciples,
46 "Beware of the scribes, who want to go around in long robes and who
love greetings in the marketplaces, the front seats in the •synagogues, and
the places of honor at banquets. 47 They devour widows' houses and say
long prayers just for show. These will receive greater punishment."

The Widow's Gift

21 He looked up and saw the rich dropping their offerings into the
temple treasury. 2 He also saw a poor widow dropping in two tiny
coins. [A], 3 “I tell you the truth,” He said. “This poor widow has put in more
than all of them. 4† For all these people have put in gifts out of their
surplus, but she out of her poverty has put in all she had to live on.”

Destruction of the Temple Predicted

5 As some were talking about the •temple complex, how it was adorned
with beautiful stones and gifts dedicated to God, He said, 6 “These things
that you see — the days will come when not one stone will be left on
another that will not be thrown down! ”

Signs of the End of the Age

7 “Teacher,” they asked Him, “so when will these things be? And what
will be the sign when these things are about to take place? ”

8 Then He said, “Watch out that you are not deceived. For many will
come in My name, saying, ‘I am He,’ and, ‘The time is near.’ Don’t follow
them. 9 When you hear of wars and rebellions, don’t be alarmed. Indeed,
these things must take place first, but the end won’t come right away.”

10 Then He told them: “Nation will be raised up against nation, and
kingdom against kingdom. 11 There will be violent earthquakes, and
famines and plagues in various places, and there will be terrifying sights
and great signs from heaven. 12† But before all these things, they will lay
their hands on you and persecute you. They will hand you over to the
•synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and
governors because of My name. 13 It will lead to an opportunity for you to
witness. 14† Therefore make up your minds not to prepare your defense
ahead of time, 15 for I will give you such words and a wisdom that none
of your adversaries will be able to resist or contradict. 16 You will even be
betrayed by parents, brothers, relatives, and friends. They will kill some of

you. 17 You will be hated by everyone because of My name, 18† but not a
hair of your head will be lost. 19 By your endurance gain your •lives.

The Destruction of Jerusalem

20† “When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then recognize that
its desolation has come near. 21 Then those in Judea must flee to the
mountains! Those inside the city must leave it, and those who are in the
country must not enter it, 22 because these are days of vengeance to fulfill
all the things that are written. 23 Woe to pregnant women and nursing
mothers in those days, for there will be great distress in the land and wrath
against this people. 24 They will fall by the edge of the sword and be led
captive into all the nations, and Jerusalem will be trampled by the Gentiles
until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

The Coming of the Son of Man

25 “Then there will be signs in the sun, moon, and stars; and there will be
anguish on the earth among nations bewildered by the roaring sea and
waves. 26 People will faint from fear and expectation of the things that are
coming on the world, because the celestial powers will be shaken. 27 Then
they will see the •Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great
glory. 28† But when these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up
your heads, because your •redemption is near! ”

The Parable of the Fig Tree

29 Then He told them a parable: “Look at the fig tree, and all the trees.
30 As soon as they put out leaves you can see for yourselves and recognize
that summer is already near. 31 In the same way, when you see these things
happening, recognize that the kingdom of God is near. 32 •I assure you:
This generation will certainly not pass away until all things take place.
33 Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will never pass away.

The Need for Watchfulness

[34] "Be on your guard, so that your minds are not dulled from carousing,
drunkenness, and worries of life, or that day will come on you
unexpectedly [35] like a trap. For it will come on all who live on the face of
the whole earth. [36] But be alert at all times, praying that you may have
strength to escape all these things that are going to take place and to stand
before the Son of Man."

[37] During the day, He was teaching in the temple complex, but in the
evening He would go out and spend the night on what is called the •Mount
of Olives. [38] Then all the people would come early in the morning to hear
Him in the temple complex.

The Plot to Kill Jesus

22 The Festival of •Unleavened Bread, which is called •Passover, was
drawing near. 2 The •chief priests and the •scribes were looking for a
way to put Him to death, because they were afraid of the people.

3† Then Satan entered Judas, called Iscariot, who was numbered among
the Twelve. 4 He went away and discussed with the chief priests and temple
police how he could hand Him over to them. 5 They were glad and agreed
to give him silver. [A] 6 So he accepted the offer and started looking for a
good opportunity to betray Him to them when the crowd was not present.

Preparation for Passover

7† Then the Day of Unleavened Bread came when the Passover lamb had
to be sacrificed. 8 Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, "Go and prepare the
Passover meal for us, so we can eat it."

9 "Where do You want us to prepare it? " they asked Him.

10 "Listen," He said to them, "when you've entered the city, a man
carrying a water jug will meet you. Follow him into the house he enters.
11 Tell the owner of the house, 'The Teacher asks you, "Where is the guest
room where I can eat the Passover with My disciples? " ' 12 Then he will
show you a large, furnished room upstairs. Make the preparations there."

13 So they went and found it just as He had told them, and they prepared
the Passover.

The First Lord's Supper

14 When the hour came, He reclined at the table, and the apostles with
Him. 15 Then He said to them, "I have fervently desired to eat this Passover
with you before I suffer. 16 For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it is
fulfilled in the kingdom of God." 17† Then He took a cup, and after giving
thanks, He said, "Take this and share it among yourselves. 18 For I tell you,
from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of
God comes."

[19]† And He took bread, gave thanks, broke it, gave it to them, and said,
"This is My body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of Me."

[20] In the same way He also took the cup after supper and said, "This cup
is the new covenant established by My blood; it is shed for you. [21]† But
look, the hand of the one betraying Me is at the table with Me! [22] For the
•Son of Man will go away as it has been determined, but woe to that man
by whom He is betrayed! "

[23] So they began to argue among themselves which of them it could be
who was going to do this thing.

The Dispute over Greatness

[24]† Then a dispute also arose among them about who should be
considered the greatest. [25] But He said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles
dominate them, and those who have authority over them are called
'Benefactors.' [26] But it must not be like that among you. On the contrary,
whoever is greatest among you must become like the youngest, and
whoever leads, like the one serving. [27] For who is greater, the one at the
table or the one serving? Isn't it the one at the table? But I am among you as
the One who serves. [28] You are the ones who stood by Me in My trials. [29] I
bestow on you a kingdom, just as My Father bestowed one on Me, [30] so
that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom. And you will sit on
thrones judging the 12 tribes of Israel.

Peter's Denial Predicted

[31] "Simon, Simon, look out! Satan has asked to sift you like wheat.
[32] But I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And you, when
you have turned back, strengthen your brothers."

[33] "Lord," he told Him, "I'm ready to go with You both to prison and to
death! "

[34†] “I tell you, Peter,” He said, “the rooster will not crow today until you
deny three times that you know Me! ”

Be Ready for Trouble

[35] He also said to them, “When I sent you out without money-bag,
traveling bag, or sandals, did you lack anything? ”

“Not a thing,” they said.

[36†] Then He said to them, “But now, whoever has a money-bag should
take it, and also a traveling bag. And whoever doesn’t have a sword should
sell his robe and buy one. [37] For I tell you, what is written must be fulfilled
in Me: **And He was counted among the outlaws.** Yes, what is written
about Me is coming to its fulfillment.”

[38†] “Lord,” they said, “look, here are two swords.”

“Enough of that! ” He told them.

The Prayer in the Garden

[39] He went out and made His way as usual to the •Mount of Olives, and
the disciples followed Him. [40] When He reached the place, He told them,
“Pray that you may not enter into temptation.” [41] Then He withdrew from
them about a stone’s throw, knelt down, and began to pray, [42] “Father, if
You are willing, take this cup away from Me — nevertheless, not My will,
but Yours, be done.”

[[43†] Then an angel from heaven appeared to Him, strengthening Him.
[44] Being in anguish, He prayed more fervently, and His sweat became like
drops of blood falling to the ground.] [45] When He got up from prayer and
came to the disciples, He found them sleeping, exhausted from their grief. [B]
[46] “Why are you sleeping? ” He asked them. “Get up and pray, so that you
won’t enter into temptation.”

The Judas Kiss

47 While He was still speaking, suddenly a mob was there, and one of the
Twelve named Judas was leading them. He came near Jesus to kiss Him,
48 but Jesus said to him, “Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a
kiss? ”

49 When those around Him saw what was going to happen, they asked,
“Lord, should we strike with the sword? ” 50 Then one of them struck the
high priest’s •slave and cut off his right ear.

51 But Jesus responded, “No more of this! ” And touching his ear, He
healed him. 52 Then Jesus said to the chief priests, temple police, and the
elders who had come for Him, “Have you come out with swords and clubs
as if I were a criminal? 53 Every day while I was with you in the •temple
complex, you never laid a hand on Me. But this is your hour — and the
dominion of darkness.”

Peter Denies His Lord

54 They seized Him, led Him away, and brought Him into the high
priest’s house. Meanwhile Peter was following at a distance. 55 They lit a
fire in the middle of the courtyard and sat down together, and Peter sat
among them. 56 When a servant saw him sitting in the firelight, and looked
closely at him, she said, “This man was with Him too.”

57 But he denied it: “Woman, I don’t know Him! ”

58† After a little while, someone else saw him and said, “You’re one of
them too! ”

“Man, I am not! ” Peter said.

59 About an hour later, another kept insisting, “This man was certainly
with Him, since he’s also a Galilean.”

60 But Peter said, “Man, I don’t know what you’re talking about! ”
Immediately, while he was still speaking, a rooster crowed. 61† Then the
Lord turned and looked at Peter. So Peter remembered the word of the
Lord, how He had said to him, “Before the rooster crows today, you will
deny Me three times.” 62 And he went outside and wept bitterly.

Jesus Mocked and Beaten

63 The men who were holding Jesus started mocking and beating Him.
64 After blindfolding Him, they kept asking, “Prophesy! Who hit You? ”
65 And they were saying many other blasphemous things against Him.

Jesus Faces the Sanhedrin

66† When daylight came, the elders [C] of the people, both the chief priests
and the scribes, convened and brought Him before their •Sanhedrin.
67 They said, “If You are the •Messiah, tell us.”

But He said to them, “If I do tell you, you will not believe. 68 And if I ask
you, you will not answer. 69 But from now on, the Son of Man will be
seated at the right hand of the Power of God.”

70 They all asked, “Are You, then, the Son of God? ”

And He said to them, “You say that I am.”

71 “Why do we need any more testimony,” they said, “since we’ve heard
it ourselves from His mouth? ”

Jesus Faces Pilate

23 Then their whole assembly rose up and brought Him before •Pilate.
[2] They began to accuse Him, saying, “We found this man subverting
our nation, opposing payment of taxes to Caesar, and saying that He
Himself is the •Messiah, a King.”

[3†] So Pilate asked Him, “Are You the King of the Jews? ”

He answered him, “You have said it.”

[4] Pilate then told the •chief priests and the crowds, “I find no grounds for
charging this man.”

[5] But they kept insisting, “He stirs up the people, teaching throughout all
Judea, from Galilee where He started even to here.”

Jesus Faces Herod Antipas

[6] When Pilate heard this, he asked if the man was a Galilean. [7†] Finding
that He was under •Herod’s jurisdiction, he sent Him to Herod, who was
also in Jerusalem during those days. [8] Herod was very glad to see Jesus; for
a long time he had wanted to see Him because he had heard about Him and
was hoping to see some miracle [A] performed by Him. [9] So he kept asking
Him questions, but Jesus did not answer him. [10] The chief priests and the
•scribes stood by, vehemently accusing Him. [11] Then Herod, with his
soldiers, treated Him with contempt, mocked Him, dressed Him in a
brilliant robe, and sent Him back to Pilate. [12†] That very day Herod and
Pilate became friends. [B] Previously, they had been hostile toward each
other.

ARTICLE

Are the Teachings of Jehovah's Witnesses Compatible with the Bible? ⇒

Jesus or Barabbas

[13] Pilate called together the chief priests, the leaders, and the people,
[14] and said to them, “You have brought me this man as one who subverts
the people. But in fact, after examining Him in your presence, I have found
no grounds to charge this man with those things you accuse Him of.
[15] Neither has Herod, because he sent Him back to us. Clearly, He has done
nothing to deserve death. [16] Therefore, I will have Him whipped [C] and then
release Him.” [[17] For according to the festival he had to release someone to
them.]

[18] Then they all cried out together, “Take this man away! Release
Barabbas to us! ” [19] (He had been thrown into prison for a rebellion that had
taken place in the city, and for murder.)

[20] Pilate, wanting to release Jesus, addressed them again, [21] but they kept
shouting, “Crucify! Crucify Him! ”

[22] A third time he said to them, “Why? What has this man done wrong? I
have found in Him no grounds for the death penalty. Therefore, I will have
Him whipped and then release Him.”

[23] But they kept up the pressure, demanding with loud voices that He be
crucified. And their voices won out. [24] So Pilate decided to grant their
demand [25] and released the one they were asking for, who had been thrown
into prison for rebellion and murder. But he handed Jesus over to their will.

The Way to the Cross

[26] As they led Him away, they seized Simon, a Cyrenian, who was
coming in from the country, and laid the cross on him to carry behind
Jesus. [27][†] A large crowd of people followed Him, including women who
were mourning and lamenting Him. [28] But turning to them, Jesus said,
“Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for Me, but weep for yourselves and
your children. [29] Look, the days are coming when they will say, ‘The
women without children, the wombs that never bore and the breasts that

never nursed, are fortunate! ’ 30† Then they will begin **to say to the**
mountains, ‘Fall on us! ’ and to the hills, ‘Cover us! ’ 31 For if they do
these things when the wood is green, what will happen when it is dry? ”

Crucified between Two Criminals

32 Two others — criminals — were also led away to be executed with
Him. 33 When they arrived at the place called The Skull, they crucified
Him there, along with the criminals, one on the right and one on the left.
[34† Then Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, because they do not know
what they are doing.”] And they divided His clothes and cast lots.

35 The people stood watching, and even the leaders kept scoffing: “He
saved others; let Him save Himself if this is God’s Messiah, the Chosen
One! ” 36† The soldiers also mocked Him. They came offering Him sour
wine 37 and said, “If You are the King of the Jews, save Yourself! ”

38 An inscription was above Him:

THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

39† Then one of the criminals hanging there began to yell insults at D
Him: “Aren’t You the Messiah? Save Yourself and us! ”

40 But the other answered, rebuking him: “Don’t you even fear God,
since you are undergoing the same punishment? 41 We are punished justly,
because we’re getting back what we deserve for the things we did, but this
man has done nothing wrong.” 42 Then he said, “Jesus, remember me
when You come into Your kingdom! ”

43† And He said to him, “•I assure you: Today you will be with Me in
paradise.”

The Death of Jesus

44† It was now about noon, [E] and darkness came over the whole land [F]
until three, [G] 45 because the sun's light failed. The curtain of the sanctuary
was split down the middle. 46† And Jesus called out with a loud voice,
"Father, **into Your hands I entrust My spirit.**" Saying this, He breathed
His last.

47† When the •centurion saw what happened, he began to glorify God,
saying, "This man really was righteous! " 48 All the crowds that had
gathered for this spectacle, when they saw what had taken place, went
home, striking their chests. 49 But all who knew Him, including the
women who had followed Him from Galilee, stood at a distance, watching
these things.

The Burial of Jesus

50 There was a good and righteous man named Joseph, a member of the
•Sanhedrin, 51 who had not agreed with their plan and action. He was from
Arimathea, a Judean town, and was looking forward to the kingdom of
God. 52 He approached Pilate and asked for Jesus' body. 53 Taking it down,
he wrapped it in fine linen and placed it in a tomb cut into the rock, where
no one had ever been placed. [H], 54 It was preparation day, and the Sabbath
was about to begin. [I] 55 The women who had come with Him from Galilee
followed along and observed the tomb and how His body was placed.
56 Then they returned and prepared spices and perfumes. And they rested
on the Sabbath according to the commandment.

Resurrection Morning

24 †On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came
to the tomb, bringing the spices they had prepared. 2 They found the
stone rolled away from the tomb. 3 They went in but did not find the body
of the Lord Jesus. 4† While they were perplexed about this, suddenly two
men stood by them in dazzling clothes. 5 So the women were terrified and
bowed down to the ground. [A]

“Why are you looking for the living among the dead? ” asked the men.
6 “He is not here, but He has been resurrected! Remember how He spoke to
you when He was still in Galilee, 7 saying, ‘The •Son of Man must be
betrayed into the hands of sinful men, be crucified, and rise on the third
day’? ” 8 And they remembered His words.

9 Returning from the tomb, they reported all these things to the Eleven
and to all the rest. 10 •Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James,
and the other women with them were telling the apostles these things.
11 But these words seemed like nonsense to them, and they did not believe
the women. 12† Peter, however, got up and ran to the tomb. When he
stooped to look in, he saw only the linen cloths. So he went home, amazed
at what had happened.

The Emmaus Disciples

13† Now that same day two of them were on their way to a village
called [B] Emmaus, which was about seven miles [C], from Jerusalem.
14 Together they were discussing everything that had taken place. 15 And
while they were discussing and arguing, Jesus Himself came near and began
to walk along with them. 16† But they [D] were prevented from recognizing
Him. 17 Then He asked them, “What is this dispute that you’re having with
each other as you are walking? ” And they stopped walking and looked
discouraged.

18 The one named Cleopas answered Him, “Are You the only visitor in
Jerusalem who doesn’t know the things that happened there in these
days? ”

[19]† “What things? ” He asked them.

So they said to Him, “The things concerning Jesus the •Nazarene, who was a Prophet powerful in action and speech before God and all the people, [20] and how our •chief priests and leaders handed Him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified Him. [21] But we were hoping that He was the One who was about to •redeem Israel. Besides all this, it’s the third day since these things happened. [22] Moreover, some women from our group astounded us. They arrived early at the tomb, [23] and when they didn’t find His body, they came and reported that they had seen a vision of angels who said He was alive. [24] Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but they didn’t see Him.”

[25] He said to them, “How unwise and slow you are to believe in your hearts all that the prophets have spoken! [26] Didn’t the •Messiah have to suffer these things and enter into His glory? ” [27]† Then beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, He interpreted for them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures.

[28] They came near the village where they were going, and He gave the impression that He was going farther. [29] But they urged Him: “Stay with us, because it’s almost evening, and now the day is almost over.” So He went in to stay with them.

[30] It was as He reclined at the table with them that He took the bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. [31] Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized Him, but He disappeared from their sight. [32] So they said to each other, “Weren’t our hearts ablaze within us while He was talking with us on the road and explaining the Scriptures to us? ” [33] That very hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem. They found the Eleven and those with them gathered together, [34] who said, [E] “The Lord has certainly been raised, and has appeared to Simon! ” [35] Then they began to describe what had happened on the road and how He was made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

ARTICLE

How Is the Transformation of Jesus' Disciples Different from Other Religious Transformations? ⇒

The Reality of the Risen Jesus

36† And as they were saying these things, He Himself stood among them.
He said to them, “Peace to you! ” 37 But they were startled and terrified
and thought they were seeing a ghost. 38 “Why are you troubled? ” He
asked them. “And why do doubts arise in your hearts? 39† Look at My
hands and My feet, that it is I Myself! Touch Me and see, because a ghost
does not have flesh and bones as you can see I have.” 40 Having said this,
He showed them His hands and feet. 41 But while they still were amazed
and unbelieving because of their joy, He asked them, “Do you have
anything here to eat? ” 42 So they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish, 43 and
He took it and ate in their presence.

44† Then He told them, “These are My words that I spoke to you while I
was still with you — that everything written about Me in the Law of Moses,
the Prophets, and the Psalms must be fulfilled.” 45 Then He opened their
minds to understand the Scriptures. 46† He also said to them, “This is what
is written: The Messiah would suffer and rise from the dead the third day,
47 and repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name
to all the nations, beginning at Jerusalem. 48 You are witnesses of these
things. 49 And look, I am sending you what My Father promised. As for
you, stay in the city until you are empowered from on high.”

The Ascension of Jesus

50† Then He led them out as far as Bethany, and lifting up His hands He
blessed them. 51 And while He was blessing them, He left them and was
carried up into heaven. 52 After worshiping Him, they returned to

Jerusalem with great joy. [53] And they were continually in the •temple
complex praising God.

JOHN

Introduction to John

JOHN

Prologue

1 †In the beginning was the Word, [A]
and the Word was with God,
and the Word was God.
2 He was with God in the beginning.

TWISTED SCRIPTURE

John 1:1-2,14

These verses refute Unitarian and cultic efforts to strip Jesus of His deity. They also hint at a Trinity. As the Word, Jesus "was God" (v. 1) and was "with God" (v. 2), indicating that the eternal Godhead consists of more than one person. The Word was incarnated as a human and dwelt among us (v. 14).

3 All things were created through Him,
and apart from Him not one thing was created
that has been created.
4† Life was in Him,
and that life was the light of men.
5 That light shines in the darkness,
yet the darkness did not overcome [B] it.
6 There was a man named John
who was sent from God.
7 He came as a witness
to testify about the light,
so that all might believe through him. [C]
8 He was not the light,
but he came to testify about the light.
9 The true light, who gives light to everyone,
was coming into the world. [D],
10 He was in the world,

and the world was created through Him,
yet the •world did not recognize Him.
11† He came to His own, [E]
and His own people [F] did not receive Him.
12 But to all who did receive Him,
He gave them the right to be [G] children of God,
to those who believe in His name,
13 who were born,
not of blood, [H]
or of the will of the flesh,
or of the will of man, [I]
but of God.
14† The Word became flesh
and took up residence [J] among us.
We observed His glory,
the glory as the •One and Only Son [K] from the Father,
full of grace and truth.
15 (John testified concerning Him and exclaimed,
"This was the One of whom I said,
'The One coming after me has surpassed me,
because He existed before me.' ")
16 Indeed, we have all received grace after grace
from His fullness,
17† for the law was given through Moses,
grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.
18† No one has ever seen God.
The One and Only Son —
the One who is at the Father's side [L] —
He has revealed Him.

ARTICLE

Aren't the Gospels the Product of Greek Thinking? ⇒

John the Baptist's Testimony

[19] This is John's testimony when the •Jews from Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to ask him, "Who are you? "

[20] He did not refuse to answer, but he declared: "I am not the •Messiah."

[21†] "What then? " they asked him. "Are you Elijah? "

"I am not," he said.

"Are you the Prophet? "

"No," he answered.

[22] "Who are you, then? " they asked. "We need to give an answer to those who sent us. What can you tell us about yourself? "

[23] He said, "I am a **voice of one crying out in the wilderness: Make straight the way of the Lord** — just as Isaiah the prophet said."

[24] Now they had been sent from the •Pharisees. [25] So they asked him, "Why then do you baptize if you aren't the Messiah, or Elijah, or the Prophet? "

[26] "I baptize with [M] water," John answered them. "Someone stands among you, but you don't know Him. [27] He is the One coming after me, whose sandal strap I'm not worthy to untie."

[28†] All this happened in Bethany across the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

The Lamb of God

[29] The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Here is the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! [30] This is the One I told you about: 'After me comes a man who has surpassed me, because He

existed before me.’ [31†] I didn’t know Him, but I came baptizing with [N] water so He might be revealed to Israel.”

[32] And John testified, “I watched the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and He rested on Him. [33] I didn’t know Him, but He [O] who sent me to baptize with [P] water told me, ‘The One you see the Spirit descending and resting on — He is the One who baptizes with [Q] the Holy Spirit.’ [34] I have seen and testified that He is the Son of God! ”

[35] Again the next day, John was standing with two of his disciples.
[36†] When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, “Look! The Lamb of God! ”

[37] The two disciples heard him say this and followed Jesus. [38] When Jesus turned and noticed them following Him, He asked them, “What are you looking for? ”

They said to Him, “•Rabbi” (which means “Teacher”), “where are You staying? ”

[39] “Come and you’ll see,” He replied. So they went and saw where He was staying, and they stayed with Him that day. It was about 10 in the morning. [R]

[40] Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, was one of the two who heard John and followed Him. [41] He first found his own brother Simon and told him, “We have found the Messiah! ” [S], (which means “Anointed One”), [42†] and he brought Simon to Jesus.

When Jesus saw him, He said, “You are Simon, son of John. You will be called •Cephas” (which means “Rock”).

Philip and Nathanael

[43] The next day He [T] decided to leave for Galilee. Jesus found Philip and told him, “Follow Me! ”

44 Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the hometown of Andrew and Peter.
45† Philip found Nathanael and told him, “We have found the One Moses wrote about in the Law (and so did the prophets): Jesus the son of Joseph, from Nazareth! ”

46† “Can anything good come out of Nazareth? ” Nathanael asked him.

“Come and see,” Philip answered.

47 Then Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward Him and said about him, “Here is a true Israelite; no deceit is in him.”

48 “How do you know me? ” Nathanael asked.

“Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you,” Jesus answered.

49 “Rabbi,” Nathanael replied, “You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel! ”

50 Jesus responded to him, “Do you believe only because I told you I saw
you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than this.” 51† Then He
said, “•I assure you: You will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending on the •Son of Man.”

The First Sign: Turning Water into Wine

2 On the third day a wedding took place in Cana of Galilee. Jesus'
mother was there, and 2 Jesus and His disciples were invited to the
wedding as well. 3 When the wine ran out, Jesus' mother told Him, "They
don't have any wine."

4† "What has this concern of yours to do with Me, •woman? " Jesus
asked. "My hour has not yet come."

5 "Do whatever He tells you," His mother told the servants.

6† Now six stone water jars had been set there for Jewish purification.
Each contained 20 or 30 gallons. [A]

7 "Fill the jars with water," Jesus told them. So they filled them to the
brim. 8 Then He said to them, "Now draw some out and take it to the chief
servant." And they did.

9 When the chief servant tasted the water (after it had become wine), he
did not know where it came from — though the servants who had drawn the
water knew. He called the groom 10 and told him, "Everyone sets out the
fine wine first, then, after people have drunk freely, the inferior. But you
have kept the fine wine until now."

11 Jesus performed this first sign [B] in Cana of Galilee. He displayed His
glory, and His disciples believed in Him.

12 After this, He went down to Capernaum, together with His mother,
His brothers, and His disciples, and they stayed there only a few days.

Cleansing the Temple Complex

13† The Jewish •Passover was near, so Jesus went up to Jerusalem. 14 In
the •temple complex He found people selling oxen, sheep, and doves, and
He also found the money changers sitting there. 15† After making a whip out
of cords, He drove everyone out of the temple complex with their sheep
and oxen. He also poured out the money changers' coins and overturned the

tables. [16] He told those who were selling doves, “Get these things out of here! Stop turning My Father’s house into a marketplace! ”

[17] And His disciples remembered that it is written: **Zeal for Your house will consume Me.**

[18] So the •Jews replied to Him, “What sign of authority will You show us for doing these things? ”

[19] Jesus answered, “Destroy this sanctuary, and I will raise it up in three days.”

[20] Therefore the Jews said, “This sanctuary took 46 years to build, and will You raise it up in three days? ”

[21] But He was speaking about the sanctuary of His body. [22] So when He was raised from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this. And they believed the Scripture and the statement Jesus had made.

[23] While He was in Jerusalem at the Passover Festival, many trusted in His name when they saw the signs He was doing. [24] Jesus, however, would not entrust Himself to them, since He knew them all [25] and because He did not need anyone to testify about man; for He Himself knew what was in man.

Jesus and Nicodemus

3 †There was a man from the •Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of
the •Jews. 2† This man came to Him at night and said, "•Rabbi, we
know that You have come from God as a teacher, for no one could perform
these signs You do unless God were with him."

3† Jesus replied, "•I assure you: Unless someone is born again, he cannot
see the kingdom of God."

TWISTED SCRIPTURE

John 3:3

Many who embrace reincarnation point to this verse and verse 7 ("You must be born again") to support their belief. But Jesus was speaking of a spiritual birth (v. 5), not a second physical birth (vv. 4-6).

4 "But how can anyone be born when he is old? " Nicodemus asked Him.
"Can he enter his mother's womb a second time and be born? "

5 Jesus answered, "I assure you: Unless someone is born of water and
the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. 6 Whatever is born of the
flesh is flesh, and whatever is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Do not be
amazed that I told you that you must be born again. 8 The wind blows
where it pleases, and you hear its sound, but you don't know where it comes
from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit."

9 "How can these things be? " asked Nicodemus.

10 "Are you a teacher of Israel and don't know these things? " Jesus
replied. 11 "I assure you: We speak what We know and We testify to what
We have seen, but you do not accept Our testimony. 12 If I have told you
about things that happen on earth and you don't believe, how will you

believe if I tell you about things of heaven? [13] No one has ascended into
heaven except the One who descended from heaven — the •Son of Man.
[14] Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man
must be lifted up, [15] so that everyone who believes in Him will have eternal
life.

[16†] "For God loved the world in this way: He gave His •One and Only
Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal
life. [17†] For God did not send His Son into the world that He might
condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through Him.
[18] Anyone who believes in Him is not condemned, but anyone who does not
believe is already condemned, because he has not believed in the name of
the One and Only Son of God.

TWISTED SCRIPTURE

John 3:16

Muslims do not believe that Jesus is the unique Son of God. According to the Koran, "No son did God beget, nor is there any God along with him" (Surah 23:91). But on nine occasions the Bible refers to Jesus as begotten of the Father. Not only did God declare Him to be His Son at His baptism (Lk 3:23), but also He proved it by raising Jesus from the dead (Rm 1:4).

[19] "This, then, is the judgment: The light has come into the world, and
people loved darkness rather than the light because their deeds were evil.
[20] For everyone who practices wicked things hates the light and avoids it,
so that his deeds may not be exposed. [21] But anyone who lives by the truth
comes to the light, so that his works may be shown to be accomplished by
God."

Jesus and John the Baptist

[22] After this, Jesus and His disciples went to the Judean countryside,
where He spent time with them and baptized. [23] John also was baptizing in
Aenon near Salim, because there was plenty of water there. People were
coming and being baptized, [24] since John had not yet been thrown into
prison.

[25] Then a dispute arose between John's disciples and a Jew about
purification. [26] So they came to John and told him, "Rabbi, the One you
testified about, and who was with you across the Jordan, is
baptizing — and everyone is flocking to Him."

[27] John responded, "No one can receive a single thing unless it's given to
him from heaven. [28] You yourselves can testify that I said, 'I am not the
•Messiah, but I've been sent ahead of Him.' [29] He who has the bride is the
groom. But the groom's friend, who stands by and listens for him, rejoices
greatly [A] at the groom's voice. So this joy of mine is complete. [30] He must
increase, but I must decrease."

The One from Heaven

[31] The One who comes from above is above all. The one who is from the
earth is earthly and speaks in earthly terms. [B] The One who comes from
heaven is above all. [32†] He testifies to what He has seen and heard, yet no
one accepts His testimony. [33] The one who has accepted His testimony has
affirmed that God is true. [34] For God sent Him, and He speaks God's
words, since He gives the Spirit without measure. [35] The Father loves the
Son and has given all things into His hands. [36] The one who believes in the
Son has eternal life, but the one who refuses to believe in the Son will not
see life; instead, the wrath of God remains on him.

Jesus and the Samaritan Woman

4 [†]When Jesus knew that the •Pharisees heard He was making and
baptizing more disciples than John 2 (though Jesus Himself was not
baptizing, but His disciples were), 3 He left Judea and went again to
Galilee. 4[†] He had to travel through Samaria, 5 so He came to a town of
Samaria called Sychar near the property [A] that Jacob had given his son
Joseph. 6 Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, worn out from His journey, sat
down at the well. It was about six in the evening. [B]

7 A woman of Samaria came to draw water.

"Give Me a drink," Jesus said to her, 8 for His disciples had gone into
town to buy food.

9[†] "How is it that You, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a •Samaritan
woman? " she asked Him. For Jews do not associate with [C] Samaritans.

10 Jesus answered, "If you knew the gift of God, and who is saying to
you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would ask Him, and He would give you living
water."

11 "Sir," said the woman, "You don't even have a bucket, and the well is
deep. So where do You get this 'living water'? 12 You aren't greater than
our father Jacob, are You? He gave us the well and drank from it himself,
as did his sons and livestock."

13 Jesus said, "Everyone who drinks from this water will get thirsty
again. 14 But whoever drinks from the water that I will give him will never
get thirsty again — ever! In fact, the water I will give him will become a
well of water springing up within him for eternal life."

15 "Sir," the woman said to Him, "give me this water so I won't get
thirsty and come here to draw water."

16 "Go call your husband," He told her, "and come back here."

[17] “I don’t have a husband,” she answered.

“You have correctly said, ‘I don’t have a husband,’ ” Jesus said. [18] “For
you’ve had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband.
What you have said is true.”

[19] “Sir,” the woman replied, “I see that You are a prophet. [20] Our fathers
worshiped on this mountain, yet you Jews say that the place to worship is
in Jerusalem.”

[21†] Jesus told her, “Believe Me, •woman, an hour is coming when you
will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. [22] You
Samaritans worship what you do not know. We worship what we do know,
because salvation is from the Jews. [23] But an hour is coming, and is now
here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth.
Yes, the Father wants such people to worship Him. [24] God is spirit, and
those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”

[25] The woman said to Him, “I know that •Messiah [D] is coming” (who is
called Christ). “When He comes, He will explain everything to us.”

[26†] “I am He,” Jesus told her, “the One speaking to you.”

The Ripened Harvest

[27] Just then His disciples arrived, and they were amazed that He was
talking with a woman. Yet no one said, “What do You want? ” or “Why are
You talking with her? ”

[28] Then the woman left her water jar, went into town, and told the men,
[29] “Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did! Could this be the
Messiah? ” [30] They left the town and made their way to Him.

[31] In the meantime the disciples kept urging Him, “•Rabbi, eat
something.”

32 But He said, "I have food to eat that you don't know about."

33 The disciples said to one another, "Could someone have brought Him something to eat? "

34 "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to finish His
work," Jesus told them. 35 "Don't you say, 'There are still four more
months, then comes the harvest'? Listen to what I'm telling you: Open
your eyes and look at the fields, for they are ready for harvest. 36 The
reaper is already receiving pay and gathering fruit for eternal life, so the
sower and reaper can rejoice together. 37 For in this case the saying is true:
'One sows and another reaps.' 38 I sent you to reap what you didn't labor
for; others have labored, and you have benefited from their labor."

ARTICLE

Can the Gospel Be Presented Across Cultures? ⇒

The Savior of the World

39 Now many Samaritans from that town believed in Him because of
what the woman said [E] when she testified, "He told me everything I ever
did." 40 Therefore, when the Samaritans came to Him, they asked Him to
stay with them, and He stayed there two days. 41 Many more believed
because of what He said. [F] 42 And they told the woman, "We no longer
believe because of what you said, for we have heard for ourselves and know
that this really is the Savior of the world."

A Galilean Welcome

43† After two days He left there for Galilee. 44 Jesus Himself testified
that a prophet has no honor in his own country. 45 When they entered

Galilee, the Galileans welcomed Him because they had seen everything He
did in Jerusalem during the festival. For they also had gone to the festival.

The Second Sign: Healing an Official's Son

46 Then He went again to Cana of Galilee, where He had turned the
water into wine. There was a certain royal official whose son was ill at
Capernaum. 47 When this man heard that Jesus had come from Judea into
Galilee, he went to Him and pleaded with Him to come down and heal his
son, for he was about to die.

48 Jesus told him, "Unless you people see signs and wonders, you will
not believe."

49 "Sir," the official said to Him, "come down before my boy dies! "

50 "Go," Jesus told him, "your son will live." The man believed what [G]
Jesus said to him and departed.

51 While he was still going down, his •slaves met him saying that his boy
was alive. 52 He asked them at what time he got better. "Yesterday at seven
in the morning [H] the fever left him," they answered. 53 The father realized
this was the very hour at which Jesus had told him, "Your son will live."
Then he himself believed, along with his whole household.

54 This, therefore, was the second sign Jesus performed after He came
from Judea to Galilee.

The Third Sign: Healing the Sick

5 After this, a Jewish festival took place, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.
2† By the Sheep Gate in Jerusalem there is a pool, called Bethesda in
•Hebrew, which has five colonnades. 3 Within these lay a large number of
the sick — blind, lame, and paralyzed [— waiting for the moving of the
water, 4 because an angel would go down into the pool from time to time
and stir up the water. Then the first one who got in after the water was
stirred up recovered from whatever ailment he had].

5 One man was there who had been sick for 38 years. 6 When Jesus saw
him lying there and knew he had already been there a long time, He said to
him, "Do you want to get well? "

7 "Sir," the sick man answered, "I don't have a man to put me into the
pool when the water is stirred up, but while I'm coming, someone goes
down ahead of me."

8 "Get up," Jesus told him, "pick up your mat and walk! " 9 Instantly the
man got well, picked up his mat, and started to walk.

Now that day was the Sabbath, 10 so the •Jews said to the man who had
been healed, "This is the Sabbath! It's illegal for you to pick up your mat."

11 He replied, "The man who made me well told me, 'Pick up your mat
and walk.' "

12 "Who is this man who told you, 'Pick up your mat and walk'? " they
asked. 13 But the man who was cured did not know who it was, because
Jesus had slipped away into the crowd that was there. [A]

14† After this, Jesus found him in the •temple complex and said to him,
"See, you are well. Do not sin anymore, so that something worse doesn't
happen to you." 15 The man went and reported to the Jews that it was Jesus
who had made him well.

Honoring the Father and the Son

[16]† Therefore, the Jews began persecuting Jesus because He was doing
these things on the Sabbath. [17] But Jesus responded to them, “My Father is
still working, and I am working also.” [18] This is why the Jews began trying
all the more to kill Him: Not only was He breaking the Sabbath, but He
was even calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God.

[19] Then Jesus replied, “•I assure you: The Son is not able to do anything
on His own, but only what He sees the Father doing. For whatever the
Father does, the Son also does these things in the same way. [20] For the
Father loves the Son and shows Him everything He is doing, and He will
show Him greater works than these so that you will be amazed. [21] And just
as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so the Son also gives life
to anyone He wants to. [22] The Father, in fact, judges no one but has given
all judgment to the Son, [23] so that all people will honor the Son just as they
honor the Father. Anyone who does not honor the Son does not honor the
Father who sent Him.

Life and Judgment

[24] “I assure you: Anyone who hears My word and believes Him who sent
Me has eternal life and will not come under judgment but has passed from
death to life.

[25] “I assure you: An hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will
hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. [26] For just
as the Father has life in Himself, so also He has granted to the Son to have
life in Himself. [27] And He has granted Him the right to pass judgment,
because He is the •Son of Man. [28] Do not be amazed at this, because a time
is coming when all who are in the graves will hear His voice [29] and come
out — those who have done good things, to the resurrection of life, but
those who have done wicked things, to the resurrection of judgment.

[30] “I can do nothing on My own. I judge only as I hear, and My
judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of
Him who sent Me.

Four Witnesses to Jesus

[31]† "If I testify about Myself, My testimony is not valid. [32] There is
Another who testifies about Me, and I know that the testimony He gives
about Me is valid. [33] You have sent messengers to John, and he has testified
to the truth. [34] I don't receive man's testimony, but I say these things so
that you may be saved. [35] John was a burning and shining lamp, and for a
time you were willing to enjoy his light.

[36] "But I have a greater testimony than John's because of the works that
the Father has given Me to accomplish. These very works I am doing
testify about Me that the Father has sent Me. [37] The Father who sent Me
has Himself testified about Me. You have not heard His voice at any time,
and you haven't seen His form. [38] You don't have His word living in you,
because you don't believe the One He sent. [39] You pore over the Scriptures
because you think you have eternal life in them, yet they testify about Me.
[40] And you are not willing to come to Me so that you may have life.

[41] "I do not accept glory from men, [42] but I know you — that you have
no love for God within you. [43] I have come in My Father's name, yet you
don't accept Me. If someone else comes in his own name, you will accept
him. [44] How can you believe? While accepting glory from one another, you
don't seek the glory that comes from the only God. [45] Do not think that I
will accuse you to the Father. Your accuser is Moses, on whom you have
set your hope. [46] For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me, because
he wrote about Me. [47] But if you don't believe his writings, how will you
believe My words? "

The Fourth Sign: Feeding 5,000

6 After this, Jesus crossed the Sea of Galilee (or Tiberias). 2 And a huge
crowd was following Him because they saw the signs that He was
performing by healing the sick. 3 So Jesus went up a mountain and sat down
there with His disciples.

4 Now the •Passover, a Jewish festival, was near. 5 Therefore, when Jesus
looked up and noticed a huge crowd coming toward Him, He asked Philip,
“Where will we buy bread so these people can eat? ” 6 He asked this to test
him, for He Himself knew what He was going to do.

7 Philip answered, “Two hundred •denarii worth of bread wouldn’t be
enough for each of them to have a little.”

8 One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, said to Him,
9 “There’s a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish — but what
are they for so many? ”

10 Then Jesus said, “Have the people sit down.”

There was plenty of grass in that place, so they sat down. The men
numbered about 5,000. 11 Then Jesus took the loaves, and after giving
thanks He distributed them to those who were seated — so also with the
fish, as much as they wanted.

12 When they were full, He told His disciples, “Collect the leftovers so
that nothing is wasted.” 13 So they collected them and filled 12 baskets
with the pieces from the five barley loaves that were left over by those who
had eaten.

14† When the people saw the sign He had done, they said, “This really is
the Prophet who was to come into the world! ” 15 Therefore, when Jesus
knew that they were about to come and take Him by force to make Him
king, He withdrew again to the mountain by Himself.

The Fifth Sign: Walking on Water

16 When evening came, His disciples went down to the sea, 17† got into a boat, and started across the sea to Capernaum. Darkness had already set in, but Jesus had not yet come to them. 18 Then a high wind arose, and the sea began to churn. 19 After they had rowed about three or four miles, [A] they saw Jesus walking on the sea. He was coming near the boat, and they were afraid.

20 But He said to them, "It is I. Don't be afraid! " 21 Then they were willing to take Him on board, and at once the boat was at the shore where they were heading.

The Bread of Life

22 The next day, the crowd that had stayed on the other side of the sea knew there had been only one boat. They also knew that Jesus had not boarded the boat with His disciples, but that His disciples had gone off alone. 23 Some boats from Tiberias came near the place where they ate the bread after the Lord gave thanks. 24 When the crowd saw that neither Jesus nor His disciples were there, they got into the boats and went to Capernaum looking for Jesus.

25 When they found Him on the other side of the sea, they said to Him, "•Rabbi, when did You get here? "

26 Jesus answered, "•I assure you: You are looking for Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate the loaves and were filled. 27 Don't work for the food that perishes but for the food that lasts for eternal life, which the •Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal of approval on Him."

28 “What can we do to perform the works of God? ” they asked.

29 Jesus replied, “This is the work of God — that you believe in the One
He has sent.”

30† “What sign then are You going to do so we may see and believe
You? ” they asked. “What are You going to perform? 31 Our fathers ate the
manna in the wilderness, just as it is written: **He gave them bread from
heaven to eat.**” ,

32 Jesus said to them, “I assure you: Moses didn’t give you the bread
from heaven, but My Father gives you the real bread from heaven. 33 For
the bread of God is the One who comes down from heaven and gives life to
the world.”

34 Then they said, “Sir, give us this bread always! ”

35 “I am the bread of life,” Jesus told them. “No one who comes to Me
will ever be hungry, and no one who believes in Me will ever be thirsty
again. 36 But as I told you, you’ve seen Me, and yet you do not believe.
37 Everyone the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes
to Me I will never cast out. 38 For I have come down from heaven, not to
do My will, but the will of Him who sent Me. 39 This is the will of Him
who sent Me: that I should lose none of those He has given Me but should
raise them up on the last day. 40 For this is the will of My Father: that
everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have eternal life, and
I will raise him up on the last day.”

41 Therefore the •Jews started complaining about Him because He said,
“I am the bread that came down from heaven.” 42 They were saying, “Isn’t
this Jesus the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can
He now say, ‘I have come down from heaven’? ”

43 Jesus answered them, “Stop complaining among yourselves. 44 No one
can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him, and I will raise

him up on the last day. 45 It is written in the Prophets: **And they will all be**
taught by God. Everyone who has listened to and learned from the Father
comes to Me — 46 not that anyone has seen the Father except the One who
is from God. He has seen the Father.

47 "I assure you: Anyone who believes has eternal life. 48 I am the bread
of life. 49 Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died.
50 This is the bread that comes down from heaven so that anyone may eat of
it and not die. 51 I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If
anyone eats of this bread he will live forever. The bread that I will give for
the life of the world is My flesh."

52[†] At that, the Jews argued among themselves, "How can this man give
us His flesh to eat? "

53 So Jesus said to them, "I assure you: Unless you eat the flesh of the
Son of Man and drink His blood, you do not have life in yourselves.
54 Anyone who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I
will raise him up on the last day, 55 because My flesh is real food and My
blood is real drink. 56 The one who eats My flesh and drinks My blood lives
in Me, and I in him. 57 Just as the living Father sent Me and I live because
of the Father, so the one who feeds on Me will live because of Me. 58 This
is the bread that came down from heaven; it is not like the manna your
fathers ate — and they died. The one who eats this bread will live forever."

59 He said these things while teaching in the •synagogue in Capernaum.

Many Disciples Desert Jesus

60 Therefore, when many of His disciples heard this, they said, "This
teaching is hard! Who can accept [B] it? "

61 Jesus, knowing in Himself that His disciples were complaining about
this, asked them, "Does this •offend you? 62 Then what if you were to
observe the Son of Man ascending to where He was before? 63 The Spirit

is the One who gives life. The flesh doesn't help at all. The words that I
have spoken to you are spirit and are life. 64 But there are some among you
who don't believe." (For Jesus knew from the beginning those who would
not believe and the one who would betray Him.) 65 He said, "This is why I
told you that no one can come to Me unless it is granted to him by the
Father."

66 From that moment many of His disciples turned back and no longer
accompanied Him. 67 Therefore Jesus said to the Twelve, "You don't want
to go away too, do you? "

68† Simon Peter answered, "Lord, who will we go to? You have the
words of eternal life. 69 We have come to believe and know that You are the
Holy One of God! "

70 Jesus replied to them, "Didn't I choose you, the Twelve? Yet one of
you is the Devil! " 71 He was referring to Judas, Simon Iscariot's son, one
of the Twelve, because he was going to betray Him.

The Unbelief of Jesus' Brothers

7 After this, Jesus traveled in Galilee, since He did not want to travel in
Judea because the •Jews were trying to kill Him. 2 The Jewish Festival
of Tabernacles [A], , was near, 3 so His brothers said to Him, “Leave here
and go to Judea so Your disciples can see Your works that You are doing.
4 For no one does anything in secret while he’s seeking public recognition.
If You do these things, show Yourself to the world.” 5† (For not even His
brothers believed in Him.)

6 Jesus told them, “My time has not yet arrived, but your time is always
at hand. 7 The world cannot hate you, but it does hate Me because I testify
about it — that its deeds are evil. 8† Go up to the festival yourselves. I’m
not going up to the festival yet, because My time has not yet fully come.”
9 After He had said these things, He stayed in Galilee.

Jesus at the Festival of Tabernacles

10 After His brothers had gone up to the festival, then He also went up,
not openly but secretly. 11 The Jews were looking for Him at the festival
and saying, “Where is He? ” 12 And there was a lot of discussion about Him
among the crowds. Some were saying, “He’s a good man.” Others were
saying, “No, on the contrary, He’s deceiving the people.” 13 Still, nobody
was talking publicly about Him because they feared the Jews.

14 When the festival was already half over, Jesus went up into the •temple
complex and began to teach. 15† Then the Jews were amazed and said,
“How does He know the Scriptures, since He hasn’t been trained? ”

16 Jesus answered them, “My teaching isn’t Mine but is from the One
who sent Me. 17 If anyone wants to do His will, he will understand
whether the teaching is from God or if I am speaking on My own. 18 The
one who speaks for himself seeks his own glory. But He who seeks the
glory of the One who sent Him is true, and there is no unrighteousness in
Him. 19 Didn’t Moses give you the law? Yet none of you keeps the law!
Why do you want to kill Me? ”

20 “You have a demon! ” the crowd responded. “Who wants to kill
You? ”

21 “I did one work, and you are all amazed,” Jesus answered.
22 “Consider this: Moses has given you circumcision — not that it comes
from Moses but from the fathers — and you circumcise a man on the
Sabbath. 23 If a man receives circumcision on the Sabbath so that the law
of Moses won’t be broken, are you angry at Me because I made a man
entirely well on the Sabbath? 24 Stop judging according to outward
appearances; rather judge according to righteous judgment.”

The Identity of the Messiah

25 Some of the people of Jerusalem were saying, “Isn’t this the man they
want to kill? 26 Yet, look! He’s speaking publicly and they’re saying nothing
to Him. Can it be true that the authorities know He is the •Messiah?
27† But we know where this man is from. When the Messiah comes,
nobody will know where He is from.”

28 As He was teaching in the temple complex, Jesus cried out, “You
know Me and you know where I am from. Yet I have not come on My own,
but the One who sent Me is true. You don’t know Him; 29 I know Him
because I am from Him, and He sent Me.”

30 Then they tried to seize Him. Yet no one laid a hand on Him because
His hour had not yet come. 31 However, many from the crowd believed in
Him and said, “When the Messiah comes, He won’t perform more signs
than this man has done, will He? ”

32 The •Pharisees heard the crowd muttering these things about Him, so
the •chief priests and the Pharisees sent temple police to arrest Him.

33 Then Jesus said, “I am only with you for a short time. Then I’m going
to the One who sent Me. 34† You will look for Me, but you will not find
Me; and where I am, you cannot come.”

35 Then the Jews said to one another, “Where does He intend to go so we
won’t find Him? He doesn’t intend to go to the Dispersion among the
Greeks and teach the Greeks, does He? 36 What is this remark He made:
‘You will look for Me, and you will not find Me; and where I am, you
cannot come’ ? ”

The Promise of the Spirit

37 On the last and most important day of the festival, Jesus stood up and
cried out, “If anyone is thirsty, he should come to Me and drink! 38 The
one who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, will have streams of
living water flow from deep within him.” 39[†] He said this about the Spirit.
Those who believed in Jesus were going to receive the Spirit, for the Spirit
had not yet been received because Jesus had not yet been glorified.

The People Are Divided over Jesus

40 When some from the crowd heard these words, they said, “This really
is the Prophet! ” 41[†] Others said, “This is the Messiah! ” But some said,
“Surely the Messiah doesn’t come from Galilee, does He? 42 Doesn’t the
Scripture say that the Messiah comes from David’s offspring [C] and from
the town of Bethlehem, where David once lived? ” 43 So a division
occurred among the crowd because of Him. 44 Some of them wanted to
seize Him, but no one laid hands on Him.

Debate over Jesus’ Claims

45 Then the temple police came to the chief priests and Pharisees, who
asked them, “Why haven’t you brought Him? ”

46 The police answered, “No man ever spoke like this! ”

47 Then the Pharisees responded to them: “Are you fooled too? 48 Have
any of the rulers or Pharisees believed in Him? 49 But this crowd, which
doesn’t know the law, is accursed! ”

50 Nicodemus — the one who came to Him previously, being one of
them — said to them, 51 “Our law doesn’t judge a man before it hears from
him and knows what he’s doing, does it? ”

52 “You aren’t from Galilee too, are you? ” they replied. “Investigate and
you will see that no prophet arises from Galilee.”

[53† So each one went to his house.

8 But Jesus went to the •Mount of Olives.

An Adulteress Forgiven

2 At dawn He went to the •temple complex again, and all the people
were coming to Him. He sat down and began to teach them.

3 Then the •scribes and the •Pharisees brought a woman caught in
adultery, making her stand in the center. 4 “Teacher,” they said to Him,
“this woman was caught in the act of committing adultery. 5 In the law
Moses commanded us to stone such women. So what do You say? ”
6 They asked this to trap Him, in order that they might have evidence to
accuse Him.

Jesus stooped down and started writing on the ground with His finger.
7 When they persisted in questioning Him, He stood up and said to them,
“The one without sin among you should be the first to throw a stone at
her.”

8 Then He stooped down again and continued writing on the ground.
9 When they heard this, they left one by one, starting with the older men.
Only He was left, with the woman in the center. 10 When Jesus stood up, He
said to her, “•Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you? ”

11 “No one, Lord,” [A] she answered.

“Neither do I condemn you,” said Jesus. “Go, and from now on do not
sin anymore.”]

The Light of the World

12 Then Jesus spoke to them again: “I am the light of the world. Anyone
who follows Me will never walk in the darkness but will have the light of
life.”

[13] So the Pharisees said to Him, “You are testifying about Yourself. Your testimony is not valid.”

[14]† “Even if I testify about Myself,” Jesus replied, “My testimony is
valid, because I know where I came from and where I’m going. But you
don’t know where I come from or where I’m going. [15]† You judge by
human standards. I judge no one. [16] And if I do judge, My judgment is
true, because I am not alone, but I and the Father who sent Me judge
together. [17] Even in your law it is written that the witness of two men is
valid. [18] I am the One who testifies about Myself, and the Father who sent
Me testifies about Me.”

[19] Then they asked Him, “Where is Your Father? ”

“You know neither Me nor My Father,” Jesus answered. “If you knew
Me, you would also know My Father.” [20] He spoke these words by the
treasury, while teaching in the temple complex. But no one seized Him,
because His hour had not come.

Jesus Predicts His Departure

[21] Then He said to them again, “I’m going away; you will look for Me, and you will die in your sin. Where I’m going, you cannot come.”

[22] So the •Jews said again, “He won’t kill Himself, will He, since He says, ‘Where I’m going, you cannot come’ ? ”

[23] “You are from below,” He told them, “I am from above. You are of
this world; I am not of this •world. [24] Therefore I told you that you will die
in your sins. For if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your
sins.”

[25] “Who are You? ” they questioned.

“Precisely what I’ve been telling you from the very beginning,” Jesus
told them. [26] “I have many things to say and to judge about you, but the

One who sent Me is true, and what I have heard from Him — these things I
tell the world."

[27] They did not know He was speaking to them about the Father. [28] So
Jesus said to them, "When you lift up the •Son of Man, then you will know
that I am He, and that I do nothing on My own. But just as the Father
taught Me, I say these things. [29] The One who sent Me is with Me. He has
not left Me alone, because I always do what pleases Him."

Truth and Freedom

[30†] As He was saying these things, many believed in Him. [31] So Jesus
said to the Jews who had believed Him, "If you continue in My word, you
really are My disciples. [32] You will know the truth, and the truth will set
you free."

[33†] "We are descendants [B] of Abraham," they answered Him, "and we
have never been enslaved to anyone. How can You say, 'You will become
free'? "

[34] Jesus responded, "•I assure you: Everyone who commits sin is a •slave
of sin. [35] A slave does not remain in the household forever, but a son does
remain forever. [36] Therefore, if the Son sets you free, you really will be
free. [37] I know you are descendants of Abraham, but you are trying to kill
Me because My word is not welcome among you. [38] I speak what I have
seen in the presence of the Father; therefore, you do what you have heard
from your father."

[39] "Our father is Abraham! " they replied.

"If you were Abraham's children," Jesus told them, "you would do what
Abraham did. [40] But now you are trying to kill Me, a man who has told you
the truth that I heard from God. Abraham did not do this! [41] You're doing
what your father does."

"We weren't born of sexual immorality," they said. "We have one
Father — God."

[42] Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love Me,
because I came from God and I am here. For I didn't come on My own, but
He sent Me. [43] Why don't you understand what I say? Because you cannot
listen to My word. [44†] You are of your father the Devil, and you want to
carry out your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning and
has not stood in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he tells a
lie, he speaks from his own nature, because he is a liar and the father of
liars. [45] Yet because I tell the truth, you do not believe Me. [46] Who among
you can convict Me of sin? If I tell the truth, why don't you believe Me?
[47] The one who is from God listens to God's words. This is why you don't
listen, because you are not from God."

Jesus and Abraham

[48] The Jews responded to Him, "Aren't we right in saying that You're a
•Samaritan and have a demon? "

[49] "I do not have a demon," Jesus answered. "On the contrary, I honor
My Father and you dishonor Me. [50] I do not seek My glory; the One who
seeks it also judges. [51] I assure you: If anyone keeps My word, he will
never see death — ever! "

[52] Then the Jews said, "Now we know You have a demon. Abraham died
and so did the prophets. You say, 'If anyone keeps My word, he will never
taste death — ever! ' [53] Are You greater than our father Abraham who died?
Even the prophets died. Who do You pretend to be? " [C]

[54] "If I glorify Myself," Jesus answered, "My glory is nothing. My
Father — you say about Him, 'He is our God' — He is the One who
glorifies Me. [55] You've never known Him, but I know Him. If I were to say
I don't know Him, I would be a liar like you. But I do know Him, and I
keep His word. [56] Your father Abraham was overjoyed that he would see
My day; he saw it and rejoiced."

57 The Jews replied, “You aren’t 50 years old yet, and You’ve seen Abraham? ”

58† Jesus said to them, “I assure you: Before Abraham was, I am.”

59 At that, they picked up stones to throw at Him. But Jesus was hidden [D] and went out of the temple complex.

The Sixth Sign: Healing a Man Born Blind

9 †As He was passing by, He saw a man blind from birth. 2 His disciples
questioned Him: "•Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he
was born blind? "

TWISTED SCRIPTURE

John 9:2

This verse, when twisted, seems to support reincarnation. The implication is that in a previous life the man sinned and was thus born blind in the next life. The reference, however, is to a Jewish belief that a fetus could commit a sin while in his mother's womb. The concept of reincarnation was foreign to Hebrew thought. Jews believed in resurrection, not reincarnation.

3 "Neither this man nor his parents sinned," Jesus answered. "This came
about so that God's works might be displayed in him. 4 We must do the
works of Him who sent Me while it is day. Night is coming when no one
can work. 5 As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world."

6† After He said these things He spit on the ground, made some mud
from the saliva, and spread the mud on his eyes. 7 "Go," He told him, "wash
in the pool of Siloam" (which means "Sent"). So he left, washed, and came
back seeing.

8 His neighbors and those who formerly had seen him as a beggar said,
"Isn't this the man who sat begging? " 9 Some said, "He's the one." "No,"
others were saying, "but he looks like him."

He kept saying, "I'm the one! "

10 Therefore they asked him, "Then how were your eyes opened? "

[11] He answered, "The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and told me, 'Go to Siloam and wash.' So when I went and washed I received my sight."

[12] "Where is He? " they asked.

"I don't know," he said.

The Healed Man's Testimony

[13] They brought the man who used to be blind to the •Pharisees. [14] The
day that Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes was a Sabbath. [15] So
again the Pharisees asked him how he received his sight.

"He put mud on my eyes," he told them. "I washed and I can see."

[16] Therefore some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for He doesn't keep the Sabbath! " But others were saying, "How can a sinful man perform such signs? " And there was a division among them.

[17] Again they asked the blind man, "What do you say about Him, since He opened your eyes? "

"He's a prophet," he said.

[18] The •Jews did not believe this about him — that he was blind and received sight — until they summoned the parents of the one who had received his sight.

[19] They asked them, "Is this your son, the one you say was born blind? How then does he now see? "

[20] "We know this is our son and that he was born blind," his parents
answered. [21] "But we don't know how he now sees, and we don't know
who opened his eyes. Ask him; he's of age. He will speak for himself."
[22†] His parents said these things because they were afraid of the Jews, since
the Jews had already agreed that if anyone confessed Him as •Messiah, he

would be banned from the •synagogue. [23] This is why his parents said, "He's of age; ask him."

[24] So a second time they summoned the man who had been blind and told him, "Give glory to God. [A] We know that this man is a sinner! "

[25] He answered, "Whether or not He's a sinner, I don't know. One thing I do know: I was blind, and now I can see! "

[26] Then they asked him, "What did He do to you? How did He open your eyes? "

[27] "I already told you," he said, "and you didn't listen. Why do you want to hear it again? You don't want to become His disciples too, do you? "

[28] They ridiculed him: "You're that man's disciple, but we're Moses' disciples. [29] We know that God has spoken to Moses. But this man — we don't know where He's from! "

[30] "This is an amazing thing," the man told them. "You don't know where He is from, yet He opened my eyes! [31] We know that God doesn't listen to sinners, but if anyone is God-fearing and does His will, He listens to him. [32] Throughout history [B] no one has ever heard of someone opening the eyes of a person born blind. [33†] If this man were not from God, He wouldn't be able to do anything."

[34] "You were born entirely in sin," they replied, "and are you trying to teach us? " Then they threw him out.

The Blind Man's Sight and the Pharisees' Blindness

[35] When Jesus heard that they had thrown the man out, He found him and asked, "Do you believe in the •Son of Man? "

[36] "Who is He, Sir, that I may believe in Him? " he asked.

[37] Jesus answered, “You have seen Him; in fact, He is the One speaking with you.”

[38] “I believe, Lord! ” he said, and he worshiped Him.

[39] Jesus said, “I came into this world for judgment, in order that those who do not see will see and those who do see will become blind.”

[40] Some of the Pharisees who were with Him heard these things and asked Him, “We aren’t blind too, are we? ”

[41]† “If you were blind,” Jesus told them, “you wouldn’t have sin. But now that you say, ‘We see’ — your sin remains.

The Ideal Shepherd

10 “•I assure you: Anyone who doesn’t enter the sheep pen by the door
but climbs in some other way, is a thief and a robber. 2 The one who
enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. 3 The doorkeeper opens it
for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and
leads them out. 4 When he has brought all his own outside, he goes ahead of
them. The sheep follow him because they recognize his voice. 5 They will
never follow a stranger; instead they will run away from him, because they
don’t recognize the voice of strangers.”

6 Jesus gave them this illustration, but they did not understand what He
was telling them.

The Good Shepherd

7 So Jesus said again, “I assure you: I am the door of the sheep. 8† All
who came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep didn’t listen to
them. 9 I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved and will
come in and go out and find pasture. 10† A thief comes only to steal and to
kill and to destroy. I have come so that they may have life and have it in
abundance.

11 “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the
sheep. 12 The hired man, since he is not the shepherd and doesn’t own the
sheep, leaves them and runs away when he sees a wolf coming. The wolf
then snatches and scatters them. 13 This happens because he is a hired man
and doesn’t care about the sheep.

14 “I am the good shepherd. I know My own sheep, and they know Me,
15 as the Father knows Me, and I know the Father. I lay down My life for
the sheep. 16† But I have other sheep that are not of this fold; I must bring
them also, and they will listen to My voice. Then there will be one flock,
one shepherd. 17 This is why the Father loves Me, because I am laying
down My life so I may take it up again. 18 No one takes it from Me, but I
lay it down on My own. I have the right to lay it down, and I have the right
to take it up again. I have received this command from My Father.”

19 Again a division took place among the •Jews because of these words.
20 Many of them were saying, “He has a demon and He’s crazy! Why do
you listen to Him? ” 21 Others were saying, “These aren’t the words of
someone demon-possessed. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind? ”

Jesus at the Festival of Dedication

22 Then the Festival of Dedication [A] took place in Jerusalem, and it was
winter. 23 Jesus was walking in the •temple complex in Solomon’s
Colonnade. 24† Then the Jews surrounded Him and asked, “How long are
You going to keep us in suspense? [B] If You are the •Messiah, tell us
plainly.” [C]

25 “I did tell you and you don’t believe,” Jesus answered them. “The
works that I do in My Father’s name testify about Me. 26 But you don’t
believe because you are not My sheep. 27 My sheep hear My voice, I know
them, and they follow Me. 28 I give them eternal life, and they will never
perish — ever! No one will snatch them out of My hand. 29 My Father,
who has given them to Me, is greater than all. No one is able to snatch them
out of the Father’s hand. 30† The Father and I are one.”

Renewed Efforts to Stone Jesus

31 Again the Jews picked up rocks to stone Him.

32 Jesus replied, “I have shown you many good works from the Father.
Which of these works are you stoning Me for? ”

33 “We aren’t stoning You for a good work,” the Jews answered, “but for
blasphemy, because You — being a man — make Yourself God.”

34† Jesus answered them, “Isn’t it written in your scripture, **I said, you
are gods**? 35 If He called those whom the word of God came to
‘gods’ — and the Scripture cannot be broken — 36 do you say, ‘You are
blaspheming’ to the One the Father set apart and sent into the world,

because I said: I am the Son of God? 37 If I am not doing My Father's
works, don't believe Me. 38 But if I am doing them and you don't believe
Me, believe the works. This way you will know and understand that the
Father is in Me and I in the Father." 39 Then they were trying again to seize
Him, yet He eluded their grasp.

TWISTED SCRIPTURE

John 10:34

An assortment of New Age sects and quasi-Christian cults believe that humans are divine. Often they point to this verse as support. This verse is actually a reference to Ps 82:6, a psalm of Asaph, which describes OT judges who stand in the place of God to judge His people. Being His representatives, they possess delegated authority to speak on His behalf. In Ps 82:7 these gods/judges are said to face death because of their unjust verdicts, showing conclusively that they are human and not divine beings. The word translated "gods" (*elohim*) in Ps 82:6 is translated "judges" in Ex 21:6 and 22:8.

Many beyond the Jordan Believe in Jesus

40 So He departed again across the Jordan to the place where John had
been baptizing earlier, and He remained there. 41 Many came to Him and
said, "John never did a sign, but everything John said about this man was
true." 42 And many believed in Him there.

Lazarus Dies at Bethany

11 Now a man was sick, Lazarus, from Bethany, the village of Mary and
her sister Martha. 2 Mary was the one who anointed the Lord with
fragrant oil and wiped His feet with her hair, and it was her brother Lazarus
who was sick. 3 So the sisters sent a message to Him: “Lord, the one You
love is sick.”

4 When Jesus heard it, He said, “This sickness will not end in death but is
for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it.”
5 Now Jesus loved Martha, her sister, and Lazarus. 6[†] So when He heard
that he was sick, He stayed two more days in the place where He was.
7 Then after that, He said to the disciples, “Let’s go to Judea again.”

8 “•Rabbi,” the disciples told Him, “just now the •Jews tried to stone
You, and You’re going there again? ”

9 “Aren’t there 12 hours in a day? ” Jesus answered. “If anyone walks
during the day, he doesn’t stumble, because he sees the light of this world.
10 If anyone walks during the night, he does stumble, because the light is
not in him.” 11 He said this, and then He told them, “Our friend Lazarus has
fallen •asleep, but I’m on My way to wake him up.”

12 Then the disciples said to Him, “Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will
get well.”

13 Jesus, however, was speaking about his death, but they thought He was
speaking about natural sleep. 14 So Jesus then told them plainly, “Lazarus
has died. 15 I’m glad for you that I wasn’t there so that you may believe.
But let’s go to him.”

16 Then Thomas (called “Twin”) said to his fellow disciples, “Let’s go so
that we may die with Him.”

The Resurrection and the Life

17 When Jesus arrived, He found that Lazarus had already been in the
tomb four days. 18 Bethany was near Jerusalem (about two miles [A] away).

[19] Many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them about
their brother. [20] As soon as Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went to
meet Him. But Mary remained seated in the house.

[21] Then Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother
wouldn't have died. [22] Yet even now I know that whatever You ask from
God, God will give You."

[23] "Your brother will rise again," Jesus told her.

[24] Martha said, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the
last day."

[25] Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who
believes in Me, even if he dies, will live. [26] Everyone who lives and
believes in Me will never die — ever. Do you believe this? "

[27]† "Yes, Lord," she told Him, "I believe You are the •Messiah, the Son
of God, who comes into the world."

Jesus Shares the Sorrow of Death

[28] Having said this, she went back and called her sister Mary, saying in
private, "The Teacher is here and is calling for you."

[29] As soon as she heard this, she got up quickly and went to Him.
[30] Jesus had not yet come into the village but was still in the place where
Martha had met Him. [31] The Jews who were with her in the house consoling
her saw that Mary got up quickly and went out. So they followed her,
supposing that she was going to the tomb to cry there.

[32] When Mary came to where Jesus was and saw Him, she fell at His
feet and told Him, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have
died! "

33 When Jesus saw her crying, and the Jews who had come with her
crying, He was angry [B] in His spirit and deeply moved. 34 "Where have
you put him? " He asked.

"Lord," they told Him, "come and see."

35 Jesus wept.

36 So the Jews said, "See how He loved him! " 37 But some of them said,
"Couldn't He who opened the blind man's eyes also have kept this man
from dying? "

The Seventh Sign: Raising Lazarus from the Dead

38 Then Jesus, angry [C] in Himself again, came to the tomb. It was a cave,
and a stone was lying against it. 39 "Remove the stone," Jesus said.

Martha, the dead man's sister, told Him, "Lord, he's already decaying. [D]
It's been four days."

40 Jesus said to her, "Didn't I tell you that if you believed you would see
the glory of God? "

41 So they removed the stone. Then Jesus raised His eyes and said,
"Father, I thank You that You heard Me. 42 I know that You always hear
Me, but because of the crowd standing here I said this, so they may believe
You sent Me." 43[†] After He said this, He shouted with a loud voice,
"Lazarus, come out! " 44 The dead man came out bound hand and foot with
linen strips and with his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Loose
him and let him go."

The Plot to Kill Jesus

45 Therefore, many of the Jews who came to Mary and saw what He did
believed in Him. 46 But some of them went to the •Pharisees and told them
what Jesus had done.

47 So the •chief priests and the Pharisees convened the •Sanhedrin and
said, “What are we going to do since this man does many signs? 48 If we let
Him continue in this way, everyone will believe in Him! Then the Romans
will come and remove both our place and our nation.”

49 One of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them,
“You know nothing at all! 50 You’re not considering that it is to your
advantage that one man should die for the people rather than the whole
nation perish.” 51† He did not say this on his own, but being high priest that
year he prophesied that Jesus was going to die for the nation, 52 and not for
the nation only, but also to unite the scattered children of God. 53† So from
that day on they plotted to kill Him. 54 Therefore Jesus no longer walked
openly among the Jews but departed from there to the countryside near the
wilderness, to a town called Ephraim. And He stayed there with the
disciples.

ARTICLE

Is There Evidence for Life After Death? ⇒

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55 The Jewish •Passover was near, and many went up to Jerusalem from
the country to purify themselves before the Passover. 56 They were looking
for Jesus and asking one another as they stood in the •temple complex:
“What do you think? He won’t come to the festival, will He? ” 57 The chief
priests and the Pharisees had given orders that if anyone knew where He
was, he should report it so they could arrest Him.

The Anointing at Bethany

12 †Six days before the •Passover, Jesus came to Bethany where
Lazarus was, the one Jesus had raised from the dead. 2 So they gave
a dinner for Him there; Martha was serving them, and Lazarus was one of
those reclining at the table with Him. 3† Then Mary took a pound of fragrant
oil — pure and expensive nard — anointed Jesus' feet, and wiped His feet
with her hair. So the house was filled with the fragrance of the oil.

4 Then one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot (who was about to betray
Him), said, 5 "Why wasn't this fragrant oil sold for 300 •denarii and given
to the poor? " 6 He didn't say this because he cared about the poor but
because he was a thief. He was in charge of the money-bag and would steal
part of what was put in it.

7 Jesus answered, "Leave her alone; she has kept it for the day of My
burial. 8 For you always have the poor with you, but you do not always
have Me."

The Decision to Kill Lazarus

9 Then a large crowd of the Jews learned He was there. They came not
only because of Jesus, but also to see Lazarus the one He had raised from
the dead. 10 Therefore the •chief priests decided to kill Lazarus also
11 because he was the reason many of the Jews were deserting them [A] and
believing in Jesus.

The Triumphal Entry

12† The next day, when the large crowd that had come to the festival
heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, 13 they took palm branches and
went out to meet Him. They kept shouting: "•***Hosanna!*** **He who comes in
the name of the Lord is the blessed One** — the King of Israel! "

14 Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it, just as it is written: 15 **Fear
no more, Daughter •Zion. Look, your King is coming, sitting on a
donkey's colt.**

[16] His disciples did not understand these things at first. However, when
Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things had been
written about Him and that they had done these things to Him.
[17] Meanwhile, the crowd, which had been with Him when He called
Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead, continued to testify.
[18] This is also why the crowd met Him, because they heard He had done
this sign.

[19] Then the •Pharisees said to one another, "You see? You've
accomplished nothing. Look — the world has gone after Him! "

Jesus Predicts His Crucifixion

[20] Now some Greeks were among those who went up to worship at the
festival. [21] So they came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee,
and requested of him, "Sir, we want to see Jesus."

[22] Philip went and told Andrew; then Andrew and Philip went and told
Jesus. [23] Jesus replied to them, "The hour has come for the •Son of Man to
be glorified.

[24] "•I assure you: Unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it
remains by itself. But if it dies, it produces a large crop. [25] The one who
loves his life will lose it, and the one who hates his life in this world will
keep it for eternal life. [26] If anyone serves Me, he must follow Me. Where I
am, there My servant also will be. If anyone serves Me, the Father will
honor him.

[27†] "Now My soul is troubled. What should I say — Father, save Me
from this hour? But that is why I came to this hour. [28] Father, glorify Your
name! "

Then a voice came from heaven: "I have glorified it, and I will glorify it
again! "

[29] The crowd standing there heard it and said it was thunder. Others said that an angel had spoken to Him.

[30] Jesus responded, “This voice came, not for Me, but for you. [31] Now is the judgment of this world. Now the ruler of this •world will be cast out.
[32†] As for Me, if I am lifted up from the earth I will draw all people to Myself.” [33] He said this to signify what kind of death He was about to die.

[34] Then the crowd replied to Him, “We have heard from the scripture that the •Messiah will remain forever. So how can You say, ‘The Son of Man must be lifted up’? [B] Who is this Son of Man? ”

[35] Jesus answered, “The light will be with you only a little longer. Walk while you have the light so that darkness doesn’t overtake you. The one who walks in darkness doesn’t know where he’s going. [36] While you have the light, believe in the light so that you may become sons of light.” Jesus said this, then went away and hid from them.

Isaiah’s Prophecies Fulfilled

[37] Even though He had performed so many signs in their presence, they did not believe in Him. [38] But this was to fulfill the word of Isaiah the prophet, who said: [C]

Lord, who has believed our message?
And who has the arm of the Lord
been revealed to?

[39†] This is why they were unable to believe, because Isaiah also said:

[40] **He has blinded their eyes**
and hardened their hearts,
so that they would not see with their eyes
or understand with their hearts,
and be converted,
and I would heal them.

41† Isaiah said these things because he saw His glory and spoke about Him.

ARTICLE

More Evidence for Life After Death ⇒

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42 Nevertheless, many did believe in Him even among the rulers, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, so they would not be banned from the •synagogue. 43 For they loved praise from men more than praise from God. D

A Summary of Jesus' Mission

44 Then Jesus cried out, "The one who believes in Me believes not in Me, but in Him who sent Me. 45 And the one who sees Me sees Him who sent Me. 46 I have come as a light into the world, so that everyone who believes in Me would not remain in darkness. 47 If anyone hears My words and doesn't keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world. 48 The one who rejects Me and doesn't accept My sayings has this as his judge: The word I have spoken will judge him on the last day. 49 For I have not spoken on My own, but the Father Himself who sent Me has given Me a command as to what I should say and what I should speak. 50 I know that His command is eternal life. So the things that I speak, I speak just as the Father has told Me."

Jesus Washes His Disciples' Feet

13 †Before the •Passover Festival, Jesus knew that His hour had come to depart from this world to the Father. Having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.

2† Now by the time of supper, the Devil had already put it into the heart
of Judas, Simon Iscariot's son, to betray Him. 3 Jesus knew that the Father
had given everything into His hands, that He had come from God, and that
He was going back to God. 4 So He got up from supper, laid aside His
robe, took a towel, and tied it around Himself. 5 Next, He poured water
into a basin and began to wash His disciples' feet and to dry them with the
towel tied around Him.

6 He came to Simon Peter, who asked Him, "Lord, are You going to wash my feet? "

7 Jesus answered him, "What I'm doing you don't understand now, but afterward you will know."

8 "You will never wash my feet — ever! " Peter said.

Jesus replied, "If I don't wash you, you have no part with Me."

9 Simon Peter said to Him, "Lord, not only my feet, but also my hands and my head."

10 "One who has bathed," Jesus told him, "doesn't need to wash anything
except his feet, but he is completely •clean. You are clean, but not all of
you." 11 For He knew who would betray Him. This is why He said, "You
are not all clean."

The Meaning of Footwashing

12 When Jesus had washed their feet and put on His robe, He reclined
again and said to them, "Do you know what I have done for you? 13 You
call Me Teacher and Lord. This is well said, for I am. 14 So if I, your Lord
and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's

feet. [15] For I have given you an example that you also should do just as I
have done for you.

[16†] "•I assure you: A •slave is not greater than his master, and a
messenger is not greater than the one who sent him. [17] If you know these
things, you are blessed if you do them. [18†] I'm not speaking about all of
you; I know those I have chosen. But the Scripture must be fulfilled: **The
one who eats My bread has raised his heel against Me.**

[19] "I am telling you now before it happens, so that when it does happen
you will believe that I am He. [20] I assure you: Whoever receives anyone I
send receives Me, and the one who receives Me receives Him who sent
Me."

Judas's Betrayal Predicted

[21] When Jesus had said this, He was troubled in His spirit and testified,
"I assure you: One of you will betray Me! "

[22] The disciples started looking at one another — uncertain which one He
was speaking about. [23] One of His disciples, the one Jesus loved, was
reclining close beside Jesus. [A] [24] Simon Peter motioned to him to find out
who it was He was talking about. [25] So he leaned back against Jesus and
asked Him, "Lord, who is it? "

[26] Jesus replied, "He's the one I give the piece of bread to after I have
dipped it." When He had dipped the bread, He gave it to Judas, Simon
Iscariot's son. [27] After Judas ate the piece of bread, Satan entered him.
Therefore Jesus told him, "What you're doing, do quickly."

[28] None of those reclining at the table knew why He told him this.
[29] Since Judas kept the money-bag, some thought that Jesus was telling
him, "Buy what we need for the festival," or that he should give something
to the poor. [30] After receiving the piece of bread, he went out immediately.
And it was night.

The New Commandment

31 When he had gone out, Jesus said, “Now the •Son of Man is glorified, and God is glorified in Him. 32 If God is glorified in Him, God will also glorify Him in Himself and will glorify Him at once.

33 “Children, I am with you a little while longer. You will look for Me, and just as I told the •Jews, ‘Where I am going you cannot come,’ so now I tell you.

34 “I give you a new command: Love one another. Just as I have loved you, you must also love one another. 35 By this all people will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

Peter’s Denials Predicted

36 “Lord,” Simon Peter said to Him, “where are You going? ”

Jesus answered, “Where I am going you cannot follow Me now, but you will follow later.”

37 “Lord,” Peter asked, “why can’t I follow You now? I will lay down my life for You! ”

38 Jesus replied, “Will you lay down your life for Me? I assure you: A rooster will not crow until you have denied Me three times.

The Way to the Father

14 “Your heart must not be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in
Me. 2 In My Father’s house are many dwelling places; if not, I would
have told you. I am going away to prepare a place for you. 3 If I go away
and prepare a place for you, I will come back and receive you to Myself, so
that where I am you may be also. 4 You know the way to where I am
going.”

5 “Lord,” Thomas said, “we don’t know where You’re going. How can
we know the way? ”

6† Jesus told him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to
the Father except through Me.

Jesus Reveals the Father

7 “If you know Me, you will also know My Father. From now on you do
know Him and have seen Him.”

8 “Lord,” said Philip, “show us the Father, and that’s enough for us.”

9† Jesus said to him, “Have I been among you all this time without your
knowing Me, Philip? The one who has seen Me has seen the Father. How
can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? 10 Don’t you believe that I am in the
Father and the Father is in Me? The words I speak to you I do not speak on
My own. The Father who lives in Me does His works. 11 Believe Me that I
am in the Father and the Father is in Me. Otherwise, believe because of the
works themselves.

Praying in Jesus’ Name

12 “•I assure you: The one who believes in Me will also do the works
that I do. And he will do even greater works than these, because I am going
to the Father. 13 Whatever you ask in My name, I will do it so that the
Father may be glorified in the Son. 14† If you ask Me anything in My
name, I will do it.

ARTICLE
How Does the Bible Relate to Islam? ⇒

Another Counselor Promised

[15] "If you love Me, you will keep My commands. [16] And I will ask the
Father, and He will give you another •Counselor to be with you forever.
[17] He is the Spirit of truth. The •world is unable to receive Him because it
doesn't see Him or know Him. But you do know Him, because He remains
with you and will be in you. [18] I will not leave you as orphans; I am
coming to you.

The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit

[19] "In a little while the world will see Me no longer, but you will see
Me. Because I live, you will live too. [20] In that day you will know that I
am in My Father, you are in Me, and I am in you. [21] The one who has My
commands and keeps them is the one who loves Me. And the one who
loves Me will be loved by My Father. I also will love him and will reveal
Myself to him."

[22] Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, "Lord, how is it You're going to
reveal Yourself to us and not to the world? "

[23] Jesus answered, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word. My
Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with
him. [24] The one who doesn't love Me will not keep My words. The word
that you hear is not Mine but is from the Father who sent Me.

[25] "I have spoken these things to you while I remain with you. [26†] But the
Counselor, the Holy Spirit — the Father will send Him in My
name — will teach you all things and remind you of everything I have told
you.

Jesus' Gift of Peace

27 "Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you. I do not give to you
as the world gives. Your heart must not be troubled or fearful. 28† You have
heard Me tell you, 'I am going away and I am coming to you.' If you loved
Me, you would have rejoiced that I am going to the Father, because the
Father is greater than I. 29 I have told you now before it happens so that
when it does happen you may believe. 30 I will not talk with you much
longer, because the ruler of the world is coming. He has no power over
Me. 31† On the contrary, I am going away so that the world may know that
I love the Father. Just as the Father commanded Me, so I do.

"Get up; let's leave this place.

The Vine and the Branches

15 “I am the true vine, and My Father is the vineyard keeper. [2]† Every
branch in Me that does not produce fruit He removes, and He prunes
every branch that produces fruit so that it will produce more fruit. [3] You are
already •clean because of the word I have spoken to you. [4] Remain in Me,
and I in you. Just as a branch is unable to produce fruit by itself unless it
remains on the vine, so neither can you unless you remain in Me.

[5] “I am the vine; you are the branches. The one who remains in Me and I
in him produces much fruit, because you can do nothing without Me. [6] If
anyone does not remain in Me, he is thrown aside like a branch and he
withers. They gather them, throw them into the fire, and they are burned.
[7] If you remain in Me and My words remain in you, ask whatever you want
and it will be done for you. [8] My Father is glorified by this: that you
produce much fruit and prove to be My disciples.

Christlike Love

[9] “As the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you. Remain in My
love. [10] If you keep My commands you will remain in My love, just as I
have kept My Father’s commands and remain in His love.

[11] “I have spoken these things to you so that My joy may be in you and
your joy may be complete. [12] This is My command: Love one another as I
have loved you. [13] No one has greater love than this, that someone would
lay down his life for his friends. [14] You are My friends if you do what I
command you. [15] I do not call you •slaves anymore, because a slave doesn’t
know what his master is doing. I have called you friends, because I have
made known to you everything I have heard from My Father. [16] You did not
choose Me, but I chose you. I appointed you that you should go out and
produce fruit and that your fruit should remain, so that whatever you ask
the Father in My name, He will give you. [17] This is what I command you:
Love one another.

Persecutions Predicted

[18] “If the •world hates you, understand that it hated Me before it hated
you. [19] If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own.
However, because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of it,
the world hates you. [20] Remember the word I spoke to you: ‘A slave is not
greater than his master.’ If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute
you. If they kept My word, they will also keep yours. [21] But they will do all
these things to you on account of My name, because they don’t know the
One who sent Me. [22†] If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not
have sin. Now they have no excuse for their sin. [23] The one who hates Me
also hates My Father. [24] If I had not done the works among them that no
one else has done, they would not have sin. Now they have seen and hated
both Me and My Father. [25] But this happened so that the statement written
in their scripture might be fulfilled: **They hated Me for no reason.**

Coming Testimony and Rejection

[26] “When the •Counselor comes, the One I will send to you from the
Father — the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father — He will
testify about Me. [27] You also will testify, because you have been with Me
from the beginning.

16 “I have told you these things to keep you from •stumbling. [2] They will ban you from the •synagogues. In fact, a time is coming when anyone who kills you will think he is offering service to God. [3] They will do these things because they haven’t known the Father or Me. [4] But I have told you these things so that when their time comes you may remember I told them to you. I didn’t tell you these things from the beginning, because I was with you.

The Counselor’s Ministry

[5†] “But now I am going away to Him who sent Me, and not one of you asks Me, ‘Where are You going? ’ [6] Yet, because I have spoken these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. [7] Nevertheless, I am telling you the truth. It is for your benefit that I go away, because if I don’t go away the •Counselor will not come to you. If I go, I will send Him to you. [8] When He comes, He will convict the world about sin, righteousness, and judgment: [9] About sin, because they do not believe in Me; [10] about righteousness, because I am going to the Father and you will no longer see Me; [11] and about judgment, because the ruler of this •world has been judged.

[12] “I still have many things to tell you, but you can’t bear them now. [13] When the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all the truth. For He will not speak on His own, but He will speak whatever He hears. He will also declare to you what is to come. [14] He will glorify Me, because He will take from what is Mine and declare it to you. [15] Everything the Father has is Mine. This is why I told you that He takes from what is Mine and will declare it to you.

Sorrow Turned to Joy

[16] “A little while and you will no longer see Me; again a little while and you will see Me.”

[17] Therefore some of His disciples said to one another, “What is this He
tells us: ‘A little while and you will not see Me; again a little while and you
will see Me’; and, ‘because I am going to the Father’ ? ” [18] They said,
“What is this He is saying, ‘A little while’? We don’t know what He’s
talking about! ”

[19] Jesus knew they wanted to question Him, so He said to them, “Are you
asking one another about what I said, ‘A little while and you will not see
Me; again a little while and you will see Me’?

[20] “•I assure you: You will weep and wail, but the world will rejoice.
You will become sorrowful, but your sorrow will turn to joy. [21] When a
woman is in labor she has pain because her time has come. But when she
has given birth to a child, she no longer remembers the suffering because
of the joy that a person has been born into the world. [22] So you also have
sorrow now. But I will see you again. Your hearts will rejoice, and no one
will rob you of your joy. [23] In that day you will not ask Me anything.

“I assure you: Anything you ask the Father in My name, He will give
you. [24†] Until now you have asked for nothing in My name. Ask and you
will receive, so that your joy may be complete.

Jesus the Victor

[25] “I have spoken these things to you in figures of speech. A time is
coming when I will no longer speak to you in figures, but I will tell you
plainly about the Father. [26] In that day you will ask in My name. I am not
telling you that I will make requests to the Father on your behalf. [27] For the
Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Me and have believed
that I came from God. [28] I came from the Father and have come into the
world. Again, I am leaving the world and going to the Father.”

[29†] “Ah! ” His disciples said. “Now You’re speaking plainly and not
using any figurative language. [30] Now we know that You know everything
and don’t need anyone to question You. By this we believe that You came
from God.”

[31] Jesus responded to them, “Do you now believe? [32] Look: An hour is
coming, and has come, when each of you will be scattered to his own
home, and you will leave Me alone. Yet I am not alone, because the Father
is with Me. [33] I have told you these things so that in Me you may have
peace. You will have suffering in this world. Be courageous! I have
conquered the world.”

Jesus Prays for Himself

17 †Jesus spoke these things, looked up to heaven, and said:

Father,
the hour has come.
Glorify Your Son
so that the Son may glorify You,
2 for You gave Him authority
over all flesh;
so He may give eternal life
to all You have given Him.
3 This is eternal life:
that they may know You, the only true God,
and the One You have sent — Jesus Christ.
4 I have glorified You on the earth
by completing the work You gave Me to do.
5 Now, Father, glorify Me in Your presence
with that glory I had with You
before the world existed.

Jesus Prays for His Disciples

6 I have revealed Your name
to the men You gave Me from the world.
They were Yours, You gave them to Me,
and they have kept Your word.
7† Now they know that all things
You have given to Me are from You,
8 because the words that You gave Me,
I have given them.
They have received them
and have known for certain
that I came from You.
They have believed that You sent Me.
9† I pray for them.
I am not praying for the •world
but for those You have given Me,

because they are Yours.
10 Everything I have is Yours,
and everything You have is Mine,
and I have been glorified in them.
11 I am no longer in the world,
but they are in the world,
and I am coming to You.
Holy Father,
protect them by Your name
that You have given Me,
so that they may be one as We are one.
12† While I was with them,
I was protecting them by Your name
that You have given Me.
I guarded them and not one of them is lost,
except the son of destruction,
so that the Scripture may be fulfilled.
13 Now I am coming to You,
and I speak these things in the world
so that they may have My joy completed in them.
14 I have given them Your word.
The world hated them
because they are not of the world,
as I am not of the world.
15 I am not praying
that You take them out of the world
but that You protect them from the evil one.
16 They are not of the world,
as I am not of the world.
17 •Sanctify them by the truth;
Your word is truth.
18 As You sent Me into the world,
I also have sent them into the world.
19 I sanctify Myself for them,
so they also may be sanctified by the truth.

Jesus Prays for All Believers

20 I pray not only for these,
but also for those who believe in Me
through their message.
21† May they all be one,
as You, Father, are in Me and I am in You.
May they also be one in Us,
so the world may believe You sent Me.
22 I have given them the glory You have given Me.
May they be one as We are one.
23 I am in them and You are in Me.
May they be made completely one,
so the world may know You have sent Me
and have loved them as You have loved Me.
24 Father,
I desire those You have given Me
to be with Me where I am.
Then they will see My glory,
which You have given Me
because You loved Me before the world's foundation.
25 Righteous Father!
The world has not known You.
However, I have known You,
and these have known that You sent Me.
26 I made Your name known to them
and will make it known,
so the love You have loved Me with
may be in them and I may be in them.

Jesus Betrayed

18 After Jesus had said these things, He went out with His disciples across the Kidron Valley, where there was a garden, and He and His disciples went into it. 2 Judas, who betrayed Him, also knew the place, because Jesus often met there with His disciples. 3† So Judas took a •company of soldiers and some temple police from the •chief priests and the •Pharisees and came there with lanterns, torches, and weapons.

4 Then Jesus, knowing everything that was about to happen to Him, went out and said to them, "Who is it you're looking for? "

5 "Jesus the •Nazarene," they answered.

"I am He," Jesus told them.

Judas, who betrayed Him, was also standing with them. 6† When He told them, "I am He," they stepped back and fell to the ground.

ARTICLE

Can Something Be True for You and Not for Me? ⇒

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7 Then He asked them again, "Who is it you're looking for? "

"Jesus the Nazarene," they said.

8 "I told you I am He," Jesus replied. "So if you're looking for Me, let these men go." 9 This was to fulfill the words He had said: "I have not lost one of those You have given Me."

10 Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it, struck the high priest's •slave, and cut off his right ear. (The slave's name was Malchus.)

11 At that, Jesus said to Peter, "Sheathe your sword! Am I not to drink the cup the Father has given Me? "

Jesus Arrested and Taken to Annas

[12]† Then the company of soldiers, the commander, and the Jewish temple
police arrested Jesus and tied Him up. [13] First they led Him to Annas, for
he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was high priest that year.
[14] Caiaphas was the one who had advised the •Jews that it was
advantageous that one man should die for the people.

Peter Denies Jesus

[15]† Meanwhile, Simon Peter was following Jesus, as was another
disciple. That disciple was an acquaintance of the high priest; so he went
with Jesus into the high priest's courtyard. [16] But Peter remained standing
outside by the door. So the other disciple, the one known to the high priest,
went out and spoke to the girl who was the doorkeeper and brought Peter in.

[17] Then the slave girl who was the doorkeeper said to Peter, "You aren't
one of this man's disciples too, are you? "

"I am not! " he said. [18] Now the slaves and the temple police had made a
charcoal fire, because it was cold. They were standing there warming
themselves, and Peter was standing with them, warming himself.

Jesus before Annas

[19] The high priest questioned Jesus about His disciples and about His
teaching.

[20] "I have spoken openly to the world," Jesus answered him. "I have
always taught in the •synagogue and in the •temple complex, where all the
Jews congregate, and I haven't spoken anything in secret. [21] Why do you
question Me? Question those who heard what I told them. Look, they know
what I said."

TWISTED SCRIPTURE

John 18:20

Jesus offered His gospel openly and freely to all who would listen, whereas the mystery religions of His day and ours (e.g., the Rosicrucians) require that one be initiated into their group before receiving knowledge. Initiation often involves occult rites, which are hidden from public view, and the payment of fees before one can acquire the teaching that the group has to offer. The Mormons conduct secret rites in their temples, including baptism for the dead and the sealing of marriages for eternity.

22 When He had said these things, one of the temple police standing by slapped Jesus, saying, “Is this the way you answer the high priest? ”

23 “If I have spoken wrongly,” Jesus answered him, “give evidence about the wrong; but if rightly, why do you hit Me? ”

24 Then Annas sent Him bound to Caiaphas the high priest.

Peter Denies Jesus Twice More

25 Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. They said to him, “You aren’t one of His disciples too, are you? ”

He denied it and said, “I am not! ”

26 One of the high priest’s slaves, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, said, “Didn’t I see you with Him in the garden? ”

27 Peter then denied it again. Immediately a rooster crowed.

Jesus before Pilate

28† Then they took Jesus from Caiaphas to the governor's •headquarters. It was early morning. They did not enter the headquarters themselves; otherwise they would be defiled and unable to eat the •Passover.

29 Then •Pilate came out to them and said, "What charge do you bring against this man? "

30 They answered him, "If this man weren't a criminal, [A] we wouldn't have handed Him over to you."

31† So Pilate told them, "Take Him yourselves and judge Him according to your law."

"It's not legal for us to put anyone to death," the Jews declared. 32 They
said this so that Jesus' words might be fulfilled signifying what kind of death He was going to die.

33 Then Pilate went back into the headquarters, summoned Jesus, and said to Him, "Are You the King of the Jews? "

34 Jesus answered, "Are you asking this on your own, or have others told you about Me? "

35 "I'm not a Jew, am I? " Pilate replied. "Your own nation and the chief priests handed You over to me. What have You done? "

36† "My kingdom is not of this •world," said Jesus. "If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I wouldn't be handed over to the Jews. As it is, My kingdom does not have its origin here."

37 "You are a king then? " Pilate asked.

"You say that I'm a king," Jesus replied. "I was born for this, and I have come into the world for this: to testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to My voice."

38 "What is truth? " said Pilate.

Jesus or Barabbas

After he had said this, he went out to the Jews again and told them, “I find no grounds for charging Him. [39][†] You have a custom that I release one prisoner to you at the Passover. So, do you want me to release to you the King of the Jews? ”

[40] They shouted back, “Not this man, but Barabbas! ” Now Barabbas was a revolutionary. [B]

Jesus Flogged and Mocked

19 †Then •Pilate took Jesus and had Him flogged. [2] The soldiers also twisted together a crown of thorns, put it on His head, and threw a purple robe around Him. [3] And they repeatedly came up to Him and said, "Hail, King of the Jews! " and were slapping His face.

[4] Pilate went outside again and said to them, "Look, I'm bringing Him outside to you to let you know I find no grounds for charging Him."

Pilate Sentences Jesus to Death

[5] Then Jesus came out wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, "Here is the man! "

[6] When the •chief priests and the temple police saw Him, they shouted, "Crucify! Crucify! "

Pilate responded, "Take Him and crucify Him yourselves, for I find no grounds for charging Him."

[7] "We have a law," the •Jews replied to him, "and according to that law He must die, because He made Himself the Son of God."

[8] When Pilate heard this statement, he was more afraid than ever. [9] He
went back into the •headquarters and asked Jesus, "Where are You from? "
But Jesus did not give him an answer. [10] So Pilate said to Him, "You're not
talking to me? Don't You know that I have the authority to release You and the authority to crucify You? "

[11] "You would have no authority over Me at all," Jesus answered him, "if it hadn't been given you from above. This is why the one who handed Me over to you has the greater sin."

[12]† From that moment Pilate made every effort [A] to release Him. But the Jews shouted, "If you release this man, you are not Caesar's friend. Anyone who makes himself a king opposes Caesar! "

[13] When Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus outside. He sat down on the judge's bench in a place called the Stone Pavement (but in •Hebrew *Gabbatha*). [14†] It was the preparation day for the •Passover, and it was about six in the morning. [B] Then he told the Jews, "Here is your king! "

[15] But they shouted, "Take Him away! Take Him away! Crucify Him! "

Pilate said to them, "Should I crucify your king? "

"We have no king but Caesar! " the chief priests answered.

[16] So then, because of them, he handed Him over to be crucified.

The Crucifixion

Therefore they took Jesus away. [17†] Carrying His own cross, He went out to what is called Skull Place, which in Hebrew is called *Golgotha*.
[18] There they crucified Him and two others with Him, one on either side, with Jesus in the middle. [19] Pilate also had a sign lettered and put on the cross. The inscription was:

JESUS THE NAZARENE
THE KING OF THE JEWS.

[20] Many of the Jews read this sign, because the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and it was written in Hebrew, [C] Latin, and Greek. [21] So the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, "Don't write, 'The King of the Jews,' but that He said, 'I am the King of the Jews.' "

[22] Pilate replied, "What I have written, I have written."

[23] When the soldiers crucified Jesus, they took His clothes and divided them into four parts, a part for each soldier. They also took the tunic, which was seamless, woven in one piece from the top. [24†] So they said to one another, "Let's not tear it, but cast lots for it, to see who gets it." They did this to fulfill the Scripture that says: **They divided My clothes among**

themselves, and they cast lots for My clothing. And this is what the
soldiers did.

Jesus' Provision for His Mother

25† Standing by the cross of Jesus were His mother, His mother's sister,
Mary the wife of Clopas, and •Mary Magdalene. 26 When Jesus saw His
mother and the disciple He loved standing there, He said to His mother,
"•Woman, here is your son." 27 Then He said to the disciple, "Here is your
mother." And from that hour the disciple took her into his home.

The Finished Work of Jesus

28 After this, when Jesus knew that everything was now accomplished
that the Scripture might be fulfilled, He said, "I'm thirsty! " 29 A jar full of
sour wine was sitting there; so they fixed a sponge full of sour wine on
hyssop [D] and held it up to His mouth.

30 When Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished! "
Then bowing His head, He gave up His spirit.

Jesus' Side Pierced

31 Since it was the preparation day, the Jews did not want the bodies to
remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a special [E] day).
They requested that Pilate have the men's legs broken and that their bodies
be taken away. 32 So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first man
and of the other one who had been crucified with Him. 33 When they came
to Jesus, they did not break His legs since they saw that He was already
dead. 34 But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and at once
blood and water came out. 35 He who saw this has testified so that you also
may believe. His testimony is true, and he knows he is telling the truth.
36 For these things happened so that the Scripture would be fulfilled: **Not
one of His bones will be broken.** 37 Also, another Scripture says: **They
will look at the One they pierced.**

Jesus' Burial

[38] After this, Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus — but
secretly because of his fear of the Jews — asked Pilate that he might
remove Jesus' body. Pilate gave him permission, so he came and took His
body away. [39†] Nicodemus (who had previously come to Him at night) also
came, bringing a mixture of about 75 pounds [F] of myrrh and aloes. [40] Then
they took Jesus' body and wrapped it in linen cloths with the aromatic
spices, according to the burial custom of the Jews. [41] There was a garden in
the place where He was crucified. A new tomb was in the garden; no one
had yet been placed in it. [42] They placed Jesus there because of the Jewish
preparation and since the tomb was nearby.

The Empty Tomb

20 †On the first day of the week •Mary Magdalene came to the tomb
early, while it was still dark. She saw that the stone had been
removed [A] from the tomb. 2 So she ran to Simon Peter and to the other
disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said to them, “They have taken the Lord
out of the tomb, and we don’t know where they have put Him! ”

3 At that, Peter and the other disciple went out, heading for the tomb.
4 The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and got
to the tomb first. 5 Stooping down, he saw the linen cloths lying there, yet
he did not go in. 6 Then, following him, Simon Peter came also. He entered
the tomb and saw the linen cloths lying there. 7 The wrapping that had been
on His head was not lying with the linen cloths but was folded up in a
separate place by itself. 8 The other disciple, who had reached the tomb
first, then entered the tomb, saw, and believed. 9 For they still did not
understand the Scripture that He must rise from the dead. 10 Then the
disciples went home again.

ARTICLE

How Should a Christian Deal with Doubt? ⇒

Mary Magdalene Sees the Risen Lord

11† But Mary stood outside facing the tomb, crying. As she was crying,
she stooped to look into the tomb. 12† She saw two angels in white sitting
there, one at the head and one at the feet, where Jesus’ body had been
lying. 13 They said to her, “•Woman, why are you crying? ”

“Because they’ve taken away my Lord,” she told them, “and I don’t
know where they’ve put Him.” 14 Having said this, she turned around and
saw Jesus standing there, though she did not know it was Jesus.

15 "Woman," Jesus said to her, "why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for? "

Supposing He was the gardener, she replied, "Sir, if you've removed Him, tell me where you've put Him, and I will take Him away."

16Jesus said, "Mary."

Turning around, she said to Him in •Hebrew, *"Rabbouni!"* [B] — which means "Teacher."

17† "Don't cling to Me," Jesus told her, "for I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to My brothers and tell them that I am ascending to My Father and your Father — to My God and your God."

18 Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord! " And she told them what [C] He had said to her.

The Disciples Commissioned

19† In the evening of that first day of the week, the disciples were gathered together with the doors locked because of their fear of the •Jews. Then Jesus came, stood among them, and said to them, "Peace to you! "

20 Having said this, He showed them His hands and His side. So the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord.

21 Jesus said to them again, "Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I
also send you." 22 After saying this, He breathed on them and said, [D]
"Receive the Holy Spirit. 23 If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven
them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

Thomas Sees and Believes

24 But one of the Twelve, Thomas (called "Twin"), was not with them
when Jesus came. 25† So the other disciples kept telling him, "We have seen
the Lord! "

But he said to them, “If I don’t see the mark of the nails in His hands, put my finger into the mark of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will never believe! ”

26 After eight days His disciples were indoors again, and Thomas was with them. Even though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them. He said, “Peace to you! ”

27 Then He said to Thomas, “Put your finger here and observe My hands. Reach out your hand and put it into My side. Don’t be an unbeliever, but a believer.”

28 Thomas responded to Him, “My Lord and my God! ”

29 Jesus said, “Because you have seen Me, you have believed. Those who believe without seeing are blessed.”

The Purpose of This Gospel

30† Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of His disciples
that are not written in this book. 31 But these are written so that you may
believe Jesus is the •Messiah, the Son of God, [E] and by believing you may
have life in His name.

Jesus' Third Appearance to the Disciples

21 [†]After this, Jesus revealed Himself again to His disciples by the Sea of Tiberias. [A] He revealed Himself in this way:

2 Simon Peter, Thomas (called "Twin"), Nathanael from Cana of Galilee, Zebedee's sons, and two others of His disciples were together.

3 "I'm going fishing," Simon Peter said to them.

"We're coming with you," they told him. They went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing.

4[†] When daybreak came, Jesus stood on the shore. However, the disciples did not know it was Jesus.

5 "Men," Jesus called to them, "you don't have any fish, do you? "

"No," they answered.

6 "Cast the net on the right side of the boat," He told them, "and you'll
find some." So they did, [B] and they were unable to haul it in because of the
large number of fish. 7 Therefore the disciple, the one Jesus loved, said to
Peter, "It is the Lord! "

When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he tied his outer garment
around him [C] (for he was stripped) and plunged into the sea. 8 But since
they were not far from land (about 100 yards [D] away), the other disciples
came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish. 9 When they got out on land,
they saw a charcoal fire there, with fish lying on it, and bread.

10 "Bring some of the fish you've just caught," Jesus told them. 11 So
Simon Peter got up and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish — 153 of
them. Even though there were so many, the net was not torn.

12 "Come and have breakfast," Jesus told them. None of the disciples dared ask Him, "Who are You? " because they knew it was the Lord.

[13] Jesus came, took the bread, and gave it to them. He did the same with the fish.

[14†] This was now the third time Jesus appeared [E] to the disciples after He was raised from the dead.

Jesus' Threefold Restoration of Peter

[15] When they had eaten breakfast, Jesus asked Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me more than these? "

"Yes, Lord," he said to Him, "You know that I love You."

"Feed My lambs," He told him.

[16] A second time He asked him, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me? "

"Yes, Lord," he said to Him, "You know that I love You."

"Shepherd My sheep," He told him.

[17] He asked him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me? "

Peter was grieved that He asked him the third time, "Do you love Me? " He said, "Lord, You know everything! You know that I love You."

"Feed My sheep," Jesus said. [18†] "•I assure you: When you were young,
you would tie your belt and walk wherever you wanted. But when you grow
old, you will stretch out your hands and someone else will tie you and carry
you where you don't want to go." [19] He said this to signify by what kind of
death he would glorify God. After saying this, He told him, "Follow
Me! "

Correcting a False Report

[20] So Peter turned around and saw the disciple Jesus loved following them. That disciple was the one who had leaned back against Jesus at the

supper and asked, “Lord, who is the one that’s going to betray You? ”
21 When Peter saw him, he said to Jesus, “Lord — what about him? ”

22† “If I want him to remain until I come,” Jesus answered, “what is that to you? As for you, follow Me.”

23 So this report [F] spread to the brothers that this disciple would not die. Yet Jesus did not tell him that he would not die, but, “If I want him to remain until I come, what is that to you? ”

Epilogue

[24][†] This is the disciple who testifies to these things and who wrote them down. We know that his testimony is true.

[25] And there are also many other things that Jesus did, which, if they were written one by one, I suppose not even the world itself could contain the books [G] that would be written.

ACTS

Introduction to Acts

Paul's Advice Ignored (Acts 27:9-12)
Storm-Tossed Ship (Acts 27:13-38)
Shipwreck (Acts 27:39-44)

Chapter 28

Malta's Hospitality (Acts 28:1-6)
Ministry in Malta (Acts 28:7-10)
Rome at Last (Acts 28:11-16)
Paul's First Interview with Roman Jews (Acts 28:17-22)
The Response to Paul's Message (Acts 28:23-29)
Paul's Ministry Unhindered (Acts 28:30-31)

ACTS

Prologue

1 †I wrote the first narrative, Theophilus, about all that Jesus began to do
and teach 2 until the day He was taken up, after He had given orders
through the Holy Spirit to the apostles He had chosen. 3 After He had
suffered, He also presented Himself alive to them by many convincing
proofs, appearing to them during 40 days and speaking about the kingdom
of God.

The Holy Spirit Promised

4 While He was together [A] with them, He commanded them not to leave
Jerusalem, but to wait for the Father’s promise. “This,” He said, “is what
you heard from Me; 5 for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized
with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”

6† So when they had come together, they asked Him, “Lord, are You
restoring the kingdom to Israel at this time? ”

7 He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or periods that the
Father has set by His own authority. 8† But you will receive power when
the Holy Spirit has come on you, and you will be My witnesses in
Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

The Ascension

9 After He had said this, He was taken up as they were watching, and a
cloud took Him out of their sight. 10 While He was going, they were gazing
into heaven, and suddenly two men in white clothes stood by them.
11† They said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up into heaven?
This Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come in the
same way that you have seen Him going into heaven.”

ARTICLE
Can Naturalistic Theories Account for the Resurrection? ⇒

United in Prayer

[12] Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called the Mount of
Olives, which is near Jerusalem — a Sabbath day's journey away. [13] When
they arrived, they went to the room upstairs where they were staying:

Peter, John,
James, Andrew,
Philip, Thomas,
Bartholomew, Matthew,
James the son of Alphaeus,
Simon the Zealot,
and Judas the son of James.

[14] All these were continually united in prayer, along with the women,
including Mary [B] the mother of Jesus, and His brothers.

Matthias Chosen

[15] During these days Peter stood up among the brothers — the number of
people who were together was about 120 — and said: [16] "Brothers, the
Scripture had to be fulfilled that the Holy Spirit through the mouth of David
spoke in advance about Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested
Jesus. [17] For he was one of our number and was allotted a share in this
ministry." [18†] Now this man acquired a field with his unrighteous wages.
He fell headfirst and burst open in the middle, and all his insides spilled
out. [19] This became known to all the residents of Jerusalem, so that in their
own language that field is called *Hakeldama* (that is, Field of Blood).
[20] "For it is written in the Book of Psalms:

Let his dwelling become desolate;
let no one live in it; and
Let someone else take his position.

[21] “Therefore, from among the men who have accompanied us during the
whole time the Lord Jesus went in and out among us — [22] beginning from
the baptism of John until the day He was taken up from us — from among
these, it is necessary that one become a witness with us of His
resurrection.”

[23] So they proposed two: Joseph, called Barsabbas, who was also known
as Justus, and Matthias. [24] Then they prayed, “You, Lord, know the hearts
of all; show which of these two You have chosen [25] to take the place in
this apostolic service that Judas left to go to his own place.” [26†] Then they
cast lots for them, and the lot fell to Matthias. So he was numbered with
the 11 apostles.

Pentecost

2 [†]When the day of Pentecost had arrived, they were all together in one
place. 2 Suddenly a sound like that of a violent rushing wind came
from heaven, and it filled the whole house where they were staying. 3 And
tongues, like flames of fire that were divided, appeared to them and rested
on each one of them. 4[†] Then they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and
began to speak in different •languages, as the Spirit gave them ability for
speech.

5 There were Jews living in Jerusalem, devout men from every nation
under heaven. 6 When this sound occurred, a crowd came together and was
confused because each one heard them speaking in his own language. 7 And
they were astounded and amazed, saying, "Look, aren't all these who are
speaking Galileans? 8 How is it that each of us can hear in our own native
language? 9 Parthians, Medes, Elamites; those who live in Mesopotamia, in
Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and •Asia, 10 Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt
and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome, both Jews and
•proselytes, 11 Cretans and Arabs — we hear them speaking the
magnificent acts of God in our own languages." 12 They were all astounded
and perplexed, saying to one another, "What could this be? " 13 But some
sneered and said, "They're full of new wine! "

Peter's Sermon

14[†] But Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice, and proclaimed
to them: "Men of Judah and all you residents of Jerusalem, let me explain
this [A] to you and pay attention to my words. 15 For these people are not
drunk, as you suppose, since it's only nine in the morning. [B] 16 On the
contrary, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel:

17 **And it will be** in the last days, says God,
that **I will pour out My Spirit on all humanity;**
then your sons and your daughters will prophesy,
your young men will see visions,
and your old men will dream dreams.
18 **I will even pour out My Spirit**

on My male and female •slaves **in those days,**
and they will prophesy.
19 **I will display wonders in the heaven** above
and signs on the earth below:
blood and fire and a cloud of smoke.
20 **The sun will be turned to darkness**
and the moon to blood
before the great and remarkable Day of the Lord comes.
21 **Then everyone who calls**
on the name of the Lord will be saved.

22 "Men of Israel, listen to these words: This Jesus the •Nazarene was a
man pointed out to you by God with miracles, wonders, and signs that God
did among you through Him, just as you yourselves know. 23† Though He
was delivered up according to God's determined plan and foreknowledge,
you used lawless people [C] to nail Him to a cross and kill Him. 24† God
raised Him up, ending the pains of death, because it was not possible for
Him to be held by it. 25 For David says of Him:

I saw the Lord ever before me;
because He is at my right hand,
I will not be shaken.
26 **Therefore my heart was glad,**
and my tongue rejoiced.
Moreover, my flesh will rest in hope,
27 **because You will not leave me in** •Hades
or allow Your Holy One to see decay.
28 **You have revealed the paths of life to me;**
You will fill me with gladness
in Your presence.

29 "Brothers, I can confidently speak to you about the patriarch David:
He is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. 30 Since he
was a prophet, he knew that God had sworn an oath to him to seat one of

his descendants on his throne. [31] Seeing this in advance, he spoke
concerning the resurrection of the •Messiah:

He was not left in Hades,
and His flesh **did not experience decay.**

[32]† "God has resurrected this Jesus. We are all witnesses of this.
[33] Therefore, since He has been exalted to the right hand of God and has
received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit, He has poured out what
you both see and hear. [34] For it was not David who ascended into the
heavens, but he himself says:

The Lord declared to my Lord,
'Sit at My right hand
[35] **until I make Your enemies Your footstool.'**

[36] "Therefore let all the house of Israel know with certainty that God has
made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah! "

Forgiveness through the Messiah

[37] When they heard this, they came under deep conviction [E] and said to
Peter and the rest of the apostles: "Brothers, what must we do? "

[38]† "Repent," Peter said to them, "and be baptized, each of you, in the
name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive
the gift of the Holy Spirit. [39] For the promise is for you and for your
children, and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will
call." [40] And with many other words he testified and strongly urged them,
saying, "Be saved from this corrupt [F] generation! "

TWISTED SCRIPTURE

Acts 2:38

Believing that there is only one person of the Godhead who manifests Himself in three ways as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, Oneness Pentecostals appeal to this verse along with Ac 8:16, 19:5, and Mt 28:19 as support. In doing so they embrace modalism, an anti-Trinitarian heresy that was condemned by the Synod of Smyrna in A.D. 200. The Nicene and Athanasian creeds also condemn modalism. The Scriptures are full of references to the triune nature of God (see Mt 3:16-17; Lk 1:35; Jn 14:26). More than 60 NT verses mention the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in the same verse. The members of the Godhead are co-existent and co-equal, one in essence and yet three in person.

Acts 2:38-39

Many groups use these verses to teach that baptism is essential to salvation. Yet Paul made a distinction between the two when he wrote, "For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel" (1 Co
1:17). He then described the gospel as "the message of the cross," which is "God's power" to save (v. 18). Baptism and the gospel are thus set in opposition to each other. Paul explained that "the gospel . . . is God's power for salvation" (Rm 1:16).

A Generous and Growing Church

41† So those who accepted his message were baptized, and that day about
3,000 people were added to them. 42 And they devoted themselves to the
apostles' teaching, to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to the
prayers.

43 Then fear came over everyone, and many wonders and signs were
being performed through the apostles. 44† Now all the believers were
together and held all things in common. 45 They sold their possessions and
property and distributed the proceeds to all, as anyone had a need. G
46 Every day they devoted themselves to meeting together in the •temple
complex, and broke bread from house to house. They ate their food with a
joyful and humble attitude, 47 praising God and having favor with all the
people. And every day the Lord added to them those who were being
saved.

Healing of a Lame Man

3 [†]Now Peter and John were going up together to the •temple complex at
the hour of prayer at three in the afternoon. [A] 2 And a man who was
lame from birth was carried there and placed every day at the temple gate
called Beautiful, so he could beg from those entering the temple complex.
3 When he saw Peter and John about to enter the temple complex, he asked
for help. 4 Peter, along with John, looked at him intently and said, "Look at
us." 5 So he turned to them, [B] expecting to get something from them. 6 But
Peter said, "I don't have silver or gold, but what I have, I give you: In the
name of Jesus Christ the •Nazarene, get up and walk! " 7[†] Then, taking him
by the right hand he raised him up, and at once his feet and ankles became
strong. 8 So he jumped up, stood, and started to walk, and he entered the
temple complex with them — walking, leaping, and praising God. 9 All the
people saw him walking and praising God, 10 and they recognized that he
was the one who used to sit and beg at the Beautiful Gate of the temple
complex. So they were filled with awe and astonishment at what had
happened to him.

Preaching in Solomon's Colonnade

11 While he was holding on to Peter and John, all the people, greatly
amazed, ran toward them in what is called Solomon's Colonnade. 12 When
Peter saw this, he addressed the people: "Men of Israel, why are you
amazed at this? Or why do you stare at us, as though we had made him
walk by our own power or godliness? 13 The God of Abraham, Isaac, and
Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified His Servant Jesus, whom you
handed over and denied in the presence of •Pilate, when he had decided to
release Him. 14 But you denied the Holy and Righteous One and asked to
have a murderer given to you. 15 You killed the source [C] of life, whom God
raised from the dead; we are witnesses of this. 16 By faith in His name, His
name has made this man strong, whom you see and know. So the faith that
comes through Him has given him this perfect health in front of all of you.

17 "And now, brothers, I know that you did it in ignorance, just as your
leaders also did. 18[†] But what God predicted through the mouth of all the
prophets — that His •Messiah would suffer — He has fulfilled in this way.

[19] Therefore repent and turn back, so that your sins may be wiped out, that
seasons of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, [20] and that
He may send Jesus, who has been appointed for you as the Messiah.
[21]† Heaven must welcome [D] Him until the times of the restoration of all
things, which God spoke about by the mouth of His holy prophets from the
beginning. [22] Moses said:

> **The Lord your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me
> from among your brothers. You must listen to Him in
> everything He will say to you. [23] And everyone who will not
> listen to that Prophet will be completely cut off from the
> people.**

[24] "In addition, all the prophets who have spoken, from Samuel and those
after him, have also announced these days. [25] You are the sons of the
prophets and of the covenant that God made with your ancestors, saying to
Abraham, **And all the families of the earth will be blessed through your
offspring.** [26] God raised up His Servant and sent Him first to you to bless
you by turning each of you from your evil ways."

Peter and John Arrested

4 †Now as they were speaking to the people, the priests, the commander
of the temple police, and the •Sadducees confronted them, [2] because
they were provoked that they were teaching the people and proclaiming the
resurrection from the dead, using Jesus as the example. [A] [3] So they seized
them and put them in custody until the next day, since it was already
evening. [4] But many of those who heard the message believed, and the
number of the men came to about 5,000.

Peter and John Face the Jewish Leadership

[5] The next day, their rulers, elders, and •scribes assembled in Jerusalem
[6] with Annas the high priest, Caiaphas, John and Alexander, and all the
members of the high-priestly family. [B] [7] After they had Peter and John
stand before them, they asked the question: "By what power or in what
name have you done this? "

[8] Then Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit and said to them, "Rulers of
the people and elders: [9†] If we are being examined today about a good deed
done to a disabled man — by what means he was healed — [10] let it be
known to all of you and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus
Christ the •Nazarene — whom you crucified and whom God raised from
the dead — by Him this man is standing here before you healthy. [11] This
Jesus is

the stone rejected by you builders,
which has become the cornerstone. [C] ,

[12†] There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under
heaven given to people, and we must be saved by it."

The Name Forbidden

[13] When they observed the boldness of Peter and John and realized that
they were uneducated and untrained men, they were amazed and recognized
that they had been with Jesus. [14] And since they saw the man who had been
healed standing with them, they had nothing to say in response. [15] After

they had ordered them to leave the •Sanhedrin, they conferred among
themselves, 16 saying, “What should we do with these men? For an obvious
sign, evident to all who live in Jerusalem, has been done through them, and
we cannot deny it! 17 However, so this does not spread any further among
the people, let’s threaten them against speaking to anyone in this name
again.” 18 So they called for them and ordered them not to preach or teach
at all in the name of Jesus.

19† But Peter and John answered them, “Whether it’s right in the sight of
God for us to listen to you rather than to God, you decide; 20 for we are
unable to stop speaking about what we have seen and heard.”

21 After threatening them further, they released them. They found no way
to punish them, because the people were all giving glory to God over what
had been done; 22 for this sign of healing had been performed on a man
over 40 years old.

ARTICLE

Does the Disciples' Conviction That they Saw the Risen Jesus Establish the Truth of the Resurrection? ⇒

Prayer for Boldness

23 After they were released, they went to their own people and reported
everything the •chief priests and the elders had said to them. 24 When they
heard this, they all raised their voices to God and said, “Master, You are the
One who made the heaven, the earth, and the sea, and everything in them.
25 You said through the Holy Spirit, by the mouth of our father David Your
servant:

Why did the Gentiles rage
and the peoples plot futile things?

[26] **The kings of the earth took their stand**
and the rulers assembled together
against the Lord and against His •Messiah.

[27] “For, in fact, in this city both •Herod and Pontius •Pilate, with the
Gentiles and the people [D] of Israel, assembled together against Your holy
Servant Jesus, whom You anointed, [28] to do whatever Your hand and Your
plan had predestined to take place. [29] And now, Lord, consider their threats,
and grant that Your •slaves may speak Your message with complete
boldness, [30] while You stretch out Your hand for healing, signs, and
wonders to be performed through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus.”
[31] When they had prayed, the place where they were assembled was shaken,
and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak God’s
message with boldness.

Believers Sharing

[32][†] Now the large group of those who believed were of one heart and
mind, and no one said that any of his possessions was his own, but instead
they held everything in common. [33] And the apostles were giving
testimony with great power to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great
grace was on all of them. [34] For there was not a needy person among them,
because all those who owned lands or houses sold them, brought the
proceeds of the things that were sold, [35] and laid them at the apostles’ feet.
This was then distributed for each person’s basic needs. [E]

[36] Joseph, a Levite and a Cypriot by birth, the one the apostles called
Barnabas, which is translated Son of Encouragement, [37] sold a field he
owned, brought the money, and laid it at the apostles’ feet.

Lying to the Holy Spirit

5 But a man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of
property. 2† However, he kept back part of the proceeds with his wife's
knowledge, and brought a portion of it and laid it at the apostles' feet.

3 Then Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the
Holy Spirit and keep back part of the proceeds from the field? 4 Wasn't it
yours while you possessed it? And after it was sold, wasn't it at your
disposal? Why is it that you planned this thing in your heart? You have not
lied to men but to God! " 5 When he heard these words, Ananias dropped
dead, and a great fear came on all who heard. 6 The young men got up,
wrapped his body, carried him out, and buried him.

TWISTED SCRIPTURE

Acts 5:3

Many "sacred name" groups as well as all Unitarian sects reject the deity of the Holy Spirit. But here Peter clearly identified the Holy Spirit as God. The Spirit possesses all the divine attributes, including omnipotence (Rm 15:19), omniscience (Rm 11:34), and omnipresence (Ps 139:7-10).

7 There was an interval of about three hours; then his wife came in, not
knowing what had happened. 8 "Tell me," Peter asked her, "did you sell the
field for this price? "

"Yes," she said, "for that price."

9 Then Peter said to her, "Why did you agree to test the Spirit of the
Lord? Look! The feet of those who have buried your husband are at the
door, and they will carry you out! "

10 Instantly she dropped dead at his feet. When the young men came in,
they found her dead, carried her out, and buried her beside her husband.
11 Then great fear came on the whole church and on all who heard these
things.

Apostolic Signs and Wonders

12 Many signs and wonders were being done among the people through
the hands of the apostles. By common consent they would all meet in
Solomon's Colonnade. 13 None of the rest dared to join them, but the
people praised them highly. 14 Believers were added to the Lord in
increasing numbers — crowds of both men and women. 15[†] As a result, they
would carry the sick out into the streets and lay them on cots and mats so
that when Peter came by, at least his shadow might fall on some of them.
16 In addition, a large group came together from the towns surrounding
Jerusalem, bringing sick people and those who were tormented by •unclean
spirits, and they were all healed.

In and Out of Prison

17 Then the high priest took action. He and all his colleagues, those who
belonged to the party of the •Sadducees, were filled with jealousy. 18 So
they arrested [A] the apostles and put them in the city jail. 19[†] But an angel of
the Lord opened the doors of the jail during the night, brought them out,
and said, 20 "Go and stand in the •temple complex, and tell the people all
about this life." 21 In obedience to this, they entered the temple complex at
daybreak and began to teach.

The Apostles on Trial Again

When the high priest and those who were with him arrived, they
convened the •Sanhedrin — the full Senate of the sons of Israel — and sent
orders to the jail to have them brought. 22 But when the temple police got
there, they did not find them in the jail, so they returned and reported,
23 "We found the jail securely locked, with the guards standing in front of
the doors, but when we opened them, we found no one inside! " 24 As the

commander of the temple police and the •chief priests heard these things,
they were baffled about them, as to what could come of this.

25 Someone came and reported to them, “Look! The men you put in jail
are standing in the temple complex and teaching the people.” 26 Then the
commander went with the temple police and brought them in without force,
because they were afraid the people might stone them. 27 After they
brought them in, they had them stand before the Sanhedrin, and the high
priest asked, 28 “Didn’t we strictly order you not to teach in this name?
And look, you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and are determined
to bring this man’s blood on us! ”

29† But Peter and the apostles replied, “We must obey God rather than
men. 30 The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom you had murdered
by hanging Him on a tree. 31 God exalted this man to His right hand as
ruler and Savior, to grant repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.
32 We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit whom God
has given to those who obey Him.”

Gamaliel’s Advice

33 When they heard this, they were enraged and wanted to kill them.
34† A •Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law who was respected by
all the people, stood up in the Sanhedrin and ordered the men to be taken
outside for a little while. 35 He said to them, “Men of Israel, be careful
about what you’re going to do to these men. 36† Not long ago Theudas rose
up, claiming to be somebody, and a group of about 400 men rallied to him.
He was killed, and all his partisans were dispersed and came to nothing.
37 After this man, Judas the Galilean rose up in the days of the census and
attracted a following. [B] That man also perished, and all his partisans were
scattered. 38 And now, I tell you, stay away from these men and leave them
alone. For if this plan or this work is of men, it will be overthrown; 39 but if
it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them. You may even be
found fighting against God.” So they were persuaded by him. 40 After they
called in the apostles and had them flogged, they ordered them not to speak

in the name of Jesus and released them. 41 Then they went out from the
presence of the Sanhedrin, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to be
dishonored on behalf of the Name. 42 Every day in the temple complex,
and in various homes, they continued teaching and proclaiming the good
news that Jesus is the •Messiah.

Seven Chosen to Serve

6 [†]In those days, as the number of the disciples was multiplying, there
arose a complaint by the Hellenistic Jews against the Hebraic Jews that
their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution. 2 Then the
Twelve summoned the whole company of the disciples and said, “It would
not be right for us to give up preaching about God to handle financial
matters. [A] 3 Therefore, brothers, select from among you seven men of good
reputation, full of the Spirit and wisdom, whom we can appoint to this
duty. 4 But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the preaching
ministry.” 5 The proposal pleased the whole company. So they chose
Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus,
Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a •proselyte from Antioch.
6[†] They had them stand before the apostles, who prayed and laid their
hands on them.

7 So the preaching about God flourished, the number of the disciples in
Jerusalem multiplied greatly, and a large group of priests became obedient
to the faith.

Stephen Accused of Blasphemy

8 Stephen, full of grace and power, was performing great wonders and
signs among the people. 9 Then some from what is called the Freedmen’s
•Synagogue, composed of both Cyrenians and Alexandrians, and some
from Cilicia and •Asia, came forward and disputed with Stephen. 10 But
they were unable to stand up against his wisdom and the Spirit by whom he
was speaking.

11[†] Then they persuaded some men to say, “We heard him speaking
blasphemous words against Moses and God! ” 12 They stirred up the
people, the elders, and the •scribes; so they came, dragged him off, and took
him to the •Sanhedrin. 13 They also presented false witnesses who said,
“This man does not stop speaking blasphemous words against this holy
place and the law. 14 For we heard him say that Jesus, this •Nazarene, will
destroy this place and change the customs that Moses handed down to us.”

15 And all who were sitting in the Sanhedrin looked intently at him and saw
that his face was like the face of an angel.

Stephen's Sermon

7 “Is this true? ” [A] the high priest asked.

[2†] “Brothers and fathers,” he said, “listen: The God of glory appeared to
our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he settled in
Haran, [3] and said to him:

Get out of your country
and away from your relatives,
and come to the land
that I will show you.

[4] “Then he came out of the land of the Chaldeans and settled in Haran.
From there, after his father died, God had him move to this land you now
live in. [5] He didn’t give him an inheritance in it, not even a foot of ground,
but He promised to give it to him as a possession, and to his descendants
after him, even though he was childless. [6] God spoke in this way:

His descendants would be strangers
in a foreign country,
and they would enslave
and oppress them 400 years.
[7] **I will judge the nation**
that they will serve as •slaves, God said.
After this, they will come out
and worship Me in this place.

[8] Then He gave him the covenant of circumcision. After this, he fathered
Isaac and circumcised him on the eighth day; Isaac did the same with
Jacob, and Jacob with the 12 patriarchs.

The Patriarchs in Egypt

[9] “The patriarchs became jealous of Joseph and sold him into Egypt, but
God was with him [10] and rescued him out of all his troubles. He gave him
favor and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, who appointed
him ruler over Egypt and over his whole household. [11] Then a famine and

great suffering came over all of Egypt and Canaan, and our ancestors could
find no food. 12 When Jacob heard there was grain in Egypt, he sent our
ancestors the first time. 13 The second time, Joseph was revealed to his
brothers, and Joseph's family became known to Pharaoh. 14 Joseph then
invited his father Jacob and all his relatives, 75 people in all, 15 and Jacob
went down to Egypt. He and our ancestors died there, 16 were carried back
to Shechem, and were placed in the tomb that Abraham had bought for a
sum of silver from the sons of Hamor in Shechem.

Moses, a Rejected Savior

17 "As the time was drawing near to fulfill the promise that God had
made to Abraham, the people flourished and multiplied in Egypt 18 until a
different king who did not know Joseph ruled over Egypt. 19 He dealt
deceitfully with our race and oppressed our ancestors by making them leave
their infants outside, so they wouldn't survive. 20 At this time Moses was
born, and he was beautiful in God's sight. He was cared for in his father's
home three months, 21 and when he was left outside, Pharaoh's daughter
adopted and raised him as her own son. 22 So Moses was educated in all
the wisdom of the Egyptians and was powerful in his speech and actions.

23 "As he was approaching the age of 40, he decided [B] to visit his
brothers, the Israelites. 24 When he saw one of them being mistreated, he
came to his rescue and avenged the oppressed man by striking down the
Egyptian. 25 He assumed his brothers would understand that God would
give them deliverance through him, but they did not understand. 26 The next
day he showed up while they were fighting and tried to reconcile them
peacefully, saying, 'Men, you are brothers. Why are you mistreating each
other? '

27 "But the one who was mistreating his neighbor pushed him away,
saying:

Who appointed you a ruler and a judge over us? 28 Do you
want to kill me, the same way you killed the Egyptian

yesterday?

[29] “At this disclosure, Moses fled and became an exile in the land of
Midian, where he fathered two sons. [30] After 40 years had passed, an angel
appeared to him in the wilderness of Mount Sinai, in the flame of a burning
bush. [31] When Moses saw it, he was amazed at the sight. As he was
approaching to look at it, the voice of the Lord came: [32] **I am the God of
your fathers — the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob.** So Moses
began to tremble and did not dare to look.

[33] “Then the Lord said to him:

> **Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place where you
> are standing is holy ground. [34] I have observed the oppression
> of My people in Egypt; I have heard their groaning and have
> come down to rescue them. And now, come, I will send you to
> Egypt.**

[35] “This Moses, whom they rejected when they said, **Who appointed
you a ruler and a judge?** — this one God sent as a ruler and a redeemer
by means of the angel who appeared to him in the bush. [36] This man led
them out and performed wonders and signs in the land of Egypt, at the Red
Sea, and in the wilderness 40 years.

Israel’s Rebellion against God

[37] “This is the Moses who said to the Israelites, **God will raise up for
you a Prophet like me from among your brothers.** [38] He is the one who
was in the congregation in the wilderness together with the angel who
spoke to him on Mount Sinai, and with our ancestors. He received living
oracles to give to us. [39] Our ancestors were unwilling to obey him, but
pushed him away, and in their hearts turned back to Egypt. [40] They told
Aaron:

> **Make us gods who will go before us. As for this Moses who
> brought us out of the land of Egypt, we don’t know what’s**

happened to him.

[41] They even made a calf in those days, offered sacrifice to the idol, and
were celebrating what their hands had made. [42] Then God turned away and
gave them up to worship the host of heaven, as it is written in the book of
the prophets:

House of Israel, did you bring Me offerings and sacrifices
40 years in the wilderness?
[43] **No, you took up the tent of Moloch**
and the star of your god Rephan,
the images that you made to worship.
So I will deport you beyond Babylon!

God's Real Tabernacle

[44] "Our ancestors had the tabernacle of the testimony in the wilderness,
just as He who spoke to Moses commanded him to make it according to the
pattern he had seen. [45] Our ancestors in turn received it and with Joshua
brought it in when they dispossessed the nations that God drove out before
our fathers, until the days of David. [46] He found favor in God's sight and
asked that he might provide a dwelling place for the God of Jacob. [47] But
it was Solomon who built Him a house. [48] However, the Most High does
not dwell in sanctuaries made with hands, as the prophet says:

[49] **Heaven is My throne,**
and earth My footstool.
What sort of house will you build for Me?
says the Lord,
or what is My resting place?
[50] **Did not My hand make all these things?**

Resisting the Holy Spirit

[51†] "You stiff-necked people with uncircumcised hearts and ears! You
are always resisting the Holy Spirit; as your ancestors did, so do you.
[52] Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? They even killed

those who announced beforehand the coming of the Righteous One, whose
betrayers and murderers you have now become. 53† You received the law
under the direction of angels and yet have not kept it.”

The First Christian Martyr

54 When they heard these things, they were enraged in their hearts [C] and
gnashed their teeth at him. 55 But Stephen, filled by the Holy Spirit, gazed
into heaven. He saw God’s glory, with [D] Jesus standing at the right hand of
God, and he said, 56† “Look! I see the heavens opened and the •Son of Man
standing at the right hand of God! ”

57 Then they screamed at the top of their voices, covered their ears, and
together rushed against him. 58† They threw him out of the city and began to
stone him. And the witnesses laid their robes at the feet of a young man
named Saul. 59 They were stoning Stephen as he called out: “Lord Jesus,
receive my spirit! ” 60 Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice,
“Lord, do not charge them with this sin! ” And saying this, he fell •asleep.

Saul the Persecutor

8 Saul agreed with putting him to death.

On that day a severe persecution broke out against the church in
Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout the land of
Judea and Samaria. 2 Devout men buried Stephen and mourned deeply over
him. 3 Saul, however, was ravaging the church. He would enter house after
house, drag off men and women, and put them in prison.

Philip in Samaria

4 So those who were scattered went on their way preaching the message
of good news. 5 Philip went down to a city in Samaria and proclaimed the
•Messiah to them. 6 The crowds paid attention with one mind to what
Philip said, as they heard and saw the signs he was performing. 7 For
•unclean spirits, crying out with a loud voice, came out of many who were
possessed, and many who were paralyzed and lame were healed. 8 So there
was great joy in that city.

The Response of Simon

9[†] A man named Simon had previously practiced sorcery in that city and
astounded the •Samaritan people, while claiming to be somebody great.
10 They all paid attention to him, from the least of them to the greatest, and
they said, “This man is called the Great Power of God! ” [A], 11 They were
attentive to him because he had astounded them with his sorceries for a long
time. 12 But when they believed Philip, as he preached the good news about
the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women
were baptized. 13 Then even Simon himself believed. And after he was
baptized, he went around constantly with [B] Philip and was astounded as he
observed the signs and great miracles that were being performed.

Simon’s Sin

14 When the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had
welcomed God’s message, they sent Peter and John to them. 15 After they
went down there, they prayed for them, so the Samaritans might receive the

Holy Spirit. 16 For He had not yet come down on [C] any of them; they had
only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 17 Then Peter and John
laid their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

18 When Simon saw that the Holy Spirit was given through the laying on
of the apostles’ hands, he offered them money, 19 saying, “Give me this
power too, so that anyone I lay hands on may receive the Holy Spirit.”

20 But Peter told him, “May your silver be destroyed with you, because
you thought the gift of God could be obtained with money! 21 You have no
part or share in this matter, because your heart is not right before God.
22 Therefore repent of this wickedness of yours, and pray to the Lord that
the intent of your heart may be forgiven you. 23 For I see you are poisoned
by bitterness and bound by iniquity.”

24 “Please pray [D] to the Lord for me,” Simon replied, “so that nothing
you have said may happen to me.”

25 Then, after they had testified and spoken the message of the Lord, they
traveled back to Jerusalem, evangelizing many villages of the Samaritans.

The Conversion of the Ethiopian Official

26 An angel of the Lord spoke to Philip: “Get up and go south to the road
that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.” (This is the desert road.) [E] 27 So
he got up and went. There was an Ethiopian man, a eunuch and high
official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was in charge of her
entire treasury. He had come to worship in Jerusalem 28 and was sitting in
his chariot on his way home, reading the prophet Isaiah aloud.

29 The Spirit told Philip, “Go and join that chariot.”

30 When Philip ran up to it, he heard him reading the prophet Isaiah, and
said, “Do you understand what you’re reading? ”

31 "How can I," he said, "unless someone guides me? " So he invited
Philip to come up and sit with him. 32† Now the Scripture passage he was
reading was this:

He was led like a sheep to the slaughter,
and as a lamb is silent before its shearer,
so He does not open His mouth.
33 **In His humiliation justice was denied Him.**
Who will describe His generation?
For His life is taken from the earth.

34 The eunuch replied to Philip, "I ask you, who is the prophet saying this
about — himself or another person? " 35 So Philip proceeded [F] to tell him
the good news about Jesus, beginning from that Scripture.

36 As they were traveling down the road, they came to some water. The
eunuch said, "Look, there's water! What would keep me from being
baptized? " [37 And Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart you
may." And he replied, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."]
38† Then he ordered the chariot to stop, and both Philip and the eunuch went
down into the water, and he baptized him. 39 When they came up out of the
water, the Spirit of the Lord carried Philip away, and the eunuch did not see
him any longer. But he went on his way rejoicing. 40 Philip appeared in [G]
Azotus, [H] and he was traveling and evangelizing all the towns until he came
to Caesarea.

The Damascus Road

9 †Meanwhile, Saul was still breathing threats and murder against the
disciples of the Lord. He went to the high priest 2† and requested
letters from him to the •synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any
men or women who belonged to the Way, he might bring them as prisoners
to Jerusalem. 3 As he traveled and was nearing Damascus, a light from
heaven suddenly flashed around him. 4 Falling to the ground, he heard a
voice saying to him, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? ”

5† “Who are You, Lord? ” he said.

“I am Jesus, the One you are persecuting,” He replied. 6 “But get up and
go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.”

7† The men who were traveling with him stood speechless, hearing the
sound but seeing no one. 8 Then Saul got up from the ground, and though
his eyes were open, he could see nothing. So they took him by the hand and
led him into Damascus. 9 He was unable to see for three days and did not
eat or drink.

Saul’s Baptism

10† There was a disciple in Damascus named Ananias. And the Lord said
to him in a vision, “Ananias! ”

“Here I am, Lord! ” he said.

11 “Get up and go to the street called Straight,” the Lord said to him, “to
the house of Judas, and ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul, since he is
praying there. 12 In a vision he has seen a man named Ananias coming in
and placing his hands on him so he can regain his sight.”

13 “Lord,” Ananias answered, “I have heard from many people about this
man, how much harm he has done to Your •saints in Jerusalem. 14 And he
has authority here from the •chief priests to arrest all who call on Your
name.”

[15] But the Lord said to him, “Go! For this man is My chosen instrument
to take My name to Gentiles, kings, and the Israelites. [16] I will show him
how much he must suffer for My name! ”

[17†] So Ananias left and entered the house. Then he placed his hands on
him and said, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the
road you were traveling, has sent me so that you can regain your sight and
be filled with the Holy Spirit.”

[18] At once something like scales fell from his eyes, and he regained his
sight. Then he got up and was baptized. [19] And after taking some food, he
regained his strength.

Saul Proclaiming the Messiah

Saul was with the disciples in Damascus for some days. [20†] Immediately
he began proclaiming Jesus in the synagogues: “He is the Son of God.”

[21] But all who heard him were astounded and said, “Isn’t this the man
who, in Jerusalem, was destroying those who called on this name and then
came here for the purpose of taking them as prisoners to the chief priests? ”

[22] But Saul grew more capable and kept confounding the Jews who lived
in Damascus by proving that this One is the •Messiah.

[23] After many days had passed, the Jews conspired to kill him, [24] but
their plot became known to Saul. So they were watching the gates day and
night intending to kill him, [25] but his disciples took him by night and
lowered him in a large basket through an opening in the wall.

Saul in Jerusalem

[26] When he arrived in Jerusalem, he tried to associate with the disciples,
but they were all afraid of him, since they did not believe he was a disciple.
[27] Barnabas, however, took him and brought him to the apostles and
explained to them how Saul had seen the Lord on the road and that He had

talked to him, and how in Damascus he had spoken boldly in the name of
Jesus. 28 Saul was coming and going with them in Jerusalem, speaking
boldly in the name of the Lord. 29† He conversed and debated with the
Hellenistic Jews, [A] but they attempted to kill him. 30 When the brothers
found out, they took him down to Caesarea and sent him off to Tarsus.

31 So the church throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace,
being built up and walking in the •fear of the Lord and in the
encouragement of the Holy Spirit, and it increased in numbers.

The Healing of Aeneas

32† As Peter was traveling from place to place, he also came down to the
saints who lived in Lydda. 33 There he found a man named Aeneas, who
was paralyzed and had been bedridden for eight years. 34 Peter said to him,
"Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you. Get up and make your bed," [B] and
immediately he got up. 35 So all who lived in Lydda and Sharon saw him
and turned to the Lord.

Dorcas Restored to Life

36 In Joppa there was a disciple named Tabitha, which is translated
Dorcas. She was always doing good works and acts of charity. 37 In those
days she became sick and died. After washing her, they placed her in a
room upstairs. 38 Since Lydda was near Joppa, the disciples heard that Peter
was there and sent two men to him who begged him, "Don't delay in
coming with us." 39 So Peter got up and went with them. When he arrived,
they led him to the room upstairs. And all the widows approached him,
weeping and showing him the robes and clothes that Dorcas had made
while she was with them. 40 Then Peter sent them all out of the room. He
knelt down, prayed, and turning toward the body said, "Tabitha, get up! "
She opened her eyes, saw Peter, and sat up. 41 He gave her his hand and
helped her stand up. Then he called the saints and widows and presented
her alive. 42 This became known throughout Joppa, and many believed in

the Lord. [43†] And Peter stayed on many days in Joppa with Simon, a leather tanner.

Cornelius's Vision

10 †There was a man in Caesarea named Cornelius, a •centurion of what
was called the Italian •Regiment. 2† He was a devout man and feared
God along with his whole household. He did many charitable deeds for the
Jewish people and always prayed to God. 3 About three in the afternoon A
he distinctly saw in a vision an angel of God who came in and said to him,
"Cornelius! "

4 Looking intently at him, he became afraid and said, "What is it, lord? "

The angel told him, "Your prayers and your acts of charity have come up
as a memorial offering before God. 5 Now send men to Joppa and call for
Simon, who is also named Peter. 6 He is lodging with Simon, a tanner,
whose house is by the sea."

7 When the angel who spoke to him had gone, he called two of his
household slaves and a devout soldier, who was one of those who attended
him. 8 After explaining everything to them, he sent them to Joppa.

Peter's Vision

9 The next day, as they were traveling and nearing the city, Peter went up
to pray on the housetop about noon. B 10 Then he became hungry and
wanted to eat, but while they were preparing something, he went into a
visionary state. 11 He saw heaven opened and an object that resembled a
large sheet coming down, being lowered by its four corners to the earth.
12 In it were all the four-footed animals and reptiles of the earth, and the
birds of the sky. 13 Then a voice said to him, "Get up, Peter; kill and eat! "

TWISTED SCRIPTURE

Acts 10:10

ew Age channelers and other occultists cite this verse to claim legitimacy for
trances and paranormal experiences. While there are several instances in the

N Scriptures where God's people had mystical experiences, such experiences were never sought. They were initiated by a sovereign God. This distinguishes Christian mysticism from New Age mysticism, which urges its adherents to pursue paranormal activity.

14 “No, Lord! ” Peter said. “For I have never eaten anything common [C]
and ritually •unclean! ”

15 Again, a second time, a voice said to him, “What God has made •clean,
you must not call common.” 16 This happened three times, and then the
object was taken up into heaven.

Peter Visits Cornelius

17 While Peter was deeply perplexed about what the vision he had seen
might mean, the men who had been sent by Cornelius, having asked
directions to Simon’s house, stood at the gate. 18 They called out, asking if
Simon, who was also named Peter, was lodging there.

19† While Peter was thinking about the vision, the Spirit told him, “Three
men are here looking for you. 20 Get up, go downstairs, and accompany
them with no doubts at all, because I have sent them.”

21 Then Peter went down to the men and said, “Here I am, the one you’re
looking for. What is the reason you’re here? ”

22 They said, “Cornelius, a centurion, an upright and God-fearing man,
who has a good reputation with the whole Jewish nation, was divinely
directed by a holy angel to call you to his house and to hear a message from
you.” 23 Peter then invited them in and gave them lodging.

The next day he got up and set out with them, and some of the brothers
from Joppa went with him. 24 The following day he entered Caesarea. Now
Cornelius was expecting them and had called together his relatives and
close friends. 25 When Peter entered, Cornelius met him, fell at his feet, and
worshiped him.

[26] But Peter helped him up and said, “Stand up! I myself am also a
man.” [27] While talking with him, he went on in and found that many had
come together there. [28†] Peter said to them, “You know it’s forbidden for a
Jewish man to associate with or visit a foreigner. But God has shown me
that I must not call any person common or unclean. [29] That’s why I came
without any objection when I was sent for. So I ask: Why did you send for
me? ”

[30] Cornelius replied, “Four days ago at this hour, at three in the
afternoon, [D] I was praying in my house. Just then a man in a dazzling robe
stood before me [31] and said, ‘Cornelius, your prayer has been heard, and
your acts of charity have been remembered in God’s sight. [32] Therefore
send someone to Joppa and invite Simon here, who is also named Peter. He
is lodging in Simon the tanner’s house by the sea.’ [33] Therefore I
immediately sent for you, and you did the right thing in coming. So we are
all present before God, to hear everything you have been commanded by
the Lord.”

ARTICLE

What is the Christian Identity Movement? ⇒

Good News for Gentiles

[34†] Then Peter began to speak: “Now I really understand that God doesn’t
show favoritism, [35] but in every nation the person who fears Him and does
righteousness is acceptable to Him. [36] He sent the message to the Israelites,
proclaiming the good news of peace through Jesus Christ — He is Lord of
all. [37] You know the events [E] that took place throughout Judea, beginning
from Galilee after the baptism that John preached: [38] how God anointed
Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, and how He went
about doing good and healing all who were under the tyranny of the Devil,
because God was with Him. [39] We ourselves are witnesses of everything

He did in both the Judean country and in Jerusalem, yet they killed Him by hanging Him on a tree. 40 God raised up this man on the third day and permitted Him to be seen, 41 not by all the people, but by us, witnesses appointed beforehand by God, who ate and drank with Him after He rose from the dead. 42 He commanded us to preach to the people and to solemnly testify that He is the One appointed by God to be the Judge of the living and the dead. 43 All the prophets testify about Him that through His name everyone who believes in Him will receive forgiveness of sins."

Gentile Conversion and Baptism

44† While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came down on all those who heard the message. 45 The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astounded because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. 46 For they heard them speaking in other •languages and declaring the greatness of [F] God.

Then Peter responded, 47 "Can anyone withhold water and prevent these people from being baptized, who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have? " 48 And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to stay for a few days.

Gentile Salvation Defended

11 [†]The apostles and the brothers who were throughout Judea heard that
the Gentiles had welcomed God’s message also. 2 When Peter went up
to Jerusalem, those who stressed circumcision [A] argued with him, 3 saying,
“You visited uncircumcised men and ate with them! ”

4 Peter began to explain to them in an orderly sequence, saying: 5 “I was
in the town of Joppa praying, and I saw, in a visionary state, an object that
resembled a large sheet coming down, being lowered by its four corners
from heaven, and it came to me. 6 When I looked closely and considered it,
I saw the four-footed animals of the earth, the wild beasts, the reptiles, and
the birds of the sky. 7 Then I also heard a voice telling me, ‘Get up, Peter;
kill and eat! ’

8 “ ‘No, Lord! ’ I said. ‘For nothing common or ritually •unclean has ever
entered my mouth! ’ 9 But a voice answered from heaven a second time,
‘What God has made •clean, you must not call common.’

10 “Now this happened three times, and then everything was drawn up
again into heaven. 11 At that very moment, three men who had been sent to
me from Caesarea arrived at the house where we were. 12 Then the Spirit
told me to accompany them with no doubts at all. These six brothers
accompanied me, and we went into the man’s house. 13 He reported to us
how he had seen the angel standing in his house and saying, ‘Send to
Joppa, and call for Simon, who is also named Peter. 14 He will speak a
message [B] to you that you and all your household will be saved by.’

15 “As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit came down on them, just as on us
at the beginning. 16 Then I remembered the word of the Lord, how He said,
‘John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’
17 Therefore, if God gave them the same gift that He also gave to us when
we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, how could I possibly hinder God? ”

18 When they heard this they became silent. Then they glorified God,
saying, “So God has granted repentance resulting in life [C] even to the
Gentiles! ”

The Church in Antioch

19 Those who had been scattered as a result of the persecution that started
because of Stephen made their way as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and
Antioch, speaking the message to no one except Jews. 20† But there were
some of them, Cypriot and Cyrenian men, who came to Antioch and began
speaking to the Hellenists, proclaiming the good news about the Lord
Jesus. 21 The Lord's hand was with them, and a large number who believed
turned to the Lord. 22 Then the report about them was heard by the church
that was at Jerusalem, and they sent out Barnabas to travel as far as
Antioch. 23 When he arrived and saw the grace of God, he was glad and
encouraged all of them to remain true to the Lord with a firm resolve of the
heart, 24 for he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And
large numbers of people were added to the Lord. 25† Then he went to
Tarsus to search for Saul, 26† and when he found him he brought him to
Antioch. For a whole year they met with the church and taught large
numbers. The disciples were first called Christians at Antioch.

Famine Relief

27 In those days some prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch.
28† Then one of them, named Agabus, stood up and predicted by the Spirit
that there would be a severe famine throughout the Roman world. [D] This
took place during the time of Claudius. 29 So each of the disciples,
according to his ability, determined to send relief to the brothers who lived
in Judea. 30† They did this, sending it to the elders by means of Barnabas
and Saul.

James Martyred and Peter Jailed

12 [†]About that time King •Herod cruelly attacked some who belonged to
the church, [2] and he killed James, John's brother, with the sword.
[3] When he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to arrest Peter too,
during the days of •Unleavened Bread. [4] After the arrest, he put him in
prison and assigned four squads of four soldiers each to guard him,
intending to bring him out to the people after the •Passover. [5] So Peter was
kept in prison, but prayer was being made earnestly to God for him by the
church.

Peter Rescued

[6†] On the night before Herod was to bring him out for execution, Peter,
bound with two chains, was sleeping between two soldiers, while the
sentries in front of the door guarded the prison. [7] Suddenly an angel of the
Lord appeared, and a light shone in the cell. Striking Peter on the side, he
woke him up and said, "Quick, get up! " Then the chains fell off his wrists.
[8] "Get dressed," the angel told him, "and put on your sandals." And he did
so. "Wrap your cloak around you," he told him, "and follow me." [9] So he
went out and followed, and he did not know that what took place through
the angel was real, but thought he was seeing a vision. [10] After they passed
the first and second guard posts, they came to the iron gate that leads into
the city, which opened to them by itself. They went outside and passed one
street, and immediately the angel left him.

[11] Then Peter came to himself and said, "Now I know for certain that the
Lord has sent His angel and rescued me from Herod's grasp and from all
that the Jewish people expected." [12] When he realized this, he went to the
house of Mary, the mother of John Mark, [A] where many had assembled and
were praying. [13] He knocked at the door in the gateway, and a servant
named Rhoda came to answer. [14] She recognized Peter's voice, and because
of her joy, she did not open the gate but ran in and announced that Peter was
standing at the gateway.

[15†] "You're crazy! " they told her. But she kept insisting that it was true.
Then they said, "It's his angel! " [16] Peter, however, kept on knocking, and

when they opened the door and saw him, they were astounded.

[17]† Motioning to them with his hand to be silent, he explained to them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison. "Report these things to James and the brothers," he said. Then he departed and went to a different place.

[18] At daylight, there was a great commotion [B] among the soldiers as to
what could have become of Peter. [19] After Herod had searched and did not
find him, he interrogated the guards and ordered their execution. Then Herod went down from Judea to Caesarea and stayed there.

Herod's Death

[20] He had been very angry with the Tyrians and Sidonians. Together they presented themselves before him. They won over Blastus, who was in charge of the king's bedroom, and through him they asked for peace,
because their country was supplied with food from the king's country. [21] So
on an appointed day, dressed in royal robes and seated on the throne, Herod
delivered a public address to them. [22] The assembled people began to shout,
"It's the voice of a god and not of a man! " [23]† At once an angel of the Lord
struck him because he did not give the glory to God, and he became
infected with worms and died. [24] Then God's message flourished and
multiplied. [25] After they had completed their relief mission, Barnabas and
Saul returned to Jerusalem, taking along John who is called Mark.

Preparing for the Mission Field

13 [†]In the church that was at Antioch there were prophets and teachers:
Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius the Cyrenian,
Manaen, a close friend of •Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.

[2] As they were ministering to [A] the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said,
"Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work I have called them to."
[3] Then after they had fasted, prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them
off.

The Mission to Cyprus

[4†] Being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they came down to Seleucia, and
from there they sailed to Cyprus. [5] Arriving in Salamis, they proclaimed
God's message in the Jewish •synagogues. They also had John as their
assistant. [6†] When they had gone through the whole island as far as Paphos,
they came across a sorcerer, a Jewish false prophet named Bar-Jesus. [7] He
was with the •proconsul, Sergius Paulus, an intelligent man. This man
summoned Barnabas and Saul and desired to hear God's message. [8†] But
Elymas the sorcerer (this is the meaning of his name) opposed them and
tried to turn the proconsul away from the faith.

[9†] Then Saul — also called Paul — filled with the Holy Spirit, stared
straight at the sorcerer [10] and said, "You son of the Devil, full of all deceit
and all fraud, enemy of all righteousness! Won't you ever stop perverting
the straight paths of the Lord? [11] Now, look! The Lord's hand is against
you. You are going to be blind, and will not see the sun for a time."
Suddenly a mist and darkness fell on him, and he went around seeking
someone to lead him by the hand.

[12] Then the proconsul, seeing what happened, believed and was
astonished at the teaching about the Lord.

Paul's Sermon in Antioch of Pisidia

[13†] Paul and his companions set sail from Paphos and came to Perga in
Pamphylia. John, however, left them and went back to Jerusalem. [14†] They

continued their journey from Perga and reached Antioch in Pisidia. On the
Sabbath day they went into the synagogue and sat down. 15† After the
reading of the Law and the Prophets, the leaders of the synagogue sent
word to them, saying, “Brothers, if you have any message of
encouragement for the people, you can speak.”

16† Then Paul stood up and motioned with his hand and said: “Men of
Israel, and you who fear God, listen! 17 The God of this people Israel chose
our ancestors, exalted the people during their stay in the land of Egypt, and
led them out of it with a mighty [B] arm. 18 And for about 40 years He put up
with them in the wilderness; 19 then after destroying seven nations in the
land of Canaan, He gave their land to them as an inheritance. 20 This all
took about 450 years. After this, He gave them judges until Samuel the
prophet. 21 Then they asked for a king, so God gave them Saul the son of
Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, for 40 years. 22 After removing him,
He raised up David as their king and testified about him: ‘**I have found
David** the son of Jesse, **a man loyal to Me,** who will carry out all My
will.’

23 “From this man’s descendants, according to the promise, God brought
the Savior, Jesus, to Israel. 24 Before He came to public attention, [C] John
had previously proclaimed a baptism of repentance to all the people of
Israel. 25 Then as John was completing his life’s work, he said, ‘Who do
you think I am? I am not the One. But look! Someone is coming after me,
and I am not worthy to untie the sandals on His feet.’

26 “Brothers, sons of Abraham’s race, and those among you who fear
God, the message of this salvation has been sent to us. 27 For the residents
of Jerusalem and their rulers, since they did not recognize Him or the voices
of the prophets that are read every Sabbath, have fulfilled their words [D] by
condemning Him. 28 Though they found no grounds for the death penalty,
they asked •Pilate to have Him killed. 29 When they had fulfilled all that
had been written about Him, they took Him down from the tree and put
Him in a tomb. 30 But God raised Him from the dead, 31 and He appeared
for many days to those who came with Him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who

are now His witnesses to the people. 32 And we ourselves proclaim to you
the good news of the promise that was made to our ancestors. 33 God has
fulfilled this for us, their children, by raising up Jesus, as it is written in the
second Psalm:

You are My Son;
today I have become Your Father. [E] ,

34 Since He raised Him from the dead, never to return to decay, He has
spoken in this way, **I will grant you the faithful covenant blessings** [F]
made to David. 35 Therefore He also says in another passage, **You will not**
allow Your Holy One to see decay. 36 For David, after serving his own
generation in God's plan, fell •asleep, was buried with his fathers, and
decayed. 37 But the One God raised up did not decay. 38 Therefore, let it be
known to you, brothers, that through this man forgiveness of sins is being
proclaimed to you, 39 and everyone who believes in Him is •justified from
everything that you could not be justified from through the law of Moses.
40 So beware that what is said in the prophets does not happen to you:

41 **Look, you scoffers,**
marvel and vanish away,
because I am doing a work in your days,
a work that you will never believe,
even if someone were to explain it to you."

Paul and Barnabas in Antioch

42 As they were leaving, the people begged that these matters be
presented to them the following Sabbath. 43 After the synagogue had been
dismissed, many of the Jews and devout •proselytes followed Paul and
Barnabas, who were speaking with them and persuading them to continue
in the grace of God.

44 The following Sabbath almost the whole town assembled to hear the
message of the Lord. 45 But when the Jews saw the crowds, they were

filled with jealousy and began to oppose what Paul was saying by insulting him.

[46]† Then Paul and Barnabas boldly said: “It was necessary that God’s
message be spoken to you first. But since you reject it and consider
yourselves unworthy of eternal life, we now turn to the Gentiles! [47] For this
is what the Lord has commanded us:

I have made you
a light for the Gentiles
to bring salvation
to the ends [G] **of the earth.**”

[48] When the Gentiles heard this, they rejoiced and glorified the message of
the Lord, and all who had been appointed to eternal life believed. [49] So the
message of the Lord spread through the whole region. [50] But the Jews
incited the prominent women, who worshiped God, and the leading men of
the city. They stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas and expelled
them from their district. [51] But they shook the dust off their feet against
them and went to Iconium. [52] And the disciples were filled with joy and the
Holy Spirit.

Growth and Persecution in Iconium

14 The same thing happened in Iconium; they entered the Jewish
•synagogue and spoke in such a way that a great number of both Jews
and Greeks believed. [2] But the Jews who refused to believe stirred up and
poisoned the minds of the Gentiles against the brothers. [3] So they stayed
there for some time and spoke boldly in reliance on the Lord, who testified
to the message of His grace by granting that signs and wonders be
performed through them. [4] But the people of the city were divided, some
siding with the Jews and some with the apostles. [5] When an attempt was
made by both the Gentiles and Jews, with their rulers, to assault and stone
them, [6] they found out about it and fled to the Lycaonian towns called
Lystra and Derbe, and to the surrounding countryside. [7] And there they
kept evangelizing.

Mistaken for Gods in Lystra

[8] In Lystra a man without strength in his feet, lame from birth, [A] and who
had never walked, sat [9] and heard Paul speaking. After observing him
closely and seeing that he had faith to be healed, [10] Paul said in a loud
voice, "Stand upright on your feet! " And he jumped up and started to walk
around.

[11†] When the crowds saw what Paul had done, they raised their voices,
saying in the Lycaonian language, "The gods have come down to us in the
form of men! " [12†] And they started to call Barnabas, Zeus, and Paul,
Hermes, because he was the main speaker. [13] Then the priest of Zeus,
whose temple was just outside the town, brought oxen and garlands to the
gates. He, with the crowds, intended to offer sacrifice.

[14] The apostles Barnabas and Paul tore their robes when they heard this
and rushed into the crowd, shouting: [15†] "Men! Why are you doing these
things? We are men also, with the same nature as you, and we are
proclaiming good news to you, that you should turn from these worthless
things to the living God, **who made the heaven, the earth, the sea, and
everything in them**. [16] In past generations He allowed all the nations to
go their own way, [17] although He did not leave Himself without a witness,

since He did what is good by giving you rain from heaven and fruitful seasons and satisfying your hearts with food and happiness.”
[18] Even though they said these things, they barely stopped the crowds from sacrificing to them.

[19]† Then some Jews came from Antioch and Iconium, and when they had won over the crowds and stoned Paul, they dragged him out of the city, thinking he was dead.
[20] After the disciples surrounded him, he got up and went into the town. The next day he left with Barnabas for Derbe.

Church Planting

[21]† After they had evangelized that town and made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, to Iconium, and to Antioch,
[22] strengthening the [B] disciples by encouraging them to continue in the faith and by telling them, “It is necessary to pass through many troubles on our way into the kingdom of God.”

[23]† When they had appointed elders in every church and prayed with fasting, they committed them to the Lord in whom they had believed.
[24] Then they passed through Pisidia and came to Pamphylia.
[25] After they spoke the message in Perga, they went down to Attalia.
[26] From there they sailed back to Antioch where they had been entrusted to the grace of God for the work they had now completed.
[27] After they arrived and gathered the church together, they reported everything God had done with them and that He had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles.
[28] And they spent a considerable time [C] with the disciples.

Dispute in Antioch

15 †Some men came down from Judea and began to teach the brothers:
“Unless you are circumcised according to the custom prescribed by
Moses, you cannot be saved! ” 2† But after Paul and Barnabas had engaged
them in serious argument and debate, the church arranged for Paul and
Barnabas and some others of them to go up to the apostles and elders in
Jerusalem concerning this controversy. 3 When they had been sent on their
way by the church, they passed through both Phoenicia and Samaria,
explaining in detail the conversion of the Gentiles, and they created great
joy among all the brothers.

4 When they arrived at Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church, the
apostles, and the elders, and they reported all that God had done with them.
5† But some of the believers from the party of the •Pharisees stood up and
said, “It is necessary to circumcise them and to command them to keep the
law of Moses! ”

The Jerusalem Council

6 Then the apostles and the elders assembled to consider this matter.
7 After there had been much debate, Peter stood up and said to them:
“Brothers, you are aware that in the early days God made a choice among
you, that by my mouth the Gentiles would hear the gospel message and
believe. 8 And God, who knows the heart, testified to them by giving the
Holy Spirit, just as He also did to us. 9 He made no distinction between us
and them, cleansing their hearts by faith. 10 Now then, why are you testing
God by putting a yoke on the disciples’ necks that neither our ancestors nor
we have been able to bear? 11 On the contrary, we believe we are saved
through the grace of the Lord Jesus in the same way they are.”

12 Then the whole assembly fell silent and listened to Barnabas and Paul
describing all the signs and wonders God had done through them among the
Gentiles. 13 After they stopped speaking, James responded: “Brothers,
listen to me! 14 Simeon has reported how God first intervened to take from
the Gentiles a people for His name. 15 And the words of the prophets agree
with this, as it is written:

[16] **After these things I will return**
and rebuild David’s fallen tent.
I will rebuild its ruins
and set it up again,
[17] **so the rest of humanity**
may seek the Lord —
even all the Gentiles
who are called by My name,
declares the Lord who does these things,
[18] **known from long ago.** ,

[19] Therefore, in my judgment, we should not cause difficulties for those
among the Gentiles who turn to God, [20†] but instead we should write to
them to abstain from things polluted by idols, from sexual immorality,
from eating anything that has been strangled, and from blood. [21] For since
ancient times, Moses has had those who proclaim him in every city, and
every Sabbath day he is read aloud in the •synagogues.”

The Letter to the Gentile Believers

[22] Then the apostles and the elders, with the whole church, decided to
select men who were among them and to send them to Antioch with Paul
and Barnabas: Judas, called Barsabbas, and Silas, both leading men among
the brothers. [23] They wrote this letter to be delivered by them: [A]

From the apostles and the elders, your brothers,
To the brothers among the Gentiles in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia:
Greetings.
[24] Because we have heard that some without our authorization
went out from us and troubled you with their words and unsettled
your hearts, [25] we have unanimously decided to select men and
send them to you along with our dearly loved Barnabas and Paul,
[26] who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus
Christ. [27] Therefore we have sent Judas and Silas, who will
personally report the same things by word of mouth. [B] [28†] For it
was the Holy Spirit’s decision — and ours — to put no greater

burden on you than these necessary things: [29] that you abstain
from food offered to idols, from blood, from eating anything that
has been strangled, and from sexual immorality. You will do well
if you keep yourselves from these things.
Farewell.

The Outcome of the Jerusalem Letter

[30] Then, being sent off, they went down to Antioch, and after gathering
the assembly, they delivered the letter. [31] When they read it, they rejoiced
because of its encouragement. [32] Both Judas and Silas, who were also
prophets themselves, encouraged the brothers and strengthened them with a
long message. [33] After spending some time there, they were sent back in
peace by the brothers to those who had sent them. [35] But Paul and
Barnabas, along with many others, remained in Antioch teaching and
proclaiming the message of the Lord.

Paul and Barnabas Part Company

36[†] After some time had passed, Paul said to Barnabas, "Let's go back
and visit the brothers in every town where we have preached the message
of the Lord and see how they're doing." 37 Barnabas wanted to take along
John Mark. [C] 38 But Paul did not think it appropriate to take along this man
who had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not gone on with them to the
work. 39 There was such a sharp disagreement that they parted company,
and Barnabas took Mark with him and sailed off to Cyprus. 40 Then Paul
chose Silas and departed, after being commended to the grace of the Lord
by the brothers. 41 He traveled through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the
churches.

Paul Selects Timothy

16 [†]Then he went on to Derbe and Lystra, where there was a disciple
named Timothy, the son of a believing Jewish woman, but his father
was a Greek. 2 The brothers at Lystra and Iconium spoke highly of him.
3 Paul wanted Timothy [A] to go with him, so he took him and circumcised
him because of the Jews who were in those places, since they all knew that
his father was a Greek. 4 As they traveled through the towns, they delivered
the decisions reached by the apostles and elders at Jerusalem for them to
observe. 5 So the churches were strengthened in the faith and increased in
number daily.

Evangelization of Europe

6[†] They went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia and were
prevented by the Holy Spirit from speaking the message in •Asia. 7 When
they came to Mysia, they tried to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus
did not allow them. 8 So, bypassing Mysia, they came down to Troas.
9 During the night a vision appeared to Paul: A Macedonian man was
standing and pleading with him, “Cross over to Macedonia and help us! ”
10[†] After he had seen the vision, we immediately made efforts to set out for
Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to evangelize them.

Lydia’s Conversion

11 Then, setting sail from Troas, we ran a straight course to Samothrace,
the next day to Neapolis, 12[†] and from there to Philippi, a Roman colony,
which is a leading city of that district of Macedonia. We stayed in that city
for a number of days. 13[†] On the Sabbath day we went outside the city gate
by the river, where we thought there was a place of prayer. We sat down and
spoke to the women gathered there. 14[†] A woman named Lydia, a dealer in
purple cloth from the city of Thyatira, who worshiped God, was listening.
The Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was spoken by Paul.
15[†] After she and her household were baptized, she urged us, “If you
consider me a believer in the Lord, come and stay at my house.” And she
persuaded us.

Paul and Silas in Prison

[16] Once, as we were on our way to prayer, a •slave girl met us who had a
spirit of prediction. [B], She made a large profit for her owners by fortune-
telling. [17†] As she followed Paul and us she cried out, “These men, who are
proclaiming to you the way of salvation, are the slaves of the Most High
God.” [18] And she did this for many days.

But Paul was greatly aggravated and turning to the spirit, said, “I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her! ” And it came out right away. [C]

[19] When her owners saw that their hope of profit was gone, they seized
Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace to the authorities.
[20] Bringing them before the chief magistrates, they said, “These men are
seriously disturbing our city. They are Jews [21†] and are promoting customs
that are not legal for us as Romans to adopt or practice.”

[22] Then the mob joined in the attack against them, and the chief
magistrates stripped off their clothes and ordered them to be beaten with
rods. [23] After they had inflicted many blows on them, they threw them in
jail, ordering the jailer to keep them securely guarded. [24] Receiving such an
order, he put them into the inner prison and secured their feet in the stocks.

A Midnight Deliverance

[25] About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to
God, and the prisoners were listening to them. [26] Suddenly there was such a
violent earthquake that the foundations of the jail were shaken, and
immediately all the doors were opened, and everyone’s chains came loose.
[27†] When the jailer woke up and saw the doors of the prison open, he drew
his sword and was going to kill himself, since he thought the prisoners had
escaped.

[28] But Paul called out in a loud voice, “Don’t harm yourself, because all
of us are here! ”

[29] Then the jailer called for lights, rushed in, and fell down trembling
before Paul and Silas. [30] Then he escorted them out and said, “Sirs, what
must I do to be saved? ”

[31] So they said, “Believe on the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved — you
and your household.” [32] Then they spoke the message of the Lord to him
along with everyone in his house. [33] He took them the same hour of the
night and washed their wounds. Right away he and all his family were
baptized. [34] He brought them into his house, set a meal before them, and
rejoiced because he had believed God with his entire household.

An Official Apology

[35]† When daylight came, the chief magistrates sent the police to say,
“Release those men! ”

[36] The jailer reported these words to Paul: “The magistrates have sent
orders for you to be released. So come out now and go in peace.”

[37]† But Paul said to them, “They beat us in public without a trial,
although we are Roman citizens, and threw us in jail. And now are they
going to smuggle us out secretly? Certainly not! On the contrary, let them
come themselves and escort us out! ”

[38] Then the police reported these words to the magistrates. They were
afraid when they heard that Paul and Silas were Roman citizens. [39] So they
came and apologized to them, and escorting them out, they urged them to
leave town. [40] After leaving the jail, they came to Lydia’s house where they
saw and encouraged the brothers, and departed.

A Short Ministry in Thessalonica

17 Then they traveled through Amphipolis and Apollonia and came to
Thessalonica, where there was a Jewish •synagogue. 2 As usual, Paul
went to the synagogue, and on three Sabbath days reasoned with them from
the Scriptures, 3 explaining and showing that the •Messiah had to suffer
and rise from the dead: “This Jesus I am proclaiming to you is the
Messiah.” 4 Then some of them were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas,
including a great number of God-fearing Greeks, as well as a number [A] of
the leading women.

Riot in the City

5 But the Jews became jealous, and they brought together some
scoundrels from the marketplace, formed a mob, and started a riot in the
city. Attacking Jason’s house, they searched for them to bring them out to
the public assembly. 6† When they did not find them, they dragged Jason
and some of the brothers before the city officials, shouting, “These men
who have turned the world upside down have come here too, 7† and Jason
has received them as guests! They are all acting contrary to Caesar’s
decrees, saying that there is another king — Jesus! ” 8 The Jews stirred up
the crowd and the city officials who heard these things. 9 So taking a
security bond from Jason and the others, they released them.

The Bereans Search the Scriptures

10 As soon as it was night, the brothers sent Paul and Silas off to Berea.
On arrival, they went into the synagogue of the Jews. 11 The people here
were more open-minded than those in Thessalonica, since they welcomed
the message with eagerness and examined the Scriptures daily to see if
these things were so. 12 Consequently, many of them believed, including a
number of the prominent Greek women as well as men. 13 But when the
Jews from Thessalonica found out that God’s message had been proclaimed
by Paul at Berea, they came there too, agitating and disturbing the crowds.
14 Then the brothers immediately sent Paul away to go to the sea, but Silas
and Timothy stayed on there. 15 Those who escorted Paul brought him as

far as Athens, and after receiving instructions for Silas and Timothy to come to him as quickly as possible, they departed.

Paul in Athens

16† While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, his spirit was troubled within him when he saw that the city was full of idols. 17 So he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and with those who worshiped God and in the marketplace every day with those who happened to be there. 18† Then also, some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers argued with him. Some said, “What is this pseudo-intellectual [B] trying to say? ”

Others replied, “He seems to be a preacher of foreign deities” — because he was telling the good news about Jesus and the Resurrection.

19† They took him and brought him to the Areopagus, [C] and said, “May we learn about this new teaching you’re speaking of? 20 For what you say sounds strange to us, and we want to know what these ideas mean.” 21 Now all the Athenians and the foreigners residing there spent their time on nothing else but telling or hearing something new.

The Areopagus Address

22† Then Paul stood in the middle of the Areopagus and said: “Men of Athens! I see that you are extremely religious in every respect. 23† For as I was passing through and observing the objects of your worship, I even found an altar on which was inscribed:

TO AN UNKNOWN GOD.

Therefore, what you worship in ignorance, this I proclaim to you. 24 The God who made the world and everything in it — He is Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in shrines made by hands. 25 Neither is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives everyone life and breath and all things. 26 From one man He has made every nationality to live over the whole earth and has determined their

appointed times and the boundaries of where they live. [27†] He did this so
they might seek God, and perhaps they might reach out and find Him,
though He is not far from each one of us. [28] For in Him we live and move
and exist, as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we are also His
offspring.' [29] Being God's offspring then, we shouldn't think that the divine
nature is like gold or silver or stone, an image fashioned by human art and
imagination.

[30] "Therefore, having overlooked the times of ignorance, God now
commands all people everywhere to repent, [31] because He has set a day
when He is going to judge the world in righteousness by the Man He has
appointed. He has provided proof of this to everyone by raising Him from
the dead."

ARTICLE

How Should a Christian Relate to Those in Non-Christian
Movements and Religions? ⇒

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[32] When they heard about resurrection of the dead, some began to
ridicule him. But others said, "We'd like to hear from you again about this."
[33] Then Paul left their presence. [34†] However, some men joined him and
believed, including Dionysius the Areopagite, a woman named Damaris,
and others with them.

Founding the Corinthian Church

18 After this, he left Athens and went to Corinth, [2†] where he found a
Jewish man named Aquila, a native of Pontus, who had recently
come from Italy with his wife Priscilla because Claudius had ordered all
the Jews to leave Rome. Paul came to them, [3†] and being of the same
occupation, stayed with them and worked, for they were tentmakers [A] by
trade. [4†] He reasoned in the •synagogue every Sabbath and tried to
persuade both Jews and Greeks.

[5] When Silas and Timothy came down from Macedonia, Paul was
occupied with preaching the message and solemnly testified to the Jews
that Jesus is the •Messiah. [6] But when they resisted and blasphemed, he
shook his robe and told them, "Your blood is on your own heads! I am
innocent. [B] From now on I will go to the Gentiles." [7] So he left there and
went to the house of a man named Titius Justus, a worshiper of God, whose
house was next door to the synagogue. [8] Crispus, the leader of the
synagogue, believed the Lord, along with his whole household. Many of
the Corinthians, when they heard, believed and were baptized.

[9] Then the Lord said to Paul in a night vision, "Don't be afraid, but keep
on speaking and don't be silent. [10] For I am with you, and no one will lay a
hand on you to hurt you, because I have many people in this city." [11] And
he stayed there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among
them.

[12†] While Gallio was •proconsul of Achaia, the Jews made a united attack
against Paul and brought him to the judge's bench. [13] "This man," they
said, "persuades people to worship God contrary to the law! "

[14] As Paul was about to open his mouth, Gallio said to the Jews, "If it
were a matter of a crime or of moral evil, it would be reasonable for me to
put up with you Jews. [15] But if these are questions about words, names, and
your own law, see to it yourselves. I don't want to be a judge of such
things." [16] So he drove them from the judge's bench. [17] Then they all
seized Sosthenes, the leader of the synagogue, and beat him in front of the
judge's bench. But none of these things concerned Gallio.

The Return Trip to Antioch

18[†] So Paul, having stayed on for many days, said good-bye to the
brothers and sailed away to Syria. Priscilla and Aquila were with him. He
shaved his head at Cenchreae because he had taken a vow. 19[†] When they
reached Ephesus he left them there, but he himself entered the synagogue
and engaged in discussion with [C] the Jews. 20 And though they asked him to
stay for a longer time, he declined, 21 but he said good-bye and stated, “I’ll
come back to you again, if God wills.” Then he set sail from Ephesus.

22[†] On landing at Caesarea, he went up and greeted the church and went
down to Antioch. 23 And after spending some time there, he set out,
traveling through one place after another in the Galatian territory and
Phrygia, strengthening all the disciples.

The Eloquent Apollos

24[†] A Jew named Apollos, a native Alexandrian, an eloquent man who
was powerful in the use of the Scriptures, arrived in Ephesus. 25 This man
had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, [D] he
spoke and taught the things about Jesus accurately, although he knew only
John’s baptism. 26 He began to speak boldly in the synagogue. After
Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him home [E] and explained the
way of God to him more accurately. 27 When he wanted to cross over to
Achaia, the brothers wrote to the disciples urging them to welcome him.
After he arrived, he greatly helped those who had believed through grace.
28 For he vigorously refuted the Jews in public, demonstrating through the
Scriptures that Jesus is the Messiah.

Twelve Disciples of John the Baptist

19 While Apollos was in Corinth, Paul traveled through the interior regions and came to Ephesus. He found some disciples [2] and asked them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed? ”

“No,” they told him, “we haven’t even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.”

[3] “Then what baptism were you baptized with? ” he asked them.

“With John’s baptism,” they replied.

[4] Paul said, “John baptized with a baptism of repentance, telling the people that they should believe in the One who would come after him, that is, in Jesus.”

[5] When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.
[6] And when Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them,
and they began to speak in other •languages and to prophesy. [7] Now there
were about 12 men in all.

In the Lecture Hall of Tyrannus

[8] Then he entered the •synagogue and spoke boldly over a period of three
months, engaging in discussion and trying to persuade them about the
things of the kingdom of God. [9†] But when some became hardened and
would not believe, slandering the Way in front of the crowd, he withdrew
from them and met separately with the disciples, conducting discussions
every day in the lecture hall of Tyrannus. [10†] And this went on for two
years, so that all the inhabitants of •Asia, both Jews and Greeks, heard the
message about the Lord.

Demonism Defeated at Ephesus

[11†] God was performing extraordinary miracles by Paul’s hands, [12] so
that even facecloths or work aprons [A] that had touched his skin were brought to the sick, and the diseases left them, and the evil spirits came out of them.

[13]† Then some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists attempted to pronounce
the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, saying, "I
command you by the Jesus that Paul preaches! " [14] Seven sons of Sceva, a
Jewish •chief priest, were doing this. [15] The evil spirit answered them, "I
know Jesus, and I recognize Paul — but who are you? " [16] Then the man
who had the evil spirit leaped on them, overpowered them all, and prevailed
against them, so that they ran out of that house naked and wounded. [17] This
became known to everyone who lived in Ephesus, both Jews and Greeks.
Then fear fell on all of them, and the name of the Lord Jesus was
magnified. [18] And many who had become believers came confessing and
disclosing their practices, [19]† while many of those who had practiced magic
collected their books and burned them in front of everyone. So they
calculated their value and found it to be 50,000 pieces of silver. [20] In this
way the Lord's message flourished and prevailed.

TWISTED SCRIPTURE

Acts 19:19

God forbids all forms of occult arts or enchantments (see Lv 19:26; Dt 18:9-12; Is 47:12-14). The appropriate response of those converted out of occultism is to rid themselves of all occult paraphernalia.

The Riot in Ephesus

[21]† When these events were over, Paul resolved in the Spirit to pass
through Macedonia and Achaia and go to Jerusalem. "After I've been
there," he said, "I must see Rome as well! " [22]† So after sending two of
those who assisted him, Timothy and Erastus, to Macedonia, he himself
stayed in Asia for a while.

23 During that time there was a major [B] disturbance about the Way.
24[†] For a person named Demetrius, a silversmith who made silver shrines of
Artemis, provided a great deal of [C] business for the craftsmen. 25 When he
had assembled them, as well as the workers engaged in this type of
business, he said: “Men, you know that our prosperity is derived from this
business. 26 You both see and hear that not only in Ephesus, but in almost
all of Asia, this man Paul has persuaded and misled a considerable number
of people by saying that gods made by hand are not gods! 27 So not only do
we run a risk that our business may be discredited, but also that the temple
of the great goddess Artemis may be despised and her magnificence come
to the verge of ruin — the very one all of Asia and the world adore.”

28 When they had heard this, they were filled with rage and began to cry
out, “Great is Artemis of the Ephesians! ” 29[†] So the city was filled with
confusion, and they rushed all together into the amphitheater, dragging
along Gaius and Aristarchus, Macedonians who were Paul’s traveling
companions. 30 Though Paul wanted to go in before the people, the
disciples did not let him. 31 Even some of the provincial officials of Asia,
who were his friends, sent word to him, pleading with him not to take a
chance by going [D] into the amphitheater. 32 Meanwhile, some were shouting
one thing and some another, because the assembly was in confusion, and
most of them did not know why they had come together. 33[†] Then some of
the crowd gave Alexander advice when the Jews pushed him to the front.
So motioning with his hand, Alexander wanted to make his defense to the
people. 34 But when they recognized that he was a Jew, a united cry went
up from all of them for about two hours: “Great is Artemis of the
Ephesians! ”

35[†] However, when the city clerk had calmed the crowd down, he said,
“Men of Ephesus! What man is there who doesn’t know that the city of the
Ephesians is the temple guardian of the great Artemis, and of the image
that fell from heaven? 36 Therefore, since these things are undeniable, you
must keep calm and not do anything rash. 37 For you have brought these
men here who are not temple robbers or blasphemers of our goddess. 38 So
if Demetrius and the craftsmen who are with him have a case against

anyone, the courts are in session, and there are •proconsuls. Let them bring charges against one another. [39] But if you want something else, it must be decided in a legal assembly. [40]† In fact, we run a risk of being charged with rioting for what happened today, since there is no •justification that we can give as a reason for this disorderly gathering.” [41] After saying this, he dismissed the assembly.

Paul in Macedonia

20 After the uproar was over, Paul sent for the disciples, encouraged
them, and after saying good-bye, departed to go to Macedonia. [2] And
when he had passed through those areas and exhorted them at length, he
came to Greece [3†] and stayed three months. When he was about to set sail
for Syria, a plot was devised against him by the Jews, so a decision was
made to go back through Macedonia. [4] He was accompanied by Sopater
son of Pyrrhus from Berea, Aristarchus and Secundus from Thessalonica,
Gaius from Derbe, Timothy, and Tychicus and Trophimus from •Asia.
[5†] These men went on ahead and waited for us in Troas, [6] but we sailed
away from Philippi after the days of •Unleavened Bread. In five days we
reached them at Troas, where we spent seven days.

Eutychus Revived at Troas

[7] On the first day of the week, we assembled to break bread. Paul spoke
to them, and since he was about to depart the next day, he extended his
message until midnight. [8] There were many lamps in the room upstairs
where we were assembled, [9†] and a young man named Eutychus was sitting
on a window sill and sank into a deep sleep as Paul kept on speaking. When
he was overcome by sleep, he fell down from the third story and was picked
up dead. [10] But Paul went down, fell on him, embraced him, and said,
“Don’t be alarmed, for his •life is in him! ” [11] After going upstairs,
breaking the bread, and eating, Paul conversed a considerable time until
dawn. Then he left. [12] They brought the boy home alive and were greatly
comforted.

TWISTED SCRIPTURE

Acts 20:7

The Churches of Christ believe this verse sets the pattern for partaking of the Lord's Supper every Sunday. But Acts 2:46 indicates that the first Christians came together daily to break bread. This is not a matter of

heresy. We just cannot conclude from Ac 20:7 that believers must break bread weekly."

From Troas to Miletus

13 Then we went on ahead to the ship and sailed for Assos, intending to
take Paul on board there. For these were his instructions, since he himself
was going by land. 14 When he met us at Assos, we took him on board and
came to Mitylene. 15 Sailing from there, the next day we arrived off Chios.
The following day we crossed over to Samos, and the day after, we came to
Miletus. 16† For Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus so he would not have
to spend time in Asia, because he was hurrying to be in Jerusalem, if
possible, for the day of Pentecost.

Farewell Address to the Ephesian Elders

17† Now from Miletus, he sent to Ephesus and called for the elders of the
church. 18† And when they came to him, he said to them: “You know, from
the first day I set foot in Asia, how I was with you the whole time —
19 serving the Lord with all humility, with tears, and with the trials that
came to me through the plots of the Jews — 20 and that I did not shrink
back from proclaiming to you anything that was profitable or from teaching
it to you in public and from house to house. 21 I testified to both Jews and
Greeks about repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus.

22 “And now I am on my way to Jerusalem, bound in my spirit, [A] not
knowing what I will encounter there, 23 except that in town after town the
Holy Spirit testifies to me that chains and afflictions are waiting for me.
24 But I count my life of no value to myself, so that I may finish my course
and the ministry I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of
God’s grace.

25† “And now I know that none of you will ever see my face
again — everyone I went about preaching the kingdom to. 26 Therefore I
testify to you this day that I am innocent [B] of everyone’s blood, 27 for I did

not shrink back from declaring to you the whole plan of God. [28†] Be on
guard for yourselves and for all the flock that the Holy Spirit has appointed
you to as •overseers, to shepherd the church of God, which He purchased
with His own blood. [29] I know that after my departure savage wolves will
come in among you, not sparing the flock. [30] And men will rise up from
your own number with deviant doctrines to lure the disciples into following
them. [31] Therefore be on the alert, remembering that night and day for
three years I did not stop warning each one of you with tears.

[32] "And now I commit you to God and to the message of His grace,
which is able to build you up and to give you an inheritance among all who
are •sanctified. [33] I have not coveted anyone's silver or gold or clothing.
[34] You yourselves know that these hands have provided for my needs and
for those who were with me. [35†] In every way I've shown you that by
laboring like this, it is necessary to help the weak and to keep in mind the
words of the Lord Jesus, for He said, 'It is more blessed to give than to
receive.'"

[36] After he said this, he knelt down and prayed with all of them. [37] There
was a great deal of weeping by everyone. They embraced Paul and kissed
him, [38] grieving most of all over his statement that they would never see his
face again. Then they escorted him to the ship.

Warnings on the Journey to Jerusalem

21 †After we tore ourselves away from them and set sail, we came by a
direct route to Cos, the next day to Rhodes, and from there to Patara.
2 Finding a ship crossing over to Phoenicia, we boarded and set sail. 3 After
we sighted Cyprus, leaving it on the left, we sailed on to Syria and arrived
at Tyre, because the ship was to unload its cargo there. 4† So we found some
disciples and stayed there seven days. Through the Spirit they told Paul not
to go to Jerusalem. 5 When our days there were over, we left to continue
our journey, while all of them, with their wives and children, escorted us
out of the city. After kneeling down on the beach to pray, 6 we said good-
bye to one another. Then we boarded the ship, and they returned home.

7 When we completed our voyage from Tyre, we reached Ptolemais,
where we greeted the brothers and stayed with them one day. 8† The next
day we left and came to Caesarea, where we entered the house of Philip the
evangelist, who was one of the Seven, and stayed with him. 9 This man had
four virgin daughters who prophesied.

10† While we were staying there many days, a prophet named Agabus
came down from Judea. 11 He came to us, took Paul's belt, tied his own feet
and hands, and said, "This is what the Holy Spirit says: 'In this way the
Jews in Jerusalem will bind the man who owns this belt and deliver him
into Gentile hands.' " 12 When we heard this, both we and the local people
begged him not to go up to Jerusalem.

13 Then Paul replied, "What are you doing, weeping and breaking my
heart? For I am ready not only to be bound but also to die in Jerusalem for
the name of the Lord Jesus."

14 Since he would not be persuaded, we stopped talking and simply said,
"The Lord's will be done! "

Conflict over the Gentile Mission

15 After these days we got ready and went up to Jerusalem. 16 Some of
the disciples from Caesarea also went with us and brought us to Mnason, a
Cypriot and an early disciple, with whom we were to stay.

17 When we reached Jerusalem, the brothers welcomed us gladly. 18† The
following day Paul went in with us to James, and all the elders were
present. 19† After greeting them, he related in detail what God did among
the Gentiles through his ministry.

20 When they heard it, they glorified God and said, “You see, brother,
how many thousands of Jews there are who have believed, and they are all
zealous for the law. 21 But they have been told about you that you teach all
the Jews who are among the Gentiles to abandon Moses, by telling them not
to circumcise their children or to walk in our customs. 22 So what is to be
done? They will certainly hear that you’ve come. 23 Therefore do what we
tell you: We have four men who have obligated themselves with a vow.
24 Take these men, purify yourself along with them, and pay for them to get
their heads shaved. Then everyone will know that what they were told about
you amounts to nothing, but that you yourself are also careful about
observing the law. 25 With regard to the Gentiles who have believed, we
have written a letter containing our decision that they should keep
themselves from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from what is
strangled, and from sexual immorality.”

The Riot in the Temple Complex

26 Then the next day, Paul took the men, having purified himself along
with them, and entered the temple, announcing the completion of the
purification days when the offering for each of them would be made. 27 As
the seven days were about to end, the Jews from •Asia saw him in the
•temple complex, stirred up the whole crowd, and seized him, 28† shouting,
“Men of Israel, help! This is the man who teaches everyone everywhere
against our people, our law, and this place. What’s more, he also brought
Greeks into the temple and has profaned this holy place.” 29 For they had
previously seen Trophimus the Ephesian in the city with him, and they
supposed that Paul had brought him into the temple complex.

30 The whole city was stirred up, and the people rushed together. They
seized Paul, dragged him out of the temple complex, and at once the gates

were shut. [31†] As they were trying to kill him, word went up to the
commander of the •regiment that all Jerusalem was in chaos. [32] Taking
along soldiers and •centurions, he immediately ran down to them. Seeing
the commander and the soldiers, they stopped beating Paul. [33] Then the
commander came up, took him into custody, and ordered him to be bound
with two chains. He asked who he was and what he had done. [34] Some in
the mob were shouting one thing and some another. Since he was not able
to get reliable information because of the uproar, he ordered him to be taken
into the barracks. [35] When Paul got to the steps, he had to be carried by the
soldiers because of the mob's violence, [36] for the mass of people followed,
yelling, "Take him away! "

Paul's Defense before the Jerusalem Mob

[37†] As he was about to be brought into the barracks, Paul said to the
commander, "Am I allowed to say something to you? "

He replied, "Do you know Greek? [38] Aren't you the Egyptian who raised
a rebellion some time ago and led 4,000 Assassins [A] into the wilderness? "

[39†] Paul said, "I am a Jewish man from Tarsus of Cilicia, a citizen of an
important city. [B] Now I ask you, let me speak to the people."

[40] After he had given permission, Paul stood on the steps and motioned
with his hand to the people. When there was a great hush, he addressed
them in the •Hebrew language:

22 “Brothers and fathers, listen now to my defense before you.” 2 When
they heard that he was addressing them in the Hebrew language, they
became even quieter. 3† He continued, “I am a Jewish man, born in Tarsus
of Cilicia but brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel and educated
according to the strict view of our patriarchal law. Being zealous for God,
just as all of you are today, 4 I persecuted this Way to the death, binding
and putting both men and women in jail, 5 as both the high priest and the
whole council of elders can testify about me. After I received letters from
them to the brothers, I traveled to Damascus to bring those who were
prisoners there to be punished in Jerusalem.

Paul’s Testimony

6 “As I was traveling and near Damascus, about noon an intense light
from heaven suddenly flashed around me. 7 I fell to the ground and heard a
voice saying to me, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? ’

8 “I answered, ‘Who are You, Lord? ’

“He said to me, ‘I am Jesus the •Nazarene, the One you are persecuting! ’
9† Now those who were with me saw the light, but they did not hear the
voice of the One who was speaking to me.

10 “Then I said, ‘What should I do, Lord? ’

“And the Lord told me, ‘Get up and go into Damascus, and there you will
be told about everything that is assigned for you to do.’

11 “Since I couldn’t see because of the brightness of that light, I was led
by the hand by those who were with me, and came into Damascus.
12† Someone named Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a
good reputation with all the Jews residing there, 13 came and stood by me
and said, ‘Brother Saul, regain your sight.’ And in that very hour I looked
up and saw him. 14 Then he said, ‘The God of our fathers has appointed
you to know His will, to see the Righteous One, and to hear the sound of
His voice. [A] 15 For you will be a witness for Him to all people of what you

have seen and heard. [16] And now, why delay? Get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins by calling on His name.'

[17] "After I came back to Jerusalem and was praying in the •temple complex, I went into a visionary state [18†] and saw Him telling me, 'Hurry and get out of Jerusalem quickly, because they will not accept your testimony about Me! '

[19] "But I said, 'Lord, they know that in •synagogue after synagogue I had those who believed in You imprisoned and beaten. [20] And when the blood of Your witness Stephen was being shed, I was standing by and approving, and I guarded the clothes of those who killed him.'

[21] "Then He said to me, 'Go, because I will send you far away to the Gentiles.' "

Paul's Roman Protection

[22] They listened to him up to this word. Then they raised their voices, shouting, "Wipe this person off the earth — it's a disgrace for him to live! "

[23] As they were yelling and flinging aside their robes and throwing dust into the air, [24] the commander ordered him to be brought into the barracks, directing that he be examined with the scourge, so he could discover the reason they were shouting against him like this. [25] As they stretched him out for the lash, Paul said to the •centurion standing by, "Is it legal for you to scourge a man who is a Roman citizen and is uncondemned? "

[26] When the centurion heard this, he went and reported to the commander, saying, "What are you going to do? For this man is a Roman citizen."

[27] The commander came and said to him, "Tell me — are you a Roman citizen? "

"Yes," he said.

28† The commander replied, “I bought this citizenship for a large amount of money.”

“But I was born a citizen,” Paul said.

29 Therefore, those who were about to examine him withdrew from him at once. The commander too was alarmed when he realized Paul was a Roman citizen and he had bound him.

Paul before the Sanhedrin

30† The next day, since he wanted to find out exactly why Paul was being accused by the Jews, he released him and instructed the •chief priests and all the •Sanhedrin to convene. Then he brought Paul down and placed him before them.

23 † Paul looked intently at the •Sanhedrin and said, “Brothers, I have
lived my life before God in all good conscience until this day.” 2 But
the high priest Ananias ordered those who were standing next to him to
strike him on the mouth. 3 Then Paul said to him, “God is going to strike
you, you whitewashed wall! You are sitting there judging me according to
the law, and in violation of the law are you ordering me to be struck? ”

4 And those standing nearby said, “Do you dare revile God’s high
priest? ”

5† “I did not know, brothers, that he was the high priest,” replied Paul.
“For it is written, **You must not speak evil of a ruler of your people.**”
6† When Paul realized that one part of them were •Sadducees and the other
part were •Pharisees, he cried out in the Sanhedrin, “Brothers, I am a
Pharisee, a son of Pharisees! I am being judged because of the hope of the
resurrection of the dead! ” 7 When he said this, a dispute broke out between
the Pharisees and the Sadducees, and the assembly was divided. 8† For the
Sadducees say there is no resurrection, and no angel or spirit, but the
Pharisees affirm them all.

9 The shouting grew loud, and some of the •scribes of the Pharisees’
party got up and argued vehemently: “We find nothing evil in this man.
What if a spirit or an angel has spoken to him? ” 10 When the dispute
became violent, the commander feared that Paul might be torn apart by
them and ordered the troops to go down, rescue him from them, and bring
him into the barracks.

The Plot against Paul

11 The following night, the Lord stood by him and said, “Have courage!
For as you have testified about Me in Jerusalem, so you must also testify in
Rome.”

12 When it was day, the Jews formed a conspiracy and bound themselves
under a curse: neither to eat nor to drink until they had killed Paul. 13 There
were more than 40 who had formed this plot. 14 These men went to the

•chief priests and elders and said, “We have bound ourselves under a solemn curse that we won’t eat anything until we have killed Paul. 15 So now you, along with the Sanhedrin, make a request to the commander that he bring him down to you as if you were going to investigate his case more thoroughly. However, before he gets near, we are ready to kill him.”

16† But the son of Paul’s sister, hearing about their ambush, came and entered the barracks and reported it to Paul. 17 Then Paul called one of the •centurions and said, “Take this young man to the commander, because he has something to report to him.”

18 So he took him, brought him to the commander, and said, “The prisoner Paul called me and asked me to bring this young man to you, because he has something to tell you.”

19 Then the commander took him by the hand, led him aside, and inquired privately, “What is it you have to report to me? ”

20 “The Jews,” he said, “have agreed to ask you to bring Paul down to the Sanhedrin tomorrow, as though they are going to hold a somewhat more careful inquiry about him. 21 Don’t let them persuade you, because there are more than 40 of them arranging to ambush him, men who have bound themselves under a curse not to eat or drink until they kill him. Now they are ready, waiting for a commitment from you.”

22 So the commander dismissed the young man and instructed him, “Don’t tell anyone that you have informed me about this.”

To Caesarea by Night

23† He summoned two of his centurions and said, “Get 200 soldiers ready with 70 cavalry and 200 spearmen to go to Caesarea at nine tonight. [A],
24† Also provide mounts so they can put Paul on them and bring him safely to Felix the governor.”

25† He wrote a letter of this kind:

[26] Claudius Lysias,
To the most excellent governor Felix:
Greetings.
[27]† When this man had been seized by the Jews and was about to
be killed by them, I arrived with my troops and rescued him
because I learned that he is a Roman citizen. [28] Wanting to know
the charge they were accusing him of, I brought him down before
their Sanhedrin. [29] I found out that the accusations were about
disputed matters in their law, and that there was no charge that
merited death or chains. [30] When I was informed that there was a
plot against the man, I sent him to you right away. I also ordered
his accusers to state their case against him in your presence.

[31]† Therefore, the soldiers took Paul during the night and brought him to
Antipatris as they were ordered. [32] The next day, they returned to the
barracks, allowing the cavalry to go on with him. [33] When these men
entered Caesarea and delivered the letter to the governor, they also
presented Paul to him. [34] After he read it, he asked what province he was
from. So when he learned he was from Cilicia, [35]† he said, "I will give you
a hearing whenever your accusers get here too." And he ordered that he be
kept under guard in •Herod's •palace.

The Accusation against Paul

24 †After five days Ananias the high priest came down with some elders
and a lawyer named Tertullus. These men presented their case against
Paul to the governor. 2 When he was called in, Tertullus began to accuse
him and said: “Since we enjoy great peace because of you, and reforms are
taking place for the benefit of this nation by your foresight, 3 we
acknowledge this in every way and everywhere, most excellent Felix, with
utmost gratitude. 4 However, so that I will not burden you any further, I beg
you in your graciousness to give us a brief hearing. 5† For we have found
this man to be a plague, an agitator among all the Jews throughout the
Roman world, and a ringleader of the sect of the •Nazarenes! 6 He even
tried to desecrate the temple, so we apprehended him [and wanted to judge
him according to our law. 7 But Lysias the commander came and took him
from our hands with great force, 8 commanding his accusers to come to
you.] By examining him yourself you will be able to discern all these
things we are accusing him of.” 9 The Jews also joined in the attack,
alleging that these things were so.

Paul’s Defense before Felix

10 When the governor motioned to him to speak, Paul replied: “Because I
know you have been a judge of this nation for many years, I am glad to
offer my defense in what concerns me. 11† You are able to determine that it
is no more than 12 days since I went up to worship in Jerusalem. 12 They
didn’t find me disputing with anyone or causing a disturbance among the
crowd, either in the •temple complex or in the •synagogues or anywhere in
the city. 13 Neither can they provide evidence to you of what they now
bring against me. 14† But I confess this to you: I worship my fathers’ God
according to the Way, which they call a sect, believing all the things that
are written in the Law and in the Prophets. 15 And I have a hope in God,
which these men themselves also accept, that there is going to be a
resurrection, both of the righteous and the unrighteous. 16 I always do my
best to have a clear conscience toward God and men. 17† After many years,
I came to bring charitable gifts and offerings to my nation, 18 and while I
was doing this, some Jews from •Asia found me ritually purified in the

temple, without a crowd and without any uproar. [19] It is they who ought to
be here before you to bring charges, if they have anything against me.
[20] Either let these men here state what wrongdoing they found in me when I
stood before the •Sanhedrin, [21] or about this one statement I cried out while
standing among them, 'Today I am being judged before you concerning the
resurrection of the dead.' "

The Verdict Postponed

[22†] Since Felix was accurately informed about the Way, he adjourned the
hearing, saying, "When Lysias the commander comes down, I will decide
your case." [23] He ordered that the •centurion keep Paul [A] under guard,
though he could have some freedom, and that he should not prevent any of
his friends from serving him.

[24] After some days, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, who was
Jewish, he sent for Paul and listened to him on the subject of faith in Christ
Jesus. [25†] Now as he spoke about righteousness, self-control, and the
judgment to come, Felix became afraid and replied, "Leave for now, but
when I find time I'll call for you." [26†] At the same time he was also hoping
that money would be given to him by Paul. For this reason he sent for him
quite often and conversed with him.

[27†] After two years had passed, Felix received a successor, Porcius
Festus, and because he wished to do a favor for the Jews, Felix left Paul in
prison.

Appeal to Caesar

25 †Three days after Festus arrived in the province, he went up to
Jerusalem from Caesarea. 2 Then the •chief priests and the leaders of
the Jews presented their case against Paul to him; and they appealed,
3 asking him to do them a favor against Paul, [A] that he might summon him
to Jerusalem. They were preparing an ambush along the road to kill him.
4 However, Festus answered that Paul should be kept at Caesarea, and that
he himself was about to go there shortly. 5 "Therefore," he said, "let the
men of authority among you go down with me and accuse him, if there is
any wrong in this man."

6† When he had spent not more than eight or 10 days among them, he
went down to Caesarea. The next day, seated at the judge's bench, he
commanded Paul to be brought in. 7 When he arrived, the Jews who had
come down from Jerusalem stood around him and brought many serious
charges that they were not able to prove, 8 while Paul made the defense
that, "Neither against the Jewish law, nor against the temple, nor against
Caesar have I sinned at all."

9† Then Festus, wanting to do a favor for the Jews, replied to Paul, "Are
you willing to go up to Jerusalem, there to be tried before me on these
charges? "

10 But Paul said: "I am standing at Caesar's tribunal, where I ought to be
tried. I have done no wrong to the Jews, as even you can see very well. 11 If
then I am doing wrong, or have done anything deserving of death, I do not
refuse to die, but if there is nothing to what these men accuse me of, no one
can give me up to them. I appeal to Caesar! "

12 After Festus conferred with his council, he replied, "You have
appealed to Caesar; to Caesar you will go! "

King Agrippa and Bernice Visit Festus

13† After some days had passed, King Agrippa and Bernice arrived in
Caesarea and paid a courtesy call on Festus. 14 Since they stayed there
many days, Festus presented Paul's case to the king, saying, "There's a man

who was left as a prisoner by Felix. 15 When I was in Jerusalem, the chief
priests and the elders of the Jews presented their case and asked for a
judgment against him. 16 I answered them that it’s not the Romans’ custom
to give any man up before the accused confronts the accusers face to face
and has an opportunity to give a defense concerning the charges.
17 Therefore, when they had assembled here, I did not delay. The next day I
sat at the judge’s bench and ordered the man to be brought in.
18 Concerning him, the accusers stood up and brought no charge of the sort
I was expecting. 19† Instead they had some disagreements with him about
their own religion and about a certain Jesus, a dead man Paul claimed to be
alive. 20 Since I was at a loss in a dispute over such things, I asked him if he
wished to go to Jerusalem and be tried there concerning these matters.
21 But when Paul appealed to be held for trial by the Emperor, I ordered him
to be kept in custody until I could send him to Caesar.”

22 Then Agrippa said to Festus, “I would like to hear the man myself.”

“Tomorrow you will hear him,” he replied.

Paul before Agrippa

23 So the next day, Agrippa and Bernice came with great pomp and
entered the auditorium with the commanders and prominent men of the city.
When Festus gave the command, Paul was brought in. 24 Then Festus said:
“King Agrippa and all men present with us, you see this man about whom
the whole Jewish community has appealed to me, both in Jerusalem and
here, shouting that he should not live any longer. 25† Now I realized that he
had not done anything deserving of death, but when he himself appealed to
the Emperor, I decided to send him. 26 I have nothing definite to write to
my lord about him. Therefore, I have brought him before all of you, and
especially before you, King Agrippa, so that after this examination is over, I
may have something to write. 27 For it seems unreasonable to me to send a
prisoner and not to indicate the charges against him.”

Paul's Defense before Agrippa

26 Agrippa said to Paul, “It is permitted for you to speak for yourself.”

Then Paul stretched out his hand and began his defense: 2 “I consider
myself fortunate, King Agrippa, that today I am going to make a defense
before you about everything I am accused of by the Jews, 3† especially
since you are an expert in all the Jewish customs and controversies.
Therefore I beg you to listen to me patiently.

4 “All the Jews know my way of life from my youth, which was spent
from the beginning among my own nation and in Jerusalem. 5† They had
previously known me for quite some time, if they were willing to testify,
that according to the strictest party of our religion I lived as a •Pharisee.
6 And now I stand on trial for the hope of the promise made by God to our
fathers, 7 the promise our 12 tribes hope to attain as they earnestly serve
Him night and day. King Agrippa, I am being accused by the Jews because
of this hope. 8 Why is it considered incredible by any of you that God
raises the dead? 9 In fact, I myself supposed it was necessary to do many
things in opposition to the name of Jesus the •Nazarene. 10† I actually did
this in Jerusalem, and I locked up many of the •saints in prison, since I had
received authority for that from the •chief priests. When they were put to
death, I cast my vote against them. 11 In all the •synagogues I often tried to
make them blaspheme by punishing them. I even pursued them to foreign
cities since I was greatly enraged at them.

Paul’s Account of His Conversion and Commission

12 “I was traveling to Damascus under these circumstances with
authority and a commission from the chief priests. 13 King Agrippa, while
on the road at midday, I saw a light from heaven brighter than the sun,
shining around me and those traveling with me. 14† We all fell to the
ground, and I heard a voice speaking to me in the •Hebrew language, ‘Saul,
Saul, why are you persecuting Me? It is hard for you to kick against the
goads.’

15 “Then I said, ‘Who are You, Lord? ’

“And the Lord replied: ‘I am Jesus, the One you are persecuting. [16†] But get up and stand on your feet. For I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you as a servant and a witness of what you have seen and of what I will reveal to you. [17] I will rescue you from the people and from the Gentiles. I now send you to them [18] to open their eyes so they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that by faith in Me they may receive forgiveness of sins and a share among those who are •sanctified.’

[19] “Therefore, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision. [20] Instead, I preached to those in Damascus first, and to those in Jerusalem and in all the region of Judea, and to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works worthy of repentance. [21] For this reason the Jews seized me in the •temple complex and were trying to kill me. [22†] To this very day, I have obtained help that comes from God, and I stand and testify to both small and great, saying nothing else than what the prophets and Moses said would take place — [23] that the •Messiah must suffer, and that as the first to rise from the dead, He would proclaim light to our people and to the Gentiles.”

Not Quite Persuaded

[24†] As he was making his defense this way, Festus exclaimed in a loud voice, “You’re out of your mind, Paul! Too much study is driving you mad! ”

[25] But Paul replied, “I’m not out of my mind, most excellent Festus. On the contrary, I’m speaking words of truth and good judgment. [26†] For the king knows about these matters. It is to him I am actually speaking boldly. For I am convinced that none of these things escapes his notice, since this was not done in a corner. [27†] King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know you believe.”

[28†] Then Agrippa said to Paul, “Are you going to persuade me to become a Christian so easily? ”

[29] "I wish before God," replied Paul, "that whether easily or with
difficulty, not only you but all who listen to me today might become as I
am — except for these chains."

[30] So the king, the governor, Bernice, and those sitting with them got up,
[31] and when they had left they talked with each other and said, "This man is
doing nothing that deserves death or chains."

[32]† Then Agrippa said to Festus, "This man could have been released if
he had not appealed to Caesar."

Sailing for Rome

27 [†]When it was decided that we were to sail to Italy, they handed over
Paul and some other prisoners to a •centurion named Julius, of the
Imperial •Regiment. [2†] So when we had boarded a ship of Adramyttium,
we put to sea, intending to sail to ports along the coast of •Asia.
Aristarchus, a Macedonian of Thessalonica, was with us. [3†] The next day
we put in at Sidon, and Julius treated Paul kindly and allowed him to go to
his friends to receive their care. [4] When we had put out to sea from there,
we sailed along the northern coast [A] of Cyprus because the winds were
against us. [5] After sailing through the open sea off Cilicia and Pamphylia,
we reached Myra in Lycia. [6†] There the centurion found an Alexandrian
ship sailing for Italy and put us on board. [7†] Sailing slowly for many days,
we came with difficulty as far as Cnidus. Since the wind did not allow us to
approach it, we sailed along the south side [B] of Crete off Salmone. [8] With
yet more difficulty we sailed along the coast and came to a place called Fair
Havens near the city of Lasea.

Paul's Advice Ignored

[9] By now much time had passed, and the voyage was already dangerous.
Since the Fast was already over, Paul gave his advice [10] and told them,
"Men, I can see that this voyage is headed toward damage and heavy loss,
not only of the cargo and the ship but also of our lives." [11†] But the
centurion paid attention to the captain and the owner of the ship rather than
to what Paul said. [12†] Since the harbor was unsuitable to winter in, the
majority decided to set sail from there, hoping somehow to reach Phoenix, a
harbor on Crete open to the southwest and northwest, and to winter there.

Storm-Tossed Ship

[13] When a gentle south wind sprang up, they thought they had achieved
their purpose. They weighed anchor and sailed along the shore of Crete.
[14] But not long afterward, a fierce wind called the "northeaster" [C] rushed
down from the island. [15] Since the ship was caught and was unable to head
into the wind, we gave way to it and were driven along. [16] After running
under the shelter of a little island called Cauda, [D] we were barely able to get

control of the skiff. [17†] After hoisting it up, they used ropes and tackle and
girded the ship. Then, fearing they would run aground on the Syrtis, they
lowered the drift-anchor, and in this way they were driven along. [18] Because
we were being severely battered by the storm, they began to jettison the
cargo the next day. [19] On the third day, they threw the ship's gear
overboard with their own hands.

[20] For many days neither sun nor stars appeared, and the severe storm
kept raging. Finally all hope that we would be saved was disappearing.
[21] Since many were going without food, Paul stood up among them and
said, "You men should have followed my advice not to sail from Crete and
sustain this damage and loss. [22†] Now I urge you to take courage, because
there will be no loss of any of your lives, but only of the ship. [23] For this
night an angel of the God I belong to and serve stood by me, [24] and said,
'Don't be afraid, Paul. You must stand before Caesar. And, look! God has
graciously given you all those who are sailing with you.' [25] Therefore, take
courage, men, because I believe God that it will be just the way it was told
to me. [26] However, we must run aground on a certain island."

[27†] When the fourteenth night came, we were drifting in the Adriatic
Sea, and in the middle of the night the sailors thought they were
approaching land. [E] [28†] They took a sounding and found it to be 120 feet [F]
deep; when they had sailed a little farther and sounded again, they found it
to be 90 feet [G] deep. [29] Then, fearing we might run aground in some rocky
place, they dropped four anchors from the stern and prayed for daylight to
come.

[30†] Some sailors tried to escape from the ship; they had let down the skiff
into the sea, pretending that they were going to put out anchors from the
bow. [31] Paul said to the centurion and the soldiers, "Unless these men stay
in the ship, you cannot be saved." [32] Then the soldiers cut the ropes holding
the skiff and let it drop away.

[33] When it was about daylight, Paul urged them all to take food, saying,
"Today is the fourteenth day that you have been waiting and going without

food, having eaten nothing. 34 Therefore I urge you to take some food. For
this has to do with your survival, since none of you will lose a hair from
your head." 35† After he said these things and had taken some bread, he
gave thanks to God in the presence of all of them, and when he broke it, he
began to eat. 36 They all became encouraged and took food themselves.
37 In all there were 276 of us on the ship. 38† When they had eaten enough,
they began to lighten the ship by throwing the grain overboard into the sea.

Shipwreck

39 When daylight came, they did not recognize the land but sighted a bay
with a beach. They planned to run the ship ashore if they could. 40 After
casting off the anchors, they left them in the sea, at the same time loosening
the ropes that held the rudders. Then they hoisted the foresail to the wind
and headed for the beach. 41† But they struck a sandbar and ran the ship
aground. The bow jammed fast and remained immovable, while the stern
began to break up by the pounding of the waves.

42† The soldiers' plan was to kill the prisoners so that no one could swim
away and escape. 43 But the centurion kept them from carrying out their
plan because he wanted to save Paul, so he ordered those who could swim
to jump overboard first and get to land. 44† The rest were to follow, some on
planks and some on debris from the ship. In this way, everyone safely
reached the shore.

Malta's Hospitality

28 [†]Once ashore, we then learned that the island was called Malta.
[2] The local people showed us extraordinary kindness, for they lit a
fire and took us all in, since it was raining and cold. [3†] As Paul gathered a
bundle of brushwood and put it on the fire, a viper came out because of the
heat and fastened itself to his hand. [4] When the local people saw the
creature hanging from his hand, they said to one another, "This man is
probably a murderer, and though he has escaped the sea, Justice [A] does not
allow him to live! " [5] However, he shook the creature off into the fire and
suffered no harm. [6†] They expected that he would swell up or suddenly
drop dead. But after they waited a long time and saw nothing unusual
happen to him, they changed their minds and said he was a god.

Ministry in Malta

[7†] Now in the area around that place was an estate belonging to the
leading man of the island, named Publius, who welcomed us and
entertained us hospitably for three days. [8†] Publius's father was in bed
suffering from fever and dysentery. Paul went to him, and praying and
laying his hands on him, he healed him. [9] After this, the rest of those on the
island who had diseases also came and were cured. [10†] So they heaped
many honors on us, and when we sailed, they gave us what we needed.

Rome at Last

[11†] After three months we set sail in an Alexandrian ship that had
wintered at the island, with the Twin Brothers [B] as its figurehead.
[12†] Putting in at Syracuse, we stayed three days. [13†] From there, after
making a circuit along the coast, we reached Rhegium. After one day a
south wind sprang up, and the second day we came to Puteoli. [14†] There we
found believers [C] and were invited to stay with them for seven days.

ARTICLE
What Should a Christian Think About Near-death Experiences? ⇒

And so we came to Rome. [15†] Now the believers [D] from there had heard
the news about us and had come to meet us as far as the Forum of Appius
and the Three Taverns. When Paul saw them, he thanked God and took
courage. [16†] When we entered Rome, Paul was permitted to stay by himself
with the soldier who guarded him.

Paul's First Interview with Roman Jews

[17†] After three days he called together the leaders of the Jews. When they
had gathered he said to them: "Brothers, although I have done nothing
against our people or the customs of our ancestors, I was delivered as a
prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans. [18] After they
examined me, they wanted to release me, since I had not committed a
capital offense. [19] Because the Jews objected, I was compelled to appeal to
Caesar; it was not as though I had any accusation against my nation. [20] For
this reason I've asked to see you and speak to you. In fact, it is for the hope
of Israel that I'm wearing this chain."

[21†] Then they said to him, "We haven't received any letters about you
from Judea. None of the brothers has come and reported or spoken anything
evil about you. [22] But we would like to hear from you what you think. For
concerning this sect, we are aware that it is spoken against everywhere."

The Response to Paul's Message

[23] After arranging a day with him, many came to him at his lodging.
From dawn to dusk he expounded and witnessed about the kingdom of God.
He tried to persuade them concerning Jesus from both the Law of Moses
and the Prophets. [24] Some were persuaded by what he said, but others did
not believe.

[25†] Disagreeing among themselves, they began to leave after Paul made
one statement: "The Holy Spirit correctly spoke through the prophet Isaiah
to your ancestors [26] when He said,

Go to these people and say:

You will listen and listen,
yet never understand;
and you will look and look,
yet never perceive.
[27] **For the hearts of these people**
have grown callous,
their ears are hard of hearing,
and they have shut their eyes;
otherwise they might see with their eyes
and hear with their ears,
understand with their heart,
and be converted,
and I would heal them.

[28] Therefore, let it be known to you that this saving work of God has been
sent to the Gentiles; they will listen! ” [[29] After he said these things, the
Jews departed, while engaging in a prolonged debate among themselves.]

Paul’s Ministry Unhindered

[30]† Then he stayed two whole years in his own rented house. And he
welcomed all who visited him, [31] proclaiming the kingdom of God and
teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with full boldness and
without hindrance.

ROMANS

Introduction to Romans

ROMANS

God’s Good News for Rome

1 Paul, a •slave of Christ Jesus, called as an apostle [A], and singled out for
God's good news — 2 which He promised long ago through His
prophets in the Holy Scriptures — 3 concerning His Son, Jesus Christ our
Lord, who was a descendant of David [B] according to the flesh 4 and who
has been declared to be the powerful Son of God by the resurrection from
the dead according to the Spirit of holiness. [C] 5 We have received grace and
apostleship through Him to bring about [D] the obedience of faith [E] among
all the nations, [F] on behalf of His name, 6† including yourselves who also
belong to Jesus Christ by calling:

7 To all who are in Rome, loved by God, called as •saints.

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul's Desire to Visit Rome

8 First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you because the
news of your faith [G] is being reported in all the world. 9 For God, whom I
serve with my spirit in telling the good news about His Son, is my witness
that I constantly mention you, 10 always asking in my prayers that if it is
somehow in God's will, I may now at last succeed in coming to you. 11 For
I want very much to see you, so I may impart to you some spiritual gift to
strengthen you, 12 that is, to be mutually encouraged by each other's faith,
both yours and mine.

13 Now I want you to know, [H], brothers, that I often planned to come to
you (but was prevented until now) in order that I might have a fruitful
ministry [I] among you, just as among the rest of the Gentiles. 14 I am
obligated both to Greeks and barbarians, [J] both to the wise and the foolish.
15 So I am eager to preach the good news to you also who are in Rome.

The Righteous Will Live by Faith

16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is God's power for
salvation to everyone who believes, first to the Jew, and also to the Greek.

[17]† For in it God's righteousness is revealed from faith to faith, [K] just as it
is written: **The righteous will live by faith.** [L] ,

The Guilt of the Gentile World

[18]† For God's wrath is revealed from heaven against all godlessness and
unrighteousness of people who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth,
[19] since what can be known [M] about God is evident among them, because
God has shown it to them. [20]† For His invisible attributes, that is, His
eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen since the creation of
the world, being understood through what He has made. As a result,
people are without excuse. [21] For though they knew God, they did not
glorify Him as God or show gratitude. Instead, their thinking became
nonsense, and their senseless minds were darkened. [22] Claiming to be wise,
they became fools [23] and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for
images resembling mortal man, birds, four-footed animals, and reptiles.

[24]† Therefore God delivered them over in the cravings of their hearts to
sexual impurity, so that their bodies were degraded among themselves.
[25] They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served
something created instead of the Creator, who is praised forever. •Amen.

TWISTED SCRIPTURE

Romans 1:25

Practitioners of Wicca, also known as neo-pagans, revere the earth as being divine. This type of misdirected worship of creation over Creator was condemned by the Apostle Paul.

From Idolatry to Depravity

26† This is why God delivered them over to degrading passions. For even
their females exchanged natural sexual relations [N] for unnatural ones.
27 The males in the same way also left natural relations [O] with females and
were inflamed in their lust for one another. Males committed shameless acts
with males and received in their own persons [P] the appropriate penalty of
their error.

TWISTED SCRIPTURE

Romans 1:26-27

The Metropolitan Community Church (MCC), founded by Troy Perry, was the first denomination started for homosexuals. After studying the Bible, Perry concluded that Christianity and homosexuality were compatible. Yet these verses clearly show that homosexuality is not "natural" but instead is "unnatural" and "shameless." Paul wrote in 1 Co 6:9 that practicing homosexuals, along with sexually immoral people, idolaters, adulterers, male prostitutes, thieves, greedy people, drunkards, revilers, or swindlers will not enter the kingdom of God. Paul went on to say, "Some of you were like this; but you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God" (1 Co 6:11).

28 And because they did not think it worthwhile to acknowledge God,
God delivered them over to a worthless mind to do what is morally wrong.
29 They are filled with all unrighteousness, evil, greed, and wickedness.
They are full of envy, murder, quarrels, deceit, and malice. They are
gossips,
30 slanderers, God-haters, arrogant, proud, boastful, inventors of
evil, disobedient to parents,
31 undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, and
unmerciful.
32 Although they know full well God's just sentence — that
those who practice such things deserve to die [Q] — they not only do them,
but even applaud [R] others who practice them.

God’s Righteous Judgment

2 Therefore, any one of you [A], who judges is without excuse. For when
you judge another, you condemn yourself, since you, the judge, do the
same things. 2 We know that God's judgment on those who do such things
is based on the truth. 3 Do you really think — anyone of you who judges
those who do such things yet do the same — that you will escape God's
judgment? 4 Or do you despise the riches of His kindness, restraint, and
patience, not recognizing [B] that God's kindness is intended to lead you to
repentance? 5 But because of your hardness and unrepentant heart you are
storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath, when God's righteous
judgment is revealed. 6[†] **He will repay each one according to his works**:
7 eternal life to those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor,
and immortality; 8 but wrath and indignation to those who are self-seeking
and disobey the truth but are obeying unrighteousness; 9 affliction and
distress for every human being who does evil, first to the Jew, and also to
the Greek; 10 but glory, honor, and peace for everyone who does what is
good, first to the Jew, and also to the Greek. 11 There is no favoritism with
God.

12 All those who sinned without the law will also perish without the law,
and all those who sinned under the law will be judged by the law. 13 For the
hearers of the law are not righteous before God, but the doers of the law
will be declared righteous. [C] 14[†] So, when Gentiles, who do not have the
law, instinctively do what the law demands, they are a law to themselves
even though they do not have the law. 15 They show that the work of the
law is written on their hearts. Their consciences confirm this. Their
competing thoughts will either accuse or excuse them 16 on the day when
God judges what people have kept secret, according to my gospel through
Christ Jesus.

Jewish Violation of the Law

17 Now if you call yourself a Jew, and rest in the law, boast in God,
18 know His will, and approve the things that are superior, being instructed
from the law, 19 and if you are convinced that you are a guide for the blind,

a light to those in darkness, [20] an instructor of the ignorant, a teacher of the
immature, having the full expression [D] of knowledge and truth in the
law — [21] you then, who teach another, don't you teach yourself? You who
preach, "You must not steal" — do you steal? [22] You who say, "You must
not commit adultery" — do you commit adultery? You who detest idols, do
you rob their temples? [23] You who boast in the law, do you dishonor God
by breaking the law? [24] For, as it is written: **The name of God is
blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you.**

ARTICLE
What Is Natural Law? ⇒

Circumcision of the Heart

[25] For circumcision benefits you if you observe the law, but if you are a
lawbreaker, your circumcision has become uncircumcision. [26] Therefore if
an uncircumcised man keeps the law's requirements, will his
uncircumcision not be counted as circumcision? [27] A man who is physically
uncircumcised, but who fulfills the law, will judge you who are a
lawbreaker in spite of having the letter of the law and circumcision. [28] For a
person is not a Jew who is one outwardly, and true circumcision is not
something visible in the flesh. [29] On the contrary, a person is a Jew who is
one inwardly, and circumcision is of the heart — by the Spirit, not the
letter. [E], That man's praise [F] is not from men but from God.

Paul Answers an Objection

3 So what advantage does the Jew have? Or what is the benefit of
circumcision? 2 Considerable in every way. First, they were entrusted
with the spoken words of God. 3 What then? If some did not believe, will
their unbelief cancel God's faithfulness? 4 Absolutely not! God must be
true, even if everyone is a liar, as it is written:

That You may be justified in Your words
and triumph when You judge.

5 But if our unrighteousness highlights [A] God's righteousness, what are we
to say? I use a human argument: [B] Is God unrighteous to inflict wrath?
6 Absolutely not! Otherwise, how will God judge the world? 7 But if by my
lie God's truth is amplified to His glory, why am I also still judged as a
sinner? 8 And why not say, just as some people slanderously claim we say,
"Let us do what is evil so that good may come"? Their condemnation is
deserved!

The Whole World Guilty before God

9 What then? Are we any better? Not at all! For we have previously
charged that both Jews and Gentiles [C], are all under sin, 10[†] as it is
written:

There is no one righteous, not even one.
11 **There is no one who understands;**
there is no one who seeks God.
12 **All have turned away;**
all alike have become useless.
There is no one who does what is good,
not even one.
13 **Their throat is an open grave;**
they deceive with their tongues.
Vipers' venom is under their lips.
14 **Their mouth is full of cursing and bitterness.**
15 **Their feet are swift to shed blood;**

16 **ruin and wretchedness are in their paths,**
17 **and the path of peace they have not known.**
18 **There is no fear of God before their eyes.**

19 Now we know that whatever the law says speaks to those who are
subject to the law, [D], so that every mouth may be shut and the whole world
may become subject to God's judgment. [E] 20 For no one will be •justified [F]
in His sight by the works of the law, because the knowledge of sin comes
through the law.

God's Righteousness through Faith

21 But now, apart from the law, God's righteousness has been
revealed — attested by the Law and the Prophets [G], 22 — that is, God's
righteousness through faith in Jesus Christ, [H] to all who believe, since
there is no distinction. 23 For all have sinned and fall short of the [I] glory of
God. 24 They are justified freely by His grace through the •redemption that
is in Christ Jesus. 25† God presented Him as a •propitiation [J] through faith
in His blood, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His restraint
God passed over the sins previously committed. 26 God presented Him to
demonstrate His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be
righteous and declare righteous [K] the one who has faith in Jesus.

Boasting Excluded

27 Where then is boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? [L], By
one of works? No, on the contrary, by a law [M] of faith. 28 For we conclude
that a man is justified by faith apart from the works of the law. 29 Or is God
for Jews only? Is He not also for Gentiles? Yes, for Gentiles too, 30 since
there is one God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the
uncircumcised through faith. 31 Do we then cancel the law through faith?
Absolutely not! On the contrary, we uphold the law.

Abraham Justified by Faith

4 What then can we say that Abraham, our physical ancestor, [A], has found? [2] If Abraham was •justified [B] by works, he has something to brag about — but not before God. [3] For what does the Scripture say?

Abraham believed God,
and it was credited to him for righteousness.

[4] Now to the one who works, pay is not considered as a gift, but as something owed. [5] But to the one who does not work, but believes on Him who declares the ungodly to be righteous, [C] his faith is credited for righteousness.

David Celebrating the Same Truth

[6†] Likewise, David also speaks of the blessing of the man God credits righteousness to apart from works:

[7] **How joyful are those whose lawless acts are forgiven**
and whose sins are covered!
[8] **How joyful is the man**
the Lord will never charge with sin!

Abraham Justified before Circumcision

[9] Is this blessing only for the circumcised, then? Or is it also for the uncircumcised? For we say, **Faith was credited to Abraham for righteousness.** [10] In what way then was it credited — while he was circumcised, or uncircumcised? Not while he was circumcised, but uncircumcised. [11] And he received the sign of circumcision as a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith [D] while still uncircumcised. This was to make him the father of all who believe but are not circumcised, so that righteousness may be credited to them also. [12] And he became the father of the circumcised, who are not only circumcised but who also follow in the footsteps of the faith our father Abraham had while he was still uncircumcised.

The Promise Granted through Faith

[13] For the promise to Abraham or to his descendants that he would
inherit the world was not through the law, but through the righteousness
that comes by faith. [E] [14] If those who are of the law are heirs, faith is made
empty and the promise is canceled. [15] For the law produces wrath. And
where there is no law, there is no transgression.

[16] This is why the promise is by faith, so that it may be according to
grace, to guarantee it to all the descendants — not only to those who are of
the law [F] but also to those who are of Abraham's faith. He is the father of us
all [17] in God's sight. As it is written: **I have made you the father of many
nations.** He believed in God, who gives life to the dead and calls things
into existence that do not exist. [18] He believed, hoping against hope, so that
he became **the father of many nations** according to what had been
spoken: **So will your descendants be.** [19] He considered his own body to
be already dead (since he was about 100 years old) and also considered the
deadness of Sarah's womb, without weakening in the faith. [20] He did not
waver in unbelief at God's promise but was strengthened in his faith and
gave glory to God, [21] because he was fully convinced that what He had
promised He was also able to perform. [22] Therefore, **it was credited to
him for righteousness.** [23] Now **it was credited to him** was not written for
Abraham alone, [24] but also for us. It will be credited to us who believe in
Him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. [25] He was delivered up
for [G] our trespasses and raised for [H] our justification. [I]

Faith Triumphs

5 Therefore, since we have been declared righteous by faith, we have
peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. [2] We have also obtained
access through Him by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we
rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. [3] And not only that, but we also
rejoice in our afflictions, because we know that affliction produces
endurance, [4] endurance produces proven character, and proven character
produces hope. [5] This hope will not disappoint us, because God's love has
been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

Those Declared Righteous Are Reconciled

[6] For while we were still helpless, at the appointed moment, Christ died
for the ungodly. [7] For rarely will someone die for a just person — though
for a good person perhaps someone might even dare to die. [8] But God
proves His own love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died
for us! [9] Much more then, since we have now been declared righteous by
His blood, we will be saved through Him from wrath. [10] For if, while we
were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son,
then how much more, having been reconciled, will we be saved by His life!
[11] And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus
Christ. We have now received this reconciliation through Him.

ARTICLE

Does the Moral Argument Show There Is a God? ⇒

Death through Adam and Life through Christ

[12†] Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death
through sin, in this way death spread to all men, because all sinned. [A] [13] In
fact, sin was in the world before the law, but sin is not charged to a person's
account when there is no law. [14] Nevertheless, death reigned from Adam to

Moses, even over those who did not sin in the likeness of Adam's transgression. He is a prototype [B] of the Coming One.

15 But the gift is not like the trespass. For if by the one man's trespass the many died, how much more have the grace of God and the gift overflowed to the many by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ.
16 And the gift is not like the one man's sin, because from one sin came the judgment, resulting in condemnation, but from many trespasses came the gift, resulting in •justification. [C]
17 Since by the one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive the overflow of grace and the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ.

18 So then, as through one trespass there is condemnation for everyone, so also through one righteous act there is life-giving justification [D] for everyone.
19 For just as through one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so also through the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.
20 The law came along to multiply the trespass. But where sin multiplied, grace multiplied even more
21 so that, just as sin reigned in death, so also grace will reign through righteousness, resulting in eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The New Life in Christ

6 [†]What should we say then? Should we continue in sin so that grace may
multiply? 2 Absolutely not! How can we who died to sin still live in it?
3 Or are you unaware that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus
were baptized into His death? 4 Therefore we were buried with Him by
baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by
the glory of the Father, so we too may •walk in a new way [A] of life. 5 For
if we have been joined with Him in the likeness of His death, we will
certainly also be in the likeness of His resurrection. 6 For we know that our
old self [B], was crucified with Him in order that sin's dominion over the
body [C] may be abolished, so that we may no longer be enslaved to sin,
7 since a person who has died is freed [D] from sin's claims. [E] 8 Now if we
died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with Him, 9 because we
know that Christ, having been raised from the dead, will not die again.
Death no longer rules over Him. 10 For in light of the fact that He died, He
died to sin once for all; but in light of the fact that He lives, He lives to
God. 11 So, you too consider yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in
Christ Jesus.

12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, so that you obey its
desires. 13 And do not offer any parts [F] of it to sin as weapons for
unrighteousness. But as those who are alive from the dead, offer yourselves
to God, and all the parts [G] of yourselves to God as weapons for
righteousness. 14 For sin will not rule over you, because you are not under
law but under grace.

From Slaves of Sin to Slaves of God

15 What then? Should we sin because we are not under law but under
grace? Absolutely not! 16[†] Don't you know that if you offer yourselves to
someone [H] as obedient •slaves, you are slaves of that one you
obey — either of sin leading to death or of obedience leading to
righteousness? 17 But thank God that, although you used to be slaves of sin,
you obeyed from the heart that pattern of teaching you were transferred [I]
to, 18 and having been liberated from sin, you became enslaved to

righteousness. [19] I am using a human analogy [J], because of the weakness of your flesh. [K] For just as you offered the parts [L] of yourselves as slaves to moral impurity, and to greater and greater lawlessness, so now offer them as slaves to righteousness, which results in •sanctification. [20] For when you were slaves of sin, you were free from allegiance to righteousness. [M] [21] So what fruit was produced [N] then from the things you are now ashamed of? For the end of those things is death. [22] But now, since you have been liberated from sin and have become enslaved to God, you have your fruit, which results in sanctification [O] — and the end is eternal life! [23] For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

An Illustration from Marriage

7 Since I am speaking to those who understand law, brothers, are you
unaware that the law has authority over someone as long as he lives?
2 For example, a married woman is legally bound to her husband while he
lives. But if her husband dies, she is released from the law regarding the
husband. 3 So then, if she gives herself to another man while her husband is
living, she will be called an adulteress. But if her husband dies, she is free
from that law. Then, if she gives herself to another man, she is not an
adulteress.

4 Therefore, my brothers, you also were put to death in relation to the
law through the crucified body of the •Messiah, so that you may belong to
another — to Him who was raised from the dead — that we may bear fruit
for God. 5 For when we were in the flesh, the sinful passions operated
through the law in every part of us [A], and bore fruit for death. 6 But now
we have been released from the law, since we have died to what held us, so
that we may serve in the new way [B] of the Spirit and not in the old letter of
the law.

Sin's Use of the Law

7 What should we say then? Is the law sin? Absolutely not! On the
contrary, I would not have known sin if it were not for the law. For
example, I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said,
Do not covet. 8 And sin, seizing an opportunity through the
commandment, produced in me coveting of every kind. For apart from the
law sin is dead. 9 Once I was alive apart from the law, but when the
commandment came, sin sprang to life 10 and I died. The commandment
that was meant for life resulted in death for me. 11 For sin, seizing an
opportunity through the commandment, deceived me, and through it killed
me. 12 So then, the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and just and
good.

ARTICLE

Notable Christian Apologist: Cornelius Van Til ⇒

The Problem of Sin in Us

13 Therefore, did what is good cause my death? [C] Absolutely not! On the
contrary, sin, in order to be recognized as sin, was producing death in me
through what is good, so that through the commandment, sin might become
sinful beyond measure. 14 For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am
made out of flesh, sold into sin’s power. 15[†] For I do not understand what I
am doing, because I do not practice what I want to do, but I do what I hate.
16 And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree with the law that it is good.
17 So now I am no longer the one doing it, but it is sin living in me. 18 For I
know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my flesh. For the desire to
do what is good is with me, but there is no ability to do it. 19 For I do not do
the good that I want to do, but I practice the evil that I do not want to do.
20 Now if I do what I do not want, I am no longer the one doing it, but it is
the sin that lives in me. 21 So I discover this principle: [D], When I want to
do what is good, evil is with me. 22 For in my inner self [E] I joyfully agree
with God’s law. 23 But I see a different law in the parts of my body, [F]
waging war against the law of my mind and taking me prisoner to the law
of sin in the parts of my body. [G] 24 What a wretched man I am! Who will
rescue me from this dying body? 25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our
Lord! [H] So then, with my mind I myself am a slave to the law of God, but
with my flesh, to the law of sin.

The Life-Giving Spirit

8 Therefore, no condemnation now exists for those in Christ Jesus,
2 because the Spirit's law of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from
the law of sin and of death. 3 What the law could not do since it was
limited [A] by the flesh, God did. He condemned sin in the flesh by sending
His own Son in flesh like ours under sin's domain, [B] and as a sin offering,
4 in order that the law's requirement would be accomplished in us who do
not •walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. 5 For those who
live [C] according to the flesh think about the things of the flesh, but those
who live [D] according to the Spirit, about the things of the Spirit. 6 For the
mind-set of the flesh is death, but the mind-set of the Spirit is life and
peace. 7 For the mind-set of the flesh is hostile to God because it does not
submit itself to God's law, for it is unable to do so. 8 Those who are in the
flesh cannot please God. 9[†] You, however, are not in the flesh, but in the
Spirit, since [E] the Spirit of God lives in you. But if anyone does not have
the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him. 10 Now if Christ is in you,
the body is dead [F] because of sin, but the Spirit [G] is life because of
righteousness. 11 And if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead
lives in you, then He who raised Christ from the dead will also bring your
mortal bodies to life through His Spirit who lives in you.

The Holy Spirit's Ministries

12 So then, brothers, we are not obligated to the flesh to live according to
the flesh, 13 for if you live according to the flesh, you are going to die. But
if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. 14 All
those led by God's Spirit are God's sons. 15 For you did not receive a spirit
of slavery to fall back into fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption, by
whom we cry out, "•*Abba*, Father!" 16 The Spirit Himself testifies together
with our spirit that we are God's children, 17 and if children, also
heirs — heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ — seeing that [H] we suffer
with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him.

From Groans to Glory

18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth
comparing with the glory that is going to be revealed to us. 19 For the
creation eagerly waits with anticipation for God's sons to be revealed.
20† For the creation was subjected to futility — not willingly, but because
of Him who subjected it — in the hope 21 that the creation itself will also
be set free from the bondage of corruption into the glorious freedom of
God's children. 22 For we know that the whole creation has been groaning
together with labor pains until now. 23 And not only that, but we ourselves
who have the Spirit as the •firstfruits — we also groan within ourselves,
eagerly waiting for adoption, the •redemption of our bodies. 24 Now in this
hope we were saved, yet hope that is seen is not hope, because who hopes
for what he sees? 25 But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait
for it with patience.

26 In the same way the Spirit also joins to help in our weakness, because
we do not know what to pray for as we should, but the Spirit Himself
intercedes for us with unspoken groanings. 27 And He who searches the
hearts knows the Spirit's mind-set, because He intercedes for the •saints
according to the will of God.

28† We know that all things work together for the good of those who
love God: those who are called according to His purpose. 29† For those He
foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, so
that He would be the firstborn among many brothers. 30 And those He
predestined, He also called; and those He called, He also •justified; and
those He justified, He also glorified.

The Believer's Triumph

31 What then are we to say about these things?
If God is for us, who is against us?
32 He did not even spare His own Son
but offered Him up for us all;
how will He not also with Him grant us everything?
33 Who can bring an accusation against God's elect?

God is the One who justifies.
34 Who is the one who condemns?
Christ Jesus is the One who died,
but even more, has been raised;
He also is at the right hand of God
and intercedes for us.
35 Who can separate us from the love of Christ?
Can affliction or anguish or persecution
or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?
36 As it is written:
Because of You
we are being put to death all day long;
we are counted as sheep to be slaughtered.
37 No, in all these things we are more than victorious
through Him who loved us.
38 For I am persuaded that not even death or life,
angels or rulers,
things present or things to come, hostile powers,
39 height or depth, or any other created thing
will have the power to separate us
from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord!

Israel's Rejection of Christ

9 I speak the truth in Christ — I am not lying; my conscience is testifying
to me with the Holy Spirit [A] — 2 that I have intense sorrow and
continual anguish in my heart. 3 For I could almost wish to be cursed and
cut off [B] from the •Messiah for the benefit of my brothers, my own flesh
and blood. 4 They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the
glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the temple service, and the
promises. 5 The ancestors are theirs, and from them, by physical descent, [C]
came the Messiah, who is God over all, praised forever. [D], •Amen.

God's Gracious Election of Israel

6† But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For not all who are
descended from Israel are Israel. 7 Neither are they all children because
they are Abraham's descendants. [E], On the contrary, **your** •offspring **will
be traced** [F] **through Isaac.** 8 That is, it is not the children by physical
descent [G] who are God's children, but the children of the promise are
considered to be the offspring. 9 For this is the statement of the promise: **At
this time I will come, and Sarah will have a son.** 10 And not only that,
but also Rebekah received a promise when she became pregnant [H], by one
man, our ancestor Isaac. 11 For though her sons had not been born yet or
done anything good or bad, so that God's purpose according to election
might stand — 12 not from works but from the One who calls — she was
told: **The older will serve the younger.** 13† As it is written: **I have loved
Jacob, but I have hated Esau.**

God's Selection Is Just

14 What should we say then? Is there injustice with God? Absolutely
not! 15 For He tells Moses:

I will show mercy
to whom I will show mercy,
and I will have compassion
on whom I will have compassion.

16 So then it does not depend on human will or effort [I] but on God who
shows mercy. 17 For the Scripture tells Pharaoh:

I raised you up for this reason
so that I may display My power in you
and that My name may be proclaimed in all the earth.

18 So then, He shows mercy to those He wants to, and He hardens those He
wants to harden.

19 You will say to me, therefore, "Why then does He still find fault? For
who can resist His will? " 20 But who are you, a mere man, to talk back to
God? Will what is formed say to the one who formed it, "Why did you
make me like this? " 21 Or has the potter no right over the clay, to make
from the same lump one piece of pottery for honor and another for
dishonor? 22[†] And what if God, desiring to display His wrath and to make
His power known, endured with much patience objects of wrath ready for
destruction? 23 And what if He did this to make known the riches of His
glory on objects of mercy that He prepared beforehand for glory — 24 on
us, the ones He also called, not only from the Jews but also from the
Gentiles? 25 As He also says in Hosea:

I will call Not My People, My People,
and she who is Unloved, Beloved.
26 **And it will be in the place where they were told,**
you are not My people,
there they will be called sons of the living God.

27 But Isaiah cries out concerning Israel:

Though the number of Israel's sons
is like the sand of the sea,
only the remnant will be saved;
28 **for the Lord will execute His sentence**
completely and decisively on the earth. [J] ,

29 And just as Isaiah predicted:

If the Lord of •Hosts [K] had not left us offspring,
we would have become like Sodom,
and we would have been made like Gomorrah.

Israel's Present State

30 What should we say then? Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness,
have obtained righteousness — namely the righteousness that comes from
faith. 31 But Israel, pursuing the law for righteousness, has not achieved
the righteousness of the law. 32 Why is that? Because they did not pursue it
by faith, but as if it were by works. They stumbled over the stumbling
stone. 33 As it is written:

Look! I am putting a stone in •Zion to stumble over
and a rock to trip over,
yet the one who believes on Him
will not be put to shame.

Righteousness by Faith Alone

10 Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God concerning them is for
their salvation! 2 I can testify about them that they have zeal for God,
but not according to knowledge. 3 Because they disregarded the
righteousness from God and attempted to establish their own righteousness,
they have not submitted themselves to God's righteousness. 4 For Christ is
the end [A] of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes. 5 For
Moses writes about the righteousness that is from the law: **The one who
does these things will live by them.** 6 But the righteousness that comes
from faith speaks like this: **Do not say in your heart, "Who will go up to
heaven? "** that is, to bring Christ down 7 or, **"Who will go down into the**
•abyss**? "** that is, to bring Christ up from the dead. 8 On the contrary, what
does it say? **The message is near you, in your mouth and in your heart.**
This is the message of faith that we proclaim: 9[†] If you confess with your
mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised Him
from the dead, you will be saved. 10 One believes with the heart, resulting
in righteousness, and one confesses with the mouth, resulting in salvation.
11 Now the Scripture says, **Everyone who believes on Him will not be put
to shame,** 12 for there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, since the
same Lord of all is rich to all who call on Him. 13 For **everyone who calls
on the name of the Lord will be saved.**

ARTICLE

What About Those Who Have Never Heard About Christ? ⇒

Israel's Rejection of the Message

14[†] But how can they call on Him they have not believed in? And how
can they believe without hearing about Him? And how can they hear
without a preacher? 15 And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it
is written: **How beautiful** [B] **are the feet of those who announce the
gospel of good things!** 16 But all did not obey the gospel. For Isaiah says,

Lord, who has believed our message? [17] So faith comes from what is
heard, and what is heard comes through the message about Christ. [18] But I
ask, "Did they not hear? " Yes, they did:

Their voice has gone out to all the earth,
and their words to the ends of the inhabited world.

[19] But I ask, "Did Israel not understand? " First, Moses said:

I will make you jealous
of those who are not a nation;
I will make you angry by a nation
that lacks understanding.

[20] And Isaiah says boldly:

I was found
by those who were not looking for Me;
I revealed Myself
to those who were not asking for Me.

[21] But to Israel he says: **All day long I have spread out My hands to a**
disobedient and defiant people.

Israel's Rejection Not Total

11 I ask, then, has God rejected His people? Absolutely not! For I too
am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, from the tribe of
Benjamin. 2 God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew. Or don't
you know what the Scripture says in the passage about Elijah — how he
pleads with God against Israel?

3 **Lord, they have killed Your prophets**
and torn down Your altars.
I am the only one left,
and they are trying to take my life!

4 But what was God's reply to him? **I have left 7,000 men for Myself who**
have not bowed down to •Baal. 5 In the same way, then, there is also at
the present time a remnant chosen by grace. 6 Now if by grace, then it is
not by works; otherwise grace ceases to be grace.

7† What then? Israel did not find what it was looking for, but the elect
did find it. The rest were hardened, 8 as it is written:

God gave them a spirit of insensitivity, [A]
eyes that cannot see
and ears that cannot hear,
to this day.

9 And David says:

Let their feasting [B] **become a snare and a trap,**
a pitfall and a retribution to them.
10 **Let their eyes be darkened so they cannot see,**
and their backs be bent continually.

Israel's Rejection Not Final

11 I ask, then, have they stumbled in order to fall? Absolutely not! On the
contrary, by their stumbling, [C] salvation has come to the Gentiles to make
Israel jealous. 12 Now if their stumbling [D] brings riches for the world, and

their failure riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their full number
bring!

13 Now I am speaking to you Gentiles. In view of the fact that I am an
apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry, 14 if I can somehow make
my own people [E], jealous and save some of them. 15 For if their rejection
brings reconciliation to the world, what will their acceptance mean but life
from the dead? 16 Now if the •firstfruits offered up are holy, so is the
whole batch. And if the root is holy, so are the branches.

17 Now if some of the branches were broken off, and you, though a wild
olive branch, were grafted in among them and have come to share in the
rich root of the cultivated olive tree, 18 do not brag that you are better than
those branches. But if you do brag — you do not sustain the root, but the
root sustains you. 19 Then you will say, “Branches were broken off so that
I might be grafted in.” 20 True enough; they were broken off by unbelief,
but you stand by faith. Do not be arrogant, but be afraid. 21 For if God did
not spare the natural branches, He will not spare you either. 22[†] Therefore,
consider God’s kindness and severity: severity toward those who have
fallen but God’s kindness toward you — if you remain in His kindness.
Otherwise you too will be cut off. 23 And even they, if they do not remain
in unbelief, will be grafted in, because God has the power to graft them in
again. 24 For if you were cut off from your native wild olive and against
nature were grafted into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will
these — the natural branches — be grafted into their own olive tree?

25[†] So that you will not be conceited, brothers, I do not want you to be
unaware of this •mystery: A partial hardening has come to Israel until the
full number of the Gentiles has come in. 26 And in this way all [F] Israel will
be saved, as it is written:

The Liberator will come from •Zion;
He will turn away godlessness from Jacob.
27 **And this will be My covenant with them**
when I take away their sins.

[28] Regarding the gospel, they are enemies for your advantage, but
regarding election, they are loved because of the patriarchs, [29] since God's
gracious gifts and calling are irrevocable. [G] [30] As you once disobeyed
God, but now have received mercy through their disobedience, [31] so they
too have now disobeyed, resulting in mercy to you, so that they also now
may receive mercy. [32] For God has imprisoned all in disobedience, so that
He may have mercy on all.

A Hymn of Praise

[33] Oh, the depth of the riches
both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God!
How unsearchable His judgments
and untraceable His ways!
[34] **For who has known the mind of the Lord?**
Or who has been His counselor?
[35] **Or who has ever first given to Him,**
and has to be repaid?
[36] For from Him and through Him
and to Him are all things.
To Him be the glory forever. •Amen.

A Living Sacrifice

12 Therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, I urge you to present your
bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God; this is your
spiritual worship. 2 Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed
by the renewing of your mind, so that you may discern what is the good,
pleasing, and perfect will of God.

Many Gifts but One Body

3 For by the grace given to me, I tell everyone among you not to think of
himself more highly than he should think. Instead, think sensibly, as God
has distributed a measure of faith to each one. 4 Now as we have many
parts in one body, and all the parts do not have the same function, 5 in the
same way we who are many are one body in Christ and individually
members of one another. 6 According to the grace given to us, we have
different gifts:

If prophecy,
use it according to the standard of one's [A] faith;
7 if service, in service;
if teaching, in teaching;
8 if exhorting, in exhortation;
giving, with generosity;
leading, with diligence;
showing mercy, with cheerfulness.

ARTICLE
How Does One Develop a Christian Mind? ⇒

Christian Ethics

9 Love must be without hypocrisy. Detest evil; cling to what is good.
10 Show family affection to one another with brotherly love. Outdo one

another in showing honor. [11] Do not lack diligence; be fervent in spirit;
serve the Lord. [12] Rejoice in hope; be patient in affliction; be persistent in
prayer. [13] Share with the •saints in their needs; pursue hospitality. [14] Bless
those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. [15] Rejoice with those who
rejoice; weep with those who weep. [16] Be in agreement with one another.
Do not be proud; instead, associate with the humble. Do not be wise in
your own estimation. [17] Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Try to do what
is honorable in everyone's eyes. [18] If possible, on your part, live at peace
with everyone. [19†] Friends, do not avenge yourselves; instead, leave room
for His [B] wrath. For it is written: **Vengeance belongs to Me; I will repay,**
says the Lord. [20] But

If your enemy is hungry, feed him.
If he is thirsty, give him something to drink.
For in so doing
you will be heaping fiery coals on his head.

[21] Do not be conquered by evil, but conquer evil with good.

A Christian's Duties to the State

13 [†]Everyone must submit to the governing authorities, for there is no
authority except from God, and those that exist are instituted by God.
2 So then, the one who resists the authority is opposing God's command,
and those who oppose it will bring judgment on themselves. 3 For rulers are
not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Do you want to be unafraid of the
authority? Do what is good, and you will have its approval. 4 For
government is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid,
because it does not carry the sword for no reason. For government is God's
servant, an avenger that brings wrath on the one who does wrong.
5 Therefore, you must submit, not only because of wrath, but also because
of your conscience. 6 And for this reason you pay taxes, since the
authorities are God's public servants, continually attending to these tasks. [A]
7 Pay your obligations to everyone: taxes to those you owe taxes, tolls to
those you owe tolls, respect to those you owe respect, and honor to those
you owe honor.

Love, Our Primary Duty

8 Do not owe anyone anything, [B] except to love one another, for the one
who loves another has fulfilled the law. 9 The commandments:

Do not commit adultery;
do not murder;
do not steal;
do not covet;

and whatever other commandment — all are summed up by this: **Love your neighbor as yourself.**

10 Love does no wrong to a neighbor. Love, therefore, is the fulfillment of the law.

Put On Christ

11[†] Besides this, knowing the time, it is already the hour for you to wake up from sleep, for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed.

[12] The night is nearly over, and the daylight is near, so let us discard the
deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. [13] Let us •walk with
decency, as in the daylight: not in carousing and drunkenness; not in
sexual impurity and promiscuity; not in quarreling and jealousy. [14] But put
on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no plans to satisfy the fleshly desires.

The Law of Liberty

14 Accept anyone who is weak in faith, [A], but don’t argue about
doubtful issues. 2 One person believes he may eat anything, but one
who is weak eats only vegetables. 3 One who eats must not look down on
one who does not eat, and one who does not eat must not criticize one who
does, because God has accepted him. 4[†] Who are you to criticize another’s
household slave? Before his own Lord he stands or falls. And he will stand.
For the Lord is able to make him stand.

5 One person considers one day to be above another day. Someone else
considers every day to be the same. Each one must be fully convinced in his
own mind. 6 Whoever observes the day, observes it for the honor of the
Lord. Whoever eats, eats for the Lord, since he gives thanks to God; and
whoever does not eat, it is for the Lord that he does not eat it, yet he thanks
God. 7 For none of us lives to himself, and no one dies to himself. 8 If we
live, we live for the Lord; and if we die, we die for the Lord. Therefore,
whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord. 9 Christ died and came to
life for this: that He might rule over both the dead and the living. 10 But
you, why do you criticize your brother? Or you, why do you look down on
your brother? For we will all stand before the tribunal of God. 11 For it is
written:

As I live, says the Lord,
every knee will bow to Me,
and every tongue will give praise to God.

12 So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God.

The Law of Love

13 Therefore, let us no longer criticize one another. Instead decide never
to put a stumbling block or pitfall in your brother’s way. 14 (I know and am
persuaded by the Lord Jesus that nothing is •unclean in itself. Still, to
someone who considers a thing to be unclean, to that one it is unclean.)
15 For if your brother is hurt by what you eat, you are no longer •walking
according to love. Do not destroy that one Christ died for by what you eat.

[16] Therefore, do not let your good be slandered, [17] for the kingdom of God
is not eating and drinking, but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy
Spirit. [18] Whoever serves Christ in this way is acceptable to God and
approved by men.

[19] So then, we must pursue what promotes peace and what builds up one
another. [20] Do not tear down God's work because of food. Everything is
•clean, but it is wrong for a man to cause stumbling by what he eats. [21] It is
a noble thing not to eat meat, or drink wine, or do anything that makes your
brother stumble. [22] Do you have a conviction? [B] Keep it to yourself before
God. The man who does not condemn himself by what he approves is
blessed. [23] But whoever doubts stands condemned if he eats, because his
eating is not from a conviction, [C] and everything that is not from a
conviction [D] is sin.

Pleasing Others, Not Ourselves

15 Now we who are strong have an obligation to bear the weaknesses of
those without strength, and not to please ourselves. 2 Each one of us
must please his neighbor for his good, to build him up. 3 For even the
•Messiah did not please Himself. On the contrary, as it is written, **The
insults of those who insult You have fallen on Me.** 4 For whatever was
written in the past was written for our instruction, so that we may have
hope through endurance and through the encouragement from the
Scriptures. 5 Now may the God who gives [A] endurance and encouragement
allow you to live in harmony with one another, according to the command
of Christ Jesus, 6 so that you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord
Jesus Christ with a united mind and voice.

Glorifying God Together

7 Therefore accept one another, just as the Messiah also accepted you, to
the glory of God. 8 For I say that the Messiah became a servant of the
circumcised on behalf of God's truth, to confirm the promises to the
fathers, 9 and so that Gentiles may glorify God for His mercy. As it is
written:

Therefore I will praise You among the Gentiles,
and I will sing psalms to Your name.

10 Again it says: **Rejoice, you Gentiles, with His people!** 11 And again:

Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles;
all the peoples should praise Him!

12 And again, Isaiah says:

The root of Jesse will appear,
the One who rises to rule the Gentiles;
the Gentiles will hope in Him.

13 Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you
believe in Him so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the

Holy Spirit.

From Jerusalem to Illyricum

14 My brothers, I myself am convinced about you that you also are full of
goodness, filled with all knowledge, and able to instruct one another.
15 Nevertheless, I have written to remind you more boldly on some points
because of the grace given me by God 16 to be a minister of Christ Jesus to
the Gentiles, serving as a priest of God's good news. My purpose is that
the offering of the Gentiles may be acceptable, •sanctified by the Holy
Spirit. 17 Therefore I have reason to boast in Christ Jesus regarding what
pertains to God. 18 For I would not dare say anything except what Christ
has accomplished through me to make the Gentiles obedient by word and
deed, 19 by the power of miraculous signs and wonders, and by the power
of God's Spirit. As a result, I have fully proclaimed the good news about
the Messiah from Jerusalem all the way around to Illyricum. 20 My aim is
to evangelize where Christ has not been named, so that I will not build on
someone else's foundation, 21 but, as it is written:

Those who were not told about Him will see,
and those who have not heard will understand.

Paul's Travel Plans

22 That is why I have been prevented many times from coming to you.
23 But now I no longer have any work to do in these provinces, [B] and I have
strongly desired for many years to come to you 24 whenever I travel to
Spain. For I hope to see you when I pass through, and to be assisted by you
for my journey there, once I have first enjoyed your company for a while.
25 Right now I am traveling to Jerusalem to serve the •saints, 26 for
Macedonia and Achaia were pleased to make a contribution for the poor
among the saints in Jerusalem. 27 Yes, they were pleased, and indeed are
indebted to them. For if the Gentiles have shared in their spiritual benefits,
then they are obligated to minister to Jews in material needs. 28 So when I
have finished this and safely delivered the funds [C] to them, I will visit you

on the way to Spain. [29] I know that when I come to you, I will come in the
fullness of the blessing of Christ.

[30] Now I appeal to you, brothers, through our Lord Jesus Christ and
through the love of the Spirit, to join with me in fervent prayers to God on
my behalf. [31] Pray that I may be rescued from the unbelievers in Judea,
that the gift I am bringing to [D] Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints,
[32] and that, by God’s will, I may come to you with joy and be refreshed
together with you.

[33] The God of peace be with all of you. •Amen.

Paul's Commendation of Phoebe

16 [†]I commend to you our sister Phoebe, who is a servant [A] of the
church in Cenchreae. 2 So you should welcome her in the Lord in a
manner worthy of the •saints and assist her in whatever matter she may
require your help. For indeed she has been a benefactor of many — and of
me also.

Greeting to Roman Christians

3 Give my greetings to Prisca [B] and Aquila, my coworkers in Christ
Jesus, 4 who risked their own necks for my life. Not only do I thank
them, but so do all the Gentile churches.
5 Greet also the church that meets in their home.
Greet my dear friend Epaenetus, who is the first convert [C], to Christ from
•Asia.
6 Greet Mary, [D] who has worked very hard for you.
7[†] Greet Andronicus and Junia, [E] my fellow countrymen and fellow
prisoners. They are noteworthy in the eyes of the apostles, [F] and they
were also in Christ before me.
8 Greet Ampliatus, my dear friend in the Lord.
9 Greet Urbanus, our coworker in Christ, and my dear friend Stachys.
10 Greet Apelles, who is approved in Christ.
Greet those who belong to the household of Aristobulus.
11 Greet Herodion, my fellow countryman.
Greet those who belong to the household of Narcissus who are in the
Lord.
12 Greet Tryphaena and Tryphosa, who have worked hard in the Lord.
Greet my dear friend Persis, who has worked very hard in the Lord.
13 Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord; also his mother — and mine.
14 Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas, and the
brothers who are with them.
15 Greet Philologus and Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and all
the saints who are with them.

16 Greet one another with a holy kiss.
All the churches of Christ send you greetings.

TWISTED SCRIPTURE

Romans 16:16

The Churches of Christ (COC) sect takes its name from this verse. Some claim that any true church will also have the correct scriptural name. Christ said, "I will build My church" (Mt 16:18). The COC argues that since it is Christ's church, it should be called the Church of Christ. Different verses, however, point to other descriptors, such as "church of God" (1 Co 10:32; Gl 1:13) and "assembly of the firstborn" (Heb 12:23). Nowhere does God's Word prescribe that a legitimate church should have a specific name."

Warning against Divisive People

17† Now I urge you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause
dissensions and obstacles contrary to the doctrine you have learned. Avoid
them, 18 for such people do not serve our Lord Christ but their own
appetites. [G] They deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting with smooth talk
and flattering words.

Paul's Gracious Conclusion

19 The report of your obedience has reached everyone. Therefore I
rejoice over you. But I want you to be wise about what is good, yet innocent
about what is evil. 20 The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your
feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.

21 Timothy, my coworker, and Lucius, Jason, and Sosipater, my fellow
countrymen, greet you.

22 I Tertius, who wrote this letter, greet you in the Lord. [H]

[23] Gaius, who is host to me and to the whole church, greets you.
Erastus, the city treasurer, and our brother Quartus greet you.

[[24] The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.]

Glory to God

[25] Now to Him who has power to strengthen you according to my gospel
and the proclamation about Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the
•mystery kept silent for long ages [26] but now revealed and made known
through the prophetic Scriptures, according to the command of the eternal
God to advance the obedience of faith [I], among all nations — [27] to the only
wise God, through Jesus Christ — to Him be the glory forever! •Amen.

1 CORINTHIANS

Introduction to 1 Corinthians

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1 CORINTHIANS

Greeting

1 †Paul, called as an apostle of Christ Jesus by God's will, and
Sosthenes our brother:

2 To God's church at Corinth, to those who are •sanctified in Christ
Jesus and called as •saints, with all those in every place who call on the
name of Jesus Christ our Lord — both their Lord and ours.

3 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Thanksgiving

4 I always thank my God for you because of God's grace given to you in
Christ Jesus, 5 that by Him you were enriched in everything — in all
speech and all knowledge. 6 In this way, the testimony about Christ was
confirmed among you, 7 so that you do not lack any spiritual gift as you
eagerly wait for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ. 8 He will also
strengthen you to the end, so that you will be blameless in the day of our
Lord Jesus Christ. 9 God is faithful; you were called by Him into
fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Divisions at Corinth

10 Now I urge you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all
of you agree in what you say, that there be no divisions among you, and that
you be united with the same understanding and the same conviction. 11 For
it has been reported to me about you, my brothers, by members of Chloe's
household, that there is rivalry among you. 12 What I am saying is this:
Each of you says, "I'm with Paul," or "I'm with Apollos," or "I'm with
•Cephas," or "I'm with Christ." 13 Is Christ divided? Was it Paul who was
crucified for you? Or were you baptized in Paul's name? 14† I thank God
that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, 15 so that no one can
say you were baptized in my name. 16 I did, in fact, baptize the household
of Stephanas; beyond that, I don't know if I baptized anyone else. 17 For
Christ did not send me to baptize, but to evangelize — not with clever
words, so that the cross of Christ will not be emptied of its effect.

ARTICLE
Why So Many Denominations? ⇒

Christ the Power and Wisdom of God

18† For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing,
but it is God's power to us who are being saved. 19 For it is written:

I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,
and I will set aside the understanding of the experts.

20 Where is the philosopher? [B] Where is the scholar? Where is the
debater of this age? Hasn't God made the world's wisdom foolish? 21 For
since, in God's wisdom, the •world did not know God through wisdom,
God was pleased to save those who believe through the foolishness of the
message preached. 22 For the Jews ask for signs and the Greeks seek
wisdom, 23 but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to the Jews
and foolishness to the Gentiles. 24 Yet to those who are called, both Jews
and Greeks, Christ is God's power and God's wisdom, 25 because God's
foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger
than human strength.

Boasting Only in the Lord

26† Brothers, consider your calling: Not many are wise from a human
perspective, [C] not many powerful, not many of noble birth. 27 Instead, God
has chosen what is foolish in the world to shame the wise, and God has
chosen what is weak in the world to shame the strong. 28 God has chosen
what is insignificant and despised in the world — what is viewed as
nothing — to bring to nothing what is viewed as something, 29 so that no
one [D] can boast in His presence. 30 But it is from Him that you are in Christ
Jesus, who became God-given wisdom for us — our righteousness,

sanctification, and •redemption, [31] in order that, as it is written: **The one who boasts must boast in the Lord.**

Paul's Proclamation

2 [†]When I came to you, brothers, announcing the testimony of God to you, I did not come with brilliance of speech or wisdom. 2 For I didn't think it was a good idea to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. 3 I came to you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling. 4 My speech and my proclamation were not with persuasive words of wisdom but with a powerful demonstration by the Spirit, 5 so that your faith might not be based on men's wisdom but on God's power.

Spiritual Wisdom

6 However, we do speak a wisdom among the mature, but not a wisdom of this age, or of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. 7 On the contrary, we speak God's hidden wisdom in a •mystery, a wisdom God predestined before the ages for our glory. 8 None of the rulers of this age knew this wisdom, for if they had known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. 9 But as it is written:

What eye did not see and ear did not hear,
and what never entered the human mind —
God prepared this for those who love Him.

ARTICLE

How Does the Holy Spirit Relate to Evidence for Christianity? ⇒

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10 Now God has revealed these things to us by the Spirit, for the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. 11 For who among men knows the thoughts [A] of a man except the spirit of the man that is in him? In the same way, no one knows the thoughts [B] of God except the Spirit of God. 12 Now we have not received the spirit of the •world, but the Spirit who comes from God, so that we may understand what has been freely given to us by God. 13 We also speak these things, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, explaining spiritual things

to spiritual people. [C] 14 But the unbeliever [D] does not welcome what comes from God’s Spirit, because it is foolishness to him; he is not able to understand it since it is evaluated [E] spiritually. 15 The spiritual person, however, can evaluate [F] everything, yet he himself cannot be evaluated [G] by anyone. 16 For

who has known the Lord’s mind,
that he may instruct Him?

But we have the mind of Christ.

The Problem of Immaturity

3 [†]Brothers, I was not able to speak to you as spiritual people but as
people of the flesh, as babies in Christ. 2 I gave you milk to drink, not
solid food, because you were not yet ready for it. In fact, you are still not
ready, 3 because you are still fleshly. For since there is envy and strife
among you, are you not fleshly and living like unbelievers? [A] 4 For
whenever someone says, “I’m with Paul,” and another, “I’m with Apollos,”
are you not unspiritual people?

The Role of God’s Servants

5[†] What then is Apollos? And what is Paul? They are servants through
whom you believed, and each has the role the Lord has given. 6 I planted,
Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. 7 So then neither the one who
plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God who gives the
growth. 8 Now the one planting and the one watering are one in purpose,
and each will receive his own reward according to his own labor. 9 For we
are God’s coworkers. [C] You are God’s field, God’s building. 10 According
to God’s grace that was given to me, I have laid a foundation as a skilled
master builder, and another builds on it. But each one must be careful how
he builds on it. 11 For no one can lay any other foundation than what has
been laid down. That foundation is Jesus Christ. 12 If anyone builds on that
foundation with gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay, or straw, 13 each
one’s work will become obvious, for the day will disclose it, because it will
be revealed by fire; the fire will test the quality of each one’s work. 14 If
anyone’s work that he has built survives, he will receive a reward. 15 If
anyone’s work is burned up, it will be lost, but he will be saved; yet it will
be like an escape through fire. [D]

16[†] Don’t you yourselves know that you are God’s sanctuary and that the
Spirit of God lives in you? 17 If anyone destroys God’s sanctuary, God will
destroy him; for God’s sanctuary is holy, and that is what you are.

The Folly of Human Wisdom

[18]† No one should deceive himself. If anyone among you thinks he is
wise in this age, he must become foolish so that he can become wise.
[19] For the wisdom of this •world is foolishness with God, since it is
written: **He catches the wise in their craftiness**; [20] and again, **The Lord
knows that the reasonings of the wise are meaningless.** [21] So no one
should boast in human leaders, for everything is yours — [22] whether Paul
or Apollos or •Cephas or the world or life or death or things present or
things to come — everything is yours, [23] and you belong to Christ, and
Christ belongs to God.

The Faithful Manager

4 [†]A person should consider us in this way: as servants of Christ and
managers of God's •mysteries. [2] In this regard, it is expected of
managers that each one of them be found faithful. [3] It is of little
importance to me that I should be evaluated by you or by any human
court. [A] In fact, I don't even evaluate myself. [4] For I am not conscious of
anything against myself, but I am not justified by this. The One who
evaluates me is the Lord. [5] Therefore don't judge anything prematurely,
before the Lord comes, who will both bring to light what is hidden in
darkness and reveal the intentions of the hearts. And then praise will come
to each one from God.

The Apostles' Example of Humility

[6] Now, brothers, I have applied these things to myself and Apollos for
your benefit, so that you may learn from us the saying: "Nothing beyond
what is written." The purpose is that none of you will be inflated with pride
in favor of one person over another. [7] For who makes you so superior?
What do you have that you didn't receive? If, in fact, you did receive it,
why do you boast as if you hadn't received it? [8†] You are already full! You
are already rich! You have begun to reign as kings without us — and I wish
you did reign, so that we could also reign with you! [9] For I think God has
displayed us, the apostles, in last place, like men condemned to die: We
have become a spectacle to the world and to angels and to men. [10] We are
fools for Christ, but you are wise in Christ! We are weak, but you are
strong! You are distinguished, but we are dishonored! [11] Up to the present
hour we are both hungry and thirsty; we are poorly clothed, roughly treated,
homeless; [12] we labor, working with our own hands. When we are reviled,
we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure it; [13] when we are slandered,
we respond graciously. Even now, we are like the world's garbage, like the
dirt everyone scrapes off their sandals.

Paul's Fatherly Care

[14] I'm not writing this to shame you, but to warn you as my dear
children. [15] For you can have 10,000 instructors in Christ, but you can't

have many fathers. For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the
gospel. [16] Therefore I urge you to imitate me. [17] This is why I have sent
Timothy to you. He is my dearly loved and faithful son in the Lord. He will
remind you about my ways in Christ Jesus, just as I teach everywhere in
every church. [18] Now some are inflated with pride, as though I were not
coming to you. [19] But I will come to you soon, if the Lord wills, and I will
know not the talk but the power of those who are inflated with pride. [20] For
the kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power. [21] What do you
want? Should I come to you with a rod, or in love and a spirit of
gentleness?

Immoral Church Members

5 †It is widely reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and
the kind of sexual immorality that is not even tolerated among the
Gentiles — a man is living with his father’s wife. 2 And you are inflated
with pride, instead of filled with grief so that he who has committed this
act might be removed from your congregation. 3 For though I am absent in
body but present in spirit, I have already decided about the one who has
done this thing as though I were present. 4 When you are assembled in the
name of our Lord Jesus with my spirit and with the power of our Lord
Jesus, 5† turn that one over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that
his spirit may be saved in the Day of the Lord.

6 Your boasting is not good. Don’t you know that a little yeast permeates
the whole batch of dough? 7 •Clean out the old yeast so that you may be a
new batch. You are indeed unleavened, for Christ our •Passover has been
sacrificed. 8 Therefore, let us observe the feast, not with old yeast or with
the yeast of malice and evil but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and
truth.

Church Discipline

9 I wrote to you in a letter not to associate with sexually immoral
people. 10 I did not mean the immoral people of this •world or the greedy
and swindlers or idolaters; otherwise you would have to leave the world.
11 But now I am writing [A] you not to associate with anyone who claims to
be a believer [B] who is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or verbally
abusive, a drunkard or a swindler. Do not even eat with such a person.
12 For what business is it of mine to judge outsiders? Don’t you judge those
who are inside? 13 But God judges outsiders. **Put away the evil person
from among yourselves.**

Lawsuits among Believers

6 [†]If any of you has a legal dispute against another, do you dare go to
court before the unrighteous, and not before the •saints? [2] Or don't you
know that the saints will judge the •world? And if the world is judged by
you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest cases? [3] Don't you know that
we will judge angels — not to mention ordinary matters? [4] So if you have
cases pertaining to this life, do you select those [A] who have no standing in
the church to judge? [5] I say this to your shame! Can it be that there is not
one wise person among you who is able to arbitrate between his brothers?
[6] Instead, believer [B] goes to court against believer, and that before
unbelievers!

[7] Therefore, to have legal disputes against one another is already a moral
failure for you. Why not rather put up with injustice? Why not rather be
cheated? [8] Instead, you act unjustly and cheat — and you do this to
believers! [9] Don't you know that the unrighteous will not inherit God's
kingdom? Do not be deceived: No sexually immoral people, idolaters,
adulterers, or anyone practicing homosexuality, [C], [10] no thieves, greedy
people, drunkards, verbally abusive people, or swindlers will inherit God's
kingdom. [11] And some of you used to be like this. But you were washed,
you were •sanctified, you were •justified in the name of the Lord Jesus
Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

Glorifying God in Body and Spirit

[12†] "Everything is permissible for me," but not everything is helpful.
"Everything is permissible for me," but I will not be brought under the
control of anything. [13] "Food for the stomach and the stomach for food,"
but God will do away with both of them. [D] The body is not for sexual
immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. [14] God raised up
the Lord and will also raise us up by His power. [15] Don't you know that
your bodies are a part of Christ's body? So should I take a part of Christ's
body and make it part of a prostitute? Absolutely not! [16] Don't you know
that anyone joined to a prostitute is one body with her? For Scripture says,
The two will become one flesh. [17] But anyone joined to the Lord is one
spirit with Him.

[18] Run from sexual immorality! “Every sin a person can commit is
outside the body.” On the contrary, the person who is sexually immoral
sins against his own body. [19] Don’t you know that your body is a sanctuary
of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God? You are not
your own, [20] for you were bought at a price. Therefore glorify God in your
body.

Principles of Marriage

7 Now in response to the matters you wrote about: “It is good for a man
not to have relations with [A] a woman.” 2 But because sexual immorality
is so common, [B], each man should have his own wife, and each woman
should have her own husband. 3 A husband should fulfill his marital
responsibility to his wife, and likewise a wife to her husband. 4 A wife does
not have the right over her own body, but her husband does. In the same
way, a husband does not have the right over his own body, but his wife
does. 5 Do not deprive one another sexually — except when you agree for a
time, to devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again; otherwise,
Satan may tempt you because of your lack of self-control. 6 I say the
following [C] as a concession, not as a command. 7 I wish that all people were
just like me. But each has his own gift from God, one person in this way
and another in that way.

ARTICLE

What Does the Bible Teach About Homosexuality? ⇒

A Word to the Unmarried

8† I say to the unmarried and to widows: It is good for them if they
remain as I am. 9 But if they do not have self-control, they should marry,
for it is better to marry than to burn with desire.

About Married People

10 I command the married — not I, but the Lord — a wife is not to
leave [D] her husband. 11 But if she does leave, she must remain unmarried or
be reconciled to her husband — and a husband is not to leave his wife.
12 But I (not the Lord) say to the rest: If any brother has an unbelieving
wife and she is willing to live with him, he must not leave her. 13 Also, if
any woman has an unbelieving husband and he is willing to live with her,
she must not leave her husband. 14 For the unbelieving husband is set apart

for God by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is set apart for God by the
husband. [E] Otherwise your children would be corrupt, but now they are set
apart for God. [15] But if the unbeliever leaves, let him leave. A brother or a
sister is not bound in such cases. God has called you to live in peace. [16] For
you, wife, how do you know whether you will save your husband? Or you,
husband, how do you know whether you will save your wife?

Various Situations of Life

[17] However, each one must live his life in the situation the Lord assigned
when God called him. [F] This is what I command in all the churches. [18] Was
anyone already circumcised when he was called? He should not undo his
circumcision. Was anyone called while uncircumcised? He should not get
circumcised. [19] Circumcision does not matter and uncircumcision does not
matter, but keeping God's commands does. [20] Each person should remain in
the life situation [G] in which he was called. [21†] Were you called while a
•slave? It should not be a concern to you. But if you can become free, by all
means take the opportunity. [H] [22] For he who is called by the Lord as a slave
is the Lord's freedman. Likewise he who is called as a free man is Christ's
slave. [23] You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of men.
[24] Brothers, each person should remain with God in whatever situation he
was called.

About the Unmarried and Widows

[25] About virgins: I have no command from the Lord, but I do give an
opinion as one who by the Lord's mercy is trustworthy. [26] Therefore I
consider this to be good because of the present distress: It is fine for a man
to remain as he is. [27] Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be loosed.
Are you loosed from a wife? Do not seek a wife. [28] However, if you do get
married, you have not sinned, and if a virgin marries, she has not sinned.
But such people will have trouble in this life, [I] and I am trying to spare you.
[29] And I say this, brothers: The time is limited, so from now on those who
have wives should be as though they had none, [30] those who weep as
though they did not weep, those who rejoice as though they did not rejoice,

those who buy as though they did not possess, [31] and those who use the
world as though they did not make full use of it. For this world in its current
form is passing away.

[32] I want you to be without concerns. An unmarried man is concerned
about the things of the Lord — how he may please the Lord. [33] But a
married man is concerned about the things of the world — how he may
please his wife — [34] and his interests are divided. An unmarried woman or
a virgin is concerned about the things of the Lord, so that she may be holy
both in body and in spirit. But a married woman is concerned about the
things of the world — how she may please her husband. [35] Now I am
saying this for your own benefit, not to put a restraint on you, but because
of what is proper and so that you may be devoted to the Lord without
distraction.

[36] But if any man thinks he is acting improperly toward his virgin, if she
is past marriageable age, [J] and so it must be, he can do what he wants. He is
not sinning; they can get married. [37] But he who stands firm in his heart
(who is under no compulsion, but has control over his own will) and has
decided in his heart to keep his own virgin, will do well. [38] So then he who
marries [K] his virgin does well, but he who does not marry [L] will do better.

[39] A wife is bound as long as her husband is living. But if her husband
dies, she is free to be married to anyone she wants — only in the Lord.
[40] But she is happier if she remains as she is, in my opinion. And I think
that I also have the Spirit of God.

Food Offered to Idols

8 About food offered to idols: We know that "we all have knowledge."
Knowledge inflates with pride, but love builds up. 2 If anyone thinks
he knows anything, he does not yet know it as he ought to know it. 3 But if
anyone loves God, he is known by Him.

4 About eating food offered to idols, then, we know that "an idol is
nothing in the world," and that "there is no God but one." 5† For even if
there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth — as there are
many "gods" and many "lords" —

ARTICLE

How Should a Christian Relate to Culture? ⇒

6† yet for us there is one God, the Father.
All things are from Him,
and we exist for Him.
And there is one Lord, Jesus Christ.
All things are through Him,
and we exist through Him.

7† However, not everyone has this knowledge. In fact, some have been so
used to idolatry up until now that when they eat food offered to an idol,
their conscience, being weak, is defiled. 8 Food will not make us acceptable
to God. We are not inferior if we don't eat, and we are not better if we do
eat. 9 But be careful that this right of yours in no way becomes a stumbling
block to the weak. 10 For if someone sees you, the one who has this
knowledge, dining in an idol's temple, won't his weak conscience be
encouraged to eat food offered to idols? 11 Then the weak person, the
brother for whom Christ died, is ruined [A] by your knowledge. 12 Now
when you sin like this against the brothers and wound their weak
conscience, you are sinning against Christ. 13 Therefore, if food causes my

brother to fall, I will never again eat meat, so that I won't cause my brother to fall.

Paul’s Example as an Apostle

9 [†]Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord?
Are you not my work in the Lord? 2 If I am not an apostle to others, at
least I am to you, for you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord. 3 My
defense to those who examine me is this: 4 Don't we have the right to eat
and drink? 5 Don't we have the right to be accompanied by a Christian
wife [A] like the other apostles, the Lord's brothers, and •Cephas? 6 Or do
Barnabas and I alone have no right to refrain from working? 7 Who ever
goes to war at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat its
fruit? Or who shepherds a flock and does not drink the milk from the flock?
8 Am I saying this from a human perspective? Doesn't the law also say the
same thing? 9 For it is written in the law of Moses, **Do not muzzle an ox
while it treads out grain.** Is God really concerned with oxen? 10 Or isn't
He really saying it for us? Yes, this is written for us, because he who plows
ought to plow in hope, and he who threshes should do so in hope of sharing
the crop. 11 If we have sown spiritual things for you, is it too much if we
reap material benefits from you? 12 If others have this right to receive
benefits from you, don't we even more?

However, we have not made use of this right; instead we endure
everything so that we will not hinder the gospel of Christ. 13 Don't you
know that those who perform the temple services eat the food from the
temple, and those who serve at the altar share in the offerings of the altar?
14 In the same way, the Lord has commanded that those who preach the
gospel should earn their living by the gospel.

15 But I have used none of these rights, and I have not written this to
make it happen that way for me. For it would be better for me to die than
for anyone to deprive me of my boast! 16 For if I preach the gospel, I have
no reason to boast, because an obligation is placed on me. And woe to me if
I do not preach the gospel! 17 For if I do this willingly, I have a reward, but
if unwillingly, I am entrusted with a stewardship. 18 What then is my
reward? To preach the gospel and offer it free of charge and not make full
use of my authority in the gospel.

[19]† Although I am a free man and not anyone's •slave, I have made
myself a slave to everyone, in order to win more people. [20] To the Jews I
became like a Jew, to win Jews; to those under the law, like one under the
law — though I myself am not under the law — to win those under the
law. [21] To those who are without that law, like one without the law — not
being without God's law but within Christ's law — to win those without the
law. [22] To the weak I became weak, in order to win the weak. I have
become all things to all people, so that I may by every possible means save
some. [23] Now I do all this because of the gospel, so I may become a partner
in its benefits. [B]

[24] Don't you know that the runners in a stadium all race, but only one
receives the prize? Run in such a way to win the prize. [25] Now everyone
who competes exercises self-control in everything. However, they do it to
receive a crown that will fade away, but we a crown that will never fade
away. [26] Therefore I do not run like one who runs aimlessly or box like one
beating the air. [27] Instead, I discipline my body and bring it under strict
control, so that after preaching to others, I myself will not be disqualified.

Warnings from Israel's Past

10 Now I want you to know, brothers, that our fathers were all under the
cloud, all passed through the sea, 2 and all were baptized into
Moses in the cloud and in the sea. 3 They all ate the same spiritual food,
4 and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from a spiritual
rock that followed them, and that rock was Christ. 5 But God was not
pleased with most of them, for they were struck down in the wilderness.

6 Now these things became examples for us, so that we will not desire
evil things as they did. [A], 7 Don't become idolaters as some of them were;
as it is written, **The people sat down to eat and drink, and got up to
play.** [B] , 8† Let us not commit sexual immorality as some of them did, [C]
and in a single day 23,000 people fell dead. 9 Let us not test Christ as some
of them did [D] and were destroyed by snakes. 10 Nor should we complain
as some of them did, [E] and were killed by the destroyer. [F] 11 Now these
things happened to them as examples, and they were written as a warning to
us, on whom the ends of the ages have come. 12 So, whoever thinks he
stands must be careful not to fall. 13 No temptation has overtaken you
except what is common to humanity. God is faithful, and He will not allow
you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation He
will also provide a way of escape so that you are able to bear it.

Warning against Idolatry

14 Therefore, my dear friends, flee from idolatry. 15 I am speaking as to
wise people. Judge for yourselves what I say. 16 The cup of blessing that
we give thanks for, is it not a sharing in the blood of Christ? The bread that
we break, is it not a sharing in the body of Christ? 17 Because there is one
bread, we who are many are one body, for all of us share that one bread.
18 Look at the people of Israel. [G] Do not those who eat the sacrifices
participate in what is offered on the altar? 19 What am I saying then? That
food offered to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything? 20 No, but I do
say that what they sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons and not to God. I do
not want you to participate with demons! 21 You cannot drink the cup of the
Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot share in the Lord's table and the

table of demons. 22 Or are we provoking the Lord to jealousy? Are we
stronger than He?

Christian Liberty

23 “Everything is permissible,” but not everything is helpful.
“Everything is permissible,” but not everything builds up. 24 No one should
seek his own good, but the good of the other person.

25 Eat everything that is sold in the meat market, asking no questions for
conscience’ sake, 26 for **the earth is the Lord’s, and all that is in it.** 27 If
one of the unbelievers invites you over and you want to go, eat everything
that is set before you, without raising questions of conscience. 28 But if
someone says to you, “This is food offered to an idol,” do not eat it, out of
consideration for the one who told you, and for conscience’ sake. 29 I do
not mean your own conscience, but the other person’s. For why is my
freedom judged by another person’s conscience? 30 If I partake with
thanks, why am I slandered because of something I give thanks for?

31 Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything
for God’s glory. 32 Give no offense to the Jews or the Greeks or the church
of God, 33 just as I also try to please all people in all things, not seeking my
own profit, but the profit of many, so that they may be saved.

11 [†] Imitate me, as I also imitate Christ.

Instructions about Head Coverings

[2] Now I praise you because you always remember me and keep the
traditions just as I delivered them to you. [3†] But I want you to know that
Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of the woman, [A],
and God is the head of Christ. [4] Every man who prays or prophesies with
something on his head dishonors his head. [5†] But every woman who prays
or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head, since that is one
and the same as having her head shaved. [6] So if a woman's head [B] is not
covered, her hair should be cut off. But if it is disgraceful for a woman to
have her hair cut off or her head shaved, she should be covered.

[7] A man, in fact, should not cover his head, because he is God's image
and glory, but woman is man's glory. [8] For man did not come from woman,
but woman came from man. [9] And man was not created for woman, but
woman for man. [10] This is why a woman should have a symbol of authority
on her head, because of the angels. [11] In the Lord, however, woman is not
independent of man, and man is not independent of woman. [12] For just as
woman came from man, so man comes through woman, and all things come
from God.

[13] Judge for yourselves: Is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her
head uncovered? [14] Does not even nature itself teach you that if a man has
long hair it is a disgrace to him, [15] but that if a woman has long hair, it is
her glory? For her hair is given to her as a covering. [16] But if anyone
wants to argue about this, we have no other [C] custom, nor do the churches
of God.

The Lord's Supper

[17] Now in giving the following instruction I do not praise you, since you
come together not for the better but for the worse. [18] For to begin with, I
hear that when you come together as a church there are divisions among

you, and in part I believe it. [19] There must, indeed, be factions among you,
so that those who are approved may be recognized among you.
[20] Therefore, when you come together, it is not really to eat the Lord's
Supper. [21] For at the meal, each one eats his own supper ahead of others.
So one person is hungry while another gets drunk! [22] Don't you have
houses to eat and drink in? Or do you look down on the church of God and
embarrass those who have nothing? What should I say to you? Should I
praise you? I do not praise you for this!

[23] For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: On the
night when He was betrayed, the Lord Jesus took bread, [24] gave thanks,
broke it, and said, "This is My body, which is for you. Do this in
remembrance of Me."

[25] In the same way, after supper He also took the cup and said, "This cup
is the new covenant established by My blood. Do this, as often as you
drink it, in remembrance of Me." [26] For as often as you eat this bread and
drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.

Self-Examination

[27] Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an
unworthy way will be •guilty of sin against the body [D] and blood of the
Lord. [28] So a man should examine himself; in this way he should eat the
bread and drink from the cup. [29] For whoever eats and drinks without
recognizing the body, eats and drinks judgment on himself. [30] This is why
many are sick and ill among you, and many have fallen •asleep. [31] If we
were properly evaluating ourselves, we would not be judged, [32] but when
we are judged, we are disciplined by the Lord, so that we may not be
condemned with the •world.

[33] Therefore, my brothers, when you come together to eat, wait for one
another. [34] If anyone is hungry, he should eat at home, so that when you
gather together you will not come under judgment. And I will give
instructions about the other matters whenever I come.

Diversity of Spiritual Gifts

12 [†]Now concerning what comes from the Spirit: [A] brothers, I do not
want you to be unaware. [2] You know that when you were pagans, you
used to be led off to the idols that could not speak. [3†] Therefore I am
informing you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God says, "Jesus is
cursed," and no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit.

[4†] Now there are different gifts, but the same Spirit. [5] There are different
ministries, but the same Lord. [6] And there are different activities, but the
same God activates each gift in each person. [B] [7] A demonstration of the
Spirit is given to each person to produce what is beneficial:

[8] to one is given a message of wisdom
through the Spirit,
to another, a message of knowledge
by the same Spirit,
[9] to another, faith by the same Spirit,
to another, gifts of healing by the one Spirit,
[10] to another, the performing of miracles,
to another, prophecy,
to another, distinguishing between spirits,
to another, different kinds of •languages,
to another, interpretation of languages.

[11] But one and the same Spirit is active in all these, distributing to each
person as He wills.

Unity Yet Diversity in the Body

[12] For as the body is one and has many parts, and all the parts of that
body, though many, are one body — so also is Christ. [13] For we were all
baptized by [C] one Spirit into one body — whether Jews or Greeks, whether
•slaves or free — and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. [14] So the
body is not one part but many. [15] If the foot should say, "Because I'm not a
hand, I don't belong to the body," in spite of this it still belongs to the body.

[16] And if the ear should say, “Because I’m not an eye, I don’t belong to the
body,” in spite of this it still belongs to the body. [17] If the whole body were
an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where
would the sense of smell be? [18] But now God has placed each one of the
parts in one body just as He wanted. [19] And if they were all the same part,
where would the body be? [20] Now there are many parts, yet one body.

[21] So the eye cannot say to the hand, “I don’t need you! ” Or again, the
head can’t say to the feet, “I don’t need you! ” [22] But even more, those parts
of the body that seem to be weaker are necessary. [23] And those parts of the
body that we think to be less honorable, we clothe these with greater honor,
and our unpresentable parts have a better presentation. [24] But our
presentable parts have no need of clothing. Instead, God has put the body
together, giving greater honor to the less honorable, [25] so that there would
be no division in the body, but that the members would have the same
concern for each other. [26] So if one member suffers, all the members suffer
with it; if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it.

[27] Now you are the body of Christ, and individual members of it. [28] And
God has placed these in the church:

first apostles, second prophets,
third teachers, next miracles,
then gifts of healing, helping,
managing, various kinds of languages.
[29] Are all apostles? Are all prophets?
Are all teachers? Do all do miracles?
[30] Do all have gifts of healing?
Do all speak in other languages?
Do all interpret?

[31] But desire the greater gifts. And I will show you an even better way.

Love: The Superior Way

13 If I speak human or angelic •languages
but do not have love,
I am a sounding gong or a clanging cymbal.
2 If I have the gift of prophecy
and understand all •mysteries
and all knowledge,
and if I have all faith
so that I can move mountains
but do not have love, I am nothing.
3 And if I donate all my goods to feed the poor,
and if I give my body in order to boast
but do not have love, I gain nothing.
4 Love is patient, love is kind.
Love does not envy,
is not boastful, is not conceited,
5 does not act improperly,
is not selfish, is not provoked,
and does not keep a record of wrongs.
6 Love finds no joy in unrighteousness
but rejoices in the truth.
7 It bears all things, believes all things,
hopes all things, endures all things.
8 Love never ends.
But as for prophecies,
they will come to an end;
as for languages, they will cease;
as for knowledge, it will come to an end.
9 For we know in part,
and we prophesy in part.
10 But when the perfect comes,
the partial will come to an end.
11 When I was a child,
I spoke like a child,
I thought like a child,
I reasoned like a child.

When I became a man,
I put aside childish things.
12 For now we see indistinctly, [A] as in a mirror,
but then face to face.
Now I know in part,
but then I will know fully,
as I am fully known.
13 Now these three remain:
faith, hope, and love.
But the greatest of these is love.

Prophecy: A Superior Gift

14 Pursue love and desire spiritual gifts, and above all that you may
prophesy. 2 For the person who speaks in another •language is not
speaking to men but to God, since no one understands him; however, he
speaks mysteries in the Spirit. [A] 3 But the person who prophesies speaks to
people for edification, encouragement, and consolation. 4 The person who
speaks in another language builds himself up, but he who prophesies builds
up the church. 5 I wish all of you spoke in other languages, but even more
that you prophesied. The person who prophesies is greater than the person
who speaks in languages, unless he interprets so that the church may be
built up.

6 But now, brothers, if I come to you speaking in other languages, how
will I benefit you unless I speak to you with a revelation or knowledge or
prophecy or teaching? 7 Even inanimate things that produce
sounds — whether flute or harp — if they don't make a distinction in the
notes, how will what is played on the flute or harp be recognized? 8 In fact,
if the trumpet makes an unclear sound, who will prepare for battle? 9 In the
same way, unless you use your tongue for intelligible speech, how will what
is spoken be known? For you will be speaking into the air. 10 There are
doubtless many different kinds of languages in the world, and all have
meaning. [B] 11 Therefore, if I do not know the meaning of the language, I
will be a foreigner [C] to the speaker, and the speaker will be a foreigner to
me. 12 So also you — since you are zealous for spiritual gifts, [D] seek to
excel in building up the church.

13 Therefore the person who speaks in another language should pray that
he can interpret. 14 For if I pray in another language, my spirit prays, but
my understanding is unfruitful. 15 What then? I will pray with the spirit,
and I will also pray with my understanding. I will sing with the spirit, and I
will also sing with my understanding. 16 Otherwise, if you praise with the
spirit, [E] how will the uninformed person [F] say "•Amen" at your giving of
thanks, since he does not know what you are saying? 17 For you may very
well be giving thanks, but the other person is not being built up. 18 I thank
God that I speak in other languages more than all of you; 19 yet in the

church I would rather speak five words with my understanding, in order to
teach others also, than 10,000 words in another language.

20 Brothers, don't be childish in your thinking, but be infants in regard to
evil and adult in your thinking. 21 It is written in the law:

I will speak to these people
by people of other languages
and by the lips of foreigners,
and even then, they will not listen to Me,

says the Lord. 22 It follows that speaking in other languages is intended as a
sign, [G] not for believers but for unbelievers. But prophecy is not for
unbelievers but for believers. 23 Therefore, if the whole church assembles
together and all are speaking in other languages and people who are
uninformed or unbelievers come in, will they not say that you are out of
your minds? 24 But if all are prophesying and some unbeliever or
uninformed person comes in, he is convicted by all and is judged by all.
25 The secrets of his heart will be revealed, and as a result he will fall
facedown and worship God, proclaiming, "God is really among you."

Order in Church Meetings

26 What then is the conclusion, brothers? Whenever you come together,
each one has a psalm, a teaching, a revelation, another language, or an
interpretation. All things must be done for edification. 27 If any person
speaks in another language, there should be only two, or at the most three,
each in turn, and someone must interpret. 28 But if there is no interpreter,
that person should keep silent in the church and speak to himself and to
God. 29 Two or three prophets should speak, and the others should
evaluate. 30 But if something has been revealed to another person sitting
there, the first prophet should be silent. 31 For you can all prophesy one by
one, so that everyone may learn and everyone may be encouraged. 32 And
the prophets' spirits are under the control of the prophets, 33 since God is
not a God of disorder but of peace.

As in all the •saints, [34]† the women should be silent in
the churches, for they are not permitted to speak, but should be submissive,
as the law also says. [35] And if they want to learn something, they should ask
their own husbands at home, for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in
the church meeting. [36] Did the word of God originate from you, or did it
come to you only?

[37]† If anyone thinks he is a prophet or spiritual, he should recognize that
what I write to you is the Lord's command. [38] But if anyone ignores this, he
will be ignored. [39] Therefore, my brothers, be eager to prophesy, and do
not forbid speaking in other languages. [40] But everything must be done
decently and in order.

Resurrection Essential to the Gospel

15 [†]Now brothers, I want to clarify [A] for you the gospel I proclaimed to
you; you received it and have taken your stand on it. 2 You are also
saved by it, if you hold to the message I proclaimed to you — unless you
believed for no purpose. [B], 3[†] For I passed on to you as most important
what I also received:

ARTICLE

Did Jesus Really Rise from the Dead? ⇒

TWISTED SCRIPTURE

1 Corinthians 15:1-8,14-18,19

These verses refute the Jehovah's Witnesses doctrine that Jesus was raised from the dead as a spirit. The Apostle Paul clearly declared that without a bodily resurrection of Jesus there is no gospel, no hope for eternal life, and no meaning in the present life. When appearing to the disciples who were terrified, thinking they were seeing a ghost (Lk 24:38), Jesus assured them, "A ghost does not have flesh and bones as you can see I have" (v. 39).

that Christ died for our sins
according to the Scriptures,
4 that He was buried,
that He was raised on the third day
according to the Scriptures,
5 and that He appeared to •Cephas,
then to the Twelve.
6 Then He appeared to over 500 brothers at one time;
most of them are still alive,
but some have fallen •asleep.

[7] Then He appeared to James,
then to all the apostles.
[8†] Last of all, as to one abnormally born, [C]
He also appeared to me.

[9] For I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle,
because I persecuted the church of God. [10] But by God's grace I am what I
am, and His grace toward me was not ineffective. However, I worked more
than any of them, yet not I, but God's grace that was with me. [11] Therefore,
whether it is I or they, so we proclaim and so you have believed.

Resurrection Essential to the Faith

[12†] Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some
of you say, "There is no resurrection of the dead"? [13] But if there is no
resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised; [14] and if Christ has
not been raised, then our proclamation is without foundation, and so is your
faith. [D] [15] In addition, we are found to be false witnesses about God,
because we have testified about God that He raised up Christ — whom He
did not raise up if in fact the dead are not raised. [16] For if the dead are not
raised, Christ has not been raised. [17] And if Christ has not been raised, your
faith is worthless; you are still in your sins. [18] Therefore, those who have
fallen asleep in Christ have also perished. [19] If we have put our hope in
Christ for this life only, we should be pitied more than anyone.

Christ's Resurrection Guarantees Ours

[20] But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the •firstfruits of those
who have fallen asleep. [21] For since death came through a man, the
resurrection of the dead also comes through a man. [22] For as in Adam all
die, so also in Christ all will be made alive. [23] But each in his own order:
Christ, the firstfruits; afterward, at His coming, those who belong to Christ.
[24] Then comes the end, when He hands over the kingdom to God the
Father, when He abolishes all rule and all authority and power. [25] For He
must reign until He puts all His enemies under His feet. [26] The last enemy

to be abolished is death. [27] For **God has put everything under His feet.** But when it says "everything" is put under Him, it is obvious that He who puts everything under Him is the exception. [28] And when everything is subject to Christ, then the Son Himself will also be subject to the One who subjected everything to Him, so that God may be all in all.

Resurrection Supported by Christian Experience

[29†] Otherwise what will they do who are being baptized for the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, then why are people baptized for them?
[30] Why are we in danger every hour? [31] I affirm by the pride in you that I have in Christ Jesus our Lord: I die every day! [32] If I fought wild animals in Ephesus with only human hope, [E] what good did that do me? [F] If the dead are not raised, **Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.** [33] Do not be deceived: "Bad company corrupts good morals." [34] Come to your senses [G] and stop sinning, for some people are ignorant about God. I say this to your shame.

TWISTED SCRIPTURE

1 Corinthians 15:29

Mormons refer to this verse as support for their practice of baptism for the dead. According to Mormon doctrine, no one can be born again apart from baptism at the hands of a Mormon priest. This creates a problem for those living before the advent of Mormonism. The solution is to baptize the dead by proxy.

There are several possible interpretations for this verse. Even if baptism for the dead were a practice in some first-century congregations, it was being administered by heretics ("they"), who according to the passage rejected the resurrection. Paul was not endorsing the ritual.

The Nature of the Resurrection Body

[35] But someone will say, “How are the dead raised? What kind of body
will they have when they come? ” [36] Foolish one! What you sow does not
come to life unless it dies. [37] And as for what you sow — you are not
sowing the future body, but only a seed, [H] perhaps of wheat or another
grain. [38] But God gives it a body as He wants, and to each of the seeds its
own body. [39] Not all flesh is the same flesh; there is one flesh for humans,
another for animals, another for birds, and another for fish. [40] There are
heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the splendor of the heavenly bodies
is different from that of the earthly ones. [41] There is a splendor of the sun,
another of the moon, and another of the stars; for one star differs from
another star in splendor. [42] So it is with the resurrection of the dead:

Sown in corruption, raised in incorruption;
[43] sown in dishonor, raised in glory;
sown in weakness, raised in power;
[44†] sown a natural body, raised a spiritual body.

If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. [45] So it is written:
The first man Adam became a living being; the last Adam became a
life-giving Spirit. [46] However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural, then
the spiritual.

[47] The first man was from the earth
and made of dust;
the second man is from heaven.
[48] Like the man made of dust,
so are those who are made of dust;
like the heavenly man,
so are those who are heavenly.
[49] And just as we have borne
the image of the man made of dust,
we will also bear
the image of the heavenly man.

Victorious Resurrection

[50] Brothers, I tell you this: Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom
of God, and corruption cannot inherit incorruption. [51] Listen! I am telling
you a •mystery:

We will not all fall asleep,
but we will all be changed,
[52] in a moment, in the blink of an eye,
at the last trumpet.
For the trumpet will sound,
and the dead will be raised incorruptible,
and we will be changed.
[53] For this corruptible must be clothed
with incorruptibility,
and this mortal must be clothed
with immortality.
[54] When this corruptible is clothed
with incorruptibility,
and this mortal is clothed
with immortality,
then the saying that is written will take place:
Death has been swallowed up in victory.
[55] **Death, where is your victory?**
Death, where is your sting?
[56] Now the sting of death is sin,
and the power of sin is the law.
[57] But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory
through our Lord Jesus Christ!

[58] Therefore, my dear brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always excelling
in the Lord's work, knowing that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.

Collection for the Jerusalem Church

16 †Now about the collection for the •saints: You should do the same as
I instructed the Galatian churches. 2 On the first day of the week, [A]
each of you is to set something aside and save in keeping with how he
prospers, so that no collections will need to be made when I come. 3 When
I arrive, I will send with letters those you recommend to carry your
gracious gift to Jerusalem. 4 If it is suitable for me to go as well, they can
travel with me.

Paul's Travel Plans

5 I will come to you after I pass through Macedonia — for I will be
traveling through Macedonia — 6 and perhaps I will remain with you or
even spend the winter, so that you may send me on my way wherever I go.
7 I don't want to see you now just in passing, for I hope to spend some time
with you, if the Lord allows. 8 But I will stay in Ephesus until Pentecost,
9 because a wide door for effective ministry has opened for me [B] — yet
many oppose me. 10 If Timothy comes, see that he has nothing to fear from
you, because he is doing the Lord's work, just as I am. 11 Therefore, no one
should look down on him. Send him on his way in peace so he can come to
me, for I am expecting him with the brothers. [C]

12 About our brother Apollos: I strongly urged him to come to you with
the brothers, but he was not at all willing to come now. However, he will
come when he has an opportunity.

Final Exhortation

13 Be alert, stand firm in the faith, act like a man, be strong. 14 Your
every action must be done with love.

15 Brothers, you know the household of Stephanas: They are the
•firstfruits of Achaia and have devoted themselves to serving the saints. I
urge you 16 also to submit to such people, and to everyone who works and
labors with them. 17 I am pleased to have Stephanas, Fortunatus, and

Achaicus present, because these men have made up for your absence. [18] For
they have refreshed my spirit and yours. Therefore recognize such people.

Conclusion

[19] The churches of •Asia greet you. Aquila and Priscilla greet you
warmly in the Lord, along with the church that meets in their home. [20] All
the brothers greet you. Greet one another with a holy kiss.

[21]† This greeting is in my own hand — Paul. [22] If anyone does not love
the Lord, a curse be on him. *Marana tha* that is, Lord, come! D [23] The grace
of the Lord Jesus be with you. [24] My love be with all of you in Christ
Jesus.

2 CORINTHIANS

Introduction to 2 Corinthians

2 CORINTHIANS

Greeting

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by God's will, and Timothy our [A]
brother:

To God's church at Corinth, with all the •saints who are throughout
Achaia.

2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus
Christ.

The God of Comfort

3† Praise the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of
mercies and the God of all comfort. 4 He comforts us in all our affliction, [B]
so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any kind of affliction,
through the comfort we ourselves receive from God. 5 For as the sufferings
of Christ overflow to us, so through Christ our comfort also overflows. 6 If
we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation. If we are comforted, it
is for your comfort, which is experienced in your endurance of the same
sufferings that we suffer. 7† And our hope for you is firm, because we
know that as you share in the sufferings, so you will share in the comfort.

8 For we don't want you to be unaware, brothers, of our affliction that
took place in •Asia: we were completely overwhelmed — beyond our
strength — so that we even despaired of life. 9 Indeed, we personally had a
death sentence within ourselves, so that we would not trust in ourselves but
in God who raises the dead. 10 He has delivered us from such a terrible
death, and He will deliver us. We have put our hope in Him that He will
deliver us again 11 while you join in helping us by your prayers. Then many
will give thanks on our behalf for the gift that came to us through the
prayers of many.

A Clear Conscience

12 For this is our confidence: The testimony of our conscience is that we
have conducted ourselves in the world, and especially toward you, with
God-given sincerity and purity, not by fleshly [C] wisdom but by God's

grace. [13] Now we are writing nothing to you other than what you can read
and also understand. I hope you will understand completely — [14] as you
have partially understood us — that we are your reason for pride, as you
are ours, in the day of our Lord Jesus.

A Visit Postponed

[15†] I planned with this confidence to come to you first, so you could
have a double benefit, [16] and to go on to Macedonia with your help, then
come to you again from Macedonia and be given a start by you on my
journey to Judea. [17] So when I planned this, was I irresponsible? Or what I
plan, do I plan in a purely human [D], way so that I say "Yes, yes" and "No,
no" simultaneously? [18] As God is faithful, our message to you is not "Yes
and no." [19] For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you
by us — by me and Silvanus [E] and Timothy — did not become "Yes and
no"; on the contrary, a final "Yes" has come in Him. [20] For every one of
God's promises is "Yes" in Him. Therefore, the "•Amen" is also spoken
through Him by us for God's glory. [21] Now it is God who strengthens us,
with you, in Christ and has anointed us. [22] He has also sealed us and given
us the Spirit as a down payment in our hearts.

[23] I call on God as a witness, on my life, that it was to spare you that I
did not come to Corinth. [24] I do not mean that we have control of [F] your
faith, but we are workers with you for your joy, because you stand by faith.

2 In fact, I made up my mind about this: [A] I would not come to you on
another painful visit. [B] 2 For if I cause you pain, then who will cheer me
other than the one being hurt by me? [C] 3 I wrote this very thing so that when
I came I wouldn't have pain from those who ought to give me joy, because I
am confident about all of you that my joy will also be yours. 4 For I wrote
to you with many tears out of an extremely troubled and anguished
heart — not that you should be hurt, but that you should know the abundant
love I have for you.

A Sinner Forgiven

5 If anyone has caused pain, he has caused pain not so much to me but to
some degree — not to exaggerate — to all of you. 6 The punishment
inflicted by the majority is sufficient for that person. 7 As a result, you
should instead forgive and comfort him. Otherwise, this one may be
overwhelmed by excessive grief. 8 Therefore I urge you to reaffirm your
love to him. 9 I wrote for this purpose: to test your character to see if you
are obedient in everything. 10 If you forgive anyone, I do too. For what I
have forgiven — if I have forgiven anything — it is for you in the presence
of Christ. 11 I have done this so that we may not be taken advantage of by
Satan. For we are not ignorant of his schemes.

A Trip to Macedonia

12 When I came to Troas to preach the gospel of Christ, the Lord opened
a door for me. 13[†] I had no rest in my spirit because I did not find my
brother Titus, but I said good-bye to them and left for Macedonia.

A Ministry of Life or Death

14 But thanks be to God, who always puts us on display [D] in Christ [E] and
through us spreads the aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place.
15 For to God we are the fragrance of Christ among those who are being
saved and among those who are perishing. 16 To some we are an aroma of
death leading to death, but to others, an aroma of life leading to life. And

who is competent for this? [17] For we are not like the many who market God's message for profit. On the contrary, we speak with sincerity in Christ, as from God and before God.

Living Letters

3 [†] Are we beginning to commend ourselves again? Or do we need, like
some, letters of recommendation to you or from you? 2 You yourselves
are our letter, written on our hearts, recognized and read by everyone. 3 It is
clear that you are Christ's letter, produced [A] by us, not written with ink but
with the Spirit of the living God — not on stone tablets but on tablets that
are hearts of flesh.

Paul's Competence

4 We have this kind of confidence toward God through Christ. 5 It is not
that we are competent in [B] ourselves to consider anything as coming from
ourselves, but our competence is from God. 6 He has made us competent to
be ministers of a new covenant, not of the letter, but of the Spirit. For the
letter kills, but the Spirit produces life.

New Covenant Ministry

7 Now if the ministry of death, chiseled in letters on stones, came with
glory, so that the Israelites were not able to look directly at Moses' face
because of the glory from his face — a fading glory — 8 how will the
ministry of the Spirit not be more glorious? 9 For if the ministry of
condemnation had glory, the ministry of righteousness overflows with even
more glory. 10 In fact, what had been glorious is not glorious now by
comparison because of the glory that surpasses it. 11 For if what was fading
away was glorious, what endures will be even more glorious.

12 Therefore, having such a hope, we use great boldness. 13 We are not
like Moses, who used to put a veil over his face so that the Israelites could
not stare at the end of what was fading away, 14 but their minds were
closed. [C], For to this day, at the reading of the old covenant, the same veil
remains; it is not lifted, because it is set aside only in Christ. 15 Even to this
day, whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their hearts, 16 but whenever a
person turns to the Lord, the veil is removed. 17 Now the Lord is the Spirit,
and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. 18 We all, with
unveiled faces, are looking as in a mirror at [D] the glory of the Lord and are

being transformed into the same image from glory to glory; this is from the Lord who is the Spirit. [E]

The Light of the Gospel

4 Therefore, since we have this ministry because we were shown mercy,
we do not give up. [2] Instead, we have renounced shameful secret things,
not •walking in deceit or distorting God's message, but commending
ourselves to every person's conscience in God's sight by an open display of
the truth. [3] But if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are
perishing. [4] In their case, the god of this age has blinded the minds of the
unbelievers so they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of
Christ, [A], who is the image of God. [5] For we are not proclaiming ourselves
but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your •slaves because of Jesus.
[6] For God who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our
hearts to give the light of the knowledge of God's glory in the face of
Jesus Christ.

Treasure in Clay Jars

[7] Now we have this treasure in clay jars, so that this extraordinary power
may be from God and not from us. [8] We are pressured in every way but not
crushed; we are perplexed but not in despair; [9] we are persecuted but not
abandoned; we are struck down but not destroyed. [10] We always carry the
death of Jesus in our body, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in
our body. [11] For we who live are always given over to death because of
Jesus, so that Jesus' life may also be revealed in our mortal flesh. [12] So
death works in us, but life in you. [13] And since we have the same spirit of
faith in keeping with what is written, **I believed, therefore I spoke,** we
also believe, and therefore speak. [14] We know that the One who raised the
Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and present us with you. [15] Indeed,
everything is for your benefit, so that grace, extended through more and
more people, may cause thanksgiving to increase to God's glory.

[16] Therefore we do not give up. Even though our outer person is being
destroyed, our inner person is being renewed day by day. [17] For our
momentary light affliction [B] is producing for us an absolutely
incomparable eternal weight of glory. [18] So we do not focus on what is
seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is
unseen is eternal.

Our Future after Death

5 [†]For we know that if our temporary, earthly dwelling is destroyed, we
have a building from God, an eternal dwelling in the heavens, not
made with hands. [2] Indeed, we groan in this body, desiring to put on our
dwelling from heaven, [3] since, when we are clothed, we will not be found
naked. [4] Indeed, we groan while we are in this tent, burdened as we are,
because we do not want to be unclothed but clothed, so that mortality may
be swallowed up by life. [5] And the One who prepared us for this very
purpose is God, who gave us the Spirit as a down payment.

[6] So, we are always confident and know that while we are at home in the
body we are away from the Lord. [7] For we •walk by faith, not by sight,
[8] and we are confident and satisfied to be out of the body and at home with
the Lord. [9] Therefore, whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim
to be pleasing to Him. [10] For we must all appear before the tribunal of
Christ, so that each may be repaid for what he has done in the body,
whether good or worthless.

[11] Therefore, because we know the •fear of the Lord, we seek to
persuade people. We are completely open before God, and I hope we are
completely open to your consciences as well. [12] We are not commending
ourselves to you again, but giving you an opportunity to be proud of us, so
that you may have a reply for those who take pride in the outward
appearance [A] rather than in the heart. [13] For if we are out of our mind, it is
for God; if we have a sound mind, it is for you. [14] For Christ's love
compels [B] us, since we have reached this conclusion: If One died for all,
then all died. [15] And He died for all so that those who live should no longer
live for themselves, but for the One who died for them and was raised.

The Ministry of Reconciliation

[16] From now on, then, we do not know [C] anyone in a purely human
way. [D] Even if we have known [E] Christ in a purely human way, [F] yet now
we no longer know [G] Him in this way. [17] Therefore, if anyone is in Christ,
he is a new creation; old things have passed away, and look, new things
have come. [18] Everything is from God, who reconciled us to Himself

through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: [19] That is, in
Christ, God was reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their
trespasses against them, and He has committed the message of
reconciliation to us. [20] Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, certain
that God is appealing through us. We plead on Christ's behalf, "Be
reconciled to God." [21†] He made the One who did not know sin to be sin [H]
for us, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

6 Working together [A] with Him, we also appeal to you, "Don't receive God's grace in vain." [2] For He says:

I heard you in an acceptable time,
and I helped you in the day of salvation.

Look, now is the acceptable time; now is the day of salvation.

ARTICLE
What Are Self-defeating Statements? ⇒

The Character of Paul's Ministry

[3] We give no opportunity for stumbling to anyone, so that the ministry will not be blamed. [4] But as God's ministers, we commend ourselves in everything:

by great endurance, by afflictions,
by hardship, by difficulties,
[5] by beatings, by imprisonments,
by riots, by labors,
by sleepless nights, by times of hunger,
[6] by purity, by knowledge,
by patience, by kindness,
by the Holy Spirit, by sincere love,
[7] by the message of truth,
by the power of God;
through weapons of righteousness
on the right hand and the left,
[8] through glory and dishonor,
through slander and good report;

as deceivers yet true;
[9] as unknown yet recognized;
as dying and look — we live;
as being disciplined yet not killed;
[10] as grieving yet always rejoicing;
as poor yet enriching many;
as having nothing yet possessing everything.

[11] We have spoken openly [B] to you, Corinthians; our heart has been opened
wide. [12] You are not limited by us, but you are limited by your own
affections. [13] I speak as to my children. As a proper response, you should
also be open to us.

Separation to God

[14†] Do not be mismatched with unbelievers. For what partnership is there
between righteousness and lawlessness? Or what fellowship does light
have with darkness? [15] What agreement does Christ have with Belial? [C] Or
what does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? [16] And what
agreement does God's sanctuary have with idols? For we are the sanctuary
of the living God, as God said:

I will dwell among them
and walk among them,
and I will be their God,
and they will be My people.
[17] **Therefore, come out from among them**
and be separate, says the Lord;
do not touch any unclean thing,
and I will welcome you.
[18] **I will be a Father to you,**
and you will be sons and daughters to Me,
says the Lord Almighty.

7 Therefore, dear friends, since we have such promises, let us •cleanse
ourselves from every impurity of the flesh and spirit, completing our
•sanctification [A] in the •fear of God.

Joy and Repentance

2 Accept us. [B] We have wronged no one, corrupted no one, defrauded no
one. 3 I don't say this to condemn you, for I have already said that you are
in our hearts, to live together and to die together. 4 I have great confidence
in you; I have great pride in you. I am filled with encouragement; I am
overcome with joy in all our afflictions.

5 In fact, when we came into Macedonia, we [C] had no rest. Instead, we
were troubled in every way: conflicts on the outside, fears inside. 6 But
God, who comforts the humble, comforted us by the arrival of Titus, 7 and
not only by his arrival, but also by the comfort he received from you. He
told us about your deep longing, your sorrow, [D] and your zeal for me, so
that I rejoiced even more. 8 For even if I grieved you with my letter, I do
not regret it — even though I did regret it since I saw that the letter grieved
you, yet only for a little while. 9 Now I rejoice, not because you were
grieved, but because your grief led to repentance. For you were grieved as
God willed, so that you didn't experience any loss from us. 10 For godly
grief produces a repentance not to be regretted and leading to salvation, but
worldly grief produces death. 11 For consider how much diligence this very
thing — this grieving as God wills — has produced in you: what a desire to
clear yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what deep longing, what zeal,
what justice! In every way you showed yourselves to be pure in this matter.
12 So even though I wrote to you, it was not because of the one who did
wrong, or because of the one who was wronged, but in order that your
diligence for us might be made plain to you in the sight of God. 13 For this
reason we have been comforted.

In addition to our comfort, we rejoiced even more over the joy Titus
had, [E] because his spirit was refreshed by all of you. 14 For if I have made

any boast to him about you, I have not been embarrassed; but as I have spoken everything to you in truth, so our boasting to Titus has also turned out to be the truth. [15] And his affection toward you is even greater as he remembers the obedience of all of you, and how you received him with fear and trembling. [16] I rejoice that I have complete confidence in you.

Appeal to Complete the Collection

8 We want you to know, brothers, about the grace of God granted to the
churches of Macedonia: 2 During a severe testing by affliction, their
abundance of joy and their deep poverty overflowed into the wealth of their
generosity. 3 I testify that, on their own, according to their ability and
beyond their ability, 4 they begged us insistently for the privilege of sharing
in the ministry to the •saints, 5 and not just as we had hoped. Instead, they
gave themselves especially to the Lord, then to us by God's will. 6 So we
urged Titus that just as he had begun, so he should also complete this grace
to you. 7 Now as you excel in everything — faith, speech, knowledge, and
in all diligence, and in your love for us — excel also in this grace.

8 I am not saying this as a command. Rather, by means of the diligence of
others, I am testing the genuineness of your love. 9[†] For you know the grace
of our Lord Jesus Christ: Though He was rich, for your sake He became
poor, so that by His poverty you might become rich. 10 Now I am giving an
opinion on this because it is profitable for you, who a year ago began not
only to do something but also to desire it. [A], 11 But now finish the task [B] as
well, that just as there was eagerness to desire it, so there may also be a
completion from what you have. 12 For if the eagerness is there, it is
acceptable according to what one has, not according to what he does not
have. 13 It is not that there may be relief for others and hardship for you,
but it is a question of equality [C] — 14 at the present time your surplus is
available for their need, so their abundance may also become available for
our need, so there may be equality. 15 As it has been written:

The person who gathered much
did not have too much,
and the person who gathered little
did not have too little.

Administration of the Collection

16 Thanks be to God who put the same concern for you into the heart of
Titus. 17 For he accepted our urging and, being very diligent, went out to
you by his own choice. 18 We have sent with him the brother who is praised

throughout the churches for his gospel ministry. [D] [19] And not only that, but
he was also appointed by the churches to accompany us with this gift [E] that
is being administered by us for the glory of the Lord Himself and to show
our eagerness to help. [20] We are taking this precaution so no one can
criticize us about this large sum administered by us. [21] For we are making
provision for what is right, not only before the Lord but also before men.
[22] We have also sent with them our brother. We have often tested him in
many circumstances and found him to be diligent — and now even more
diligent because of his great confidence in you. [23] As for Titus, he is my
partner and coworker serving you; as for our brothers, they are the
messengers of the churches, the glory of Christ. [24] Therefore, show them
proof before the churches of your love and of our boasting about you.

Motivations for Giving

9 Now concerning the ministry to the •saints, it is unnecessary for me to
write to you. [2] For I know your eagerness, and I brag about you to the
Macedonians: “Achaia has been prepared since last year,” and your zeal
has stirred up most of them. [3] But I sent the brothers so our boasting about
you in the matter would not prove empty, and so you would be prepared just
as I said. [4] For if any Macedonians come with me and find you unprepared,
we, not to mention you, would be embarrassed in that situation. [A]
[5] Therefore I considered it necessary to urge the brothers to go on ahead to
you and arrange in advance the generous gift you promised, so that it will
be ready as a gift and not as an extortion.

[6] Remember this: [B] The person who sows sparingly will also reap
sparingly, and the person who sows generously will also reap generously.
[7] Each person should do as he has decided in his heart — not reluctantly or
out of necessity, for God loves a cheerful giver. [8] And God is able to make
every grace overflow to you, so that in every way, always having
everything you need, you may excel in every good work. [9] As it is written:

He scattered;
He gave to the poor;
His righteousness endures forever.

ARTICLE

Are Scientology and the Bible Compatible? ⇒

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[10] Now the One who provides seed for the sower and bread for food will
provide and multiply your seed and increase the harvest of your
righteousness. [11] You will be enriched in every way for all generosity,
which produces thanksgiving to God through us. [12] For the ministry of this
service is not only supplying the needs of the saints, but is also overflowing
in many acts of thanksgiving to God. [13] They will glorify God for your
obedience to the confession of [C] the gospel of Christ, and for your

generosity in sharing with them and with others through the proof provided
by this service. 14 And they will have deep affection for [D] you in their
prayers on your behalf because of the surpassing grace of God in you.
15 Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift.

Paul's Apostolic Authority

10 [†]Now I, Paul, make a personal appeal to you by the gentleness and
graciousness of Christ — I who am humble among you in person but
bold toward you when absent. 2 I beg you that when I am present I will not
need to be bold with the confidence by which I plan to challenge certain
people who think we are behaving in an unspiritual way. [A], 3[†] For though
we live in the body, [B] we do not wage war in an unspiritual way, [C] 4 since
the weapons of our warfare are not worldly, [D] but are powerful through
God for the demolition of strongholds. We demolish arguments 5 and every
high-minded thing that is raised up against the knowledge of God, taking
every thought captive to obey Christ. 6 And we are ready to punish any
disobedience, once your obedience has been confirmed.

7 Look at what is obvious. [E] If anyone is confident that he belongs to
Christ, he should remind himself of this: Just as he belongs to Christ, so do
we. 8 For if I boast some more about our authority, which the Lord gave for
building you up and not for tearing you down, I am not ashamed. 9 I don't
want to seem as though I am trying to terrify you with my letters. 10 For it is
said, "His letters are weighty and powerful, but his physical presence is
weak, and his public speaking is despicable." 11 Such a person should
consider this: What we are in the words of our letters when absent, we will
be in actions when present.

12 For we don't dare classify or compare ourselves with some who
commend themselves. But in measuring themselves by themselves and
comparing themselves to themselves, they lack understanding. 13 We,
however, will not boast beyond measure but according to the measure of the
area of ministry that God has assigned to us, which reaches even to you.
14 For we are not overextending ourselves, as if we had not reached you,
since we have come to you with the gospel of Christ. 15 We are not bragging
beyond measure about other people's labors. But we have the hope that as
your faith increases, our area of ministry will be greatly enlarged, 16 so that
we may proclaim the good news to the regions beyond you, not boasting
about what has already been done in someone else's area of ministry. 17 So

the one who boasts must boast in the Lord. [18] For it is not the one commending himself who is approved, but the one the Lord commends.

Paul and the False Apostles

11 I wish you would put up with a little foolishness from me. Yes, do put
up with me. [A] 2 For I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy,
because I have promised you in marriage to one husband — to present a
pure virgin to Christ. 3 But I fear that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his
cunning, your minds may be seduced from a complete and pure devotion to
Christ. 4 For if a person comes and preaches another Jesus, whom we did
not preach, or you receive a different spirit, which you had not received, or
a different gospel, which you had not accepted, you put up with it
splendidly!

TWISTED SCRIPTURE

2 Corinthians 11:4

Cult leaders often preach "another Jesus." For instance, Reverend Sun Myung Moon teaches that Jesus was the second Adam who only partially succeeded at His mission; thus, Rev. Moon must complete it. Mary Baker Eddy, founder of the Church of Christ, Scientist (aka Christian Science), wrote of Jesus as a divine being who only appeared to have a physical body. Victor Paul Wierwille, founder of The Way International, rejected the preexistence of Jesus and taught that Jesus was a man with a fallen nature, yet without sin. Charles Taze Russell, the architect of the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society (aka Jehovah's Witnesses), taught that the preincarnate Jesus was the archangel Michael, the first of God's creation. Mormonism teaches that Jesus was the first and mightiest spirit son of God and the brother of all the other spirits who would eventually become humans on earth. Followers of the Word-Faith embrace a belief that Jesus was born again after His death and descent into hell. New Age gurus espouse a Jesus who was a great world teacher for His age, but they believe that a new world teacher is about to appear. To accept another Jesus is tantamount to receiving "another spirit" and "another gospel." The authentic gospel is the free offer of salvation to all who believe.

5† Now I consider myself in no way inferior to the “super-apostles.”
6 Though untrained in public speaking, I am certainly not untrained in
knowledge. Indeed, we have always made that clear to you in everything.

[7] Or did I commit a sin by humbling myself so that you might be exalted,
because I preached the gospel of God to you free of charge? [8] I robbed
other churches by taking pay from them to minister to you. [9] When I was
present with you and in need, I did not burden anyone, for the brothers who
came from Macedonia supplied my needs. I have kept myself, and will
keep myself, from burdening you in any way. [10] As the truth of Christ is in
me, this boasting of mine will not be stopped [B] in the regions of Achaia.
[11] Why? Because I don't love you? God knows I do!

[12] But I will continue to do what I am doing, in order to deny [C] the
opportunity of those who want an opportunity to be regarded just as our
equals in what they boast about. [13] For such people are false apostles,
deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. [14] And no
wonder! For Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. [15] So it is no great
thing if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness.
Their destiny [D] will be according to their works.

Paul's Sufferings for Christ

[16] I repeat: No one should consider me a fool. But if you do, at least
accept me as a fool, so I too may boast a little. [17] What I say in this matter [E]
of boasting, I don't speak as the Lord would, but foolishly. [18] Since many
boast in an unspiritual way, [F] I will also boast. [19] For you, being so wise,
gladly put up with fools! [20] In fact, you put up with it if someone enslaves
you, if someone devours you, if someone captures you, if someone
dominates you, or if someone hits you in the face. [21] I say this to our
shame: We have been weak.

But in whatever anyone dares to boast — I am talking foolishly — I also
dare:

[22] Are they Hebrews? So am I.
Are they Israelites? So am I.
Are they the •seed of Abraham? So am I.

23 Are they servants of Christ?
I’m talking like a madman — I’m a better one:
with far more labors,
many more imprisonments,
far worse beatings, near death [G] many times.
24 Five times I received 39 lashes from Jews.
25 Three times I was beaten with rods by the Romans.
Once I was stoned by my enemies.
Three times I was shipwrecked.
I have spent a night and a day
in the open sea.
26 On frequent journeys, I faced
dangers from rivers,
dangers from robbers,
dangers from my own people,
dangers from the Gentiles,
dangers in the city,
dangers in the open country,
dangers on the sea,
and dangers among false brothers;
27 labor and hardship,
many sleepless nights, hunger and thirst,
often without food, cold, and lacking clothing.

28 Not to mention [H] other things, there is the daily pressure on me: my care
for all the churches. 29 Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to
•stumble, and I do not burn with indignation? 30 If boasting is necessary, I
will boast about my weaknesses. 31 The God and Father of the Lord Jesus,
who is praised forever, knows I am not lying. 32 In Damascus, the governor
under King Aretas guarded the city of the Damascenes in order to arrest
me, 33 so I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall and
escaped his hands.

Sufficient Grace

12 Boasting is necessary. It is not profitable, but I will move on to
visions and revelations of the Lord. [2] I know a man in Christ who
was caught up into the third heaven 14 years ago. Whether he was in the
body or out of the body, I don't know, God knows. [3] I know that this
man — whether in the body or out of the body I don't know, God knows —
[4] was caught up into paradise. He heard inexpressible words, which a man
is not allowed to speak. [5] I will boast about this person, but not about
myself, except of my weaknesses. [6] For if I want to boast, I will not be a
fool, because I will be telling the truth. But I will spare you, so that no one
can credit me with something beyond what he sees in me or hears from me,
[7†] especially because of the extraordinary revelations. Therefore, so that I
would not exalt myself, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger [A]
of Satan to torment me so I would not exalt myself. [8] Concerning this, I
pleaded with the Lord three times to take it away from me. [9] But He said to
me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness."
Therefore, I will most gladly boast all the more about my weaknesses, so
that Christ's power may reside in me. [10] So I take pleasure in weaknesses,
insults, catastrophes, persecutions, and in pressures, because of Christ. For
when I am weak, then I am strong.

TWISTED SCRIPTURE

2 Corinthians 12:2

Some New Age teachers mention this verse as support for the practice of astral projection, or soul travel. Followers of Eckankar regularly attempt to separate soul and body, which supposedly enables them to traverse the various realms of the universe. Paul called his experience a vision (12:1) and indicated that it was not self-initiated but rather happened to him unexpectedly. There is no scriptural support for astral projection.

Signs of an Apostle

[11] I have become a fool; you forced it on me. I should have been
endorsed by you, since I am not in any way inferior to the "super-apostles,"
even though I am nothing. [12] The signs of an apostle were performed with
great endurance among you — not only signs but also wonders and
miracles. [13] So in what way were you treated worse than the other
churches, except that I personally did not burden you? Forgive me this
wrong!

Paul's Concern for the Corinthians

[14] Now I am ready to come to you this third time. I will not burden you,
for I am not seeking what is yours, but you. For children are not obligated
to save up for their parents, but parents for their children. [15] I will most
gladly spend and be spent for you. [B], If I love you more, am I to be loved
less? [16] Now granted, I have not burdened you; yet sly as I am, I took you
in by deceit! [17] Did I take advantage of you by anyone I sent you? [18] I
urged Titus to come, and I sent the brother with him. Did Titus take
advantage of you? Didn't we •walk in the same spirit and in the same
footsteps?

[19] You have thought all along that we were defending ourselves to you. [C]
No, in the sight of God we are speaking in Christ, and everything, dear
friends, is for building you up. [20] For I fear that perhaps when I come I will
not find you to be what I want, and I may not be found by you to be what
you want; [D] there may be quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish
ambitions, slander, gossip, arrogance, and disorder. [21] I fear that when I
come my God will again [E] humiliate me in your presence, and I will grieve
for many who sinned before and have not repented of the moral impurity,
sexual immorality, and promiscuity they practiced.

Final Warnings and Exhortations

13 This is the third time I am coming to you. **Every fact must be
established by the testimony** [A] **of two or three witnesses.** 2 I gave a
warning when I was present the second time, and now I give a warning
while I am absent to those who sinned before and to all the rest: If I come
again, I will not be lenient, 3 since you seek proof of Christ speaking in me.
He is not weak toward you, but powerful among you. 4 In fact, He was
crucified in weakness, but He lives by God's power. For we also are weak
in Him, yet toward you we will live with Him by God's power.

5 Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith. Examine yourselves. Or
do you yourselves not recognize that Jesus Christ is in you? — unless you
fail the test. [B] 6 And I hope you will recognize that we do not fail the test.
7 Now we pray to God that you do nothing wrong — not that we may
appear to pass the test, but that you may do what is right, even though we
may appear to fail. 8 For we are not able to do anything against the truth,
but only for the truth. 9 In fact, we rejoice when we are weak and you are
strong. We also pray that you become fully mature. [C] 10 This is why I am
writing these things while absent, that when I am there I will not use
severity, in keeping with the authority the Lord gave me for building up
and not for tearing down.

11 Finally, brothers, rejoice. Become mature, be encouraged, be of the
same mind, be at peace, and the God of love and peace will be with you.
12 Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the •saints greet you.

13 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the
fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with all of you.

GALATIANS

Introduction to Galatians

GALATIANS

Greeting

1 †Paul, an apostle — not from men or by man, but by Jesus Christ and
God the Father who raised Him from the dead — 2 and all the brothers
who are with me:

To the churches of Galatia.

3 Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ,
4† who gave Himself for our sins to rescue us from this present evil age,
according to the will of our God and Father. 5 To whom be the glory
forever and ever. •Amen.

No Other Gospel

6† I am amazed that you are so quickly turning away from Him who
called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel —
7 not that there is another gospel, but there are some who are troubling you
and want to change the good news [A] about the •Messiah. 8 But even if we or
an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel other than what we
have preached to you, a curse be on him! [B] 9 As we have said before, I now
say again: If anyone preaches to you a gospel contrary to what you
received, a curse be on him!

TWISTED SCRIPTURE

Galatians 1:8-9

Joseph Smith, the founder of Mormonism, claimed that he was visited by the angel Moroni who informed him that the true gospel had been corrupted after the apostolic age and thus had been absent from the earth for nearly 19 centuries. Smith viewed his calling as a restoration of true Christianity to the world. The Mormon gospel is based on self-effort, submission to baptism for regeneration, the acceptance of Joseph Smith as God's end-time prophet, a belief in the "inspired" Mormon scriptures, and the keeping of the Word of Wisdom, which includes abstinence from caffeine, tobacco, and alcohol (Doctrines and Covenants, section 89), among other things. Similarly, Islam teaches that the angel Gabriel delivered the Koran to

Muhammad. The Apostle Paul identified all such human or angelic revelations as "contrary" gospels and pronounced a curse upon those who proclaim a false gospel.

10† For am I now trying to win the favor of people, or God? Or am I striving to please people? If I were still trying to please people, I would not be a •slave of Christ.

Paul Defends His Apostleship

11† Now I want you to know, brothers, that the gospel preached by me is not based on human thought. [C] 12 For I did not receive it from a human source and I was not taught it, but it came by a revelation from Jesus Christ.

13† For you have heard about my former way of life in Judaism: I persecuted God's church to an extreme degree and tried to destroy it. 14 I advanced in Judaism beyond many contemporaries among my people, because I was extremely zealous for the traditions of my ancestors. 15 But when God, who from my birth set me apart and called me by His grace, was pleased 16 to reveal His Son in me, so that I could preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with anyone. [D] 17 I did not go up to Jerusalem to those who had become apostles before me; instead I went to Arabia and came back to Damascus.

18† Then after three years I did go up to Jerusalem to get to know •Cephas, and I stayed with him 15 days. 19 But I didn't see any of the other apostles except James, the Lord's brother. 20 Now I am not lying in what I write to you. God is my witness. [E]

21 Afterward, I went to the regions of Syria and Cilicia. 22 I remained personally unknown to the Judean churches in Christ; 23 they simply kept hearing: "He who formerly persecuted us now preaches the faith he once tried to destroy." 24 And they glorified God because of me.

Paul Defends His Gospel at Jerusalem

2 Then after 14 years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus along also. 2 I went up according to a revelation and presented to them the gospel I preach among the Gentiles — but privately to those recognized as leaders — so that I might not be running, or have run the race, in vain. 3 But not even Titus who was with me, though he was a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised. 4 This issue arose because of false brothers smuggled in, who came in secretly to spy on the freedom that we have in Christ Jesus, in order to enslave us. 5 But we did not give up and submit to these people for even an hour, so that the truth of the gospel would be preserved for you.

6 Now from those recognized as important (what they really were makes no difference to me; God does not show favoritism [A],) — they added nothing to me. 7 On the contrary, they saw that I had been entrusted with the gospel for the uncircumcised, just as Peter was for the circumcised, 8 since the One at work in Peter for an apostleship to the circumcised was also at work in me for the Gentiles. 9 When James, •Cephas, and John, recognized as pillars, acknowledged the grace that had been given to me, they gave the right hand of fellowship to me and Barnabas, agreeing that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised. 10 They asked only that we would remember the poor, which I made every effort to do.

ARTICLE

Is Allah Identical to the God and Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ?



Freedom from the Law

11[†] But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face because he stood condemned. [B] 12 For he regularly ate with the Gentiles before certain men came from James. However, when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, because he feared those from the circumcision party.

[13] Then the rest of the Jews joined his hypocrisy, so that even Barnabas was carried away by their hypocrisy. [14] But when I saw that they were deviating from the truth of the gospel, I told Cephas in front of everyone, “If you, who are a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you compel Gentiles to live like Jews? ”

[15] We who are Jews by birth and not “Gentile sinners” [16] know that no one is •justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ. [C] And we have believed in Christ Jesus so that we might be justified by faith in Christ [D] and not by the works of the law, because by the works of the law no human being will [E] be justified. [17] But if we ourselves are also found to be “sinners” while seeking to be justified by Christ, is Christ then a promoter [F], of sin? Absolutely not! [18] If I rebuild the system [G] I tore down, I show myself to be a lawbreaker. [19] For through the law I have died to the law, so that I might live for God. I have been crucified with Christ [20] and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, [H] I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. [21] I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died for nothing.

Justification through Faith

3 [†]You foolish Galatians! Who has hypnotized you, before whose eyes
Jesus Christ was vividly portrayed as crucified? 2 I only want to learn
this from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law or by
hearing with faith? [A] 3 Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit,
are you now going to be made complete by the flesh? 4 Did you suffer so
much for nothing — if in fact it was for nothing? 5 So then, does God
supply you with the Spirit and work miracles among you by the works of
the law or by hearing with faith? [B]

6 Just as Abraham **believed God, and it was credited to him for
righteousness,** 7 then understand that those who have faith are Abraham's
sons. 8 Now the Scripture saw in advance that God would •justify the
Gentiles by faith and told the good news ahead of time to Abraham, saying,
All the nations will be blessed through you. 9 So those who have faith are
blessed with Abraham, who had faith. [C]

Law and Promise

10 For all who rely on the works of the law are under a curse, because it
is written: **Everyone who does not continue doing everything written in
the book of the law is cursed.** 11 Now it is clear that no one is justified
before God by the law, because **the righteous will live by faith.** 12 But the
law is not based on faith; instead, **the one who does these things will live
by them.** 13[†] Christ has •redeemed us from the curse of the law by
becoming a curse for us, because it is written: **Everyone who is hung on a
tree is cursed.** 14 The purpose was that the blessing of Abraham would
come to the Gentiles by Christ Jesus, so that we could receive the promised
Spirit through faith.

15 Brothers, I'm using a human illustration. [D] No one sets aside or makes
additions to even a human covenant [E] that has been ratified. 16 Now the
promises were spoken to Abraham and to his •seed. He does not say "and to
seeds," as though referring to many, but referring to one, **and to your seed,**
who is Christ. 17[†] And I say this: The law, which came 430 years later, does
not revoke a covenant that was previously ratified by God and cancel the

promise. [18] For if the inheritance is from the law, it is no longer from the
promise; but God granted it to Abraham through the promise.

The Purpose of the Law

[19] Why then was the law given? It was added because of transgressions
until the Seed to whom the promise was made would come. The law was
put into effect through angels by means of a mediator. [20] Now a mediator
is not for just one person, but God is one. [21] Is the law therefore contrary to
God's promises? Absolutely not! For if a law had been given that was able
to give life, then righteousness would certainly be by the law. [22] But the
Scripture has imprisoned everything under sin's power, [F], so that the
promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.
[23] Before this faith came, we were confined under the law, imprisoned until
the coming faith was revealed. [24] The law, then, was our guardian [G] until
Christ, so that we could be justified by faith. [25] But since that faith has
come, we are no longer under a guardian, [26] for you are all sons of God
through faith in Christ Jesus.

Sons and Heirs

[27] For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on
Christ like a garment. [28†] There is no Jew or Greek, •slave or free, male or
female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. [29] And if you belong to Christ,
then you are Abraham's seed, heirs according to the promise.

4 Now I say that as long as the heir is a child, he differs in no way from a
•slave, though he is the owner of everything. [2] Instead, he is under
guardians and stewards until the time set by his father. [3] In the same way we
also, when we were children, were in slavery under the elemental forces [A]
of the world. [4†] When the time came to completion, God sent His Son,
born of a woman, born under the law, [5] to •redeem those under the law, so
that we might receive adoption as sons. [6] And because you are sons, God
has sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, "•*Abba*, Father!"
[7] So you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir through
God.

Paul's Concern for the Galatians

[8] But in the past, when you didn't know God, you were enslaved to
things [B] that by nature are not gods. [9] But now, since you know God, or
rather have become known by God, how can you turn back again to the
weak and bankrupt elemental forces? Do you want to be enslaved to them
all over again? [10] You observe special days, months, seasons, and years.
[11] I am fearful for you, that perhaps my labor for you has been wasted.

[12] I beg you, brothers: Become like me, for I also became like you. You
have not wronged me; [13] you know that previously I preached the gospel to
you because of a physical illness. [14] You did not despise or reject me though
my physical condition was a trial for you. On the contrary, you received me
as an angel of God, as Christ Jesus Himself.

[15] What happened to this sense of being blessed you had? For I testify to
you that, if possible, you would have torn out your eyes and given them to
me. [16] Have I now become your enemy by telling you the truth? [17] They
are enthusiastic about you, but not for any good. Instead, they want to
isolate you so you will be enthusiastic about them. [18] Now it is always good
to be enthusiastic about good — and not just when I am with you. [19] My
children, I am again suffering labor pains for you until Christ is formed in
you. [20] I would like to be with you right now and change my tone of voice,
because I don't know what to do about you.

Sarah and Hagar: Two Covenants

21 Tell me, those of you who want to be under the law, don’t you hear the
law? 22 For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by a slave and the
other by a free woman. 23 But the one by the slave was born according to
the impulse of the flesh, while the one by the free woman was born as the
result of a promise. 24 These things are illustrations, for the women
represent the two covenants. One is from Mount Sinai and bears children
into slavery — this is Hagar. 25 Now Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia and
corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her
children. 26 But the Jerusalem above is free, and she is our mother. 27 For it
is written:

Rejoice, childless woman,
who does not give birth.
Burst into song and shout,
you who are not in labor,
for the children of the desolate are many,
more numerous than those
of the woman who has a husband.

28 Now you, brothers, like Isaac, are children of promise. 29 But just as
then the child born according to the flesh persecuted the one born according
to the Spirit, so also now. 30 But what does the Scripture say?

> **Drive out the slave and her son, for the son of the slave will never be a co-heir with the son of the free woman.**

31 Therefore, brothers, we are not children of the slave but of the free
woman.

Freedom of the Christian

5 Christ has liberated us to be free. Stand firm then and don't submit
again to a yoke of slavery. [2] Take note! I, Paul, tell you that if you get
yourselves circumcised, Christ will not benefit you at all. [3] Again I testify to
every man who gets himself circumcised that he is obligated to keep the
entire law. [4] You who are trying to be •justified by the law are alienated
from Christ; you have fallen from grace. [5] For through the Spirit, by faith,
we eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness. [6] For in Christ Jesus neither
circumcision nor uncircumcision accomplishes anything; what matters is
faith working through love.

[7] You were running well. Who prevented you from obeying the truth?
[8] This persuasion did not come from the One who called you. [9] A little
yeast leavens the whole lump of dough. [10] I have confidence in the Lord
you will not accept any other view. But whoever it is that is confusing you
will pay the penalty. [11] Now brothers, if I still preach circumcision, why am
I still persecuted? In that case the offense of the cross has been abolished.
[12] I wish those who are disturbing you might also get themselves castrated!

ARTICLE

How does the Bible Relate to Judaism? ⇒

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[13] For you were called to be free, brothers; only don't use this freedom
as an opportunity for the flesh, but serve one another through love. [14] For
the entire law is fulfilled in one statement: **Love your neighbor as
yourself.** [15] But if you bite and devour one another, watch out, or you will
be consumed by one another.

The Spirit versus the Flesh

[16] I say then, •walk by the Spirit and you will not carry out the desire of
the flesh. [17] For the flesh desires what is against the Spirit, and the Spirit
desires what is against the flesh; these are opposed to each other, so that you

don’t do what you want. [18] But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not
under the law.

[19] Now the works of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, moral
impurity, promiscuity, [20] idolatry, sorcery, hatreds, strife, jealousy,
outbursts of anger, selfish ambitions, dissensions, factions, [21] envy,
drunkenness, carousing, and anything similar. I tell you about these things
in advance — as I told you before — that those who practice such things
will not inherit the kingdom of God.

[22] But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness,
goodness, faith, [B] [23] gentleness, self-control. Against such things there is
no law. [24] Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh
with its passions and desires. [25] Since we live by the Spirit, we must also
follow the Spirit. [26] We must not become conceited, provoking one another,
envying one another.

Carry One Another's Burdens

6 Brothers, if someone is caught in any wrongdoing, you who are spiritual
should restore such a person with a gentle spirit, watching out for
yourselves so you also won't be tempted. 2† Carry one another's burdens;
in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. 3 For if anyone considers
himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceives himself. 4 But
each person should examine his own work, and then he will have a reason
for boasting in himself alone, and not in respect to someone else. 5 For each
person will have to carry his own load.

6 The one who is taught the message must share all his good things with
the teacher. 7 Don't be deceived: God is not mocked. For whatever a man
sows he will also reap, 8 because the one who sows to his flesh will reap
corruption from the flesh, but the one who sows to the Spirit will reap
eternal life from the Spirit. 9 So we must not get tired of doing good, for
we will reap at the proper time if we don't give up. 10 Therefore, as we have
opportunity, we must work for the good of all, especially for those who
belong to the household of faith.

Concluding Exhortation

11 Look at what large letters I use as I write to you in my own
handwriting. 12 Those who want to make a good impression in the flesh are
the ones who would compel you to be circumcised — but only to avoid
being persecuted for the cross of Christ. 13 For even the circumcised don't
keep the law themselves; however, they want you to be circumcised in
order to boast about your flesh. 14 But as for me, I will never boast about
anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. The •world has been
crucified to me through the cross, and I to the world. 15 For both
circumcision and uncircumcision mean nothing; what matters instead is a
new creation. 16 May peace come to all those who follow this standard, and
mercy to the Israel of God!

17 From now on, let no one cause me trouble, because I bear on my body
scars for the cause of Jesus. 18 Brothers, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ
be with your spirit. •Amen.

EPHESIANS

Introduction to Ephesians

EPHESIANS

Greeting

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by God’s will:

To the faithful •saints in Christ Jesus at Ephesus.

2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

God’s Rich Blessings

3† Praise the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us
in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavens. 4† For He chose us in
Him, before the foundation of the world, to be holy and blameless in His
sight. In love [A] 5† He predestined us to be adopted through Jesus Christ for
Himself, according to His favor and will, 6 to the praise of His glorious
grace that He favored us with in the Beloved.

7 We have •redemption in Him through His blood, the forgiveness of our
trespasses, according to the riches of His grace 8 that He lavished on us with
all wisdom and understanding. 9 He made known to us the •mystery of His
will, according to His good pleasure that He planned in Him 10 for the
administration [B] of the days of fulfillment [C] — to bring everything together
in the •Messiah, both things in heaven and things on earth in Him.

11† We have also received an inheritance [D] in Him, predestined
according to the purpose of the One who works out everything in agreement
with the decision of His will, 12 so that we who had already put our hope in
the Messiah might bring praise to His glory.

13 When you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation,
and when you believed in Him, you were also sealed with the promised
Holy Spirit. 14 He is the down payment of our inheritance, for the
redemption of the possession, [E] to the praise of His glory.

ARTICLE
How Can Jesus' Death Bring Forgiveness? ⇒

Prayer for Spiritual Insight

15 This is why, since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your
love for all the saints, 16 I never stop giving thanks for you as I remember
you in my prayers. 17 I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the
glorious Father, [F] would give you a spirit [G], of wisdom and revelation in
the knowledge of Him. 18 I pray that the perception of your mind [H] may be
enlightened so you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the
glorious riches of His inheritance among the saints, 19[†] and what is the
immeasurable greatness of His power to us who believe, according to the
working of His vast strength.

God's Power in Christ

20 He demonstrated this power in the Messiah by raising Him from the
dead and seating Him at His right hand in the heavens — 21 far above
every ruler and authority, power and dominion, and every title given, [I], not
only in this age but also in the one to come. 22[†] And **He put everything
under His feet** and appointed Him as head over everything for the church,
23 which is His body, the fullness of the One who fills all things in every
way.

From Death to Life

2 †And you were dead in your trespasses and sins [2] in which you
previously •walked according to the ways of this world, according to
the ruler who exercises authority over the lower heavens, [A], the spirit now
working in the disobedient. [B] [3] We too all previously lived among them in
our fleshly desires, carrying out the inclinations of our flesh and thoughts,
and we were by nature children under wrath as the others were also. [4] But
God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love that He had for us, [C]
[5] made us alive with the •Messiah even though we were dead in trespasses.
You are saved by grace! [6] Together with Christ Jesus He also raised us up
and seated us in the heavens, [7] so that in the coming ages He might display
the immeasurable riches of His grace through His kindness to us in Christ
Jesus. [8]† For you are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from
yourselves; it is God's gift — [9] not from works, so that no one can boast.
[10]† For we are His creation, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which
God prepared ahead of time so that we should walk in them.

TWISTED SCRIPTURE

Ephesians 2:8-9

All false gospels add works to grace. Mormons, for example, state, "For we know that it is by grace that we have been saved, *after all we do*" (2 Nephi 25:23, emphasis added).

Unity in Christ

[11] So then, remember that at one time you were Gentiles in the
flesh — called "the uncircumcised" by those called "the circumcised,"
which is done in the flesh by human hands. [12] At that time you were
without the Messiah, excluded from the citizenship of Israel, and foreigners
to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the
world. [13]† But now in Christ Jesus, you who were far away have been

brought near by the blood of the Messiah. [14] For He is our peace, who
made both groups one and tore down the dividing wall of hostility. In His
flesh, [15] He made of no effect the law consisting of commands and
expressed in regulations, so that He might create in Himself one new man
from the two, resulting in peace. [16] He did this so that He might reconcile
both to God in one body through the cross and put the hostility to death by
it. [D] [17] When the Messiah came, He proclaimed the good news of peace to
you who were far away and peace to those who were near. [18] For through
Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father. [19] So then you are no
longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with the •saints, and
members of God's household, [20] built on the foundation of the apostles and
prophets, with Christ Jesus Himself as the cornerstone. [21] The whole
building, being put together by Him, grows into a holy sanctuary in the
Lord. [22] You also are being built together for God's dwelling in the Spirit.

Paul's Ministry to the Gentiles

3 For this reason, I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus on behalf of you
Gentiles — 2 you have heard, haven't you, about the administration of
God's grace that He gave to me for you? 3 The •mystery was made known
to me by revelation, as I have briefly written above. 4 By reading this you
are able to understand my insight about the mystery of the •Messiah. 5 This
was not made known to people [A] in other generations as it is now revealed
to His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit: 6 The Gentiles are co-heirs,
members of the same body, and partners of the promise in Christ Jesus
through the gospel. 7 I was made a servant of this gospel by the gift of
God's grace that was given to me by the working of His power.

8 This grace was given to me — the least of all the •saints — to proclaim
to the Gentiles the incalculable riches of the Messiah, 9 and to shed light
for all about the administration of the mystery hidden for ages in God who
created all things. 10 This is so God's multi-faceted wisdom may now be
made known through the church to the rulers and authorities in the
heavens. 11 This is according to His eternal purpose accomplished in the
Messiah, Jesus our Lord. 12 In Him we have boldness and confident access
through faith in Him. [B] 13 So then I ask you not to be discouraged over my
afflictions on your behalf, for they are your glory.

Prayer for Spiritual Power

14 For this reason I kneel before the Father 15 from whom every family
in heaven and on earth is named. 16 I pray that He may grant you, according
to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power in the inner man
through His Spirit, 17 and that the Messiah may dwell in your hearts through
faith. I pray that you, being rooted and firmly established in love, 18 may be
able to comprehend with all the saints what is the length and width, height
and depth of God's love, 19 and to know the Messiah's love that surpasses
knowledge, so you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

20 Now to Him who is able to do above and beyond all that we ask or
think according to the power that works in us — 21 to Him be glory in the
church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. •Amen.

Unity and Diversity in the Body of Christ

4 Therefore I, the prisoner for the Lord, urge you to •walk worthy of the
calling you have received, [2] with all humility and gentleness, with
patience, accepting [A], one another in love, [3] diligently keeping the unity
of the Spirit with the peace that binds us. [4†] There is one body and one
Spirit — just as you were called to one hope [B] at your calling — [5] one
Lord, one faith, one baptism, [6] one God and Father of all, who is above
all and through all and in all.

ARTICLE

How Can We Know Anything at All? ⇒

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[7] Now grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of the
•Messiah's gift. [8†] For it says:

When He ascended on high,
He took prisoners into captivity; [C]
He gave gifts to people.

[9†] But what does "He ascended" mean except that He descended to the
lower parts of the earth? [D], [10] The One who descended is also the One who
ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill [E] all things. [11] And
He personally gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists,
some pastors and teachers, [12] for the training of the •saints in the work of
ministry, to build up the body of Christ, [13] until we all reach unity in the
faith and in the knowledge of God's Son, growing into a mature man with a
stature measured by Christ's fullness. [14] Then we will no longer be little
children, tossed by the waves and blown around by every wind of teaching,
by human cunning with cleverness in the techniques of deceit. [15] But
speaking the truth in love, let us grow in every way into Him who is the
head — Christ. [16] From Him the whole body, fitted and knit together by
every supporting ligament, promotes the growth of the body for building
up itself in love by the proper working of each individual part.

Living the New Life

[17] Therefore, I say this and testify in the Lord: You should no longer walk
as the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their thoughts. [18] They are darkened
in their understanding, excluded from the life of God, because of the
ignorance that is in them and because of the hardness of their hearts.
[19] They became callous and gave themselves over to promiscuity for the
practice of every kind of impurity with a desire for more and more. [F]

[20] But that is not how you learned about the Messiah, [21] assuming you
heard about Him and were taught by Him, because the truth is in Jesus.
[22] You took off [G], your former way of life, the old self [H] that is corrupted
by deceitful desires; [23] you are being renewed [I] in the spirit of your minds;
[24] you put on [J] the new self, the one created according to God's likeness
in righteousness and purity of the truth.

[25] Since you put away lying, **Speak the truth, each one to his
neighbor,** because we are members of one another. [26†] **Be angry and do
not sin.** Don't let the sun go down on your anger, [27] and don't give the
Devil an opportunity. [28] The thief must no longer steal. Instead, he must do
honest work with his own hands, so that he has something to share with
anyone in need. [29] No foul language is to come from your mouth, but only
what is good for building up someone in need, [K] so that it gives grace to
those who hear. [30†] And don't grieve God's Holy Spirit. You were sealed
by Him [L] for the day of •redemption. [31] All bitterness, anger and wrath,
shouting and slander must be removed from you, along with all malice.
[32] And be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving one another,
just as God also forgave you in Christ.

5 Therefore, be imitators of God, as dearly loved children. 2 And •walk in
love, as the •Messiah also loved us and gave Himself for us, a
sacrificial and fragrant offering to God. 3[†] But sexual immorality and any
impurity or greed should not even be heard of [A] among you, as is proper
for •saints. 4 Coarse and foolish talking or crude joking are not suitable, but
rather giving thanks. 5[†] For know and recognize this: Every sexually
immoral or impure or greedy person, who is an idolater, does not have an
inheritance in the kingdom of the Messiah and of God.

Light versus Darkness

6 Let no one deceive you with empty arguments, for God's wrath is
coming on the disobedient because of these things. [B] 7 Therefore, do not
become their partners. 8 For you were once darkness, but now you are light
in the Lord. Walk as children of light — 9 for the fruit of the light results
in all goodness, righteousness, and truth — 10 discerning what is pleasing
to the Lord. 11 Don't participate in the fruitless works of darkness, but
instead expose them. 12 For it is shameful even to mention what is done by
them in secret. 13 Everything exposed by the light is made clear, 14 for what
makes everything clear is light. Therefore it is said:

Get up, sleeper, and rise up from the dead,
and the Messiah will shine on you.

Consistency in the Christian Life

15 Pay careful attention, then, to how you walk — not as unwise people
but as wise — 16 making the most of the time, [C] because the days are evil.
17 So don't be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is. 18 And don't
get drunk with wine, which leads to reckless actions, but be filled by the
Spirit:

19 speaking to one another
in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs,
singing and making music

from your heart to the Lord,
[20] giving thanks always for everything
to God the Father
in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,
[21] submitting to one another
in the fear of Christ.

TWISTED SCRIPTURE

Ephesians 5:19

Though not a matter of heresy, non-instrumental Churches of Christ, who teach that Christians should not use musical instruments in worship, have a difficult time with this verse. Most NT commentaries define "psalms" as songs accompanied by musical instruments. Se Ps 150 on the relationship between worship and instruments."

Wives and Husbands

[22†] Wives, submit to your own husbands as to the Lord, [23] for the
husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church. He is
the Savior of the body. [24] Now as the church submits to Christ, so wives
are to submit to their husbands in everything. [25] Husbands, love your
wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave Himself for her [26] to make
her holy, cleansing [D] her with the washing of water by the word. [27] He did
this to present the church to Himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or
anything like that, but holy and blameless. [28] In the same way, husbands
are to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves
himself. [29] For no one ever hates his own flesh but provides and cares for it,
just as Christ does for the church, [30] since we are members of His body.

[31] **For this reason a man will leave**
his father and mother

and be joined to his wife,
and the two will become one flesh.

[32] This •mystery is profound, but I am talking about Christ and the church.
[33] To sum up, each one of you is to love his wife as himself, and the wife is
to respect her husband.

Children and Parents

6 Children, obey your parents as you would the Lord, [A] because this is
right. 2 **Honor your father and mother**, which is the first
commandment [B] with a promise, 3 **so that it may go well with you and
that you may have a long life in the land.** [C] , 4 Fathers, don't stir up
anger in your children, but bring them up in the training and instruction of
the Lord.

Slaves and Masters

5† •Slaves, obey your human [D] masters with fear and trembling, in the
sincerity of your heart, as to Christ. 6 Don't work only while being
watched, in order to please men, but as slaves of Christ, do God's will from
your heart. [E] 7 Serve with a good attitude, as to the Lord and not to men,
8 knowing that whatever good each one does, slave or free, he will receive
this back from the Lord. 9 And masters, treat your slaves the same way,
without threatening them, because you know that both their Master and
yours is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with Him.

Christian Warfare

10 Finally, be strengthened by the Lord and by His vast strength. 11† Put
on the full armor of God so that you can stand against the tactics [F] of the
Devil. 12 For our battle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers,
against the authorities, against the world powers of this darkness, against
the spiritual forces of evil in the heavens. 13 This is why you must take up
the full armor of God, so that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and
having prepared everything, to take your stand. 14 Stand, therefore,

with truth like a belt around your waist,
righteousness like armor on your chest,
15 and your feet sandaled with readiness
for the gospel of peace.
16 In every situation take the shield of faith,
and with it you will be able to extinguish
all the flaming arrows of the evil one.

[17] Take the helmet of salvation,
and the sword of the Spirit,
which is God's word.

[18] Pray at all times in the Spirit with every prayer and request, and stay alert in this with all perseverance and intercession for all the •saints.
[19] Pray also for me, that the message may be given to me when I open my mouth to make known with boldness the •mystery of the gospel. [20] For this I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I might be bold enough in Him to speak as I should.

Paul's Farewell

[21] Tychicus, our dearly loved brother and faithful servant [G] in the Lord, will tell you all the news about me so that you may be informed. [22] I am sending him to you for this very reason, to let you know how we are and to encourage your hearts.

[23] Peace to the brothers, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. [24] Grace be with all who have undying love for our Lord Jesus Christ.

PHILIPPIANS

Philippians 1 Philippians 2 Philippians 3 Philippians 4

Introduction to Philippians

PHILIPPIANS

Greeting

1 [†]Paul and Timothy, slaves of Christ Jesus:

To all the •saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, including the
•overseers and deacons.

2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Thanksgiving and Prayer

3 I give thanks to my God for every remembrance of you, [A] 4 always
praying with joy for all of you in my every prayer, 5 because of your
partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. 6 I am sure of this,
that He who started a good work in you [B] will carry it on to completion
until the day of Christ Jesus. 7 It is right for me to think this way about all
of you, because I have you in my heart, [C] and you are all partners with me
in grace, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and establishment of
the gospel. 8 For God is my witness, how deeply I miss all of you with the
affection of Christ Jesus. 9 And I pray this: that your love will keep on
growing in knowledge and every kind of discernment, 10 so that you can
approve the things that are superior and can be pure and blameless in [D]
the day of Christ, 11 filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes
through Jesus Christ to the glory and praise of God.

Advance of the Gospel

12 Now I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has
actually resulted in the advance of the gospel, 13[†] so that it has become
known throughout the whole imperial guard, [E] and to everyone else, that
my imprisonment is in the cause of Christ. 14 Most of the brothers in the
Lord have gained confidence from my imprisonment and dare even more to
speak the message fearlessly. 15[†] To be sure, some preach Christ out of
envy and strife, but others out of good will. 16[†] These do so out of love,
knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel; 17 the others
proclaim Christ out of rivalry, not sincerely, seeking to cause me anxiety in
my imprisonment. [F] 18 What does it matter? Just that in every way, whether

out of false motives or true, Christ is proclaimed. And in this I rejoice. Yes,
and I will rejoice 19[†] because I know this will lead to my deliverance [G]
through your prayers and help from the Spirit of Jesus Christ. 20 My eager
expectation and hope is that I will not be ashamed about anything, but that
now as always, with all boldness, Christ will be highly honored in my body,
whether by life or by death.

Living Is Christ

21 For me, living is Christ and dying is gain. 22 Now if I live on in the
flesh, this means fruitful work for me; and I don't know which one I
should choose. 23 I am pressured by both. I have the desire to depart and be
with Christ — which is far better — 24 but to remain in the flesh is more
necessary for you. 25 Since I am persuaded of this, I know that I will remain
and continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith, 26 so
that, because of me, your confidence may grow in Christ Jesus when I
come to you again.

27 Just one thing: Live your life in a manner worthy of the gospel of
Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or am absent, I will hear about
you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind, [H] working side
by side for the faith that comes from the gospel, 28 not being frightened in
any way by your opponents. This is a sign of destruction for them, but of
your deliverance — and this is from God. 29 For it has been given to you
on Christ's behalf not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for Him,
30 having the same struggle that you saw I had and now hear that I have.

Christian Humility

2 If then there is any encouragement in Christ, if any consolation of love,
if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, 2 fulfill
my joy by thinking the same way, having the same love, sharing the same
feelings, focusing on one goal. 3 Do nothing out of rivalry or conceit, but
in humility consider others as more important than yourselves.
4† Everyone should look out not only for his own interests, but also for the
interests of others.

Christ's Humility and Exaltation

5† Make your own attitude that of Christ Jesus,

ARTICLE

The Incarnation: Could God Become Man Without Ceasing to Be God? ⇒

6† who, existing in the form of God,
did not consider equality with God
as something to be used for His own advantage. [A]
7† Instead He emptied Himself
by assuming the form of a •slave,
taking on the likeness of men.
And when He had come as a man
in His external form,
8 He humbled Himself by becoming obedient
to the point of death —
even to death on a cross.
9† For this reason God highly exalted Him
and gave Him the name
that is above every name,
10† so that at the name of Jesus
every knee will bow —

of those who are in heaven and on earth
and under the earth —
11 and every tongue should confess
that Jesus Christ is Lord, [B]
to the glory of God the Father.

Lights in the World

12† So then, my dear friends, just as you have always obeyed, not only
in my presence, but now even more in my absence, work out your own
salvation with fear and trembling. 13 For it is God who is working in you,
enabling you both to desire and to work out His good purpose. 14 Do
everything without grumbling and arguing, 15 so that you may be
blameless and pure, children of God who are faultless in a crooked and
perverted generation, among whom you shine like stars in the world.
16 Hold firmly to [C] the message of life. Then I can boast in the day of
Christ that I didn't run or labor for nothing. 17 But even if I am poured out
as a •drink offering on the sacrifice and service of your faith, I am glad and
rejoice with all of you. 18 In the same way you should also be glad and
rejoice with me.

Timothy and Epaphroditus

19 Now I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon so that I
also may be encouraged when I hear news about you. 20 For I have no one
else like-minded who will genuinely care about your interests; 21 all seek
their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. 22 But you know his proven
character, because he has served with me in the gospel ministry like a son
with a father. 23 Therefore, I hope to send him as soon as I see how things
go with me. 24 I am convinced in the Lord that I myself will also come
quickly.

25 But I considered it necessary to send you Epaphroditus — my brother,
coworker, and fellow soldier, as well as your messenger and minister to my
need — 26 since he has been longing for all of you and was distressed

because you heard that he was sick. 27 Indeed, he was so sick that he nearly
died. However, God had mercy on him, and not only on him but also on me,
so that I would not have one grief on top of another. 28 For this reason, I am
very eager to send him so that you may rejoice when you see him again and
I may be less anxious. 29 Therefore, welcome him in the Lord with all joy
and hold men like him in honor, 30 because he came close to death for the
work of Christ, risking his life to make up what was lacking in your
ministry to me.

Knowing Christ

3 Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord. To write to you again about
this is no trouble for me and is a protection for you.

2† Watch out for “dogs,” watch out for evil workers, watch out for those
who mutilate the flesh. 3 For we are the circumcision, the ones who serve
by the Spirit of God, boast in Christ Jesus, and do not put confidence in
the flesh — 4 although I once also had confidence in the flesh. If anyone
else thinks he has grounds for confidence in the flesh, I have more:
5 circumcised the eighth day; of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of
Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews; regarding the law, a •Pharisee;
6 regarding zeal, persecuting the church; regarding the righteousness that
is in the law, blameless.

7 But everything that was a gain to me, I have considered to be a loss
because of Christ. 8† More than that, I also consider everything to be a loss
in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. Because
of Him I have suffered the loss of all things and consider them filth, so that
I may gain Christ 9 and be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my
own from the law, but one that is through faith in Christ [A] — the
righteousness from God based on faith. 10† My goal is to know Him and
the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being
conformed to His death, 11 assuming that I will somehow reach the
resurrection from among the dead.

Reaching Forward to God’s Goal

12 Not that I have already reached the goal or am already fully mature,
but I make every effort to take hold of it because I also have been taken
hold of by Christ Jesus. 13 Brothers, I do not consider myself to have taken
hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and reaching
forward to what is ahead, 14 I pursue as my goal the prize promised by
God’s heavenly [B] call in Christ Jesus. 15† Therefore, all who are mature
should think this way. And if you think differently about anything, God will
reveal this also to you. 16 In any case, we should live up to whatever truth
we have attained. 17 Join in imitating me, brothers, and observe those who

live according to the example you have in us. [18] For I have often told you,
and now say again with tears, that many live as enemies of the cross of
Christ. [19] Their end is destruction; their god is their stomach; their glory is
in their shame. They are focused on earthly things, [20]† but our citizenship is
in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus
Christ. [21] He will transform the body of our humble condition into the
likeness of His glorious body, by the power that enables Him to subject
everything to Himself.

Practical Counsel

4 So then, my brothers, you are dearly loved and longed for — my joy and
crown. In this manner stand firm in the Lord, dear friends. 2 I urge
Euodia and I urge Syntyche to agree in the Lord. 3 Yes, I also ask you, true
partner, [A] to help these women who have contended for the gospel at my
side, along with Clement and the rest of my coworkers whose names are in
the book of life. 4 Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!
5 Let your graciousness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. 6 Don't
worry about anything, but in everything, through prayer and petition with
thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. 7 And the peace of
God, which surpasses every thought, will guard your hearts and minds in
Christ Jesus.

8 Finally brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is
just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable — if
there is any moral excellence and if there is any praise — dwell on these
things. 9 Do what you have learned and received and heard and seen in me,
and the God of peace will be with you.

Appreciation of Support

10 I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that once again you renewed your care
for me. You were, in fact, concerned about me but lacked the opportunity
to show it. 11 I don't say this out of need, for I have learned to be content in
whatever circumstances I am. 12 I know both how to have a little, and I
know how to have a lot. In any and all circumstances I have learned the
secret of being content — whether well fed or hungry, whether in
abundance or in need. 13 I am able to do all things through Him who
strengthens me. 14 Still, you did well by sharing with me in my hardship.

15 And you Philippians know that in the early days of the gospel, when I
left Macedonia, no church shared with me in the matter of giving and
receiving except you alone. 16 For even in Thessalonica you sent gifts for
my need several times. 17 Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the profit [B],
that is increasing to your account. 18 But I have received everything in full,
and I have an abundance. I am fully supplied, having received from

Epaphroditus what you provided — a fragrant offering, an acceptable
sacrifice, pleasing to God. 19 And my God will supply all your needs
according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus. 20 Now to our God and
Father be glory forever and ever. •Amen.

Final Greetings

21 Greet every •saint in Christ Jesus. Those brothers who are with me
greet you. 22 All the saints greet you, but especially those from Caesar's
household. 23 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

COLOSSIANS

Introduction to Colossians

COLOSSIANS

Greeting

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by God’s will, and Timothy our [A]
brother:

2 To the •saints in Christ at Colossae, who are faithful brothers.

Grace to you and peace from God our Father.

Thanksgiving

3 We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we
pray for you, 4 for we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the
love you have for all the saints 5 because of the hope reserved for you in
heaven. You have already heard about this hope in the message of truth, the
gospel 6 that has come to you. It is bearing fruit and growing all over the
world, just as it has among you since the day you heard it and recognized
God’s grace in the truth. [B], 7 You learned this from Epaphras, our dearly
loved fellow •slave. He is a faithful servant of the •Messiah on your
behalf, 8 and he has told us about your love in the Spirit.

Prayer for Spiritual Growth

9 For this reason also, since the day we heard this, we haven’t stopped
praying for you. We are asking that you may be filled with the knowledge
of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, [C] 10 so that you may
•walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to Him, bearing fruit in every good
work and growing in the knowledge of God. 11 May you be strengthened
with all power, according to His glorious might, for all endurance and
patience, with joy 12 giving thanks to the Father, who has enabled you to
share in the saints’ [D] inheritance in the light. 13 He has rescued us from the
domain of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of the Son He
loves. 14 We have •redemption, the forgiveness of sins, in Him.

The Centrality of Christ

15† He is the image of the invisible God,
the firstborn over all creation.

[16] For everything was created by Him,
in heaven and on earth,
the visible and the invisible,
whether thrones or dominions
or rulers or authorities —
all things have been created through Him and for Him.
[17] He is before all things,
and by Him all things hold together.
[18] He is also the head of the body, the church;
He is the beginning,
the firstborn from the dead,
so that He might come to have
first place in everything.
[19] For God was pleased to have
all His fullness dwell in Him,
[20†] and through Him to reconcile
everything to Himself
by making peace
through the blood of His cross —
whether things on earth or things in heaven.

[21] Once you were alienated and hostile in your minds because of your
evil actions. [22] But now He has reconciled you by His physical body
through His death, to present you holy, faultless, and blameless before
Him — [23] if indeed you remain grounded and steadfast in the faith and are
not shifted away from the hope of the gospel that you heard. This gospel
has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and I, Paul, have
become a servant of it.

Paul's Ministry

[24†] Now I rejoice in my sufferings for you, and I am completing in my
flesh what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for His body, that is, the church.
[25] I have become its servant, according to God's administration that was
given to me for you, to make God's message fully known, [26] the •mystery
hidden for ages and generations but now revealed to His saints. [27] God

wanted to make known among the Gentiles the glorious wealth of this
mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. [28] We proclaim Him,
warning and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present
everyone mature in Christ. [29] I labor for this, striving with His strength that
works powerfully in me.

2 For I want you to know how great a struggle I have for you, for those in
Laodicea, and for all who have not seen me in person. 2 I want their
hearts to be encouraged and joined together in love, so that they may have
all the riches of assured understanding and have the knowledge of God's
•mystery — Christ. 3 All the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are
hidden in Him.

Christ versus the Colossian Heresy

4 I am saying this so that no one will deceive you with persuasive
arguments. 5 For I may be absent in body, but I am with you in spirit,
rejoicing to see how well ordered you are and the strength of your faith in
Christ.

6 Therefore, as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, •walk in Him,
7 rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, just as you were
taught, overflowing with gratitude.

ARTICLE

Notable Christian Apologist: Athanasius ⇒

8† Be careful that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty
deceit based on human tradition, based on the elemental forces of the
world, and not based on Christ. 9† For the entire fullness of God's nature [A]
dwells bodily [B] in Christ, 10 and you have been filled by Him, who is the
head over every ruler and authority. 11 You were also circumcised in Him
with a circumcision not done with hands, by putting off the body of flesh,
in the circumcision of the •Messiah. 12 Having been buried with Him in
baptism, you were also raised with Him through faith in the working of
God, who raised Him from the dead. 13 And when you were dead in
trespasses and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive with

Him and forgave us all our trespasses. [14] He erased the certificate of debt,
with its obligations, that was against us and opposed to us, and has taken it
out of the way by nailing it to the cross. [15†] He disarmed the rulers and
authorities and disgraced them publicly; He triumphed over them by
Him. [C]

[16] Therefore, don't let anyone judge you in regard to food and drink or
in the matter of a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day. [D] [17] These are a
shadow of what was to come; the substance is [E] the Messiah. [18†] Let no
one disqualify you, [F], insisting on ascetic practices and the worship of
angels, claiming access to a visionary realm and inflated without cause by
his unspiritual [G] mind. [19] He doesn't hold on to the head, from whom the
whole body, nourished and held together by its ligaments and tendons,
develops with growth from God.

ARTICLE

How Should a Christian Relate to the New Age Movement? ⇒

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[20] If you died with the Messiah to the elemental forces of this world,
why do you live as if you still belonged to the world? Why do you submit
to regulations: [21] "Don't handle, don't taste, don't touch"? [22] All these
regulations refer to what is destroyed by being used up; they are commands
and doctrines of men. [23] Although these have a reputation of wisdom by
promoting ascetic practices, humility, and severe treatment of the body, they
are not of any value in curbing self-indulgence. [H]

The Life of the New Man

3 So if you have been raised with the •Messiah, seek what is above, where
the Messiah is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your minds on
what is above, not on what is on the earth. 3 For you have died, and your
life is hidden with the Messiah in God. 4 When the Messiah, who is your
life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.

5 Therefore, put to death what belongs to your worldly nature: [A] sexual
immorality, impurity, lust, evil desire, and greed, which is idolatry.
6 Because of these, God's wrath comes on the disobedient, 7 and you once
•walked in these things when you were living in them. 8 But now you must
also put away all the following: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and filthy
language from your mouth. 9 Do not lie to one another, since you have put
off the old self [B], with its practices 10 and have put on the new self. You
are being renewed in knowledge according to the image of your [C] Creator.
11 In Christ [D] there is not Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision,
barbarian, Scythian, •slave and free; but Christ is all and in all.

TWISTED SCRIPTURE

Colossians 3:11

Groups such as Union Life, which hold to a pantheistic worldview, believe that everything in existence is a form or manifestation of God's essence, although God is more than the sum total of creation. Hence, they look to this verse for scriptural support. The verse, however, actually teaches that Christ is everything to a believer and indwells each one.

The Christian Life

12 Therefore, God's chosen ones, holy and loved, put on heartfelt
compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience, 13 accepting
one another and forgiving one another if anyone has a complaint against
another. Just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you must also forgive.

[14] Above all, put on love — the perfect bond of unity. [15] And let the peace
of the Messiah, to which you were also called in one body, control your
hearts. Be thankful. [16] Let the message about the Messiah dwell richly
among you, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, and
singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, with gratitude in your hearts to
God. [17] And whatever you do, in word or in deed, do everything in the
name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

Christ in Your Home

[18†] Wives, be submissive to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.
[19] Husbands, love your wives and don't be bitter toward them.
[20] Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.
[21] Fathers, do not exasperate your children, so they won't become
discouraged.
[22†] Slaves, obey your human masters in everything. Don't work only
while being watched, in order to please men, but work wholeheartedly,
fearing the Lord.
[23] Whatever you do, do it enthusiastically, [E] as something done for the
Lord and not for men, [24] knowing that you will receive the reward of an
inheritance from the Lord. You serve the Lord Christ. [25] For the
wrongdoer will be paid back for whatever wrong he has done, and there
is no favoritism.

4 Masters, supply your •slaves with what is right and fair, since you
know that you too have a Master in heaven.

Speaking to God and Others

2 Devote yourselves to prayer; stay alert in it with thanksgiving. 3 At the
same time, pray also for us that God may open a door to us for the
message, to speak the •mystery of the •Messiah, for which I am in prison,
4 so that I may reveal it as I am required to speak. 5 Act wisely toward
outsiders, making the most of the time. 6 Your speech should always be
gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you should answer
each person.

Christian Greetings

7 Tychicus, our dearly loved brother, faithful servant, and fellow slave in
the Lord, will tell you all the news about me. 8 I have sent him to you for
this very purpose, so that you may know how we are and so that he may
encourage your hearts. 9 He is with Onesimus, a faithful and dearly loved
brother, who is one of you. They will tell you about everything here.

10 Aristarchus, my fellow prisoner, greets you, as does Mark, Barnabas's
cousin (concerning whom you have received instructions: if he comes to
you, welcome him), 11 and so does Jesus who is called Justus. These alone
of the circumcision are my coworkers for the kingdom of God, and they
have been a comfort to me. 12 Epaphras, who is one of you, a slave of
Christ Jesus, greets you. He is always contending for you in his prayers, so
that you can stand mature and fully assured in everything God wills. 13 For
I testify about him that he works hard for you, for those in Laodicea, and
for those in Hierapolis. 14 Luke, the dearly loved physician, and Demas
greet you. 15 Give my greetings to the brothers in Laodicea, and to Nympha
and the church in her home. 16† When this letter has been read among you,
have it read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and see that you also read
the letter from Laodicea. 17 And tell Archippus, "Pay attention to the
ministry you have received in the Lord, so that you can accomplish it."

18 This greeting is in my own hand — Paul. Remember my
imprisonment. Grace be with you.

1 THESSALONIANS

Introduction to 1 Thessalonians

1 THESSALONIANS

Greeting

1 Paul, Silvanus, [A] and Timothy:

To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Grace to you and peace.

Thanksgiving

2 We always thank God for all of you, remembering you constantly in our
prayers. 3 We recall, in the presence of our God and Father, your work of
faith, labor of love, and endurance of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ,
4 knowing your election, brothers loved by God. 5 For our gospel did not
come to you in word only, but also in power, in the Holy Spirit, and with
much assurance. You know what kind of men we were among you for your
benefit, 6 and you became imitators of us and of the Lord when, in spite of
severe persecution, you welcomed the message with joy from the Holy
Spirit. 7 As a result, you became an example to all the believers in
Macedonia and Achaia. 8 For the Lord's message rang out from you, not
only in Macedonia and Achaia, but in every place that your faith [B], in God
has gone out. Therefore, we don't need to say anything, 9 for they
themselves report [C] what kind of reception we had from you: how you
turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God 10 and to wait
for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead — Jesus, who
rescues us from the coming wrath.

Paul's Conduct

2 For you yourselves know, brothers, that our visit with you was not
without result. 2 On the contrary, after we had previously suffered, and
we were treated outrageously in Philippi, as you know, we were
emboldened by our God to speak the gospel of God to you in spite of great
opposition. 3 For our exhortation didn't come from error or impurity or an
intent to deceive. 4 Instead, just as we have been approved by God to be
entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not to please men, but rather God,
who examines our hearts. 5 For we never used flattering speech, as you
know, or had greedy motives — God is our witness — 6 and we didn't
seek glory from people, either from you or from others. 7 Although we
could have been a burden as Christ's apostles, instead we were gentle
among you, as a nursing mother nurtures her own children. 8 We cared so
much for you that we were pleased to share with you not only the gospel of
God but also our own lives, because you had become dear to us. 9 For you
remember our labor and hardship, brothers. Working night and day so that
we would not burden any of you, we preached God's gospel to you. 10 You
are witnesses, and so is God, of how devoutly, righteously, and
blamelessly we conducted ourselves with you believers. 11 As you know,
like a father with his own children, 12 we encouraged, comforted, and
implored each one of you to •walk worthy of God, who calls you into His
own kingdom and glory.

Reception and Opposition to the Message

13 This is why we constantly thank God, because when you received the
message about God that you heard from us, you welcomed it not as a
human message, but as it truly is, the message of God, which also works
effectively in you believers. 14† For you, brothers, became imitators of
God's churches in Christ Jesus that are in Judea, since you have also
suffered the same things from people of your own country, just as they did
from the Jews 15 who killed both the Lord Jesus and the prophets and
persecuted us; they displease God and are hostile to everyone, 16 hindering
us from speaking to the Gentiles so that they may be saved. As a result, they
are always completing the number of their sins, and wrath has overtaken
them at last. [A]

Paul’s Desire to See Them

17† But as for us, brothers, after we were forced to leave you for a short
time (in person, not in heart), we greatly desired and made every effort to
return and see you face to face. 18 So we wanted to come to you — even I,
Paul, time and again — but Satan hindered us. 19 For who is our hope or
joy or crown of boasting in the presence of our Lord Jesus at His
coming? Is it not you? 20 For you are our glory and joy!

Anxiety in Athens

3 Therefore, when we could no longer stand it, we thought it was better to
be left alone in Athens. [2] And we sent Timothy, our brother and God's
coworker in the gospel of Christ, to strengthen and encourage you
concerning your faith, [3] so that no one will be shaken by these persecutions.
For you yourselves know that we are appointed to [A] this. [4] In fact, when we
were with you, we told you previously that we were going to suffer
persecution, and as you know, it happened. [5] For this reason, when I could
no longer stand it, I also sent him to find out about your faith, fearing that
the tempter had tempted you and that our labor might be for nothing.

Encouraged by Timothy

[6] But now Timothy has come to us from you and brought us good news
about your faith and love and reported that you always have good memories
of us, wanting to see us, as we also want to see you. [7] Therefore, brothers,
in all our distress and persecution, we were encouraged about you through
your faith. [8] For now we live, if you stand firm in the Lord. [9] How can we
thank God for you in return for all the joy we experience before our God
because of you, [10] as we pray very earnestly night and day to see you face
to face and to complete what is lacking in your faith?

Prayer for the Church

[11] Now may our God and Father Himself, and our Lord Jesus, direct our
way to you. [12] And may the Lord cause you to increase and overflow with
love for one another and for everyone, just as we also do for you. [13] May
He make your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at
the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His •saints. •Amen.

The Call to Sanctification

4 Finally then, brothers, we ask and encourage you in the Lord Jesus, that as you have received from us how you must •walk and please God — as you are doing [A] — do so even more. 2 For you know what commands we gave you through the Lord Jesus.

3 For this is God’s will, your •sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality, 4 so that each of you knows how to control his own body [B] in sanctification and honor, 5 not with lustful desires, like the Gentiles who don’t know God. 6 This means one must not transgress against and defraud his brother in this matter, because the Lord is an avenger of all these offenses, [C] as we also previously told and warned you. 7 For God has not called us to impurity but to sanctification. 8 Therefore, the person who rejects this does not reject man, but God, who also gives you His Holy Spirit.

Loving and Working

9 About brotherly love: You don’t need me to write you because you yourselves are taught by God to love one another. 10 In fact, you are doing this toward all the brothers in the entire region of Macedonia. But we encourage you, brothers, to do so even more, 11 to seek to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business, [D] and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you, 12 so that you may walk properly [E] in the presence of outsiders and not be dependent on anyone. [F]

The Comfort of Christ’s Coming

13 We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, concerning those who are •asleep, so that you will not grieve like the rest, who have no hope. 14 Since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, in the same way God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep through [G] Jesus. 15 For we say this to you by a revelation from the Lord: [H], We who are still alive at the Lord’s coming will certainly have no advantage over [I] those who have fallen asleep. 16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, [J] with the archangel’s voice, and with the trumpet of God, and the

dead in Christ will rise first. [17†] Then we who are still alive will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air and so we will always be with the Lord. [18] Therefore encourage [K] one another with these words.

The Day of the Lord

5 About the times and the seasons: Brothers, you do not need anything to
be written to you. 2 For you yourselves know very well that the Day of
the Lord will come just like a thief in the night. 3 When they say, “Peace
and security,” then sudden destruction comes on them, like labor pains
come on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. 4 But you, brothers,
are not in the dark, for this day to overtake you like a thief. 5 For you are
all sons of light and sons of the day. We do not belong to the night or the
darkness. 6 So then, we must not sleep, like the rest, but we must stay
awake and be serious. 7 For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who
get drunk are drunk at night. 8 But since we belong to the day, we must be
serious and put the armor of faith and love on our chests, and put on a
helmet of the hope of salvation. 9 For God did not appoint us to wrath, but
to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, 10 who died for us, so
that whether we are awake or •asleep, we will live together with Him.
11 Therefore encourage one another and build each other up as you are
already doing.

Exhortations and Blessings

12 Now we ask you, brothers, to give recognition to those who labor
among you and lead you in the Lord and admonish you, 13 and to regard
them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among
yourselves. 14 And we exhort you, brothers: warn those who are
irresponsible, [A] comfort the discouraged, help the weak, be patient with
everyone. 15 See to it that no one repays evil for evil to anyone, but always
pursue what is good for one another and for all.

16 Rejoice always!
17 Pray constantly.
18 Give thanks in everything,
for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.
19 Don’t stifle the Spirit.
20 Don’t despise prophecies,
21 but test all things.

Hold on to what is good.
[22] Stay away from every kind of evil.

[23] Now may the God of peace Himself •sanctify you completely. And
may your spirit, soul, and body be kept sound and blameless for the
coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. [24] He who calls you is faithful, who
also will do it. [25] Brothers, pray for us also. [26] Greet all the brothers with a
holy kiss. [27] I charge you by the Lord that this letter be read to all the
brothers. [28] The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

2 THESSALONIANS

2 Thessalonians 1 2 Thessalonians 2 2 Thessalonians 3

Introduction to 2 Thessalonians

2 THESSALONIANS

Greeting

1 Paul, Silvanus, [A] and Timothy:

To the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus
Christ.

2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

God's Judgment and Glory

3 We must always thank God for you, brothers. This is right, since your
faith is flourishing and the love each one of you has for one another is
increasing. 4 Therefore, we ourselves boast about you among God's
churches — about your endurance and faith in all the persecutions and
afflictions you endure. 5 It is a clear evidence of God's righteous judgment
that you will be counted worthy of God's kingdom, for which you also are
suffering, 6 since it is righteous for God to repay with affliction those who
afflict you 7[†] and to reward with rest you who are afflicted, along with us.
This will take place at the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with
His powerful angels, 8 taking vengeance with flaming fire on those who
don't know God and on those who don't obey the gospel of our Lord
Jesus. 9 These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction from the Lord's
presence and from His glorious strength 10 in that day when He comes to
be glorified by His •saints and to be admired by all those who have
believed, because our testimony among you was believed. 11 And in view of
this, we always pray for you that our God will consider you worthy of His
calling, and will, by His power, fulfill every desire for goodness and the
work of faith, 12 so that the name of our Lord Jesus will be glorified by
you, and you by Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus
Christ.

The Man of Lawlessness

2 Now concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being
gathered to Him: We ask you, brothers, 2 not to be easily upset in mind
or troubled, either by a spirit or by a message or by a letter as if from us,
alleging that the Day of the Lord has come. 3 Don't let anyone deceive you
in any way. For that day will not come unless the apostasy [A] comes first and
the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction. 4 He opposes
and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that
he sits in God's sanctuary, [B] publicizing that he himself is God.

5 Don't you remember that when I was still with you I told you about
this? 6 And you know what currently restrains him, so that he will be
revealed in his time. 7 For the •mystery of lawlessness is already at work,
but the one now restraining will do so until he is out of the way, 8 and then
the lawless one will be revealed. The Lord Jesus will destroy him with the
breath of His mouth and will bring him to nothing with the brightness of
His coming. 9 The coming of the lawless one is based on Satan's working,
with all kinds of false miracles, signs, and wonders, 10 and with every
unrighteous deception among those who are perishing. They perish because
they did not accept the love of the truth in order to be saved. 11† For this
reason God sends them a strong delusion so that they will believe what is
false, 12 so that all will be condemned — those who did not believe the
truth but enjoyed unrighteousness.

Stand Firm

13† But we must always thank God for you, brothers loved by the Lord,
because from the beginning God has chosen you for salvation through
•sanctification by the Spirit and through belief in the truth. 14 He called you
to this through our gospel, so that you might obtain the glory of our Lord
Jesus Christ. 15 Therefore, brothers, stand firm and hold to the traditions
you were taught, either by our message or by our letter.

16 May our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God our Father, who has
loved us and given us eternal encouragement and good hope by grace,
17 encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good work and word.

Pray for Us

3 Finally, brothers, pray for us that the Lord's message may spread rapidly and be honored, just as it was with you, [2] and that we may be delivered from wicked and evil men, for not all have faith. [A] [3] But the Lord is faithful; He will strengthen and guard you from the evil one. [4] We have confidence in the Lord about you, that you are doing and will do what we command. [5] May the Lord direct your hearts to God's love and Christ's endurance.

Warning against Irresponsible Behavior

[6†] Now we command you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to keep away from every brother who •walks irresponsibly and not according to the tradition received from us. [7] For you yourselves know how you must imitate us: We were not irresponsible among you; [8] we did not eat anyone's food [B] free of charge; instead, we labored and struggled, working night and day, so that we would not be a burden to any of you. [9] It is not that we don't have the right to support, but we did it to make ourselves an example to you so that you would imitate us. [10] In fact, when we were with you, this is what we commanded you: "If anyone isn't willing to work, he should not eat." [11] For we hear that there are some among you who walk irresponsibly, not working at all, but interfering with the work of others. [12] Now we command and exhort such people by the Lord Jesus Christ that quietly working, they may eat their own food. [C] [13] Brothers, do not grow weary in doing good.

[14] And if anyone does not obey our instruction in this letter, take note of that person; don't associate with him, so that he may be ashamed. [15] Yet don't treat him as an enemy, but warn him as a brother.

ARTICLE
Notable Christian Apologist: Augustine ⇒

Final Greetings

[16] May the Lord of peace Himself give you peace always in every way.
The Lord be with all of you. [17] This greeting is in my own hand — Paul.
This is a sign in every letter; this is how I write. [18] The grace of our Lord
Jesus Christ be with all of you.

1 TIMOTHY

1 Timothy 1 1 Timothy 2 1 Timothy 3 1 Timothy 4
1 Timothy 5 1 Timothy 6

Introduction to 1 Timothy

1 TIMOTHY

Greeting

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the command of God our Savior
and of Christ Jesus our hope:

2 To Timothy, my true son in the faith.

Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

False Doctrine and Misuse of the Law

3 As I urged you when I went to Macedonia, remain in Ephesus so that
you may instruct certain people not to teach different doctrine 4† or to pay
attention to myths and endless genealogies. These promote empty
speculations rather than God's plan, which operates by faith. 5 Now the
goal of our instruction is love that comes from a pure heart, a good
conscience, and a sincere faith. 6 Some have deviated from these and
turned aside to fruitless discussion. 7 They want to be teachers of the law,
although they don't understand what they are saying or what they are
insisting on. 8 But we know that the law is good, provided one uses it
legitimately. 9 We know that the law is not meant for a righteous person, but
for the lawless and rebellious, for the ungodly and sinful, for the unholy
and irreverent, for those who kill their fathers and mothers, for murderers,
10† for the sexually immoral and homosexuals, for kidnappers, [A] liars,
perjurers, and for whatever else is contrary to the sound teaching 11 based
on the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was entrusted to me.

Paul's Testimony

12 I give thanks to Christ Jesus our Lord who has strengthened me,
because He considered me faithful, appointing me to the ministry — 13 one
who was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an arrogant man. But I
received mercy because I acted out of ignorance in unbelief. 14 And the
grace of our Lord overflowed, along with the faith and love that are in
Christ Jesus. 15 This saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance:
"Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" — and I am the worst
of them. 16 But I received mercy for this reason, so that in me, the worst of
them, Christ Jesus might demonstrate His extraordinary patience as an

example to those who would believe in Him for eternal life. 17† Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. •Amen.

Engage in Battle

18 Timothy, my son, I am giving you this instruction in keeping with the prophecies previously made about you, so that by them you may strongly engage in battle, 19 having faith and a good conscience. Some have rejected these and have suffered the shipwreck of their faith. 20 Hymenaeus and Alexander are among them, and I have delivered them to Satan, so that they may be taught not to blaspheme.

Instructions on Prayer

2 First of all, then, I urge that petitions, prayers, intercessions, and
thanksgivings be made for everyone, 2 for kings and all those who are in
authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and
dignity. 3 This is good, and it pleases God our Savior, 4† who wants
everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

5† For there is one God
and one mediator between God and humanity,
Christ Jesus, Himself human,
6 who gave Himself — a ransom for all,
a testimony at the proper time.

7 For this I was appointed a herald, an apostle (I am telling the truth; I
am not lying), and a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.

ARTICLE

How Should a Christian Understand the Role of Government? ⇒

Instructions to Men and Women

8 Therefore, I want the men in every place to pray, lifting up holy hands
without anger or argument. 9† Also, the women are to dress themselves in
modest clothing, with decency and good sense, not with elaborate
hairstyles, gold, pearls, or expensive apparel, 10 but with good works, as is
proper for women who affirm that they worship God. 11† A woman should
learn in silence with full submission. 12 I do not allow a woman to teach or
to have authority over a man; instead, she is to be silent. 13 For Adam was
created first, then Eve. 14 And Adam was not deceived, but the woman was
deceived and transgressed. 15 But she will be saved through childbearing, if
she continues [A] in faith, love, and holiness, with good judgment.

Qualifications of Church Leaders

3 This saying is trustworthy: “If anyone aspires to be an •overseer, he
desires a noble work.” 2[†] An overseer, therefore, must be above
reproach, the husband of one wife, self-controlled, sensible, respectable,
hospitable, an able teacher, [A] 3 not addicted to wine, not a bully but gentle,
not quarrelsome, not greedy — 4 one who manages his own household
competently, having his children under control with all dignity. 5 (If anyone
does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of
God’s church?) 6 He must not be a new convert, or he might become
conceited and fall into the condemnation of the Devil. 7 Furthermore, he
must have a good reputation among outsiders, so that he does not fall into
disgrace and the Devil’s trap.

8 Deacons, likewise, should be worthy of respect, not hypocritical, not
drinking a lot of wine, not greedy for money, 9 holding the •mystery of the
faith with a clear conscience. 10 And they must also be tested first; if they
prove blameless, then they can serve as deacons. 11 Wives, too, must be
worthy of respect, not slanderers, self-controlled, faithful in everything.
12 Deacons must be husbands of one wife, managing their children and their
own households competently. 13 For those who have served well as deacons
acquire a good standing for themselves, and great boldness in the faith that
is in Christ Jesus.

The Mystery of Godliness

14 I write these things to you, hoping to come to you soon. 15 But if I
should be delayed, I have written so that you will know how people ought
to act in God’s household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar
and foundation of the truth. 16 And most certainly, the mystery of
godliness is great:

He was manifested in the flesh,
vindicated in the Spirit,
seen by angels,
preached among the nations,
believed on in the world,

taken up in glory.

Demonic Influence

4 Now the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will depart from
the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and the teachings of
demons, [2] through the hypocrisy of liars whose consciences are seared.
[3] They forbid marriage and demand abstinence from foods that God
created to be received with gratitude by those who believe and know the
truth. [4] For everything created by God is good, and nothing should be
rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, [5] since it is sanctified by the
word of God and by prayer.

TWISTED SCRIPTURE

1 Timothy 4:1

One of the marks of the last days is an increase in false teachers, who for a while embrace the gospel but are later lured away into heresy. The Apostle Paul predicted that this would happen at the church of Ephesus, where Timothy served as leader (Ac 20:29-30). Later the ascended Lord commended this church with the words "You have tested those who call themselves apostles and are not, and you have found them to be liars" (Rv 2:2). Christians are responsible for testing new doctrines and revelations against the clear teaching of Scripture (Ac 17:17).

A Good Servant of Jesus Christ

[6] If you point these things out to the brothers, you will be a good servant
of Christ Jesus, nourished by the words of the faith and the good teaching
that you have followed. [7†] But have nothing to do with irreverent and silly
myths. Rather, train yourself in godliness, [8†] for

the training of the body has a limited benefit,
but godliness is beneficial in every way,
since it holds promise for the present life
and also for the life to come.

[9] This saying is trustworthy and deserves full acceptance. [10†] In fact, we
labor and strive for this, because we have put our hope in the living God,
who is the Savior of everyone, especially of those who believe.

Instructions for Ministry

[11] Command and teach these things. [12] Let no one despise your youth;
instead, you should be an example to the believers in speech, in conduct,
in love, in faith, in purity. [13] Until I come, give your attention to public
reading, exhortation, and teaching. [14] Do not neglect the gift that is in you;
it was given to you through prophecy, with the laying on of hands by the
council of elders. [15] Practice these things; be committed to them, so that
your progress may be evident to all. [16] Pay close attention to your life and
your teaching; persevere in these things, for by doing this you will save
both yourself and your hearers.

5 Do not rebuke an older man, but exhort him as a father, younger men as
brothers, 2 older women as mothers, and with all propriety, the younger
women as sisters.

The Support of Widows

3 Support [A] widows who are genuinely widows. 4 But if any widow has
children or grandchildren, they must learn to practice godliness toward their
own family first and to repay their parents, for this pleases God. 5 The real
widow, left all alone, has put her hope in God and continues night and day
in her petitions and prayers; 6 however, she who is self-indulgent is dead
even while she lives. 7 Command this also, so they won't be blamed. 8 But
if anyone does not provide for his own, that is his own household, he has
denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

9 No widow should be placed on the official support list [B] unless she is at
least 60 years old, has been the wife of one husband, 10 and is well known
for good works — that is, if she has brought up children, shown
hospitality, washed the •saints' feet, helped the afflicted, and devoted
herself to every good work. 11 But refuse to enroll younger widows, for
when they are drawn away from Christ by desire, they want to marry
12† and will therefore receive condemnation because they have renounced
their original pledge. 13 At the same time, they also learn to be idle, going
from house to house; they are not only idle, but are also gossips and
busybodies, saying things they shouldn't say. 14 Therefore, I want younger
women to marry, have children, manage their households, and give the
adversary no opportunity to accuse us. 15 For some have already turned
away to follow Satan. 16 If any believing woman has widows in her
family, she should help them, and the church should not be burdened, so
that it can help those who are genuinely widows.

Honoring the Elders

17 The elders who are good leaders should be considered worthy of an
ample honorarium, [C] especially those who work hard at preaching and

teaching. [18] For the Scripture says:

Do not muzzle an ox
while it is treading out the grain, and,
the worker is worthy of his wages.

ARTICLE
How Is Jihad Understood in Islam? ⇒

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[19] Don’t accept an accusation against an elder unless it is supported by
two or three witnesses. [20] Publicly rebuke those who sin, so that the rest
will also be afraid. [21] I solemnly charge you before God and Christ Jesus
and the elect angels to observe these things without prejudice, doing
nothing out of favoritism. [22] Don’t be too quick to appoint [D], anyone as an
elder, and don’t share in the sins of others. Keep yourself pure. [23†] Don’t
continue drinking only water, but use a little wine because of your stomach
and your frequent illnesses. [24] Some people’s sins are obvious, going before
them to judgment, but the sins of others surface [E] later. [25] Likewise, good
works are obvious, and those that are not obvious cannot remain hidden.

Honoring Masters

6 [†]All who are under the yoke as •slaves must regard their own masters [A] to be worthy of all respect, so that God's name and His teaching will not be blasphemed. 2 Those who have believing masters should not be disrespectful to them because they are brothers, but should serve them better, since those who benefit from their service are believers and dearly loved.

False Doctrine and Human Greed

Teach and encourage these things. 3 If anyone teaches other doctrine and does not agree with the sound teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ and with the teaching that promotes godliness, 4 he is conceited, understanding nothing, but has a sick interest in disputes and arguments over words. From these come envy, quarreling, slander, evil suspicions, 5 and constant disagreement among people whose minds are depraved and deprived of the truth, who imagine that godliness is a way to material gain. 6 But godliness with contentment is a great gain.

7 For we brought nothing into the world,
and we can take nothing out.
8 But if we have food and clothing, [B]
we will be content with these.

9 But those who want to be rich fall into temptation, a trap, and many foolish and harmful desires, which plunge people into ruin and destruction.
10 For the love of money is a root [C] of all kinds of evil, and by craving it, some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pains.

Fight the Good Fight

11 But you, man of God, run from these things,
and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith,
love, endurance, and gentleness.
12 Fight the good fight for the faith;
take hold of eternal life

that you were called to
and have made a good confession about
in the presence of many witnesses.

13 In the presence of God, who gives life to all, and of Christ Jesus, who
gave a good confession before Pontius •Pilate, I charge you 14† to keep the
command without fault or failure until the appearing of our Lord Jesus
Christ. 15 God will bring this about in His own time. He is

the blessed and only Sovereign,
the King of kings,
and the Lord of lords,
16† the only One who has immortality,
dwelling in unapproachable light;
no one has seen or can see Him,
to Him be honor and eternal might.
•Amen.

TWISTED SCRIPTURE

1 Timothy 6:16

The basic premise of the soul sleep theory, also known as conditional immortality, is derived from this verse among others (see Gn 2:17; 3:4,19,22; Ps 146:4; Ec 9:5; Ezk 18:20; Rm 6:23). Groups such as the Jehovah's Witnesses, Seventh-day Adventists, The Way International, and a host of "sacred name" sects believe that when humans die, their bodies go into the grave and remain unconscious until resurrection day. The vast majority of Christians, however, believe that human consciousness survives death. Jesus exhorted, "Don't fear those who kill the body but are not able to kill the soul; rather, fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Mt 10:28). The Apostle Peter talked about laying aside his "tent," that is, dying (2 Pt 1:14), which seems to indicate that the personality survives death. Paul made a similar statement in 2 Co 5:1. Paul also wrote of death as "the desire to depart and to be with Christ" (Php 1:23). The author of Hebrews wrote of "the spirits of righteous people made perfect" (Heb 12:23). And the martyred tribulation saints cry out, "O Lord . . . how long until You judge and avenge our blood?" (Rv 6:10), showing that they are alive when

making this plea. Most importantly, Jesus spoke on the subject when He assured the thief on the cross, "Today you will be with Me in paradise" (Lk 23:43). When referring to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Jesus concluded that "He is not the God of the dead, but of the living" (Mt 22:32).

Instructions to the Rich

17 Instruct those who are rich in the present age not to be arrogant or to
set their hope on the uncertainty of wealth, but on God, who richly
provides us with all things to enjoy. 18 Instruct them to do what is good, to
be rich in good works, to be generous, willing to share, 19 storing up for
themselves a good reserve [D] for the age to come, so that they may take
hold of life that is real.

Guard the Heritage

20 Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to you, avoiding irreverent,
empty speech and contradictions from the "knowledge" that falsely bears
that name. 21 By professing it, some people have deviated from the faith.

Grace be with all of you.

2 TIMOTHY

2 Timothy 1 | 2 Timothy 2 | 2 Timothy 3 | 2 Timothy 4

Introduction to 2 Timothy

2 TIMOTHY

Greeting

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by God's will, for the promise of life in Christ Jesus:

[2] To Timothy, my dearly loved son.

Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

Thanksgiving

[3] I thank God, whom I serve with a clear conscience as my ancestors did,
when I constantly remember you in my prayers night and day.
[4] Remembering your tears, I long to see you so that I may be filled with joy,
[5] clearly recalling your sincere faith that first lived in your grandmother
Lois, then in your mother Eunice, and that I am convinced is in you also.

[6] Therefore, I remind you to keep ablaze [A] the gift of God that is in you
through the laying on of my hands. [7†] For God has not given us a spirit [B] of
fearfulness, but one of power, love, and sound judgment.

Not Ashamed of the Gospel

[8] So don't be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, or of me His prisoner. Instead, share in suffering for the gospel, relying on the power of God.

[9] He has saved us and called us
with a holy calling,
not according to our works,
but according to His own purpose and grace,
which was given to us in Christ Jesus
before time began.
[10] This has now been made evident
through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus,
who has abolished death
and has brought life and immortality to light
through the gospel.

[11] For this gospel I was appointed a herald, apostle, and teacher, [12] and that
is why I suffer these things. But I am not ashamed, because I know the One
I have believed in and am persuaded that He is able to guard what has been
entrusted to me [C] until that day.

Be Loyal to the Faith

[13] Hold on to the pattern of sound teaching that you have heard from
me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. [14] Guard, through the
Holy Spirit who lives in us, that good thing entrusted to you. [15] This you
know: All those in •Asia have turned away from me, including Phygelus
and Hermogenes. [16] May the Lord grant mercy to the household of
Onesiphorus, because he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my
chains. [17] On the contrary, when he was in Rome, he diligently searched
for me and found me. [18] May the Lord grant that he obtain mercy from
Him on that day. And you know very well how much he ministered at
Ephesus.

Be Strong in Grace

2 You, therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.
[2] And what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses,
commit to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.

[3] Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. [4] No one serving as
a soldier gets entangled in the concerns of civilian life; he seeks to please
the recruiter. [5] Also, if anyone competes as an athlete, he is not crowned
unless he competes according to the rules. [6] The hardworking farmer ought
to be the first to get a share of the crops. [7] Consider what I say, for the Lord
will give you understanding in everything.

[8†] Keep your attention on Jesus Christ as risen from the dead and
descended from David. This is according to my gospel. [9] I suffer for it to
the point of being bound like a criminal, but God's message is not bound.
[10] This is why I endure all things for the elect: so that they also may obtain
salvation, which is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory. [11] This saying is
trustworthy:

For if we have died with Him,
we will also live with Him;
[12] if we endure, we will also reign with Him;
if we deny Him, He will also deny us;
[13] if we are faithless, He remains faithful,
for He cannot deny Himself.

An Approved Worker

[14] Remind them of these things, charging them before God not to fight
about words; this is in no way profitable and leads to the ruin of the
hearers. [15] Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who
doesn't need to be ashamed, correctly teaching the word of truth. [16] But
avoid irreverent, empty speech, for this will produce an even greater
measure of godlessness. [17] And their word will spread like gangrene;
Hymenaeus and Philetus are among them. [18†] They have deviated from the
truth, saying that the resurrection has already taken place, and are

overturning the faith of some. 19 Nevertheless, God’s solid foundation
stands firm, having this inscription:

The Lord knows those who are His, and
Everyone who names the name of the Lord
must turn away from unrighteousness.

20 Now in a large house there are not only gold and silver bowls, but also
those of wood and clay, some for honorable [A] use, some for
dishonorable. [B], 21 So if anyone purifies himself from anything
dishonorable, [C] he will be a special [D] instrument, set apart, useful to the
Master, prepared for every good work.

22 Flee from youthful passions, and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and
peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart. 23 But
reject foolish and ignorant disputes, knowing that they breed quarrels.
24 The Lord’s •slave must not quarrel, but must be gentle to everyone, able
to teach, [E] and patient, 25 instructing his opponents with gentleness.
Perhaps God will grant them repentance leading them to the knowledge of
the truth. 26 Then they may come to their senses and escape the Devil’s
trap, having been captured by him to do his will.

Difficult Times Ahead

3 But know this: Difficult times will come in the last days. [2] For people
will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, proud, blasphemers,
disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, [3] unloving, irreconcilable,
slanderers, without self-control, brutal, without love for what is good,
[4] traitors, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of
God, [5] holding to the form of godliness but denying its power. Avoid these
people!

[6] For among them are those who worm their way into households and
capture idle women burdened down with sins, led along by a variety of
passions, [7] always learning and never able to come to a knowledge of the
truth. [8†] Just as Jannes and Jambres resisted Moses, so these also resist the
truth, men who are corrupt in mind, worthless in regard to the faith. [9] But
they will not make further progress, for their lack of understanding will be
clear to all, as theirs was also.

Struggles in the Christian Life

[10] But you have followed my teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, patience,
love, and endurance, [11] along with the persecutions and sufferings that
came to me in Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra. What persecutions I
endured! Yet the Lord rescued me from them all. [12†] In fact, all those who
want to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. [13] Evil people
and impostors will become worse, deceiving and being deceived. [14] But as
for you, continue in what you have learned and firmly believed. You know
those who taught you, [15] and you know that from childhood you have
known the sacred Scriptures, which are able to give you wisdom for
salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. [16†] All Scripture is inspired by
God [A] and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for
training in righteousness, [17] so that the man of God may be complete,
equipped for every good work.

ARTICLE

What Does It Mean That God Inspired the Bible? ⇒

Fulfill Your Ministry

4 I solemnly charge you before God and Christ Jesus, who is going to
judge the living and the dead, and because of His appearing and His
kingdom: 2 Proclaim the message; persist in it whether convenient or not;
rebuke, correct, and encourage with great patience and teaching. 3 For the
time will come when they will not tolerate sound doctrine, but according to
their own desires, will multiply teachers for themselves because they have
an itch to hear something new. [A] 4 They will turn away from hearing the
truth and will turn aside to myths. 5 But as for you, be serious about
everything, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your
ministry.

TWISTED SCRIPTURE

2 Timothy 4:4

False teachers replace the truth of the gospel with fables or myths. In his book, *In My Soul I Am Free*, Paul Twitchell, the man behind Eckankar, taught his students the so-called ability to separate soul and body, enabling them to engage in astral travel to all parts of the world and transcend the various spheres of the universe until they attain ultimate salvation. Scientologists believe that spirit beings called Thetans, living 74 trillion years ago, used the evolutionary process to create human beings, whose bodies they now inhabit. Whenever a human dies, the indwelling Thetan reincarnates into another body. Urantia, embracing a combination of Seventh-day Adventist and New Age doctrines, is another new religious movement that teaches a fanciful creation story. According to its scenario, planet earth, originally called Urantia, was created by Michael of Nebadon one trillion years ago. Michael eventually came to earth as the man Jesus. The Apostle Paul predicted a day when many will reject the truth and turn to fables.

6† For I am already being poured out as a •drink offering, and the time
for my departure is close. 7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the
race, I have kept the faith. 8 There is reserved for me in the future the
crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me

on that day, and not only to me, but to all those who have loved His
appearing.

Final Instructions

[9] Make every effort to come to me soon, [10] for Demas has deserted me,
because he loved this present world, and has gone to Thessalonica.
Crescens has gone to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia. [11] Only Luke is with me.
Bring Mark with you, for he is useful to me in the ministry. [12] I have sent
Tychicus to Ephesus. [13] When you come, bring the cloak I left in Troas
with Carpus, as well as the scrolls, especially the parchments. [14] Alexander
the coppersmith did great harm to me. The Lord will repay him according
to his works. [15] Watch out for him yourself because he strongly opposed
our words.

[16] At my first defense, no one stood by me, but everyone deserted me.
May it not be counted against them. [17] But the Lord stood with me and
strengthened me, so that the proclamation might be fully made through me
and all the Gentiles might hear. So I was rescued from the lion's mouth.
[18] The Lord will rescue me from every evil work and will bring me safely
into His heavenly kingdom. To Him be the glory forever and ever! •Amen.

Benediction

[19] Greet Prisca and Aquila, and the household of Onesiphorus.
[20] Erastus has remained at Corinth; I left Trophimus sick at Miletus.
[21] Make every effort to come before winter. Eubulus greets you, as do
Pudens, Linus, Claudia, and all the brothers.

[22] The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you.

TITUS

Titus 1 Titus 2 Titus 3

Introduction to Titus

TITUS

Greeting

1 Paul, a •slave of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to build up [A] the
faith of God's elect and their knowledge of the truth that leads [B] to
godliness, 2† in the hope of eternal life that God, who cannot lie, promised
before time began. 3 In His own time He has revealed His message in the
proclamation that I was entrusted with by the command of God our
Savior:

4 To Titus, my true son in our common faith.

Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior.

Titus's Ministry in Crete

5 The reason I left you in Crete was to set right what was left undone
and, as I directed you, to appoint elders in every town: 6† one who is
blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful [C] children not accused
of wildness or rebellion. 7 For an •overseer, as God's administrator, must
be blameless, not arrogant, not hot-tempered, not addicted to wine, not a
bully, not greedy for money, 8 but hospitable, loving what is good, sensible,
righteous, holy, self-controlled, 9 holding to the faithful message as taught,
so that he will be able both to encourage with sound teaching and to refute
those who contradict it.

10† For there are also many rebellious people, full of empty talk and
deception, especially those from Judaism. [D] 11 It is necessary to silence
them; they overthrow whole households by teaching what they shouldn't in
order to get money dishonestly. 12† One of their very own prophets said,

Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons.

13 This testimony is true. So, rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound
in the faith 14† and may not pay attention to Jewish myths and the
commands of men who reject the truth.

15 To the pure, everything is pure, but to those who are defiled and
unbelieving nothing is pure; in fact, both their mind and conscience are

defiled. [16] They profess to know God, but they deny Him by their works.
They are detestable, disobedient, and disqualified for any good work.

Sound Teaching and Christian Living

2 But you must say the things that are consistent with sound teaching.
[2] Older men are to be level headed, worthy of respect, sensible, and
sound in faith, love, and endurance. [3†] In the same way, older women are
to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not addicted to much wine. They
are to teach what is good, [4] so they may encourage the young women to
love their husbands and to love their children, [5] to be self-controlled, pure,
homemakers, kind, and submissive to their husbands, so that God's
message will not be slandered.

[6] In the same way, encourage the young men to be self-controlled [7] in
everything. Make yourself an example of good works with integrity and
dignity in your teaching. [8] Your message is to be sound beyond reproach,
so that the opponent will be ashamed, having nothing bad to say about us.

[9†] •Slaves are to be submissive to their masters in everything, and to be
well-pleasing, not talking back [10] or stealing, but demonstrating utter
faithfulness, so that they may adorn the teaching of God our Savior in
everything.

[11†] For the grace of God has appeared with salvation [A] for all people,
[12] instructing us to deny godlessness and worldly lusts and to live in a
sensible, righteous, and godly way in the present age, [13†] while we wait for
the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior,
Jesus Christ. [14] He gave Himself for us to •redeem us from all lawlessness
and to cleanse for Himself a people for His own possession, eager to do
good works.

[15] Say these things, and encourage and rebuke with all authority. Let no
one disregard [B] you.

Christian Living among Outsiders

3 Remind them to be submissive to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be
ready for every good work, 2 to slander no one, to avoid fighting, and to
be kind, always showing gentleness to all people. 3 For we too were once
foolish, disobedient, deceived, enslaved by various passions and pleasures,
living in malice and envy, hateful, detesting one another.

4 But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love
for mankind appeared,
5† He saved us —
not by works of righteousness that we had done,
but according to His mercy,
through the washing of regeneration
and renewal by the Holy Spirit.
6 He poured out this Spirit on us abundantly
through Jesus Christ our Savior,
7 so that having been •justified by His grace,
we may become heirs with the hope of eternal life.

8 This saying is trustworthy. I want you to insist on these things, so that
those who have believed God might be careful to devote themselves to
good works. These are good and profitable for everyone. 9† But avoid
foolish debates, genealogies, quarrels, and disputes about the law, for they
are unprofitable and worthless. 10 Reject a divisive person after a first and
second warning, 11 knowing that such a person is perverted and sins, being
self-condemned.

Final Instructions and Closing

12 When I send Artemas or Tychicus to you, make every effort to come
to me in Nicopolis, for I have decided to spend the winter there.
13 Diligently help Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their journey, so that
they will lack nothing.

14 And our people must also learn to devote themselves to good works for
cases of urgent need, so that they will not be unfruitful. 15 All those who

are with me greet you. Greet those who love us in the faith. Grace be with all of you.

PHILEMON

Philemon 1

Introduction to Philemon

PHILEMON

Greeting

1 Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother:

To Philemon our dear friend and coworker, 2 to Apphia our sister, to
Archippus our fellow soldier, and to the church that meets in your home.

3 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Philemon's Love and Faith

4 I always thank my God when I mention you in my prayers, 5 because I
hear of your love and faith toward [A] the Lord Jesus and for all the •saints.
6 I pray that your participation in the faith may become effective through
knowing every good thing that is in us for the glory of Christ. 7 For I have
great joy and encouragement from your love, because the hearts of the
saints have been refreshed through you, brother.

An Appeal for Onesimus

8 For this reason, although I have great boldness in Christ to command
you to do what is right, 9 I appeal to you, instead, on the basis of love. I,
Paul, as an elderly man [B] and now also as a prisoner of Christ Jesus,
10† appeal to you for my son, Onesimus. [C], I fathered him while I was in
chains. 11 Once he was useless to you, but now he is useful both to you and
to me. 12 I am sending him back to you as a part of myself. 13 I wanted to
keep him with me, so that in my imprisonment for the gospel he might
serve me in your place. 14 But I didn't want to do anything without your
consent, so that your good deed might not be out of obligation, but of your
own free will. 15 For perhaps this is why he was separated from you for a
brief time, so that you might get him back permanently, 16† no longer as a
•slave, but more than a slave — as a dearly loved brother. He is especially
so to me, but even more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord.

17 So if you consider me a partner, accept him as you would me. 18 And
if he has wronged you in any way, or owes you anything, charge that to my
account. 19 I, Paul, write this with my own hand: I will repay it — not to

mention to you that you owe me even your own self. [20] Yes, brother, may I
have joy from you in the Lord; refresh my heart in Christ. [21] Since I am
confident of your obedience, I am writing to you, knowing that you will do
even more than I say. [22] But meanwhile, also prepare a guest room for me,
for I hope that through your prayers I will be restored to you.

Final Greetings

[23] Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, greets you, and so do
[24] Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke, my coworkers.

[25] The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

HEBREWS

Introduction to Hebrews

HEBREWS

The Nature of the Son

1 Long ago God spoke to the fathers by the prophets at different times
and in different ways. 2† In these last days, He has spoken to us by His
Son. God has appointed Him heir of all things and made the universe [A],
through Him. 3 The Son is the radiance [B] of God’s glory and the exact
expression [C] of His nature, sustaining all things by His powerful word.
After making purification for sins, He sat down at the right hand of the
Majesty on high. [D] 4 So He became higher in rank than the angels, just as
the name He inherited is superior to theirs.

> ## TWISTED SCRIPTURE
>
> Hebrews 1:1-2
>
> Jesus is God's final and full revelation to the world. Therefore anyone who claims to be a prophet with a new revelation must be considered a false prophet (Mt 24:5,11, 23-26).

The Son Superior to Angels

5 For to which of the angels did He ever say, **You are My Son; today I
have become Your Father,** [E], or again, **I will be His Father, and He will
be My Son**? 6 When He again [F] brings His firstborn into the world, He
says, **And all God’s angels must worship Him.** 7 And about the angels He
says:

He makes His angels winds, [G]
and His servants [H] **a fiery flame,**

8† but to [I] the Son:

Your throne, God,
is forever and ever,

and the scepter of Your kingdom
is a scepter of justice.
9 **You have loved righteousness**
and hated lawlessness;
this is why God, Your God,
has anointed You
with the oil of joy
rather than Your companions. [J]

ARTICLE

What Is Divine Revelation? ⇒

10† And:

In the beginning, Lord,
You established the earth,
and the heavens are the works of Your hands;
11† **they will perish, but You remain.**
They will all wear out like clothing;
12 **You will roll them up like a cloak,**
and they will be changed like a robe.
But You are the same,
and Your years will never end.

13 Now to which of the angels has He ever said:

Sit at My right hand
until I make Your enemies Your footstool? [K] ,

14 Are they not all ministering spirits sent out to serve those who are going to inherit salvation?

Warning against Neglect

2 We must, therefore, pay even more attention to what we have heard, so
that we will not drift away. 2 For if the message spoken through angels
was legally binding [A] and every transgression and disobedience received a
just punishment, 3 how will we escape if we neglect such a great salvation?
It was first spoken by the Lord and was confirmed to us by those who heard
Him. 4 At the same time, God also testified by signs and wonders, various
miracles, and distributions of gifts from the Holy Spirit according to His
will.

Jesus and Humanity

5 For He has not subjected to angels the world to come that we are
talking about. 6 But one has somewhere testified:

What is man that You remember him,
or the son of man that You care for him?
7 **You made him lower than the angels**
for a short time;
You crowned him with glory and honor
8 **and subjected everything under his feet.**

For in **subjecting everything** to him, He left nothing that is not subject to
him. As it is, we do not yet see **everything subjected** to him. 9 But we do
see Jesus — **made lower than the angels for a short time** so that by God's
grace He might taste death for everyone — crowned with glory and honor
because of His suffering in death.

10 For in bringing many sons to glory, it was entirely appropriate that
God — all things exist for Him and through Him — should make the
source [B] of their salvation perfect through sufferings. 11 For the One who
•sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one Father. [C] That is why
Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers, 12 saying:

I will proclaim Your name to My brothers;
I will sing hymns to You in the congregation.

13 Again, **I will trust in Him.** And again, **Here I am with the children
God gave Me.**

14 Now since the children have flesh and blood in common, Jesus also
shared in these, so that through His death He might destroy the one holding
the power of death — that is, the Devil — 15 and free those who were held
in slavery all their lives by the fear of death. 16[†] For it is clear that He does
not reach out to help angels, but to help Abraham's offspring. 17 Therefore,
He had to be like His brothers in every way, so that He could become a
merciful and faithful high priest in service [D] to God, to make •propitiation
for the sins of the people. 18 For since He Himself was tested and has
suffered, He is able to help those who are tested.

Our Apostle and High Priest

3 Therefore, holy brothers and companions in a heavenly calling, consider
Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession; 2 He was faithful to
the One who appointed Him, just as Moses was in all God’s household.
3 For Jesus is considered worthy of more glory than Moses, just as the
builder has more honor than the house. 4 Now every house is built by
someone, but the One who built everything is God. 5 Moses was faithful as
a servant in all God’s household, as a testimony to what would be said in
the future. 6 But Christ was faithful as a Son over His household. And we
are that household if we hold on to the courage and the confidence of our
hope.

Warning against Unbelief

7 Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says:

Today, if you hear His voice,
8 **do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion,**
on the day of testing in the wilderness,
9 **where your fathers tested Me, tried Me**,
and saw My works 10 **for 40 years.**
Therefore I was provoked with that generation
and said, “They always go astray in their hearts,
and they have not known My ways.”
11 **So I swore in My anger,**
“They will not enter My rest.”

12 Watch out, brothers, so that there won’t be in any of you an evil,
unbelieving heart that departs from the living God. 13 But encourage each
other daily, while it is still called **today**, so that none of you is hardened by
sin’s deception. 14 For we have become companions of the •Messiah if we
hold firmly until the end the reality [A] that we had at the start. 15 As it is
said:

Today, if you hear His voice,
do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion.

[16] For who heard and rebelled? Wasn't it really all who came out of Egypt
under Moses? [17] And who was He provoked with for 40 years? Was it not
with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness? [18] And who
did He swear to that they would not enter His rest, if not those who
disobeyed? [19] So we see that they were unable to enter because of unbelief.

The Promised Rest

4 Therefore, while the promise to enter His rest remains, let us fear that
none of you should miss it. [A] 2 For we also have received the good news
just as they did; but the message they heard did not benefit them, since they
were not united with those who heard it in faith 3 (for we who have
believed enter the rest), in keeping with what [B] He has said:

So I swore in My anger,
they will not enter My rest.

And yet His works have been finished since the foundation of the world,
4 for somewhere He has spoken about the seventh day in this way:

And on the seventh day
God rested from all His works.

5 Again, in that passage He says, **They will never enter My rest.** 6 Since it
remains for some to enter it, and those who formerly received the good
news did not enter because of disobedience, 7 again, He specifies a certain
day — **today** — speaking through David after such a long time, as
previously stated:

Today, if you hear His voice,
do not harden your hearts.

8 For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken later about
another day. 9 Therefore, a Sabbath rest remains for God's people. 10 For the
person who has entered His rest has rested from his own works, just as God
did from His. 11 Let us then make every effort to enter that rest, so that no
one will fall into the same pattern of disobedience.

12 For the word of God is living and effective and sharper than any
double-edged sword, penetrating as far as the separation of soul and spirit,
joints and marrow. It is able to judge the ideas and thoughts of the heart.
13 No creature is hidden from Him, but all things are naked and exposed to
the eyes of Him to whom we must give an account.

Our Great High Priest

[14] Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through
the heavens — Jesus the Son of God — let us hold fast to the confession.
[15]† For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our
weaknesses, but One who has been tested in every way as we are, yet
without sin. [16] Therefore let us approach the throne of grace with boldness,
so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us at the proper time.

The Messiah, a High Priest

5 For every high priest taken from men is appointed in service [A] to God for the people, to offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins. [2] He is able to deal gently with those who are ignorant and are going astray, since he is also subject to weakness. [3] Because of this, he must make a sin offering for himself as well as for the people. [4] No one takes this honor on himself; instead, a person is called by God, just as Aaron was. [5] In the same way, the •Messiah did not exalt Himself to become a high priest, but the One who said to Him, **You are My Son; today I have become Your Father,** [6] also said in another passage, **You are a priest forever in the order of Melchizedek.**

[7] During His earthly life, [B] He offered prayers and appeals with loud cries and tears to the One who was able to save Him from death, and He was heard because of His reverence. [8] Though He was God's Son, He learned obedience through what He suffered. [9] After He was perfected, He became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey Him, [10] and He was declared by God a high priest in the order of Melchizedek.

The Problem of Immaturity

[11] We have a great deal to say about this, and it's difficult to explain, since you have become too lazy to understand. [12] Although by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the basic principles of God's revelation again. You need milk, not solid food. [13] Now everyone who lives on milk is inexperienced with the message about righteousness, because he is an infant. [14] But solid food is for the mature — for those whose senses have been trained to distinguish between good and evil.

Warning against Regression

6 Therefore, leaving the elementary message about the •Messiah, let us go on to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead
works, faith in God, 2 teaching about ritual washings, [A] laying on of hands,
the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. 3 And we will do this if
God permits.

4[†] For it is impossible to renew to repentance those who were once
enlightened, who tasted the heavenly gift, became companions with the
Holy Spirit, 5 tasted God's good word and the powers of the coming age,
6 and who have fallen away, because, [B] to their own harm, they are
recrucifying the Son of God and holding Him up to contempt. 7 For ground
that has drunk the rain that has often fallen on it and that produces
vegetation useful to those it is cultivated for receives a blessing from God.
8 But if it produces thorns and thistles, it is worthless and about to be
cursed, and will be burned at the end.

ARTICLE

Notable Christian Apologist: C.S. Lewis ⇒

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9 Even though we are speaking this way, dear friends, in your case we are
confident of the better things connected with salvation. 10 For God is not
unjust; He will not forget your work and the love you showed for His name
when you served the •saints — and you continue to serve them. 11 Now we
want each of you to demonstrate the same diligence for the final realization
of your hope, 12 so that you won't become lazy but will be imitators of
those who inherit the promises through faith and perseverance.

Inheriting the Promise

13 For when God made a promise to Abraham, since He had no one
greater to swear by, He swore by Himself:

[14] **I will indeed bless you,**
and I will greatly multiply you.

[15] And so, after waiting patiently, Abraham [C] obtained the promise. [16] For
men swear by something greater than themselves, and for them a
confirming oath ends every dispute. [17] Because God wanted to show His
unchangeable purpose even more clearly to the heirs of the promise, He
guaranteed it with an oath, [18†] so that through two unchangeable things, in
which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled for refuge might
have strong encouragement to seize the hope set before us. [19] We have this
hope as an anchor for our lives, safe and secure. It enters the inner
sanctuary behind the curtain. [20] Jesus has entered there on our behalf as a
forerunner, because He has become a high priest forever in the order of
Melchizedek.

The Greatness of Melchizedek

7 For this Melchizedek —

King of Salem, priest of the Most High God,
who met Abraham and blessed him
as he returned from defeating the kings,
[2] and Abraham gave him a tenth of everything;
first, his name means king of righteousness,
then also, king of Salem,
meaning king of peace;
[3†] without father, mother, or genealogy,
having neither beginning of days nor end of life,
but resembling the Son of God —

remains a priest forever.

[4] Now consider how great this man was — even Abraham the patriarch
gave a tenth of the plunder to him! [5] The sons of Levi who receive the
priestly office have a command according to the law to collect a tenth from
the people — that is, from their brothers — though they have also
descended from Abraham. [A] [6] But one without this [B] lineage collected
tenths from Abraham and blessed the one who had the promises. [7] Without
a doubt, [C] the inferior is blessed by the superior. [8] In the one case, men who
will die receive tenths, but in the other case, Scripture testifies that he lives.
[9] And in a sense Levi himself, who receives tenths, has paid tenths through
Abraham, [10] for he was still within his ancestor [D] when Melchizedek met
him.

A Superior Priesthood

[11†] If then, perfection came through the Levitical priesthood (for under it
the people received the law), what further need was there for another priest
to appear, said to be in the order of Melchizedek and not in the order of
Aaron? [12] For when there is a change of the priesthood, there must be a
change of law as well. [13] For the One these things are spoken about
belonged to a different tribe. No one from it has served at the altar. [14] Now

it is evident that our Lord came from Judah, and Moses said nothing about
that tribe concerning priests.

[15] And this becomes clearer if another priest like Melchizedek appears,
[16] who did not become a priest based on a legal command concerning
physical [E] descent but based on the power of an indestructible life. [17] For it
has been testified:

You are a priest forever
in the order of Melchizedek.

[18] So the previous command is annulled because it was weak and
unprofitable [19] (for the law perfected nothing), but a better hope is
introduced, through which we draw near to God.

[20] None of this happened without an oath. For others became priests
without an oath, [21] but He became a priest with an oath made by the One
who said to Him:

The Lord has sworn,
and He will not change His mind,
You are a priest forever.

[22] So Jesus has also become the guarantee of a better covenant.

[23] Now many have become Levitical priests, since they are prevented by
death from remaining in office. [24][†] But because He remains forever, He
holds His priesthood permanently. [25] Therefore, He is always able to save [F]
those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to intercede
for them.

[26] For this is the kind of high priest we need: holy, innocent, undefiled,
separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens. [27] He doesn't need
to offer sacrifices every day, as high priests do — first for their own sins,
then for those of the people. He did this once for all when He offered
Himself. [28] For the law appoints as high priests men who are weak, but the

promise of the oath, which came after the law, appoints a Son, who has been perfected forever.

A Heavenly Priesthood

8 Now the main point of what is being said is this: We have this kind of
high priest, who sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty
in the heavens, 2 a minister of the sanctuary and the true tabernacle that
was set up by the Lord and not man. 3 For every high priest is appointed to
offer gifts and sacrifices; therefore it was necessary for this priest also to
have something to offer. 4 Now if He were on earth, He wouldn't be a
priest, since there are those offering the gifts prescribed by the law. 5 These
serve as a copy and shadow of the heavenly things, as Moses was warned
when he was about to complete the tabernacle. For God said, **Be careful
that you make everything according to the pattern that was shown to
you on the mountain.** 6 But Jesus has now obtained a superior ministry,
and to that degree He is the mediator of a better covenant, which has been
legally enacted on better promises.

A Superior Covenant

7 For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no
occasion for a second one. 8 But finding fault with His people, [A] He says:

Look, the days are coming, says the Lord,
when I will make a new covenant
with the house of Israel
and with the house of Judah —
9[†] **not like the covenant**
that I made with their ancestors
on the day I took them by their hands
to lead them out of the land of Egypt.
I disregarded them, says the Lord,
because they did not continue in My covenant.
10 **But this is the covenant**
that I will make with the house of Israel
after those days, says the Lord:
I will put My laws into their minds
and write them on their hearts.
I will be their God,
and they will be My people.

[11] **And each person will not teach his fellow citizen,**
and each his brother, saying, “Know the Lord,”
because they will all know Me,
from the least to the greatest of them.
[12] **For I will be merciful to their wrongdoing,**
and I will never again remember their sins. ,

[13] By saying, **a new covenant**, He has declared that the first is old. And what is old and aging is about to disappear.

Old Covenant Ministry

9 Now the first covenant also had regulations for ministry and an earthly
sanctuary. 2 For a tabernacle was set up, and in the first room, which is
called the holy place, were the lampstand, the table, and the presentation
loaves. 3 Behind the second curtain, the tabernacle was called the most
holy place. 4† It contained the gold altar of incense and the ark of the
covenant, covered with gold on all sides, in which there was a gold jar
containing the manna, Aaron's staff that budded, and the tablets of the
covenant. 5 The •cherubim of glory were above it overshadowing the
•mercy seat. It is not possible to speak about these things in detail right
now.

6 With these things set up this way, the priests enter the first room
repeatedly, performing their ministry. 7 But the high priest alone enters the
second room, and he does that only once a year, and never without blood,
which he offers for himself and for the sins of the people committed in
ignorance. 8 The Holy Spirit was making it clear that the way into the most
holy place had not yet been disclosed while the first tabernacle was still
standing. 9 This is a symbol for the present time, during which gifts and
sacrifices are offered that cannot perfect the worshiper's conscience.
10 They are physical regulations and only deal with food, drink, and various
washings imposed until the time of restoration.

New Covenant Ministry

11 But the •Messiah has appeared, high priest of the good things that have
come. In the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands (that
is, not of this creation), 12 He entered the most holy place once for all, not
by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood, having obtained
eternal •redemption. 13 For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of
a young cow, sprinkling those who are defiled, sanctify for the purification
of the flesh, 14 how much more will the blood of the Messiah, who through
the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse our
consciences from dead works to serve the living God?

[15] Therefore, He is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who
are called might receive the promise of the eternal inheritance, because a
death has taken place for redemption from the transgressions committed
under the first covenant. [16] Where a will exists, the death of the one who
made it must be established. [17] For a will is valid only when people die,
since it is never in force while the one who made it is living. [18] That is why
even the first covenant was inaugurated with blood. [19] For when every
command had been proclaimed by Moses to all the people according to the
law, he took the blood of calves and goats, along with water, scarlet wool,
and hyssop, and sprinkled the scroll itself and all the people, [20] saying,
This is the blood of the covenant that God has commanded for you.
[21] In the same way, he sprinkled the tabernacle and all the articles of
worship with blood. [22] According to the law almost everything is purified
with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.

[23] Therefore it was necessary for the copies of the things in the heavens
to be purified with these sacrifices, but the heavenly things themselves to be
purified with better sacrifices than these. [24] For the Messiah did not enter a
sanctuary made with hands (only a model [A] of the true one) but into heaven
itself, so that He might now appear in the presence of God for us. [25] He did
not do this to offer Himself many times, as the high priest enters the
sanctuary yearly with the blood of another. [26] Otherwise, He would have
had to suffer many times since the foundation of the world. But now He has
appeared one time, at the end of the ages, for the removal of sin by the
sacrifice of Himself. [27†] And just as it is appointed for people to die
once — and after this, judgment — [28] so also the Messiah, having been
offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to
bear sin, but [B] to bring salvation to those who are waiting for Him.

TWISTED SCRIPTURE

Hebrews 9:27

This verse clearly shows that belief in reincarnation is not an option for a Christian. Each individual is granted a single lifetime on earth and "after this, judgment." Jesus told of a rich man who died and in hell lifted up his eyes in torment (Lk 16:23). There is no opportunity to return to earth.

ARTICLE

Does the Bible Teach Reincarnation? ⇒

The Perfect Sacrifice

10 Since the law has only a shadow of the good things to come, and not the actual form of those realities, it can never perfect the worshipers by the same sacrifices they continually offer year after year. [2] Otherwise, wouldn't they have stopped being offered, since the worshipers, once purified, would no longer have any consciousness of sins? [3] But in the sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year. [4†] For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

[5†] Therefore, as He was coming into the world, He said:

You did not want sacrifice and offering,
but You prepared a body for Me.
[6] **You did not delight**
in whole burnt offerings and sin offerings.
[7] **Then I said, "See —**
it is written about Me
in the volume of the scroll —
I have come to do Your will, God! "

[8] After He says above, **You did not want or delight in sacrifices and offerings, whole burnt offerings and sin offerings** (which are offered according to the law), [9] He then says, **See, I have come to do Your will.** He takes away the first to establish the second. [10] By this will of God, we have been •sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once and for all.

[11] Every priest stands day after day ministering and offering the same sacrifices time after time, which can never take away sins. [12] But this man, after offering one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God. [13] He is now waiting until His enemies are made His footstool. [14] For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are sanctified. [15] The Holy Spirit also testifies to us about this. For after He says:

[16] **This is the covenant I will make with them**
after those days, says the Lord:
I will put My laws on their hearts

and write them on their minds,

[17] He adds:

I will never again remember
their sins and their lawless acts.

[18] Now where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer an offering
for sin.

Exhortations to Godliness

[19] Therefore, brothers, since we have boldness to enter the sanctuary
through the blood of Jesus, [20] by a new and living way He has opened for
us through the curtain (that is, His flesh), [21] and since we have a great high
priest over the house of God, [22] let us draw near with a true heart in full
assurance of faith, our hearts sprinkled •clean from an evil conscience and
our bodies washed in pure water. [23] Let us hold on to the confession of our
hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. [24] And let us be
concerned about one another in order to promote love and good works,
[25] not staying away from our worship meetings, as some habitually do, but
encouraging each other, and all the more as you see the day drawing near.

Warning against Deliberate Sin

[26] For if we deliberately sin after receiving the knowledge of the truth,
there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, [27] but a terrifying expectation
of judgment and the fury of a fire about to consume the adversaries. [28†] If
anyone disregards Moses' law, he dies without mercy, based on the
testimony of two or three witnesses. [29] How much worse punishment do
you think one will deserve who has trampled on the Son of God, regarded
as profane [A] the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and
insulted the Spirit of grace? [30] For we know the One who has said,
Vengeance belongs to Me, I will repay, and again, **The Lord will judge
His people.** [31] It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living
God!

32 Remember the earlier days when, after you had been enlightened, you
endured a hard struggle with sufferings. 33 Sometimes you were publicly
exposed to taunts and afflictions, and at other times you were companions
of those who were treated that way. 34 For you sympathized with the
prisoners and accepted with joy the confiscation of your possessions,
knowing that you yourselves have a better and enduring possession. 35 So
don’t throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. 36 For you
need endurance, so that after you have done God’s will, you may receive
what was promised.

37† For yet in **a very little while,**
the Coming One will come and not delay.
38 **But My righteous one will live by faith;**
and if he draws back,
I have no pleasure in him.

39 But we are not those who draw back and are destroyed, but those who
have faith and obtain life.

Heroes of Faith

11 [†]Now faith is the reality [A] of what is hoped for, the proof [B] of what is
not seen. 2 For our ancestors won God's approval by it.

3 By faith we understand that the universe was [C] created by God's
command, [D] so that what is seen has been made from things that are not
visible.

4 By faith Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain did. By faith
he was approved as a righteous man, because God approved his gifts, and
even though he is dead, he still speaks through his faith.

5[†] By faith Enoch was taken away so he did not experience death, and **he
was not to be found because God took him away.** For prior to his
removal he was approved, since he had pleased God.
6 Now without faith it
is impossible to please God, for the one who draws near to Him must
believe that He exists and rewards those who seek Him.

7 By faith Noah, after he was warned about what was not yet seen and
motivated by godly fear, built an ark to deliver his family. By faith he
condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness that comes
by faith.

8 By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed and went out to a place
he was going to receive as an inheritance. He went out, not knowing where
he was going.
9 By faith he stayed as a foreigner in the land of promise,
living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, co-heirs of the same promise.
10 For he
was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose architect and
builder is God.

11 By faith even Sarah herself, when she was unable to have children,
received power to conceive offspring, even though she was past the age,
since she [E] considered that the One who had promised was faithful.
12 Therefore from one man — in fact, from one as good as dead — came
offspring as numerous as the stars of heaven and as innumerable as the
grains of sand by the seashore.

13† These all died in faith without having received the promises, but they
saw them from a distance, greeted them, and confessed that they were
foreigners and temporary residents on the earth. 14 Now those who say
such things make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. 15 If they were
thinking about where they came from, they would have had an opportunity
to return. 16 But they now desire a better place — a heavenly one. Therefore
God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for
them.

17† By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac. He received
the promises and he was offering his unique son, 18 the one it had been said
about, **Your •seed will be traced** [F] **through Isaac.** 19 He considered God
to be able even to raise someone from the dead, and as an illustration, [G] he
received him back.

20 By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come.
21 By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph,
and **he worshiped, leaning on the top of his staff.** 22 By faith Joseph, as
he was nearing the end of his life, mentioned the exodus of the Israelites
and gave instructions concerning his bones.

23 By faith, after Moses was born, he was hidden by his parents for three
months, because they saw that the child was beautiful, and they didn't fear
the king's edict. 24 By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be
called the son of Pharaoh's daughter 25 and chose to suffer with the people
of God rather than to enjoy the short-lived pleasure of sin. 26† For he
considered the reproach because of the •Messiah to be greater wealth than
the treasures of Egypt, since his attention was on the reward.

27 By faith he left Egypt behind, not being afraid of the king's anger, for
Moses persevered as one who sees Him who is invisible. 28 By faith he
instituted the •Passover and the sprinkling of the blood, so that the destroyer
of the firstborn might not touch the Israelites. 29 By faith they crossed the
Red Sea as though they were on dry land. When the Egyptians attempted to
do this, they were drowned.

[30] By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after being encircled by the
Israelites for seven days. [31]† By faith Rahab the prostitute received the spies
in peace and didn't perish with those who disobeyed.

[32] And what more can I say? Time is too short for me to tell about
Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, and the prophets,
[33] who by faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, obtained
promises, shut the mouths of lions, [34] quenched the raging of fire, escaped
the edge of the sword, gained strength after being weak, became mighty in
battle, and put foreign armies to flight. [35] Women received their
dead — they were raised to life again. Some men were tortured, not
accepting release, so that they might gain a better resurrection, [36] and others
experienced mockings and scourgings, as well as bonds and imprisonment.
[37] They were stoned, they were sawed in two, they died by the sword, they
wandered about in sheepskins, in goatskins, destitute, afflicted, and
mistreated. [38] The •world was not worthy of them. They wandered in
deserts and on mountains, hiding in caves and holes in the ground.

[39] All these were approved through their faith, but they did not receive
what was promised, [40] since God had provided something better for us, so
that they would not be made perfect without us.

The Call to Endurance

12 Therefore, since we also have such a large cloud of witnesses
surrounding us, let us lay aside every weight and the sin that so easily
ensnares us. Let us run with endurance the race that lies before us,
2 keeping our eyes on Jesus, [A] the source and perfecter [B] of our faith, who
for the joy that lay before Him [C] endured a cross and despised the shame
and has sat down at the right hand of God's throne.

Fatherly Discipline

3 For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against
Himself, so that you won't grow weary and lose heart. 4 In struggling
against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood.
5 And you have forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons:

My son, do not take the Lord's discipline lightly
or faint when you are reproved by Him,
6[†] **for the Lord disciplines the one He loves**
and punishes every son He receives.

7 Endure suffering as discipline: God is dealing with you as sons. For what
son is there that a father does not discipline? 8 But if you are without
discipline — which all receive [D] — then you are illegitimate children and
not sons. 9 Furthermore, we had natural fathers discipline us, and we
respected them. Shouldn't we submit even more to the Father of spirits and
live? 10 For they disciplined us for a short time based on what seemed good
to them, but He does it for our benefit, so that we can share His holiness.
11 No discipline seems enjoyable at the time, but painful. Later on, however,
it yields the fruit of peace and righteousness to those who have been
trained by it.

12 Therefore strengthen your tired hands and weakened knees, 13 and
make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be
dislocated [E] but healed instead.

Warning against Rejecting God's Grace

14 Pursue peace with everyone, and holiness — without it no one will
see the Lord. 15 Make sure that no one falls short of the grace of God and
that no root of bitterness springs up, causing trouble and by it, defiling
many. 16 And make sure that there isn't any immoral or irreverent person
like Esau, who sold his birthright in exchange for one meal. 17 For you
know that later, when he wanted to inherit the blessing, he was rejected
because he didn't find any opportunity for repentance, though he sought it
with tears.

18 For you have not come to what could be touched, to a blazing fire, to
darkness, gloom, and storm, 19 to the blast of a trumpet, and the sound of
words. (Those who heard it begged that not another word be spoken to
them, 20 for they could not bear what was commanded: **And if even an**
animal touches the mountain, it must be stoned! 21 The appearance was
so terrifying that Moses said, **I am terrified and trembling.**) 22 Instead,
you have come to Mount •Zion, to the city of the living God (the heavenly
Jerusalem), to myriads of angels in festive gathering, 23 to the assembly of
the firstborn whose names have been written [F] in heaven, to God who is the
Judge of all, to the spirits of righteous people made perfect, 24 to Jesus
(mediator of a new covenant), and to the sprinkled blood, which says
better things than the blood of Abel.

25 Make sure that you do not reject the One who speaks. For if they did
not escape when they rejected Him who warned them on earth, even less
will we if we turn away from Him who warns us from heaven. 26 His voice
shook the earth at that time, but now He has promised, **Yet once more I**
will shake not only the earth but also heaven. 27 This expression, "Yet
once more," indicates the removal of what can be shaken — that is, created
things — so that what is not shaken might remain. 28 Therefore, since we
are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us hold on to grace. [G] By
it, we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and awe, 29 for our God is
a consuming fire.

Final Exhortations

13 Let brotherly love continue. [2†] Don't neglect to show hospitality, for
by doing this some have welcomed angels as guests without knowing
it. [3] Remember the prisoners, as though you were in prison with them, and
the mistreated, as though you yourselves were suffering bodily. [A]
[4†] Marriage must be respected by all, and the marriage bed kept undefiled,
because God will judge immoral people and adulterers. [5] Your life should
be free from the love of money. Be satisfied with what you have, for He
Himself has said, **I will never leave you or forsake you.** [6] Therefore, we
may boldly say:

The Lord is my helper;
I will not be afraid.
What can man do to me?

[7] Remember your leaders who have spoken God's word to you. As you
carefully observe the outcome of their lives, imitate their faith. [8] Jesus
Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. [9] Don't be led astray by
various kinds of strange teachings; for it is good for the heart to be
established by grace and not by foods, since those involved in them have
not benefited. [10] We have an altar from which those who serve the
tabernacle do not have a right to eat. [11] For the bodies of those animals
whose blood is brought into the most holy place by the high priest as a sin
offering are burned outside the camp. [12] Therefore Jesus also suffered
outside the gate, so that He might •sanctify [B] the people by His own blood.
[13] Let us then go to Him outside the camp, bearing His disgrace. [14] For we
do not have an enduring city here; instead, we seek the one to come.
[15] Therefore, through Him let us continually offer up to God a sacrifice of
praise, that is, the fruit of our lips that confess His name. [16] Don't neglect
to do what is good and to share, for God is pleased with such sacrifices.
[17] Obey your leaders [C] and submit to them, for they keep watch over your
souls as those who will give an account, so that they can do this with joy
and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you. [18] Pray for us; for
we are convinced that we have a clear conscience, wanting to conduct

ourselves honorably in everything. [19] And I especially urge you to pray [D]
that I may be restored to you very soon.

Benediction and Farewell

[20†] Now may the God of peace, who brought up from the dead our Lord
Jesus — the great Shepherd of the sheep — with the blood of the
everlasting covenant, [21] equip [E] you with all that is good to do His will,
working in us what is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ. Glory
belongs to Him forever and ever. •Amen.

[22] Brothers, I urge you to receive this message of exhortation, for I have
written to you briefly. [23] Be aware that our brother Timothy has been
released. If he comes soon enough, he will be with me when I see you.
[24] Greet all your leaders and all the •saints. Those who are from Italy greet
you. [25] Grace be with all of you.

JAMES

James 1 James 2 James 3 James 4
James 5

Introduction to James

JAMES

Greeting

1 James, a •slave of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ:

To the 12 tribes in the Dispersion.

Greetings.

Trials and Maturity

2 Consider it a great joy, my brothers, whenever you experience various
trials, 3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. 4 But
endurance must do its complete work, so that you may be mature and
complete, lacking nothing.

5 Now if any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives to all
generously and without criticizing, and it will be given to him. 6 But let
him ask in faith without doubting. For the doubter is like the surging sea,
driven and tossed by the wind. 7 That person should not expect to receive
anything from the Lord. 8 An indecisive [A] man is unstable in all his ways.

9 The brother of humble circumstances should boast in his exaltation,
10 but the one who is rich should boast in his humiliation because he will
pass away like a flower of the field. 11 For the sun rises with its scorching
heat and dries up the grass; its flower falls off, and its beautiful appearance
is destroyed. In the same way, the rich man will wither away while pursuing
his activities.

12 A man who endures trials [B] is blessed, because when he passes the test
he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love
Him.

13† No one undergoing a trial should say, “I am being tempted by God.”
For God is not tempted by evil, [C] and He Himself doesn’t tempt anyone.
14 But each person is tempted when he is drawn away and enticed by his
own evil desires. 15 Then after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin,
and when sin is fully grown, it gives birth to death.

16 Don’t be deceived, my dearly loved brothers. 17 Every generous act
and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of
lights; with Him there is no variation or shadow cast by turning. 18 By His
own choice, He gave us a new birth by the message of truth so that we
would be the •firstfruits of His creatures.

Hearing and Doing the Word

19 My dearly loved brothers, understand this: Everyone must be quick to
hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger, 20 for man’s anger does not
accomplish God’s righteousness. 21 Therefore, ridding yourselves of all
moral filth and evil, [D] humbly receive the implanted word, which is able to
save you. [E]

22 But be doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.
23 Because if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man
looking at his own face [F] in a mirror. 24 For he looks at himself, goes away,
and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. 25 But the one who looks
intently into the perfect law of freedom and perseveres in it, and is not a
forgetful hearer but one who does good works — this person will be blessed
in what he does.

26 If anyone thinks he is religious without controlling his tongue, then
his religion is useless and he deceives himself. 27 Pure and undefiled
religion before our [G] God and Father is this: to look after orphans and
widows in their distress and to keep oneself unstained by the •world.

The Sin of Favoritism

2 My brothers, do not show favoritism as you hold on to the faith in our
glorious Lord Jesus Christ. 2 For example, a man comes into your
meeting wearing a gold ring and dressed in fine clothes, and a poor man
dressed in dirty clothes also comes in. 3 If you look with favor on the man
wearing the fine clothes and say, “Sit here in a good place,” and yet you say
to the poor man, “Stand over there,” or, “Sit here on the floor by my
footstool,” 4 haven’t you discriminated among yourselves and become
judges with evil thoughts?

5 Listen, my dear brothers: Didn’t God choose the poor in this world to
be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom that He has promised to those
who love Him? 6 Yet you dishonored that poor man. Don’t the rich oppress
you and drag you into the courts? 7 Don’t they blaspheme the noble name
that was pronounced over you at your baptism?

8 Indeed, if you keep the royal law prescribed in the Scripture, **Love your
neighbor as yourself**, you are doing well. 9 But if you show favoritism,
you commit sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors. 10 For
whoever keeps the entire law, yet fails in one point, is •guilty of breaking it
all. 11 For He who said, **Do not commit adultery**, also said, **Do not
murder.** So if you do not commit adultery, but you do murder, you are a
lawbreaker.

12 Speak and act as those who will be judged by the law of freedom.
13 For judgment is without mercy to the one who hasn’t shown mercy.
Mercy triumphs over judgment.

Faith and Works

14[†] What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does
not have works? Can his faith [A] save him?

15 If a brother or sister is without clothes and lacks daily food 16 and one
of you says to them, “Go in peace, keep warm, and eat well,” but you don’t

give them what the body needs, what good is it? [17] In the same way faith, if
it doesn't have works, is dead by itself.

[18] But someone will say, "You have faith, and I have works." Show me
your faith without works, and I will show you faith from my works. [19] You
believe that God is one; you do well. The demons also believe — and they
shudder.

[20] Foolish man! Are you willing to learn that faith without works is
useless? [21] Wasn't Abraham our father justified by works when he offered
Isaac his son on the altar? [22] You see that faith was active together with his
works, and by works, faith was perfected. [23] So the Scripture was fulfilled
that says, **Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him for
righteousness**, and he was called God's friend. [24] You see that a man is
•justified by works and not by faith alone. [25] And in the same way, wasn't
Rahab the prostitute also justified by works when she received the
messengers and sent them out by a different route? [26] For just as the body
without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead.

Controlling the Tongue

3 Not many should become teachers, my brothers, knowing that we will receive a stricter judgment, [2] for we all stumble in many ways. If anyone does not stumble in what he says, [A] he is a mature man who is also able to control his whole body. [B]

[3] Now when we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we also guide the whole animal. [C] [4] And consider ships: Though very large and driven by fierce winds, they are guided by a very small rudder wherever the will of the pilot directs. [5] So too, though the tongue is a small part of the body, it boasts great things. Consider how large a forest a small fire ignites. [6] And the tongue is a fire. The tongue, a world of unrighteousness, is placed among the parts of our bodies. It pollutes the whole body, sets the course of life on fire, and is set on fire by •hell.

[7] Every sea creature, reptile, bird, or animal is tamed and has been tamed by man, [8] but no man can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. [9] We praise our [D] Lord and Father with it, and we curse men who are made in God’s likeness with it. [10] Praising and cursing come out of the same mouth. My brothers, these things should not be this way. [11] Does a spring pour out sweet and bitter water from the same opening? [12] Can a fig tree produce olives, my brothers, or a grapevine produce figs? Neither can a saltwater spring yield fresh water.

The Wisdom from Above

[13] Who is wise and has understanding among you? He should show his works by good conduct with wisdom’s gentleness. [14] But if you have bitter envy and selfish ambition in your heart, don’t brag and deny the truth. [15] Such wisdom does not come from above but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. [16] For where envy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every kind of evil. [17] But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peace-loving, gentle, compliant, full of mercy and good fruits, without favoritism and hypocrisy. [18] And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who cultivate peace.

Proud or Humble

4 What is the source of wars and fights among you? Don’t they come
from the cravings that are at war within you? [A] 2 You desire and do not
have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. You do
not have because you do not ask. 3 You ask and don’t receive because you
ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your evil desires.

4 Adulteresses! Don’t you know that friendship with the •world is
hostility toward God? So whoever wants to be the world’s friend becomes
God’s enemy. 5[†] Or do you think it’s without reason the Scripture says that
the Spirit who lives in us yearns jealously? [C]

6 But He gives greater grace. Therefore He says:

God resists the proud,
but gives grace to the humble.

7 Therefore, submit to God. But resist the Devil, and he will flee from
you. 8 Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your
hands, sinners, and purify your hearts, double-minded people! 9 Be
miserable and mourn and weep. Your laughter must change to mourning
and your joy to sorrow. 10 Humble yourselves before the Lord, and He will
exalt you.

11 Don’t criticize one another, brothers. He who criticizes a brother or
judges his brother criticizes the law and judges the law. But if you judge the
law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge. 12 There is one lawgiver and
judge who is able to save and to destroy. But who are you to judge your
neighbor?

Our Will and His Will

13 Come now, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will travel to such
and such a city and spend a year there and do business and make a profit.”
14 You don’t even know what tomorrow will bring — what your life will be!
For you are like smoke that appears for a little while, then vanishes.

[15] Instead, you should say, “If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or
that.” [16] But as it is, you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil.
[17] So it is a sin for the person who knows to do what is good and doesn’t do
it.

Warning to the Rich

5 Come now, you rich people! Weep and wail over the miseries that are coming on you. 2 Your wealth is ruined and your clothes are moth-eaten. 3 Your silver and gold are corroded, and their corrosion will be a witness against you and will eat your flesh like fire. You stored up treasure in the last days! 4 Look! The pay that you withheld from the workers who reaped your fields cries out, and the outcry of the harvesters has reached the ears of the Lord of •Hosts. [A], 5 You have lived luxuriously on the land and have indulged yourselves. You have fattened your hearts for [B] the day of slaughter. 6 You have condemned — you have murdered — the righteous man; he does not resist you.

Waiting for the Lord

7 Therefore, brothers, be patient until the Lord’s coming. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth and is patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains. 8 You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, because the Lord’s coming is near.

9 Brothers, do not complain about one another, so that you will not be judged. Look, the judge stands at the door!

10 Brothers, take the prophets who spoke in the Lord’s name as an example of suffering and patience. 11 See, we count as blessed those who have endured. [C] You have heard of Job’s endurance and have seen the outcome from the Lord. The Lord is very compassionate and merciful.

Truthful Speech

12† Now above all, my brothers, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath. Your “yes” must be “yes,” and your “no” must be “no,” so that you won’t fall under judgment.

Effective Prayer

13 Is anyone among you suffering? He should pray. Is anyone cheerful? He should sing praises. 14 Is anyone among you sick? He should call for

the elders of the church, and they should pray over him after anointing him
with olive oil in the name of the Lord. [15] The prayer of faith will save the
sick person, and the Lord will restore him to health; if he has committed
sins, he will be forgiven. [16] Therefore, confess your sins to one another and
pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The urgent request of a
righteous person is very powerful in its effect. [17] Elijah was a man with a
nature like ours; yet he prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and for three
years and six months it did not rain on the land. [18] Then he prayed again,
and the sky gave rain and the land produced its fruit.

[19] My brothers, if any among you strays from the truth, and someone
turns him back, [20] let him know that whoever turns a sinner from the error
of his way will save his •life from death and cover a multitude of sins.

1 PETER

Introduction to 1 Peter

1 PETER

Greeting

1 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ:

To the temporary residents dispersed in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia,
•Asia, and Bithynia, chosen 2 according to the foreknowledge of God the
Father and set apart by the Spirit for obedience and for sprinkling with the
blood of Jesus Christ.

May grace and peace be multiplied to you.

A Living Hope

3[†] Praise the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. According to His
great mercy, He has given us a new birth into a living hope through the
resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead 4 and into an inheritance that is
imperishable, uncorrupted, and unfading, kept in heaven for you. 5 You are
being protected by God's power through faith for a salvation that is ready
to be revealed in the last time. 6 You rejoice in this, [A] though now for a
short time you have had to struggle in various trials 7 so that the
genuineness of your faith — more valuable than gold, which perishes
though refined by fire — may result in [B] praise, glory, and honor at the
revelation of Jesus Christ. 8 You love Him, though you have not seen
Him. And though not seeing Him now, you believe in Him and rejoice with
inexpressible and glorious joy, 9 because you are receiving the goal of your
faith, the salvation of your souls. [C]

10 Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the
grace that would come to you searched and carefully investigated. 11 They
inquired into what time or what circumstances [D] the Spirit of Christ within
them was indicating when He testified in advance to the messianic
sufferings [E], and the glories that would follow. [F] 12 It was revealed to them
that they were not serving themselves but you. These things have now been
announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the
Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Angels desire to look into these things.

A Call to Holy Living

13 Therefore, with your minds ready for action, [G] be serious and set your
hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of
Jesus Christ. 14 As obedient children, do not be conformed to the desires of
your former ignorance. 15 But as the One who called you is holy, you also
are to be holy in all your conduct; 16 for it is written, **Be holy, because I am
holy.**

17 And if you address as Father the One who judges impartially based on
each one's work, you are to conduct yourselves in fear during the time of
your temporary residence. 18 For you know that you were •redeemed from
your empty way of life inherited from the fathers, not with perishable
things like silver or gold, 19 but with the precious blood of Christ, like that
of a lamb without defect or blemish. 20 He was chosen [H] before the
foundation of the world but was revealed at the end of the times for you
21 who through Him are believers in God, who raised Him from the dead
and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.

ARTICLE

How Can the Bible Affirm Both Divine Sovereignty and Human Freedom? ⇒

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22 By obedience to the truth, having purified yourselves [I] for sincere love
of the brothers, love one another earnestly [J] from a pure heart, 23 since
you have been born again — not of perishable seed but of
imperishable — through the living and enduring word of God. 24 For

All flesh is like grass,
and all its glory like a flower of the grass.
The grass withers, and the flower falls,
25 **but the word of the Lord endures forever.**

And this is the word that was preached as the gospel to you.

The Living Stone and a Holy People

2 So rid yourselves of all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all
slander. 2 Like newborn infants, desire the pure spiritual milk, so that
you may grow by it for your salvation, 3 since **you have tasted that the
Lord is good.** 4 Coming to Him, a living stone — rejected by men but
chosen and valuable to God — 5 you yourselves, as living stones, are being
built into a spiritual house for a holy priesthood to offer spiritual sacrifices
acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. 6 For it is contained in Scripture:

Look! I lay a stone in •Zion,
a chosen and honored [A] **cornerstone,** [B]
and the one who believes in Him
will never be put to shame! [C] ,

7 So honor will come to you who believe, but for the unbelieving,

The stone that the builders rejected —
this One has become the cornerstone,

8 and

A stone to stumble over, [D]
and a rock to trip over. [E] ,

They stumble because they disobey the message; they were destined for
this.

9 But you are **a chosen race,** [F] , **a royal priesthood,**
a holy nation, a people for His possession,
so that you may proclaim the praises [G] ,
of the One who called you out of darkness
into His marvelous light.
10 Once you were not a people,
but now you are God's people;
you had not received mercy,
but now you have received mercy.

A Call to Good Works

[11] Dear friends, I urge you as strangers and temporary residents to
abstain from fleshly desires that war against you. [H], [12] Conduct
yourselves honorably among the Gentiles, [I] so that in a case where they
speak against you as those who do what is evil, they will, by observing your
good works, glorify God on the day of visitation.

[13†] Submit to every human authority [J] because of the Lord, whether to
the Emperor [K] as the supreme authority [14] or to governors as those sent out
by him to punish those who do what is evil and to praise those who do what
is good. [15] For it is God's will that you silence the ignorance of foolish
people by doing good. [16] As God's •slaves, live as free people, but don't
use your freedom as a way to conceal evil. [17] Honor everyone. Love the
brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the Emperor. [L]

Submission of Slaves to Masters

[18†] Household slaves, submit with all fear to your masters, not only to
the good and gentle but also to the cruel. [M] [19] For it brings favor if,
mindful of God's will, someone endures grief from suffering unjustly.
[20] For what credit is there if you sin and are punished, and you endure it?
But when you do what is good and suffer, if you endure it, this brings favor
with God.

[21] For you were called to this,
because Christ also suffered for you,
leaving you an example,
so that you should follow in His steps.
[22] He **did not commit sin,**
and no deceit was found in His mouth;
[23] when He was reviled,
He did not revile in return;
when He was suffering,
He did not threaten

but entrusted Himself to the One who judges justly.
24 He Himself bore our sins
in His body on the tree,
so that, having died to sins,
we might live for righteousness;
you have been healed by **His wounds.**
25 For you **were like sheep going astray,**
but you have now returned
to the Shepherd and Guardian [O] of your souls.

Wives and Husbands

3 [†]In the same way, wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands so
that, even if some disobey the Christian message, they may be won
over [A], without a message by the way their wives live 2 when they observe
your pure, reverent lives. 3 Your beauty should not consist of outward
things like elaborate hairstyles and the wearing of gold ornaments [B] or fine
clothes. 4 Instead, it should consist of what is inside [C] the heart with the
imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very valuable in
God's eyes. 5 For in the past, the holy women who put their hope in God
also beautified themselves in this way, submitting to their own husbands,
6 just as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. You have become her
children when you do what is good and are not frightened by anything
alarming.

7 Husbands, in the same way, live with your wives with an
understanding of their weaker nature [D] yet showing them honor as co-heirs
of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered.

Do No Evil

8 Now finally, all of you should be like-minded and sympathetic, should
love believers, [E] and be compassionate and humble, 9 not paying back evil
for evil or insult for insult but, on the contrary, giving a blessing, since you
were called for this, so that you can inherit a blessing.

ARTICLE
What Are the Three Laws of Logic? ⇒

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10 For **the one who wants to love life**
and to see good days
must keep his tongue from evil
and his lips from speaking deceit,
11 **and he must turn away from evil**

and do what is good.
He must seek peace and pursue it,
[12] **because the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous**
and His ears are open to their request.
But the face of the Lord is against
those who do what is evil.

Undeserved Suffering

[13] And who will harm [F] you if you are deeply committed to what is
good? [G] [14] But even if you should suffer for righteousness, you are blessed.
Do not fear what they fear or be disturbed, [15] but honor [H] the •Messiah
as Lord in your hearts. Always be ready to give a defense to anyone who
asks you for a reason [I] for the hope that is in you. [16] However, do this with
gentleness and respect, keeping your conscience clear, [J], [K], so that when
you are accused, those who denounce your Christian life [L] will be put to
shame. [17] For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's
will, [M] than for doing evil.

[18] For Christ also suffered for sins once for all,
the righteous for the unrighteous, [N]
that He might bring you to God,
after being put to death in the fleshly realm [O],
but made alive in the spiritual realm. [P]

[19] In that state [Q] He also went and made a proclamation to the spirits in
prison [20] who in the past were disobedient, when God patiently waited in
the days of Noah while an ark was being prepared. In it a few — that is,
eight people [R], — were saved through water. [21] Baptism, which
corresponds to this, now saves you (not the removal of the filth of the flesh,
but the pledge [S] of a good conscience toward God) through the resurrection
of Jesus Christ. [22] Now that He has gone into heaven, He is at God's right
hand with angels, authorities, and powers subject to Him.

Following Christ

4 Therefore, since Christ suffered in the flesh, equip [A] yourselves also
with the same resolve [B] — because the one who suffered in the flesh has
finished with sin [C] — 2 in order to live the remaining time in the flesh, no
longer for human desires, [D] but for God's will. 3 For there has already been
enough time spent in doing what the pagans choose to do: [E] carrying on in
unrestrained behavior, evil desires, drunkenness, orgies, carousing, and
lawless idolatry. 4 So they are surprised that you don't plunge with them
into the same flood [F] of wild living — and they slander you. 5 They will
give an account to the One who stands ready to judge the living and the
dead. 6 For this reason the gospel was also preached to those who are now
dead, so that, although they might be judged by men in the fleshly realm, [G]
they might live by God in the spiritual realm. [H]

End-Time Ethics

7 Now the end of all things is near; therefore, be serious and disciplined
for prayer. 8 Above all, maintain an intense love for each other, since **love
covers a multitude of sins.** 9 Be hospitable to one another without
complaining. 10 Based on the gift each one has received, use it to serve
others, as good managers of the varied grace of God. 11 If anyone speaks, it
should be as one who speaks God's words; if anyone serves, it should be
from the strength God provides, so that God may be glorified through Jesus
Christ in everything. To Him belong the glory and the power forever and
ever. •Amen.

Christian Suffering

12 Dear friends, don't be surprised when the fiery ordeal [I] comes among
you to test you as if something unusual were happening to you. 13 Instead,
rejoice as you share in the sufferings of the •Messiah, so that you may also
rejoice with great joy at the revelation of His glory. 14 If you are ridiculed
for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of
God rests on you. 15 None of you, however, should suffer as a murderer, a
thief, an evildoer, or a meddler. [J] 16 But if anyone suffers as a "Christian,"
he should not be ashamed but should glorify God in having that name.

17 For the time has come for judgment to begin with God’s household, and
if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who disobey the
gospel of God?

18 And **if a righteous person is saved with difficulty,**
what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?

19 So those who suffer according to God’s will should, while doing what is
good, entrust themselves to a faithful Creator.

About the Elders

5 Therefore, as a fellow elder and witness to the sufferings of the
•Messiah and also a participant in the glory about to be revealed, I
exhort the elders among you: [2] Shepherd God's flock among you, not
overseeing out of compulsion but freely, according to God's will; not for
the money but eagerly; [3] not lording it over those entrusted to you, but
being examples to the flock. [4] And when the chief Shepherd appears, you
will receive the unfading crown of glory.

[5] In the same way, you younger men, be subject to the elders. And all of
you clothe yourselves with [A] humility toward one another, because

God resists the proud
but gives grace to the humble.

[6] Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, so that He
may exalt you at the proper time, [B] [7] casting all your care on Him, because
He cares about you.

Conclusion

[8] Be serious! Be alert! Your adversary the Devil is prowling around like
a roaring lion, looking for anyone he can devour. [9] Resist him and be firm
in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are being experienced by your
fellow believers throughout the world.

[10] Now the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in
Christ Jesus, will personally [C] restore, establish, strengthen, and support
you after you have suffered a little. [D] [11] The dominion belongs to Him
forever. •Amen.

[12] I have written you this brief letter through Silvanus [E] (I know him to
be a faithful brother) to encourage you and to testify that this is the true
grace of God. Take your stand in it! [13] The church in Babylon, also chosen,
sends you greetings, as does Mark, my son. [14] Greet one another with a kiss
of love. Peace to all of you who are in Christ.

2 PETER

2 Peter 1 2 Peter 2 2 Peter 3

Introduction to 2 Peter

2 PETER

Greeting

1 Simeon Peter, a •slave and an apostle of Jesus Christ:

To those who have obtained a faith of equal privilege with ours [A] through
the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ.

[2] May grace and peace be multiplied to you through the knowledge of
God and of Jesus our Lord.

Growth in the Faith

[3] His [B] divine power has given us everything required for life and
godliness through the knowledge of Him who called us by [C] His own
glory and goodness. [4] By these He has given us very great and precious
promises, so that through them you may share in the divine nature,
escaping the corruption that is in the world because of evil desires. [5] For
this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with goodness,
goodness with knowledge, [6] knowledge with self-control, self-control with
endurance, endurance with godliness, [7] godliness with brotherly affection,
and brotherly affection with love. [8] For if these qualities are yours and are
increasing, they will keep you from being useless or unfruitful in the
knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. [9] The person who lacks these things is
blind and shortsighted and has forgotten the cleansing from his past sins.
[10] Therefore, brothers, make every effort to confirm your calling and
election, because if you do these things you will never stumble. [11] For in
this way, entry into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus
Christ will be richly supplied to you.

[12] Therefore I will always remind you about these things, even though
you know them and are established in the truth you have. [13] I consider it
right, as long as I am in this bodily tent, to wake you up with a reminder,
[14] knowing that I will soon lay aside my tent, as our Lord Jesus Christ has
also shown me. [15] And I will also make every effort that you may be able
to recall these things at any time after my departure. [D]

The Trustworthy Prophetic Word

[16] For we did not follow cleverly contrived myths when we made known
to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ; instead, we were
eyewitnesses of His majesty. [17] For when He received honor and glory
from God the Father, a voice came to Him from the Majestic Glory:

ARTICLE

Isn't That Just Your Interpretation? ⇒

This is My beloved Son.
I take delight in Him!

[18] And we heard this voice when it came from heaven while we were with
Him on the holy mountain. [19] So we have the prophetic word strongly
confirmed. You will do well to pay attention to it, as to a lamp shining in a
dismal place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your
hearts. [20] First of all, you should know this: No prophecy of Scripture
comes from one’s own interpretation, [21†] because no prophecy ever came
by the will of man; instead, men spoke from God as they were moved by
the Holy Spirit.

The Judgment of False Teachers

2 But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, and will bring swift destruction on themselves. [2] Many will follow their unrestrained ways, and the way of truth will be blasphemed because of them. [3] They will exploit you in their greed with deceptive words. Their condemnation, pronounced long ago, is not idle, and their destruction does not sleep.

[4] For if God didn't spare the angels who sinned but threw them down into Tartarus and delivered them to be kept in chains of darkness until judgment; [5] and if He didn't spare the ancient world, but protected Noah, a preacher of righteousness, and seven others, [A] when He brought a flood on the world of the ungodly; [6] and if He reduced the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to ashes and condemned them to ruin, making them an example to those who were going to be ungodly; [7] and if He rescued righteous Lot, distressed by the unrestrained behavior of the immoral [8] (for as he lived among them, that righteous man tormented himself day by day with the lawless deeds he saw and heard) — [9] then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials and to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of judgment, [10] especially those who follow the polluting desires of the flesh and despise authority.

Bold, arrogant people! They do not tremble when they blaspheme the glorious ones; [11] however, angels, who are greater in might and power, do not bring a slanderous charge against them before the Lord. [12] But these people, like irrational animals — creatures of instinct born to be caught and destroyed — speak blasphemies about things they don't understand, and in their destruction they too will be destroyed, [13] suffering harm as the payment for unrighteousness. They consider it a pleasure to carouse in the daytime. They are spots and blemishes, delighting in their deceptions as they feast with you. [14] They have eyes full of adultery and are always looking for sin. They seduce unstable people and have hearts trained in greed. Children under a curse! [15] They have gone astray by abandoning the straight path and have followed the path of Balaam, the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness [16] but received a rebuke for his

transgression: A donkey that could not talk spoke with a human voice and restrained the prophet's irrationality.

[17] These people are springs without water, mists driven by a whirlwind. The gloom of darkness has been reserved for them. [18] For by uttering boastful, empty words, they seduce, with fleshly desires and debauchery, people who have barely escaped [B] from those who live in error. [19] They promise them freedom, but they themselves are •slaves of corruption, since people are enslaved to whatever defeats them. [20] For if, having escaped the world's impurity through the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in these things and defeated, the last state is worse for them than the first. [21] For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness than, after knowing it, to turn back from the holy command delivered to them. [22] It has happened to them according to the true proverb: **A dog returns to its own vomit,** and, "a sow, after washing itself, wallows in the mud."

The Day of the Lord

3 Dear friends, this is now the second letter I have written to you; in both
letters, I want to develop a genuine understanding with a reminder, 2 so
that you can remember the words previously spoken by the holy prophets
and the command of our Lord and Savior given through your apostles.
3† First, be aware of this: Scoffers will come in the last days to scoff, living
according to their own desires, 4 saying, "Where is the promise of His
coming? Ever since the fathers fell •asleep, all things continue as they
have been since the beginning of creation." 5 They willfully ignore this:
Long ago the heavens and the earth were brought about from water and
through water by the word of God. 6 Through these waters the world of
that time perished when it was flooded. 7 But by the same word, the
present heavens and earth are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of
judgment and destruction of ungodly men.

8 Dear friends, don't let this one thing escape you: With the Lord one day
is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day. 9 The Lord does
not delay His promise, as some understand delay, but is patient with you,
not wanting any to perish but all to come to repentance.

10 But the Day of the Lord will come like a thief; on that day the
heavens will pass away with a loud noise, the elements will burn and be
dissolved, and the earth and the works on it will be disclosed. 11 Since all
these things are to be destroyed in this way, it is clear what sort of people
you should be in holy conduct and godliness 12 as you wait for and
earnestly desire the coming [A] of the day of God. The heavens will be on
fire and be dissolved because of it, and the elements will melt with the heat.
13 But based on His promise, we wait for the new heavens and a new earth,
where righteousness will dwell.

Conclusion

14 Therefore, dear friends, while you wait for these things, make every
effort to be found at peace with Him without spot or blemish. 15 Also,
regard the patience of our Lord as an opportunity for salvation, just as our
dear brother Paul has written to you according to the wisdom given to him.

[16] He speaks about these things in all his letters in which there are some matters that are hard to understand. The untaught and unstable twist them to their own destruction, as they also do with the rest of the Scriptures.

[17] Therefore, dear friends, since you know this in advance, be on your guard, so that you are not led away by the error of lawless people and fall
from your own stability. [18] But grow in the grace and knowledge of our
Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. [B], •Amen.

1 JOHN

Introduction to 1 John

1 JOHN

Prologue: Our Declaration

1 [†]What was from the beginning,
what we have heard,
what we have seen with our eyes,
what we have observed
and have touched with our hands,
concerning the Word of life —
2 that life was revealed,
and we have seen it
and we testify and declare to you
the eternal life that was with the Father
and was revealed to us —
3 what we have seen and heard
we also declare to you,
so that you may have fellowship along with us;
and indeed our fellowship is with the Father
and with His Son Jesus Christ.
4 We are writing these things
so that our joy may be complete.

Fellowship with God

5[†] Now this is the message we have heard from Him and declare to you:
God is light, and there is absolutely no darkness in Him. 6[†] If we say, “We
have fellowship with Him,” yet we •walk in darkness, we are lying and are
not practicing [A] the truth. 7 But if we walk in the light as He Himself is in
the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His
Son cleanses us from all sin. 8 If we say, “We have no sin,” we are
deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, He is
faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all
unrighteousness. 10 If we say, “We don’t have any sin,” we make Him a liar,
and His word is not in us.

2 [†]My little children, I am writing you these things so that you may not
sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an •advocate with the
Father — Jesus Christ the Righteous One. 2 He Himself is the •propitiation
for our sins, and not only for ours, but also for those of the whole world.

God's Commands

3 This is how we are sure that we have come to know Him: by keeping
His commands. 4 The one who says, "I have come to know Him," yet
doesn't keep His commands, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. 5 But
whoever keeps His word, truly in him the love of God is perfected. [A] This
is how we know we are in Him: 6 The one who says he remains in Him
should •walk just as He walked.

7 Dear friends, I am not writing you a new command but an old
command that you have had from the beginning. The old command is the
message you have heard. 8 [†] Yet I am writing you a new command, which is
true in Him and in you, because the darkness is passing away and the true
light is already shining.

9 The one who says he is in the light but hates his brother is in the
darkness until now. 10 The one who loves his brother remains in the light,
and there is no cause for stumbling in him. [B] 11 But the one who hates his
brother is in the darkness, walks in the darkness, and doesn't know where
he's going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.

Reasons for Writing

12 I am writing to you, little children,
because your sins have been forgiven
because of Jesus' name.
13 I am writing to you, fathers,
because you have come to know
the One who is from the beginning.
I am writing to you, young men,

because you have had victory over the evil one.
14 I have written to you, children,
because you have come to know the Father.
I have written to you, fathers,
because you have come to know
the One who is from the beginning.
I have written to you, young men,
because you are strong,
God's word remains in you,
and you have had victory over the evil one.

ARTICLE
Notable Christian Apologist: Irenaeus ⇒

A Warning about the World

15 Do not love the •world or the things that belong to [C] the world. If
anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in him. 16 For everything
that belongs to [D] the world — the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and
the pride in one's lifestyle — is not from the Father, but is from the world.
17 And the world with its lust is passing away, but the one who does God's
will remains forever.

The Last Hour

18† Children, it is the last hour. And as you have heard, "Antichrist is
coming," even now many antichrists have come. We know from this that it
is the last hour. 19 They went out from us, but they did not belong to us; for
if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us. However,
they went out so that it might be made clear that none of them belongs to
us.

[20]† But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and all of you have
knowledge. [21] I have not written to you because you don't know the truth,
but because you do know it, and because no lie comes from the truth.
[22]† Who is the liar, if not the one who denies that Jesus is the •Messiah?
This one is the antichrist: the one who denies the Father and the Son. [23] No
one who denies the Son can have the Father; he who confesses the Son has
the Father as well.

Remaining with God

[24] What you have heard from the beginning must remain in you. If what
you have heard from the beginning remains in you, then you will remain in
the Son and in the Father. [25] And this is the promise that He Himself made
to us: eternal life. [26] I have written these things to you about those who are
trying to deceive you.

[27] The anointing you received from Him remains in you, and you don't
need anyone to teach you. Instead, His anointing teaches you about all
things and is true and is not a lie; just as He has taught you, remain in
Him.

God's Children

[28] So now, little children, remain in Him, so that when He appears we
may have boldness and not be ashamed before Him at His coming. [29] If
you know that He is righteous, you know this as well: Everyone who does
what is right has been born of Him.

3 [†] Look at how great a love [A] the Father has given us that we should be called God's children. And we are! The reason the •world does not know us is that it didn't know Him. 2 Dear friends, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet been revealed. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him because we will see Him as He is. 3 And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself just as He is pure.

ARTICLE

Can a Chrisitan Have Assurance of Salvation? ⇒

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4 Everyone who commits sin also breaks the law; [B] sin is the breaking of law. 5 You know that He was revealed so that He might take away sins, and there is no sin in Him. 6 Everyone who remains in Him does not sin; [C], everyone who [D] sins has not seen Him or known Him.

7 Little children, let no one deceive you! The one who does what is right is righteous, just as He is righteous. 8[†] The one who commits [E] sin is of the Devil, for the Devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God was revealed for this purpose: to destroy the Devil's works. 9 Everyone who has been born of God does not sin, [F] because His seed remains in him; he is not able to sin, [G] because he has been born of God. 10 This is how God's children — and the Devil's children — are made evident.

The Command to Love

Whoever does not do what is right is not of God, especially the one who does not love his brother. 11 For this is the message you have heard from the beginning: We should love one another, 12 unlike Cain, who was of the evil one and murdered [H] his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his works were evil, and his brother's were righteous. 13 Do not be surprised, brothers, if the world hates you. 14 We know that we have passed from death to life because we love our brothers. The one who does not love

remains in death. [15] Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life residing in him.

Love in Action

[16] This is how we have come to know love: He laid down His life for us. We should also lay down our lives for our brothers. [17] If anyone has this world's goods and sees his brother in need but closes his eyes to his need — how can God's love reside in him?

[18] Little children, we must not love with word or speech, but with truth and action. [19] This is how we will know we belong to the truth and will convince our conscience in His presence, [20] even if our conscience condemns us, that God is greater than our conscience, and He knows all things.

[21] Dear friends, if our conscience doesn't condemn us, we have confidence before God [22] and can receive whatever we ask from Him because we keep His commands and do what is pleasing in His sight.
[23] Now this is His command: that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another as He commanded us. [24] The one who keeps His commands remains in Him, and He in him. And the way we know that He remains in us is from the Spirit He has given us.

The Spirit of Truth and the Spirit of Error

4 [†]Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to
determine if they are from God, because many false prophets have gone
out into the world.

2 This is how you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit who confesses that
Jesus Christ has [A] come in the flesh is from God. 3 But every spirit who
does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist;
you have heard that he is coming, and he is already in the world now.

4 You are from God, little children, and you have conquered them,
because the One who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.
5 They are from the •world. Therefore what they say is from the world, and
the world listens to them. 6 We are from God. Anyone who knows God
listens to us; anyone who is not from God does not listen to us. From this
we know the Spirit of truth and the spirit of deception.

Knowing God through Love

7 Dear friends, let us love one another, because love is from God, and
everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. 8 The one who
does not love does not know God, because God is love. 9 God's love was
revealed among us in this way: [B] God sent His •One and Only Son into the
world so that we might live through Him. 10 Love consists in this: not that
we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the [C]
•propitiation for our sins. 11 Dear friends, if God loved us in this way, we
also must love one another. 12 No one has ever seen God. If we love one
another, God remains in [D] us and His love is perfected in us.

13 This is how we know that we remain in Him and He in us: He has
given assurance to us from His Spirit. 14 And we have seen and we testify
that the Father has sent His Son as the world's Savior. 15 Whoever
confesses [E] that Jesus is the Son of God — God remains in him and he in
God. 16 And we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for
us. God is love, and the one who remains in love remains in God, and God
remains in him.

[17] In this, love is perfected with us so that we may have confidence in the
day of judgment, for we are as He is in this world. [18] There is no fear in
love; instead, perfect love drives out fear, because fear involves
punishment. [F] So the one who fears has not reached perfection in love.
[19] We love because He first loved us.

Keeping God's Commands

[20] If anyone says, "I love God," yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For the
person who does not love his brother he has seen cannot love the God he
has not seen. [21] And we have this command from Him: The one who loves
God must also love his brother.

5 †Everyone who believes that Jesus is the •Messiah has been born of
God, and everyone who loves the Father also loves the one born of
Him. 2 This is how we know that we love God's children when we love God
and obey His commands. 3 For this is what love for God is: to keep His
commands. Now His commands are not a burden, 4 because whatever has
been born of God conquers the •world. This is the victory that has
conquered the world: our faith. 5 And who is the one who conquers the
world but the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

The Certainty of God's Testimony

6 Jesus Christ — He is the One who came by water and blood, not by
water only, but by water and by blood. And the Spirit is the One who
testifies, because the Spirit is the truth. 7 For there are three that testify:
8 the Spirit, the water, and the blood — and these three are in agreement.
9 If we accept the testimony of men, God's testimony is greater, because it
is God's testimony that He has given about His Son. 10 (The one who
believes in the Son of God has this testimony within him. The one who does
not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed in the
testimony God has given about His Son.) 11 And this is the testimony: God
has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.

12 The one who has the Son has life. The one who doesn't have the Son
of God does not have life. 13† I have written these things to you who believe
in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal
life.

Effective Prayer

14 Now this is the confidence we have before Him: Whenever we ask
anything according to His will, He hears us. 15 And if we know that He
hears whatever we ask, we know that we have what we have asked Him
for.

[16] If anyone sees his brother committing a sin that does not bring death, he should ask, and God [A] will give life to him — to those who commit sin that doesn't bring death. There is sin [B] that brings death. I am not saying he should pray about that. [17] All unrighteousness is sin, and there is sin that does not bring death.

Conclusion

[18] We know that everyone who has been born of God does not sin, but the One who is born of God keeps him, , and the evil one does not touch him.

[19] We know that we are of God, and the whole world is under the sway of the evil one.

ARTICLE
Is Christian Science Compatible with the Bible? ⇒

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[20] And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding so that we may know the true One. We are in the true One — that is, in His Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life.

[21†] Little children, guard yourselves from idols.

2 JOHN

2 John 1

Introduction to 2 John

Greeting (2 John 1:1-3)
Truth and Deception (2 John 1:4-11)
Farewell (2 John 1:12-13)

2 JOHN

Greeting

1 †The Elder: A

To the elect lady B and her children: I love all of you in the truth — and
not only I, but also all who have come to know the truth — 2 because of the
truth that remains in us and will be with us forever.

3 Grace, mercy, and peace will be with us from God the Father and from
Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love.

Truth and Deception

4† I was very glad to find some of your children •walking in the truth, in
keeping with a command we have received from the Father. 5 So now I urge
you, dear lady — not as if I were writing you a new command, but one we
have had from the beginning — that we love one another. 6 And this is
love: that we walk according to His commands. This is the command as
you have heard it from the beginning: you must walk in love. C

ARTICLE

What Are Common Characteristics of the New Religious Movements? ⇒

7† Many deceivers have gone out into the world; they do not confess the
coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh. D, This is the deceiver and the
antichrist. 8† Watch yourselves so you don't lose what we have worked for,
but that you may receive a full reward. 9 Anyone who does not remain in
Christ's teaching but goes beyond it, does not have God. The one who
remains in that teaching, this one has both the Father and the Son. 10† If
anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him
into your home, and don't say, "Welcome," to him; 11 for the one who says,
"Welcome," to him shares in his evil works.

Farewell

[12] Though I have many things to write to you, I don’t want to do so with paper and ink. Instead, I hope to be with you and talk face to face [E] so that our joy may be complete.

[13] The children of your elect sister send you greetings.

3 JOHN

3 John 1

Introduction to 3 John

Greeting (3 John 1:1-4)
Gaius Commended (3 John 1:5-8)
Diotrephes and Demetrius (3 John 1:9-12)
Farewell (3 John 1:13-14)

3 JOHN

Greeting

1 [†]The Elder:

To my dear friend [A] Gaius: I love you in the truth.

[2] Dear friend, [B] I pray that you may prosper in every way and be in good
health physically just as you are spiritually. [C] [3] For I was very glad when
some brothers came and testified to your faithfulness to the truth — how
you are •walking in the truth. [4†] I have no greater joy than this: to hear that
my children are walking in the truth.

Gaius Commended

[5] Dear friend, [D] you are showing faithfulness [E] by whatever you do for
the brothers, especially when they are strangers. [6†] They have testified to
your love in front of the church. You will do well to send them on their
journey in a manner worthy of God, [7] since they set out for the sake of the
Name, accepting nothing from pagans. [8] Therefore, we ought to support
such men so that we can be coworkers with [F] the truth.

Diotrephes and Demetrius

[9†] I wrote something to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to have
first place among them, does not receive us. [10] This is why, if I come, I
will remind him of the works he is doing, slandering us with malicious
words. And he is not satisfied with that! He not only refuses to welcome the
brothers himself, but he even stops those who want to do so and expels
them from the church.

[11] Dear friend, [G] do not imitate what is evil, but what is good. The one
who does good is of God; the one who does evil has not seen God.
[12] Demetrius has a good testimony from everyone, and from the truth itself.
And we also testify for him, and you know that our testimony is true.

Farewell

[13] I have many things to write you, but I don't want to write to you with pen and ink. [14] I hope to see you soon, and we will talk face to face. [H]

Peace be with you. The friends send you greetings. Greet the friends by name.

JUDE

Jude 1

Introduction to Jude

Greeting (Jude 1:1-2)
Jude's Purpose in Writing (Jude 1:3-4)
Apostates: Past and Present (Jude 1:5-11)
The Apostates' Doom (Jude 1:12-19)
Exhortation and Benediction (Jude 1:20-25)

JUDE

Greeting

1 Jude, a •slave of Jesus Christ and a brother of James:

To those who are the called, loved by God the Father and kept by Jesus
Christ.

2 May mercy, peace, and love be multiplied to you.

Jude's Purpose in Writing

3 Dear friends, although I was eager to write you about the salvation we
share, I found it necessary to write and exhort you to contend for the faith
that was delivered to the •saints once for all. 4 For some men, who were
designated for this judgment long ago, have come in by stealth; they are
ungodly, turning the grace of our God into promiscuity and denying Jesus
Christ, our only Master and Lord.

Apostates: Past and Present

5 Now I want to remind you, though you know all these things: The Lord
first saved a people out of Egypt and later destroyed those who did not
believe; 6 and He has kept, with eternal chains in darkness for the judgment
of the great day, the angels who did not keep their own position but
deserted their proper dwelling. 7 In the same way, Sodom and Gomorrah
and the cities around them committed sexual immorality and practiced
perversions, [A] just as angels did, and serve as an example by undergoing the
punishment of eternal fire.

8 Nevertheless, these dreamers likewise defile their flesh, reject authority,
and blaspheme glorious ones. 9[†] Yet Michael the archangel, when he was
disputing with the Devil in a debate about Moses' body, did not dare bring
an abusive condemnation against him but said, "The Lord rebuke you! "
10 But these people blaspheme anything they don't understand. What they
know by instinct like unreasoning animals — they destroy themselves with
these things. 11 Woe to them! For they have traveled in the way of Cain,
have abandoned themselves to the error of Balaam for profit, and have
perished in Korah's rebellion.

ARTICLE
Isn't Christianity Intolerant? ⇒

The Apostates' Doom

12 These are the ones who are like dangerous reefs [B] at your love feasts.
They feast with you, nurturing only themselves without fear. They are
waterless clouds carried along by winds; trees in late autumn — fruitless,
twice dead, pulled out by the roots; 13 wild waves of the sea, foaming up
their shameful deeds; wandering stars for whom the blackness of darkness
is reserved forever!

14 And Enoch, in the seventh generation from Adam, prophesied about
them:

Look! The Lord comes [C]
with thousands of His holy ones
15 to execute judgment on all
and to convict them [D]
of all their ungodly acts
that they have done in an ungodly way,
and of all the harsh things ungodly sinners
have said against Him.

16 These people are discontented grumblers, •walking according to their
desires; their mouths utter arrogant words, flattering people for their own
advantage.

17 But you, dear friends, remember what was predicted by the apostles of
our Lord Jesus Christ; 18 they told you, "In the end time there will be
scoffers walking according to their own ungodly desires." 19 These people
create divisions and are unbelievers, [E] not having the Spirit.

Exhortation and Benediction

[20] But you, dear friends, as you build yourselves up in your most holy
faith and pray in the Holy Spirit, [21] keep yourselves in the love of God,
expecting the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ for eternal life. [22] Have mercy
on those who doubt; [23] save others by snatching them from the fire; have
mercy on others but with fear, hating even the garment defiled by the
flesh.

[24] Now to Him who is able to protect you from stumbling and to make
you stand in the presence of His glory, blameless and with great joy, [25] to
the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty,
power, and authority before all time, now and forever. •Amen.

REVELATION

Introduction to Revelation

REVELATION

Prologue

1 [†]The revelation of [A] Jesus Christ that God gave Him to show His
•slaves what must quickly [B] take place. He sent it and signified it
through His angel to His slave John, 2 who testified to God's word and to
the testimony [C] about Jesus Christ, in all he saw. [D] 3[†] The one who reads
this is blessed, and those who hear the words of this prophecy and keep [E]
what is written in it are blessed, because the time is near!

4[†] John:

To the seven churches in •Asia.

Grace and peace to you from the One who is, who was, and who is
coming; from the seven spirits [F], before His throne; 5[†] and from Jesus
Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead and the ruler of the
kings of the earth.

To Him who loves us and has set us free from our sins by His blood,
6[†] and made us a kingdom, priests [G], to His God and Father — the glory
and dominion are His forever and ever. •Amen.

7[†] **Look! He is coming with the clouds,**
and **every eye will see Him,**
including those who pierced [H] **Him.**
And all the families of the earth [I] ,
will mourn over Him. [J] ,
This is certain. Amen.

8 "I am the •Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "the One who is,
who was, and who is coming, the Almighty."

John's Vision of the Risen Lord

9[†] I, John, your brother and partner in the tribulation, kingdom, and
endurance that are in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos because of
God's word and the testimony about Jesus. [K], 10 I was in the Spirit [L] , on
the Lord's day, and I heard a loud voice behind me like a trumpet

11† saying, “Write on a scroll what you see and send it to the seven
churches: Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and
Laodicea.”

12† I turned to see whose voice it was that spoke to me. When I turned I
saw seven gold lampstands, 13 and among the lampstands was One like the
•Son of Man, [M], dressed in a long robe and with a gold sash wrapped
around His chest. 14 His head and hair were white like wool — white as
snow — and His eyes like a fiery flame. 15 His feet were like fine bronze as
it is fired in a furnace, and His voice like the sound of cascading [N] waters.
16 He had seven stars in His right hand; a sharp double-edged sword came
from His mouth, and His face was shining like the sun at midday. [O]

17 When I saw Him, I fell at His feet like a dead man. He laid His right
hand on me and said, “Don’t be afraid! I am the First and the Last, 18 and
the Living One. I was dead, but look — I am alive forever and ever, and I
hold the keys of death and •Hades. 19† Therefore write what you have seen,
what is, and what will take place after this. 20† The •secret of the seven stars
you saw in My right hand and of the seven gold lampstands is this: The
seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands
are the seven churches.

THE LETTERS TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES

The Letter to Ephesus

2 † “Write to the angel of the church in Ephesus:

“The One who holds the seven stars in His right hand and who walks
among the seven gold lampstands says: 2 I know your works, your labor,
and your endurance, and that you cannot tolerate evil. You have tested those
who call themselves apostles and are not, and you have found them to be
liars. 3 You also possess endurance and have tolerated many things because
of My name and have not grown weary. 4 But I have this against you: You
have abandoned the love you had at first. 5 Remember then how far you
have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first. Otherwise, I will
come to you and remove your lampstand from its place — unless you
repent. 6 Yet you do have this: You hate the practices of the Nicolaitans,
which I also hate.

7 “Anyone who has an ear should listen to what the Spirit says to the
churches. I will give the victor the right to eat from the tree of life, which is
in God’s paradise.

The Letter to Smyrna

8† “Write to the angel of the church in Smyrna:

“The First and the Last, the One who was dead and came to life, says: 9 I
know your affliction and poverty, yet you are rich. I know the slander of
those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a •synagogue of Satan.
10 Don’t be afraid of what you are about to suffer. Look, the Devil is about
to throw some of you into prison to test you, and you will have affliction for
10 days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.

11 “Anyone who has an ear should listen to what the Spirit says to the
churches. The victor will never be harmed by the second death.

The Letter to Pergamum

12† “Write to the angel of the church in Pergamum:

"The One who has the sharp, double-edged sword says: [13] I know where
you live — where Satan's throne is! And you are holding on to My name
and did not deny your faith in Me, even in the days of Antipas, My faithful
witness who was killed among you, where Satan lives. [14] But I have a few
things against you. You have some there who hold to the teaching of
Balaam, who taught Balak to place a stumbling block in front of the
Israelites: to eat meat sacrificed to idols and to commit sexual immorality.
[15] In the same way, you also have those who hold to the teaching of the
Nicolaitans. [16] Therefore repent! Otherwise, I will come to you quickly and
fight against them with the sword of My mouth.

[17] "Anyone who has an ear should listen to what the Spirit says to the
churches. I will give the victor some of the hidden manna. I will also give
him a white stone, and on the stone a new name is inscribed that no one
knows except the one who receives it.

The Letter to Thyatira

[18]† "Write to the angel of the church in Thyatira:

"The Son of God, the One whose eyes are like a fiery flame and whose
feet are like fine bronze, says: [19] I know your works — your love,
faithfulness, service, and endurance. Your last works are greater than the
first. [20] But I have this against you: You tolerate the woman Jezebel, who
calls herself a prophetess and teaches and deceives My •slaves to commit
sexual immorality and to eat meat sacrificed to idols. [21] I gave her time to
repent, but she does not want to repent of her sexual immorality. [22] Look! I
will throw her into a sickbed and those who commit adultery with her into
great tribulation, unless they repent of her practices. [23] I will kill her
children with the plague. Then all the churches will know that I am the One
who examines minds and hearts, and I will give to each of you according to
your works. [24] I say to the rest of you in Thyatira, who do not hold this
teaching, who haven't known the deep things of Satan — as they say — I
do not put any other burden on you. [25] But hold on to what you have until I

come. [26] The one who is victorious and keeps My works to the end: I will give him authority over the nations —

[27] **and he will shepherd them with an iron scepter;**
he will shatter them like pottery —

just as I have received this from My Father. [28] I will also give him the morning star.

[29] “Anyone who has an ear should listen to what the Spirit says to the churches.

The Letter to Sardis

3 †“Write to the angel of the church in Sardis:

“The One who has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars says: I
know your works; you have a reputation for being alive, but you are dead.
2 Be alert and strengthen what remains, which is about to die, for I have not
found your works complete before My God. 3 Remember, therefore, what
you have received and heard; keep it, and repent. But if you are not alert, I
will come like a thief, and you have no idea at what hour I will come
against you. 4 But you have a few people in Sardis who have not defiled
their clothes, and they will walk with Me in white, because they are worthy.
5 In the same way, the victor will be dressed in white clothes, and I will
never erase his name from the book of life but will acknowledge his name
before My Father and before His angels.

6 “Anyone who has an ear should listen to what the Spirit says to the
churches.

The Letter to Philadelphia

7† “Write to the angel of the church in Philadelphia:

“The Holy One, the True One, the One who has the key of David, who
opens and no one will close, and closes and no one opens says: 8 I know
your works. Because you have limited strength, have kept My word, and
have not denied My name, look, I have placed before you an open door that
no one is able to close. 9 Take note! I will make those from the •synagogue
of Satan, who claim to be Jews and are not, but are lying — note this — I
will make them come and bow down at your feet, and they will know that I
have loved you. 10 Because you have kept My command to endure, I will
also keep you from the hour of testing that is going to come over the whole
world to test those who live on the earth. 11 I am coming quickly. Hold on
to what you have, so that no one takes your crown. 12 The victor: I will
make him a pillar in the sanctuary of My God, and he will never go out
again. I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of
My God — the new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My
God — and My new name.

[13] “Anyone who has an ear should listen to what the Spirit says to the churches.

The Letter to Laodicea

[14†] “Write to the angel of the church in Laodicea:

“The •Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Originator of God’s
creation says: [15] I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I
wish that you were cold or hot. [16] So, because you are lukewarm, and
neither hot nor cold, I am going to vomit you out of My mouth. [17] Because
you say, ‘I’m rich; I have become wealthy and need nothing,’ and you don’t
know that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind, and naked, [18] I advise you
to buy from Me gold refined in the fire so that you may be rich, white
clothes so that you may be dressed and your shameful nakedness not be
exposed, and ointment to spread on your eyes so that you may see. [19] As
many as I love, I rebuke and discipline. So be committed and repent.
[20] Listen! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and
opens the door, I will come in to him and have dinner with him, and he with
Me. [21] The victor: I will give him the right to sit with Me on My throne, just
as I also won the victory and sat down with My Father on His throne.

[22] “Anyone who has an ear should listen to what the Spirit says to the churches.”

The Throne Room of Heaven

4 [†]After this I looked, and there in heaven was an open door. The first
voice that I had heard speaking to me like a trumpet said, “Come up
here, and I will show you what must take place after this.”

2 Immediately I was in the Spirit, [A], and a throne was set there in
heaven. One was seated on the throne, 3[†] and the One seated looked like
jasper and carnelian stone. A rainbow that looked like an emerald
surrounded the throne. 4 Around that throne were 24 thrones, and on the
thrones sat 24 elders dressed in white clothes, with gold crowns on their
heads. 5[†] Flashes of lightning and rumblings of thunder came from the
throne. Seven fiery torches were burning before the throne, which are the
seven spirits of God. 6[†] Something like a sea of glass, similar to crystal,
was also before the throne. Four living creatures covered with eyes in front
and in back were in the middle [B] and around the throne. 7 The first living
creature was like a lion; the second living creature was like a calf; the third
living creature had a face like a man; and the fourth living creature was like
a flying eagle. 8[†] Each of the four living creatures had six wings; they were
covered with eyes around and inside. Day and night they never stop, [C]
saying:

Holy, holy, holy,
Lord God, the Almighty,
who was, who is, and who is coming.

9 Whenever the living creatures give glory, honor, and thanks to the One
seated on the throne, the One who lives forever and ever, 10 the 24 elders
fall down before the One seated on the throne, worship the One who lives
forever and ever, cast their crowns before the throne, and say:

11 Our Lord and God,
You are worthy to receive
glory and honor and power,
because You have created all things,
and because of Your will
they exist and were created.

The Lamb Takes the Scroll

5 [†]Then I saw in the right hand of the One seated on the throne a scroll
with writing on the inside and on the back, sealed with seven seals. 2 I
also saw a mighty angel proclaiming in a loud voice, “Who is worthy to
open the scroll and break its seals? ” 3 But no one in heaven or on earth or
under the earth was able to open the scroll or even to look in it. 4 And I
cried and cried because no one was found worthy to open the scroll or even
to look in it.

5 Then one of the elders said to me, “Stop crying. Look! The Lion from
the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has been victorious so that He may
open the scroll and its seven seals.” 6 Then I saw One like a slaughtered
lamb standing between [A] the throne and the four living creatures and among
the elders. He had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits
of God sent into all the earth. 7 He came and took the scroll out of the right
hand of the One seated on the throne.

The Lamb Is Worthy

8[†] When He took the scroll, the four living creatures and the 24 elders fell
down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp and gold bowls filled with
incense, which are the prayers of the •saints. 9[†] And they sang a new song:

You are worthy to take the scroll
and to open its seals,
because You were slaughtered,
and You •redeemed [B] people
for God by Your blood
from every tribe and language
and people and nation.
10 You made them a kingdom
and priests to our God,
and they will reign on the earth.

11[†] Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels around the throne,
and also of the living creatures and of the elders. Their number was

countless thousands, plus thousands of thousands. [12] They said with a loud
voice:

The Lamb who was slaughtered is worthy
to receive power and riches
and wisdom and strength
and honor and glory and blessing!

[13] I heard every creature in heaven, on earth, under the earth, on the sea,
and everything in them say:

Blessing and honor and glory and dominion
to the One seated on the throne,
and to the Lamb, forever and ever!

[14] The four living creatures said, "•Amen," and the elders fell down and
worshiped.

The First Seal on the Scroll

6 [†] Then I saw [A] the Lamb open one of the seven seals, and I heard one of
the four living creatures say with a voice like thunder, “Come! ” 2 I
looked, and there was a white horse. The horseman on it had a bow; a
crown was given to him, and he went out as a victor to conquer. [C]

ARTICLE

Does the Bible Teach That Humans Are More Than Their Bodies?



The Second Seal

3 When He opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature say,
“Come! ” 4 Then another horse went out, a fiery red one, and its horseman
was empowered [E] to take peace from the earth, so that people would
slaughter one another. And a large sword was given to him.

The Third Seal

5 When He opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say,
“Come! ” And I looked, and there was a black horse. The horseman on it
had a set of scales in his hand. 6 Then I heard something like a voice among
the four living creatures say, “A quart of wheat for a •denarius, and three
quarts of barley for a denarius — but do not harm the olive oil and the
wine.”

The Fourth Seal

7 When He opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living
creature say, “Come! ” 8 And I looked, and there was a pale green [H] horse.
The horseman on it was named Death, and •Hades was following after him.
Authority was given to them over a fourth of the earth, to kill by the sword,
by famine, by plague, and by the wild animals of the earth.

The Fifth Seal

[9†] When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the people [I]
slaughtered because of God's word and the testimony they had. [10] They
cried out with a loud voice: "Lord, [J] the One who is holy and true, how long
until You judge and avenge our blood from those who live on the earth? "
[11] So a white robe was given to each of them, and they were told to rest a
little while longer until the number would be completed of their fellow
slaves and their brothers, who were going to be killed just as they had been.

The Sixth Seal

[12†] Then I saw Him open [K] the sixth seal. A violent earthquake occurred;
the sun turned black like •sackcloth made of goat hair; the entire moon [L]
became like blood; [13] the stars of heaven fell to the earth as a fig tree drops
its unripe figs when shaken by a high wind; [14] the sky separated like a scroll
being rolled up; and every mountain and island was moved from its place.

[15] Then the kings of the earth, the nobles, the military commanders, the
rich, the powerful, and every •slave and free person hid in the caves and
among the rocks of the mountains. [16] And they said to the mountains and to
the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of the One seated on the
throne and from the wrath of the Lamb, [17] because the great day of Their
wrath has come! And who is able to stand? "

The Sealed of Israel

7 [†]After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth,
restraining the four winds of the earth so that no wind could blow on the
earth or on the sea or on any tree. 2 Then I saw another angel, who had the
seal of the living God rise up from the east. He cried out in a loud voice to
the four angels who were empowered [A] to harm the earth and the sea:
3 "Don't harm the earth or the sea or the trees until we seal the •slaves of
our God on their foreheads." 4[†] And I heard the number of those who were
sealed:

TWISTED SCRIPTURE

Revelation 7:4

The Jehovah's Witnesses (JWs) claim that only 144,000, whom they identify as JWs born prior to 1914, will reign with Christ in heaven. The author of Rv, however, identified the 144,000 as Jews from the 12 tribes of Israel.

144,000 sealed from every tribe of the Israelites:
5 12,000 sealed from the tribe of Judah,
12,000 from the tribe of Reuben,
12,000 from the tribe of Gad,
6 12,000 from the tribe of Asher,
12,000 from the tribe of Naphtali,
12,000 from the tribe of Manasseh,
7 12,000 from the tribe of Simeon,
12,000 from the tribe of Levi,
12,000 from the tribe of Issachar,
8 12,000 from the tribe of Zebulun,
12,000 from the tribe of Joseph,
12,000 sealed from the tribe of Benjamin.

A Multitude from the Great Tribulation

9† After this I looked, and there was a vast multitude from every nation,
tribe, people, and language, which no one could number, standing before
the throne and before the Lamb. They were robed in white with palm
branches in their hands. 10 And they cried out in a loud voice:

Salvation belongs to our God,
who is seated on the throne,
and to the Lamb!

11 All the angels stood around the throne, the elders, and the four living
creatures, and they fell facedown before the throne and worshiped God,
12 saying:

•Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom
and thanksgiving and honor
and power and strength
be to our God forever and ever. Amen.

13† Then one of the elders asked me, “Who are these people robed in
white, and where did they come from? ”

14 I said to him, “Sir, [B] you know.”

Then he told me:

These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation.
They washed their robes and made them white
in the blood of the Lamb.
15† For this reason they are before the throne of God,
and they serve Him day and night in His sanctuary.
The One seated on the throne will shelter [C] them:
16 They will no longer hunger;
they will no longer thirst;
the sun will no longer strike them,
nor will any heat.

[17] For the Lamb who is at the center of the throne
will shepherd them;
He will guide them to springs of living waters,
and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.

The Seventh Seal

8 †When He opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for
about half an hour. 2† Then I saw the seven angels who stand in the
presence of God; seven trumpets were given to them. 3 Another angel, with
a gold incense burner, came and stood at the altar. He was given a large
amount of incense to offer with the prayers of all the •saints on the gold
altar in front of the throne. 4 The smoke of the incense, with the prayers of
the saints, went up in the presence of God from the angel's hand. 5 The
angel took the incense burner, filled it with fire from the altar, and hurled it
to the earth; there were rumblings of thunder, flashes of lightning, and an
earthquake. 6 And the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared to
blow them.

The First Trumpet

7 The first angel blew his trumpet, and hail and fire, mixed with blood,
were hurled to the earth. So a third of the earth was burned up, a third of the
trees were burned up, and all the green grass was burned up.

The Second Trumpet

8† The second angel blew his trumpet, and something like a great
mountain ablaze with fire was hurled into the sea. So a third of the sea
became blood, 9 a third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of
the ships were destroyed.

The Third Trumpet

10 The third angel blew his trumpet, and a great star, blazing like a torch,
fell from heaven. It fell on a third of the rivers and springs of water. 11 The
name of the star is Wormwood, and a third of the waters became
•wormwood. So, many of the people died from the waters, because they had
been made bitter.

The Fourth Trumpet

[12] The fourth angel blew his trumpet, and a third of the sun was struck, a third of the moon, and a third of the stars, so that a third of them were darkened. A third of the day was without light, and the night as well.

[13†] I looked again and heard an eagle flying high overhead, crying out in a loud voice, “Woe! Woe! Woe to those who live on the earth, because of the remaining trumpet blasts that the three angels are about to sound! ”

The Fifth Trumpet

9 [†]The fifth angel blew his trumpet, and I saw a star that had fallen from
heaven to earth. The key to the shaft of the •abyss was given to him.
2 He opened the shaft of the abyss, and smoke came up out of the shaft like
smoke from a great furnace so that the sun and the air were darkened by
the smoke from the shaft. 3 Then locusts came out of the smoke on to the
earth, and power [A] was given to them like the power that scorpions have on
the earth. 4 They were told not to harm the grass of the earth, or any green
plant, or any tree, but only people who do not have God's seal on their
foreheads. 5 They were not permitted to kill them but were to torment them
for five months; their torment is like the torment caused by a scorpion when
it strikes a man. 6 In those days people will seek death and will not find it;
they will long to die, but death will flee from them.

7 The appearance of the locusts was like horses equipped for battle.
Something like gold crowns was on their heads; their faces were like men's
faces; 8 they had hair like women's hair; their teeth were like lions' teeth;
9 they had chests like iron breastplates; the sound of their wings was like the
sound of chariots with many horses rushing into battle; 10 and they had tails
with stingers like scorpions, so that with their tails they had the power [B] to
harm people for five months. 11 They had as their king [C] the angel of the
abyss; his name in Hebrew is •Abaddon, [D] and in Greek he has the name
Apollyon. [E] 12 The first woe has passed. There are still two more woes to
come after this.

The Sixth Trumpet

13[†] The sixth angel blew his trumpet. From the four horns of the gold
altar that is before God, I heard a voice 14 say to the sixth angel who had
the trumpet, "Release the four angels bound at the great river Euphrates."
15 So the four angels who were prepared for the hour, day, month, and year
were released to kill a third of the human race. 16 The number of mounted
troops was 200 million; I heard their number. 17 This is how I saw the
horses in my vision: The horsemen had breastplates that were fiery red,
hyacinth blue, and sulfur yellow. The heads of the horses were like lions'

heads, and from their mouths came fire, smoke, and sulfur. [18] A third of the
human race was killed by these three plagues — by the fire, the smoke, and
the sulfur that came from their mouths. [19] For the power of the horses is in
their mouths and in their tails, for their tails, which resemble snakes, have
heads, and they inflict injury with them.

ARTICLE

Notable Christian Apologist: Justin Martyr ⇒

[20†] The rest of the people, who were not killed by these plagues, did not
repent of the works of their hands to stop worshiping demons and idols of
gold, silver, bronze, stone, and wood, which are not able to see, hear, or
walk. [21] And they did not repent of their murders, their sorceries, [F] their
sexual immorality, or their thefts.

The Mighty Angel and the Small Scroll

10 [†]Then I saw another mighty angel coming down from heaven,
surrounded by a cloud, with a rainbow over his head. [A] His face was
like the sun, his legs [B] were like fiery pillars, 2 and he had a little scroll
opened in his hand. He put his right foot on the sea, his left on the land,
3 and he cried out with a loud voice like a roaring lion. When he cried out,
the seven thunders spoke with their voices. 4 And when the seven thunders
spoke, I was about to write. Then I heard a voice from heaven, saying,
"Seal up what the seven thunders said, and do not write it down! "

5[†] Then the angel that I had seen standing on the sea and on the land
raised his right hand to heaven. 6 He swore an oath by the One who lives
forever and ever, who created heaven and what is in it, the earth and what
is in it, and the sea and what is in it: "There will no longer be an interval of
time, [C] 7 but in the days of the sound of the seventh angel, when he will
blow his trumpet, then God's •hidden plan will be completed, as He
announced to His servants [D] the prophets."

8[†] Now the voice that I heard from heaven spoke to me again and said,
"Go, take the scroll that lies open in the hand of the angel who is standing
on the sea and on the land."

9 So I went to the angel and asked him to give me the little scroll. He said
to me, "Take and eat it; it will be bitter in your stomach, but it will be as
sweet as honey in your mouth."

10 Then I took the little scroll from the angel's hand and ate it. It was as
sweet as honey in my mouth, but when I ate it, my stomach became bitter.
11 And I was told, [E] "You must prophesy again about [F] many peoples,
nations, languages, and kings."

The Two Witnesses

11 [†]Then I was given a measuring reed like a rod, with these words:
"Go [A] and measure God's sanctuary and the altar, and count those
who worship there. 2 But exclude the courtyard outside the sanctuary. Don't
measure it, because it is given to the nations, [B] and they will trample the
holy city for 42 months. 3 I will empower [C] my two witnesses, and they will
prophesy for 1,260 days, dressed in •sackcloth." 4 These are the two olive
trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth. 5 If
anyone wants to harm them, fire comes from their mouths and consumes
their enemies; if anyone wants to harm them, he must be killed in this way.
6 These men have the power to close up the sky so that it does not rain
during the days of their prophecy. They also have power over the waters to
turn them into blood and to strike the earth with every plague whenever
they want.

The Witnesses Martyred

7[†] When they finish their testimony, the beast [D], that comes up out of the
•abyss will make war with them, conquer them, and kill them. 8[†] Their dead
bodies [E], will lie in the public square [F] of the great city, which
prophetically [G] is called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was
crucified. 9 And representatives from [H] the peoples, tribes, languages, and
nations will view their bodies for three and a half days and not permit their
bodies to be put into a tomb. 10 Those who live on the earth will gloat over
them and celebrate and send gifts to one another because these two prophets
brought judgment to those who live on the earth.

The Witnesses Resurrected

11[†] But after 3 1/2 days, the breath [I] of life from God entered them, and
they stood on their feet. So great fear fell on those who saw them. 12 Then
they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up here."
They went up to heaven in a cloud, while their enemies watched them.
13[†] At that moment a violent earthquake took place, a tenth of the city fell,
and 7,000 people were killed in the earthquake. The survivors were terrified

and gave glory to the God of heaven. [14] The second woe has passed. Take note: The third woe is coming quickly!

The Seventh Trumpet

[15]† The seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven saying:

The kingdom of the •world has become the kingdom
of our Lord and of His •Messiah,
and He will reign forever and ever!

[16] The 24 elders, who were seated before God on their thrones, fell facedown and worshiped God, [17] saying:

We thank You, Lord God, the Almighty,
who is and who was,
because You have taken Your great power
and have begun to reign.
[18] The nations were angry,
but Your wrath has come.
The time has come
for the dead to be judged
and to give the reward
to Your servants the prophets,
to the •saints, and to those who fear Your name,
both small and great,
and the time has come to destroy
those who destroy the earth.

[19] God's sanctuary in heaven was opened, and the ark of His covenant appeared in His sanctuary. There were flashes of lightning, rumblings of thunder, an earthquake, and severe hail.

The Woman, the Child, and the Dragon

12 [†] A great sign [A] appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun,
with the moon under her feet and a crown of 12 stars on her head.
2 She was pregnant and cried out in labor and agony as she was about to
give birth. 3 Then another sign [B] appeared in heaven: There was a great
fiery red dragon having seven heads and 10 horns, and on his heads were
seven diadems. [C] 4 His tail swept away a third of the stars in heaven and
hurled them to the earth. And the dragon stood in front of the woman who
was about to give birth, so that when she did give birth he might devour her
child. 5 But she gave birth to a Son — a male who is going to shepherd [D] all
nations with an iron scepter — and her child was caught up to God and to
His throne. 6 The woman fled into the wilderness, where she had a place
prepared by God, to be fed there [E] for 1,260 days.

TWISTED SCRIPTURE

Revelation 12:5

Some charismatic sects have adopted a belief that in the last days God will raise up a "male child" company of believers, often referred to as "manifested sons." This faithful remnant of overcomers will reach such a state of perfection that their bodies will become immortal. The male child in this verse, however, is none other than Jesus.

The Dragon Thrown Out of Heaven

7[†] Then war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against
the dragon. The dragon and his angels also fought, 8 but he could not
prevail, and there was no place for them in heaven any longer. 9 So the great
dragon was thrown out — the ancient serpent, who is called the Devil and
Satan, the one who deceives the whole world. He was thrown to earth, and
his angels with him.

10 Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say:

The salvation and the power
and the kingdom of our God
and the authority of His •Messiah
have now come,
because the accuser of our brothers
has been thrown out:
the one who accuses them
before our God day and night.
11† They conquered him
by the blood of the Lamb
and by the word of their testimony,
for they did not love their lives
in the face of death.
12† Therefore rejoice, you heavens,
and you who dwell in them!
Woe to the earth and the sea,
for the Devil has come down to you
with great fury,
because he knows he has a short time.

The Woman Persecuted

13† When the dragon saw that he had been thrown to earth, he persecuted
the woman who gave birth to the male child. 14 The woman was given two
wings of a great eagle, so that she could fly from the serpent's presence to
her place in the wilderness, where she was fed for a time, times, and half a
time. 15 From his mouth the serpent spewed water like a river flowing after
the woman, to sweep her away in a torrent. 16 But the earth helped the
woman. The earth opened its mouth and swallowed up the river that the
dragon had spewed from his mouth. 17† So the dragon was furious with the
woman and left to wage war against the rest of her offspring [F] — those
who keep God's commands and have the testimony about Jesus. 18 He
stood on the sand of the sea.

TWISTED SCRIPTURE

Revelation 12:17

The Seventh-day Adventist Church holds that "the testimony about Jesus," also identified as "the spirit of prophecy" (19:10), is the mark of the remnant or true church and finds its fulfillment in its founder Ellen G. White. She is God's final end-time prophet who spoke by the "spirit of prophecy." Research has revealed, however, that nearly 50 percent of E. G. White's writings were borrowed from other writers.

The Beast from the Sea

13 [†]And I saw a beast coming up out of the sea. He [A] had 10 horns and
seven heads. On his horns were 10 diadems, and on his heads were
blasphemous names. 2 The beast I saw was like a leopard, his feet were like
a bear's, and his mouth was like a lion's mouth. The dragon gave him his
power, his throne, and great authority. 3 One of his heads appeared to be
fatally wounded, [B] but his fatal wound was healed. The whole earth was
amazed and followed the beast. [C] 4 They worshiped the dragon because he
gave authority to the beast. And they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is
like the beast? Who is able to wage war against him? "

5[†] A mouth was given to him to speak boasts and blasphemies. He was
also given authority to act for 42 months. 6 He began to speak [E]
blasphemies against God: to blaspheme His name and His
dwelling — those who dwell in heaven. 7 And he was permitted to wage
war against the •saints and to conquer them. He was also given authority
over every tribe, people, language, and nation. 8[†] All those who live on the
earth will worship him, everyone whose name was not written from the
foundation of the world in the book [F] of life of the Lamb who was
slaughtered. [G]

9[†] If anyone has an ear, he should listen:

10 If anyone is destined for captivity,
into captivity he goes.
If anyone is to be killed with a sword,
with a sword he will be killed.

This demands the perseverance [H] and faith of the saints.

The Beast from the Earth

11[†] Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth; he had two
horns like a lamb, [I], but he sounded like a dragon. 12 He exercises all the
authority of the first beast on his behalf and compels the earth and those
who live on it to worship the first beast, whose fatal wound was healed.

[13] He also performs great signs, even causing fire to come down from
heaven to earth in front of people. [14] He deceives those who live on the
earth because of the signs that he is permitted to perform on behalf of the
beast, telling those who live on the earth to make an image [J] of the beast
who had the sword wound and yet lived. [15] He was permitted to give a
spirit [K] to the image of the beast, so that the image of the beast could both
speak and cause whoever would not worship the image of the beast to be
killed. [16†] And he requires everyone — small and great, rich and poor, free
and •slave — to be given a mark [L] on his right hand or on his forehead,
[17] so that no one can buy or sell unless he has the mark: the beast's name or
the number of his name.

[18] Here is wisdom: [M], The one who has understanding must calculate [N]
the number of the beast, because it is the number of a man. [O] His number is
666.

The Lamb and the 144,000

14 †Then I looked, and there on Mount •Zion stood the Lamb, and with
Him were 144,000 who had His name and His Father’s name written
on their foreheads. 2 I heard a sound [A] from heaven like the sound of
cascading waters and like the rumbling of loud thunder. The sound I heard
was also like harpists playing on their harps. 3 They sang a new song
before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders, but no
one could learn the song except the 144,000 who had been •redeemed [B]
from the earth. 4 These are the ones not defiled with women, for they have
kept their virginity. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He
goes. They were redeemed from the human race as the •firstfruits for God
and the Lamb. 5 No lie was found in their mouths; they are blameless.

The Proclamation of Three Angels

6† Then I saw another angel flying high overhead, having the eternal
gospel to announce to the inhabitants of the earth — to every nation, tribe,
language, and people. 7 He spoke with a loud voice: “Fear God and give
Him glory, because the hour of His judgment has come. Worship the Maker
of heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water.”

TWISTED SCRIPTURE

Revelation 14:6-12

Called by the Seventh-day Adventist Church (SDA) the "three angels' messages," this passage forms the core of the SDA belief system. According to a convoluted and erroneous SDA interpretation, the following points are true. (1) "The hour of His judgment has come" (v. 7) refers to the "investigative judgment" of 1844. (2) "Worship the Maker of heaven and earth" (v. 7) is a call to observe Saturday as the Sabbath. (3) "Babylon the Great has fallen" (v. 8) refers to the 'apostate' or non-SDA Church as the notorious prostitute who seduces the nations. (4) "If anyone worships the beast . . . and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand" (v. 9) is a warning against following the Antichrist and worshiping on Sunday. Those refusing to heed the warning will be "tormented with fire and

sulfur" (vv. 9-10). Only the remnant church, those who embrace SDA beliefs, will be saved.

8† A second angel [D] followed, saying: "It has fallen, Babylon the Great has fallen, who made all nations drink the wine of her sexual immorality, [E] which brings wrath."

9 And a third angel [F] followed them and spoke with a loud voice: "If anyone worships the beast and his image and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand,
10 he will also drink the wine of God's wrath, which is mixed full strength in the cup of His anger. He will be tormented with fire and sulfur in the sight of the holy angels and in the sight of the Lamb,
11 and the smoke of their torment will go up forever and ever. There is no rest [G] day or night for those who worship the beast and his image, or anyone who receives the mark of his name.
12† This demands the perseverance [H] of the •saints, who keep God's commands and their faith in Jesus." [I]

13 Then I heard a voice from heaven saying, "Write: The dead who die in the Lord from now on are blessed."

"Yes," says the Spirit, "let them rest from their labors, for their works follow them! "

Reaping the Earth's Harvest

14† Then I looked, and there was a white cloud, and One like the Son of Man [J] was seated on the cloud, with a gold crown on His head and a sharp sickle in His hand.
15 Another angel came out of the sanctuary, crying out in a loud voice to the One who was seated on the cloud, "Use your sickle and reap, for the time to reap has come, since the harvest of the earth is ripe."
16 So the One seated on the cloud swung His sickle over the earth, and the earth was harvested.

[17] Then another angel who also had a sharp sickle came out of the
sanctuary in heaven. [18] Yet another angel, who had authority over fire, came
from the altar, and he called with a loud voice to the one who had the sharp
sickle, “Use your sharp sickle and gather the clusters of grapes from earth’s
vineyard, because its grapes have ripened.” [19] So the angel swung his sickle
toward earth and gathered the grapes from earth’s vineyard, and he threw
them into the great winepress of God’s wrath. [20] Then the press was
trampled outside the city, and blood flowed out of the press up to the
horses’ bridles for about 180 miles. [K]

Preparation for the Bowl Judgments

15 †Then I saw another great and awe-inspiring sign [A] in heaven: seven
angels with the seven last plagues, for with them, God's wrath will be
completed. 2† I also saw something like a sea of glass mixed with fire, and
those who had won the victory over the beast, his image, and the number of
his name, were standing on the sea of glass with harps from God. [B] 3 They
sang the song of God's servant Moses and the song of the Lamb:

Great and awe-inspiring are Your works,
Lord God, the Almighty;
righteous and true are Your ways,
King of the Nations.
4 Lord, who will not fear
and glorify Your name?
Because You alone are holy,
for all the nations will come
and worship before You
because Your righteous acts
have been revealed.

5† After this I looked, and the heavenly sanctuary — the tabernacle of
testimony — was opened. 6 Out of the sanctuary came the seven angels
with the seven plagues, dressed in •clean, bright linen, with gold sashes
wrapped around their chests. 7 One of the four living creatures gave the
seven angels seven gold bowls filled with the wrath of God who lives
forever and ever. 8 Then the sanctuary was filled with smoke from God's
glory and from His power, and no one could enter the sanctuary until the
seven plagues of the seven angels were completed.

The First Bowl

16 †Then I heard a loud voice from the sanctuary saying to the seven
angels, “Go and pour out the seven bowls of God’s wrath on the
earth.” 2 The first went and poured out his bowl on the earth, and severely
painful sores [A] broke out on the people who had the mark of the beast and
who worshiped his image.

The Second Bowl

3 The second poured out his bowl into the sea. It turned to blood like a
dead man’s, and all life [B] in the sea died.

The Third Bowl

4 The third poured out his bowl into the rivers and the springs of water,
and they became blood. 5 I heard the angel of the waters say:

You are righteous,
who is and who was, the Holy One,
for You have decided these things.
6 Because they poured out
the blood of the •saints and the prophets,
You also gave them blood to drink;
they deserve it!

7 Then I heard someone from the altar say:

Yes, Lord God, the Almighty,
true and righteous are Your judgments.

The Fourth Bowl

8† The fourth poured out his bowl on the sun. He [C] was given the
power [D] to burn people with fire, 9 and people were burned by the intense
heat. So they blasphemed the name of God, who had the power [E] over
these plagues, and they did not repent and give Him glory.

The Fifth Bowl

10 The fifth poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and his
kingdom was plunged into darkness. People [F] gnawed their tongues
because of their pain 11 and blasphemed the God of heaven because of their
pains and their sores, yet they did not repent of their actions.

The Sixth Bowl

12† The sixth poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its
water was dried up to prepare the way for the kings from the east. 13 Then I
saw three unclean spirits like frogs coming from the dragon's mouth, from
the beast's mouth, and from the mouth of the false prophet. 14 For they are
spirits of demons performing signs, who travel to the kings of the whole
world to assemble them for the battle of the great day of God, the
Almighty.

15 "Look, I am coming like a thief. The one who is alert and remains
clothed so that he may not go around naked and people see his shame is
blessed."

16 So they assembled them at the place called in Hebrew, Armagedon. ,

The Seventh Bowl

17† Then the seventh poured out his bowl into the air, [G] and a loud voice
came out of the sanctuary from the throne, saying, "It is done! " 18 There
were flashes of lightning and rumblings of thunder. And a severe
earthquake occurred like no other since man has been on the earth — so
great was the quake. 19 The great city split into three parts, and the cities of
the nations [H] fell. Babylon the Great was remembered in God's presence;
He gave her the cup filled with the wine of His fierce anger. 20 Every island
fled, and the mountains disappeared. [I], 21 Enormous hailstones, each
weighing about 100 pounds, [J] fell from the sky on people, and they
blasphemed God for the plague of hail because that plague was extremely
severe.

The Woman and the Scarlet Beast

17 †Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and
spoke with me: "Come, I will show you the judgment of the notorious
prostitute who sits on many [A] waters. 2 The kings of the earth committed
sexual immorality with her, and those who live on the earth became drunk
on the wine of her sexual immorality." 3 So he carried me away in the
Spirit [B], to a desert. I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast that was
covered [C] with blasphemous names and had seven heads and 10 horns.
4 The woman was dressed in purple and scarlet, adorned with gold, precious
stones, and pearls. She had a gold cup in her hand filled with everything
vile and with the impurities of her prostitution. 5 On her forehead a cryptic
name was written:

BABYLON THE GREAT
THE MOTHER OF PROSTITUTES
AND OF THE VILE THINGS OF THE EARTH.

6 Then I saw that the woman was drunk on the blood of the •saints and on
the blood of the witnesses to Jesus. When I saw her, I was greatly
astonished.

The Meaning of the Woman and of the Beast

7† Then the angel said to me, "Why are you astonished? I will tell you the
•secret meaning of the woman and of the beast, with the seven heads and
the 10 horns, that carries her. 8 The beast that you saw was, and is not, and
is about to come up from the •abyss and go to destruction. Those who live
on the earth whose names have not been written in the book of life from the
foundation of the world will be astonished when they see the beast that
was, and is not, and will be present again.

9† "Here is the mind with wisdom: [D], The seven heads are seven
mountains on which the woman is seated. 10 They are also seven kings:
Five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come, and when he comes, he
must remain for a little while. 11 The beast that was and is not, is himself an
eighth king, yet he belongs to the seven and is going to destruction. 12 The

10 horns you saw are 10 kings who have not yet received a kingdom, but
they will receive authority as kings with the beast for one hour. [13] These
have one purpose, and they give their power and authority to the beast.
[14†] These will make war against the Lamb, but the Lamb will conquer them
because He is Lord of lords and King of kings. Those with Him are called,
chosen, and faithful."

[15†] He also said to me, "The waters you saw, where the prostitute was
seated, are peoples, multitudes, nations, and languages. [16] The 10 horns
you saw, and the beast, will hate the prostitute. They will make her desolate
and naked, devour her flesh, and burn her up with fire. [17] For God has put
it into their hearts to carry out His plan by having one purpose and to give
their kingdom [E] to the beast until God's words are accomplished. [18†] And
the woman you saw is the great city that has an empire [F] over the kings of
the earth."

The Fall of Babylon the Great

18 After this I saw another angel with great authority coming down from
heaven, and the earth was illuminated by his splendor. 2 He cried in a
mighty voice:

It has fallen,
Babylon the Great has fallen!
She has become a dwelling for demons,
a haunt for every •unclean spirit,
a haunt for every unclean bird,
and a haunt [A] for every unclean and despicable beast.
3 For all the nations have drunk
the wine of her sexual immorality,
which brings wrath.
The kings of the earth
have committed sexual immorality with her,
and the merchants of the earth
have grown wealthy from her excessive luxury.

4† Then I heard another voice from heaven:

Come out of her, My people,
so that you will not share in her sins
or receive any of her plagues.
5† For her sins are piled up [B] to heaven,
and God has remembered her crimes.
6 Pay her back the way she also paid,
and double it according to her works.
In the cup in which she mixed,
mix a double portion for her.
7 As much as she glorified herself and lived luxuriously,
give her that much torment and grief,
for she says in her heart,
"I sit as a queen;
I am not a widow,
and I will never see grief."
8 For this reason her plagues will come in one day —

death and grief and famine.
She will be burned up with fire,
because the Lord God who judges her is mighty.

The World Mourns Babylon's Fall

9† The kings of the earth who have committed sexual immorality and
lived luxuriously with her will weep and mourn over her when they see the
smoke of her burning. 10 They will stand far off in fear of her torment,
saying:

Woe, woe, the great city,
Babylon, the mighty city!
For in a single hour
your judgment has come.

11 The merchants of the earth will also weep and mourn over her, because
no one buys their merchandise any longer — 12 merchandise of gold, silver,
precious stones, and pearls; fine fabrics of linen, purple, silk, and scarlet; all
kinds of fragrant wood products; objects of ivory; objects of expensive
wood, brass, [C] iron, and marble; 13 cinnamon, spice, incense, myrrh, [E] and
frankincense; wine, olive oil, fine wheat flour, and grain; cattle and sheep;
horses and carriages; and slaves [F] and human lives.

14 The fruit you craved has left you.
All your splendid and glamorous things are gone;
they will never find them again.

15 The merchants of these things, who became rich from her, will stand far
off in fear of her torment, weeping and mourning, 16 saying:

Woe, woe, the great city,
dressed in fine linen, purple, and scarlet,
adorned with gold, precious stones, and pearls,
17 for in a single hour
such fabulous wealth was destroyed!

And every shipmaster, seafarer, the sailors, and all who do business by
sea, stood far off [18] as they watched the smoke from her burning and kept
crying out: “Who is like the great city? ” [19] They threw dust on their heads
and kept crying out, weeping, and mourning:

Woe, woe, the great city,
where all those who have ships on the sea
became rich from her wealth,
for in a single hour she was destroyed.
[20†] Rejoice over her, heaven,
and you •saints, apostles, and prophets,
because God has executed your judgment on her! [G]

The Finality of Babylon’s Fall

[21] Then a mighty angel picked up a stone like a large millstone and
threw it into the sea, saying:

In this way, Babylon the great city
will be thrown down violently
and never be found again.
[22] The sound of harpists, musicians,
flutists, and trumpeters
will never be heard in you again;
no craftsman of any trade
will ever be found in you again;
the sound of a mill
will never be heard in you again;
[23] the light of a lamp
will never shine in you again;
and the voice of a groom and bride
will never be heard in you again.
All this will happen
because your merchants
were the nobility of the earth,
because all the nations were deceived
by your sorcery,

24 and the blood of prophets and saints,
and of all those slaughtered on earth,
was found in you. [H]

Celebration in Heaven

19 †After this I heard something like the loud voice of a vast multitude in heaven, saying:

•Hallelujah!
Salvation, glory, and power belong to our God,
2 because His judgments are true and righteous,
because He has judged the notorious prostitute
who corrupted the earth with her sexual immorality;
and He has avenged the blood of His •slaves
that was on her hands.

3 A second time they said:

Hallelujah!
Her smoke ascends forever and ever!

4 Then the 24 elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God, who is seated on the throne, saying:

•Amen! Hallelujah!

5 A voice came from the throne, saying:

Praise our God,
all His slaves, who fear Him,
both small and great!

Marriage of the Lamb Announced

6 Then I heard something like the voice of a vast multitude, like the sound of cascading waters, and like the rumbling of loud thunder, saying:

Hallelujah, because our Lord God, the Almighty,
has begun to reign!
7† Let us be glad, rejoice, and give Him glory,
because the marriage of the Lamb has come,
and His wife has prepared herself.

8 She was given fine linen to wear, bright and pure.

For the fine linen represents the righteous acts of the •saints.

9 Then he said to me, “Write: Those invited to the marriage feast of the
Lamb are fortunate!” He also said to me, “These words of God are true.”
10† Then I fell at his feet to worship him, but he said to me, “Don’t do that! I
am a fellow slave with you and your brothers who have the testimony
about [A] Jesus. Worship God, because the testimony about Jesus is the spirit
of prophecy.” [B]

The Rider on a White Horse

11† Then I saw heaven opened, and there was a white horse. Its rider is
called Faithful and True, and He judges and makes war in righteousness.
12 His eyes were like a fiery flame, and many crowns [C] were on His head.
He had a name written that no one knows except Himself. 13 He wore a
robe stained with blood, [D], and His name is the Word of God. 14 The
armies that were in heaven followed Him on white horses, wearing pure
white linen. 15 A sharp sword came from His mouth, so that He might
strike the nations with it. He will shepherd [E] them with an iron scepter. He
will also trample the winepress of the fierce anger of God, the Almighty.
16 And He has a name written on His robe and on His thigh:

**KING OF KINGS
AND LORD OF LORDS.**

The Beast and His Armies Defeated

17† Then I saw an angel standing on [F] the sun, and he cried out in a loud
voice, saying to all the birds flying high overhead, “Come, gather together
for the great supper of God, 18 so that you may eat the flesh of kings, the
flesh of commanders, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and of
their riders, and the flesh of everyone, both free and slave, small and
great.”

[19] Then I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies gathered
together to wage war against the rider on the horse and against His army.
[20]† But the beast was taken prisoner, and along with him the false prophet,
who had performed the signs in his presence. He deceived those who
accepted the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image with
these signs. Both of them were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns
with sulfur. [21] The rest were killed with the sword that came from the
mouth of the rider on the horse, and all the birds were filled with their flesh.

Satan Bound

20 †Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven with the key to the
•abyss and a great chain in his hand. 2 He seized the dragon, that
ancient serpent who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for 1,000
years. 3 He threw him into the abyss, closed it, and put a seal on it so that
he would no longer deceive the nations until the 1,000 years were
completed. After that, he must be released for a short time.

The Saints Reign with the Messiah

4† Then I saw thrones, and people seated on them who were given
authority to judge. I also saw the people [A], who had been beheaded
because of their testimony about Jesus and because of God's word, who
had not worshiped the beast or his image, and who had not accepted the
mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with
the •Messiah for 1,000 years. 5 The rest of the dead did not come to life
until the 1,000 years were completed. This is the first resurrection.
6 Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection! The
second death has no power [B] over them, but they will be priests of God and
of the Messiah, and they will reign with Him for 1,000 years.

Satanic Rebellion Crushed

7† When the 1,000 years are completed, Satan will be released from his
prison 8 and will go out to deceive the nations at the four corners of the
earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them for battle. Their number is like the
sand of the sea. 9 They came up over the surface of the earth and
surrounded the encampment of the •saints, the beloved city. Then fire came
down from heaven and consumed them. 10 The Devil who deceived them
was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false
prophet are, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

The Great White Throne Judgment

11† Then I saw a great white throne and One seated on it. Earth and
heaven fled from His presence, and no place was found for them. 12 I also
saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books

were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life, and the dead were judged according to their works by what was written in the books.

[13] Then the sea gave up its dead, and Death and •Hades gave up their
dead; all [C] were judged according to their works. [14] Death and Hades were
thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire.
[15] And anyone not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake
of fire.

The New Creation

21 †Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and
the first earth had passed away, and the sea no longer existed. 2 I also
saw the Holy City, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God,
prepared like a bride adorned for her husband.

3 Then I heard a loud voice from the throne:

Look! God's dwelling [A] is with humanity,
and He will live with them.
They will be His people,
and God Himself will be with them
and be their God.
4 He will wipe away every tear from their eyes.
Death will no longer exist;
grief, crying, and pain will exist no longer,
because the previous things [B] have passed away.

5 Then the One seated on the throne said, "Look! I am making everything
new." He also said, "Write, because these words are faithful and true."
6 And He said to me, "It is done! I am the •Alpha and the Omega, the
Beginning and the End. I will give water as a gift to the thirsty from the
spring of life. 7† The victor will inherit these things, and I will be his God,
and he will be My son. 8 But the cowards, unbelievers, vile, murderers,
sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars — their share will be in
the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death."

ARTICLE

How Does a Chrisitian Converse with a Buddhist? ⇒

The New Jerusalem

9† Then one of the seven angels, who had held the seven bowls filled with
the seven last plagues, came and spoke with me: "Come, I will show you

the bride, the wife of the Lamb.” [10] He then carried me away in the
Spirit [C], to a great and high mountain and showed me the holy city,
Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, [11] arrayed with God’s
glory. Her radiance was like a very precious stone, like a jasper stone,
bright as crystal. [12†] The city had a massive high wall, with 12 gates.
Twelve angels were at the gates; the names of the 12 tribes of Israel’s sons
were inscribed on the gates. [13] There were three gates on the east, three
gates on the north, three gates on the south, and three gates on the west.
[14] The city wall had 12 foundations, and the 12 names of the Lamb’s 12
apostles were on the foundations.

[15] The one who spoke with me had a gold measuring rod to measure the
city, its gates, and its wall. [16] The city is laid out in a square; its length and
width are the same. He measured the city with the rod at 12,000 *stadia*. [D]
Its length, width, and height are equal. [17] Then he measured its wall, 144
•cubits according to human measurement, which the angel used. [18] The
building material of its wall was jasper, and the city was pure gold like clear
glass.

[19] The foundations of the city wall were adorned with every kind of
precious stone:

the first foundation jasper,
the second sapphire,
the third chalcedony,
the fourth emerald,
[20] the fifth sardonyx,
the sixth carnelian,
the seventh chrysolite,
the eighth beryl,
the ninth topaz,
the tenth chrysoprase,
the eleventh jacinth,
the twelfth amethyst.

21 The 12 gates are 12 pearls; each individual gate was made of a single
pearl. The broad street [E] of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass.

22[†] I did not see a sanctuary in it, because the Lord God the Almighty and
the Lamb are its sanctuary. 23 The city does not need the sun or the moon to
shine on it, because God's glory illuminates it, and its lamp is the Lamb.
24 The nations will walk in its light, and the kings of the earth will bring
their glory into it. 25 Each day its gates will never close because it will
never be night there. 26 They will bring the glory and honor of the nations
into it. 27 Nothing profane will ever enter it: no one who does what is vile
or false, but only those written in the Lamb's book of life.

The Source of Life

22 [†]Then he showed me the river of living water, sparkling like crystal,
flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb 2 down the middle
of the broad street of the city. The tree of life [A] was on both sides of the
river, bearing 12 kinds of fruit, producing its fruit every month. The leaves
of the tree are for healing the nations, 3 and there will no longer be any
curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, [B] and His
•slaves will serve Him. 4 They will see His face, and His name will be on
their foreheads. 5 Night will no longer exist, and people will not need
lamplight or sunlight, because the Lord God will give them light. And they
will reign forever and ever.

The Time Is Near

6[†] Then he said to me, “These words are faithful and true. And the Lord,
the God of the spirits of the prophets, has sent His angel to show His slaves
what must quickly take place.” [C]

7 “Look, I am coming quickly! The one who keeps the prophetic words
of this book is blessed.”

8[†] I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. When I heard and
saw them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who had shown
them to me. 9 But he said to me, “Don’t do that! I am a fellow slave with
you, your brothers the prophets, and those who keep the words of this book.
Worship God.” 10[†] He also said to me, “Don’t seal the prophetic words of
this book, because the time is near. 11 Let the unrighteous go on in
unrighteousness; let the filthy go on being made filthy; let the righteous go
on in righteousness; and let the holy go on being made holy.”

12 “Look! I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me to repay each
person according to what he has done. 13 I am the •Alpha and the Omega,
the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.

14[†] “Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the
right to the tree of life and may enter the city by the gates. 15 Outside are the

dogs, the sorcerers, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices lying.

[16] "I, Jesus, have sent My angel to attest these things to you for the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright Morning Star."

[17] Both the Spirit and the bride say, "Come! " Anyone who hears should say, "Come! " And the one who is thirsty should come. Whoever desires should take the living water as a gift.

[18†] I testify to everyone who hears the prophetic words of this book: If
anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues that are written in
this book. [19] And if anyone takes away from the words of this prophetic
book, God will take away his share of the tree of life and the holy city,
written in this book.

[20†] He who testifies about these things says, "Yes, I am coming quickly."

•Amen! Come, Lord Jesus!

[21†] The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all the •saints. Amen.

Genesis 1 Notes

1:1A Or *created the universe*

1:1-2B Or *When God began to create the sky and the earth,* [2] *the earth was*

1:8C Or *"heavens"*

1:14D Or *for the appointed times*

1:20E Lit *with swarms of*

1:21F Or *created sea monsters*

1:26G Lit *scurry*

1:28H Lit *and all scurrying animals that scurry*

Genesis 2 Notes

2:1A Lit *and all their host*

2:2B Or *ceased*

2:3C Lit *work that God created to make*

2:4D Lit *creation on the day*

2:5E Or *earth*

2:10F Or *goes*

2:10G Lit *became four heads*

2:11H Or *of the Havilah*

2:12I Lit *good*

2:17J Lit *eat from it*

2:20K Or *for Adam*

Genesis 3 Notes

3:5A Lit *on the day*

3:5B Or *gods*, or *divine beings*

3:8C Lit *at the wind of the day*

3:10D Lit *the sound of You*

3:17E Lit *it through pain*

3:19F Or *food*

3:20G Lit *Living*, or *Life*

Genesis 4 Notes

4:1A Lit *the LORD*

4:5B Lit *and his face fell*

4:6C Lit *why has your face fallen*

4:11D Lit *blood from your hand*

4:13E Or *sin*

4:15F Or *suffer severely*

4:20G Lit *the dweller of tent and livestock*

Genesis 5 Notes

5:1A Lit *written family*

5:1B Or *Adam*

5:2C Or *Adam*

Genesis 6 Notes

6:2A Or *women*

6:3B Or *strive*

6:3C Or *in*

6:3D Lit *flesh*

6:11E Or *injustice*

6:13F Or *injustice*

6:15G Or *300 cubits long, 50 cubits wide, and 30 cubits high*

6:16H Or *window*, or *hatch* ; Hb uncertain

6:16I Lit *to a cubit*

Genesis 7 Notes

7:20A Lit *surged 15 cubits*

7:21B Lit *all the swarming swarms*

Genesis 8 Notes

8:1A Or *spirit* ; Gn 1:2

8:17B Lit *creatures of all flesh*

Genesis 9 Notes

9:2A Lit *are given in your hand*

9:15B Lit *and creatures of all flesh*

9:16C Lit *creatures of all flesh*

9:20D Or *Noah began to be a farmer and planted*

Genesis 10 Notes

10:10A Or *Uruk*

10:10B Or *Akkad*

10:10C Or *and all of them*

10:10D Or *in Babylonia*

10:22E Or *Assyria*

Genesis 11 Notes

11:1A Lit *one lip and the same words*

11:2B Lit *they*

11:2C Or *migrated eastward*

11:7D Or *confound*

11:7E Lit *lip*

11:7F Lit *understand each man the lip of his companion*

Genesis 12 Notes

12:2A Or *great. Be a blessing!*

12:3B Lit *clans*

12:3C Or *will find blessing*

12:3D Or *will bless themselves by you*

Genesis 13 Notes

13:2A Lit *heavy*

13:8B Lit *brothers*

13:10C Lit *Valley as you go to*

13:13D Lit *evil and sinful*

Genesis 14 Notes

14:1A Or *nations*

14:13B Lit *were possessors of a covenant of*

14:19C Or *Possessor*

14:20D Or *and blessed be*

14:24E Lit *Nothing to me*

Genesis 15 Notes

15:2A Hb obscure

15:3B Lit *a son of*

15:4C Lit *loins*

15:13D Lit *will serve them and they will oppress them*

15:16E Lit *Amorites is not yet complete*

15:18F Lit *the great river, the river Euphrates*

Genesis 16 Notes

16:2A Lit *Abram listened to the voice of Sarai*

16:4B Lit *He came to*

16:5C Or *May my suffering be on you*

16:5D Lit *bosom*

16:9E Lit *to mistreatment under her hand*

16:12F Or *live away from*

16:13G Lit *her: You God Who Sees*

16:13H Hb obscure

16:14I Or *Beer-lahai-roi*

Genesis 17 Notes

17:18A Lit *Ishmael would live in Your sight*

17:22B Lit *went up*, or *ascended*

Genesis 18 Notes

18:3A Or *My Lord*, or *The Lord*

18:5B Lit *may sustain your heart*

18:6C Lit *three seahs* ; about 21 quarts

18:8D Or *butter*

18:8E Lit *was standing by*

18:11F Lit *days*

18:11G Lit *The way of women had ceased for Sarah*

18:19H Lit *known*

Genesis 19 Notes

19:8A Lit *do what is good in your eyes*

19:10B Lit *men*

19:12C Lit *men*

19:14D Lit *take*

19:15E Or *iniquity*, or *guilt*

19:18F Or *My Lord*, or *My lords*

19:21G Or *Look!*

19:21H Lit *I will lift up your face*

Genesis 20 Notes

20:3A Lit *is possessed by a husband*

20:5B Lit *with integrity of my heart*

20:5C Lit *cleanness of my*

20:6D Lit *with integrity of your heart*

20:8E Lit *in their ears*

20:15F Lit *Settle in the good in your eyes*

20:16G Lit *a covering of the eyes*

Genesis 21 Notes

21:11A Lit *was very bad in the eyes of*

21:12B Lit *Let it not be bad in your eyes*

21:17C Or *an*

21:30D Lit *that it*

Genesis 22 Notes

22:8A Lit *see*

22:9B Or *Isaac hand and foot*

22:14C Or *Yahweh-yireh*

22:14D Or *He will be seen*

22:18E Or *will bless themselves*, or *will find blessing*

Genesis 23 Notes

23:3A Or *sons of Heth* ; also in vv. 5,7,10,16,18,20

23:4B Lit *dead from before me*

23:5C Lit *Abraham, saying to him*

23:6D Lit *my lord*

23:6E Or *prince of God*, or *mighty prince*

23:6F Or *finest graves*

23:10G Lit *ears*

23:11H Lit *in the eyes of the sons*

23:13I Lit *ears*

23:16J Lit *ears*

Genesis 24 Notes

24:1A Lit *days*

24:19B Lit *they are finished drinking*

24:49C Lit *go to the right or to the left*

24:50D Lit *we cannot say to you anything bad or good*

24:55E Lit *us a few days or 10*

24:55F Or *you*

24:57G Lit *mouth*

24:59H Lit *with her wet nurse* ; Gn 35:8

24:60I Lit *his*

24:63J Or *pray*, or *meditate* ; Hb obscure

Genesis 25 Notes

25:7A Lit *And these are the days of the years of the lives of Abraham that he lived*

25:16B Or *chieftains*

25:16C Or *peoples*

25:17D Lit *And these are the years*

25:18E Or *He settled down alongside of*

25:22F Lit *If thus, why this I*

25:27G Lit *a man of the field*

25:27H Lit *man living in tents*

Genesis 26 Notes

26:4A Or *will bless themselves*

26:8B Or *and he looked and behold —*

26:12C Lit *found*

26:16D Or *are more numerous than we are*

26:19E Lit *living*

26:20F Or *Esek*

26:21G Or *Sitnah*

26:22H Or *Rehoboth*

26:31I Lit *swore, each man to his brother*

26:33J Or *Shibah*

26:35K Lit *And they became bitterness of spirit*

Genesis 27 Notes

27:27A Lit *smelled the smell of*

27:38B Lit *Esau lifted up his voice and wept*

27:40C Hb obscure

27:46D Lit *of these daughters of the land*

Genesis 28 Notes

28:13A Or *there above it*

Genesis 29 Notes

29:1A Lit *Jacob picked up his feet*

29:1B Lit *the land of the children of the east*

29:10C Lit *with the sheep of Laban his mother's brother*

29:11D Lit *and he lifted his voice and wept*

29:14E Lit *my bone and my flesh*

29:17F Lit *tender*

29:21G Lit *to go to*

Genesis 30 Notes

30:2A Lit *the fruit of the womb*

30:3B Lit *bear on my knees*

30:8C Or *With mighty wrestlings*

30:43D Lit *The man spread out very much, very much*

Genesis 31 Notes

31:6A Lit *worked with all my strength*

31:20B Lit *And he stole the heart of*

31:21C Lit *and set his face to*

31:42D Lit *and the work of my hands*

Genesis 32 Notes

32:31A Variant of *Peniel*

32:32B Or *tendon*

Genesis 33 Notes

33:8A Lit *camp*

33:15B Lit *May I find favor in your eyes*

33:20C Or *El-Elohe-Israel*

Genesis 34 Notes

34:3A Lit *spoke to her heart*

34:11B Lit *May I find favor in your eyes*

34:12C Or *bride-price*, or *betrothal present*

34:24D Lit *All who went out of the city gate*

34:24E Lit *all the males who went out of the city gate*

Genesis 35 Notes

35:7A Or *El-bethel*

35:8B Lit *Deborah, Rebekah's wet nurse* ; Gn 24:59

35:8C Or *Allon-bacuth*

35:11D Lit *will come from your loins*

35:13E Lit *went up*

35:21F Or *beyond Migdal-eder*

Genesis 36 Notes

36:43A Lit *He Esau*

Genesis 37 Notes

37:3A Or *robe with long sleeves*

37:19B Lit *comes the lord of the dreams*

37:21C Lit *their hands*

37:30D Lit *And I, where am I going*

Genesis 38 Notes

38:5A Or *He was at Chezib when*

38:12B Lit *And there were many days*

38:14C Or *sat by the mouth of the springs*

38:26D Or *more righteous*

Genesis 39 Notes

39:2A Lit *and he was*

39:4B Lit *owned in his hand*

39:6C Lit *owned in Joseph's hand*

39:7D Lit *And after these things*

39:8E Lit *owns in my hand*

39:10F Lit *did not listen to her*

39:10G Lit *refused to lie beside her, to be with her*

39:11H Lit *there in the house*

39:15I Lit *me raise my voice and scream*

39:18J Lit *I raised my voice and screamed*

39:22K Lit *prison in the hand of Joseph*

39:23L Lit *anything in his hand*

Genesis 40 Notes

40:4A Lit *custody days*

40:19B Or *and impale you on a pole*

40:19C Lit *eat your flesh from upon you*

40:22D Or *impaled*

Genesis 41 Notes

41:16A Or *"God will answer Pharaoh with peace [of mind]."*

41:29B Lit *Look! Seven*

41:38C Or *the spirit of the gods*, or *a god's spirit*

41:40D Lit *will kiss your mouth*

41:45E Or *Heliopolis*

41:45F Or *Joseph gained authority over*

41:50G Or *Heliopolis*

Genesis 42 Notes

42:9A Lit *nakedness*

42:13B Or *today*

42:14C Lit *"That which I spoke to you saying*

42:19D Lit *your brothers*

42:22E Lit *Even his blood is being sought*

42:32F Lit *of our*

42:32G Or *today*

42:37H Lit *hand*

Genesis 43 Notes

43:9A Lit *can seek him from my hand*

43:16B Lit *to the one who was over his house*

43:19C Lit *approached the one who was over the house*

Genesis 44 Notes

44:9A Lit *If your servants are*

44:18B Lit *speak a word in my lord's ears*

Genesis 45 Notes

45:1A Lit *all those standing about him*

45:7B Or *keep alive for you many survivors*

45:12C Lit *that my mouth is*

45:15D Lit *brothers, and he wept over them*

45:26E Lit *Jacob's heart was numb*

Genesis 46 Notes

46:15A Lit *All persons his sons and his daughters*

46:20B Or *Heliopolis*

46:26C Lit *Jacob who came out from his loins*

46:28D Lit *to give directions before him*

46:34E Lit *fathers, are men of livestock*

Genesis 47 Notes

47:8A Lit *many are the days of the years*

47:22B Lit *They ate*

47:31C Or *Israel worshiped while leaning on the top of his staff*

Genesis 48 Notes

48:10A Lit *he was not able to*

48:17B Or *he was displeased* ; lit *head, it was bad in his eyes*

48:19C Lit *people*

48:19D Or *a multitude of nations*; lit *a fullness of nations*

48:22E Or *Shechem*, Joseph's burial place; lit *one shoulder*

Genesis 49 Notes

49:1A Or *in the last days*

49:10B Or *until tribute comes to him*, or *until Shiloh comes*, or *until He comes to Shiloh*

49:14C Or *sheepfolds*

49:22D Lit *daughters*

49:22E Hb obscure

49:24F Lit *and the hands of his*

49:26G Or *of the mountains*

49:26H Lit *to*

49:26I Hb obscure

Genesis 50 Notes

50:4A Lit *please speak in the ears of*

50:21B Lit *spoke to their hearts*

50:23C Lit *were born on the knees of*

Exodus 1 Notes

1:5A Lit *of people issuing from Jacob's loins*

1:12B Or *Egyptians loathed*

1:16C Lit *birth, look at the stones*

Exodus 2 Notes

2:2A Or *healthy*

2:11B Lit *And it was in those days*

2:11C Lit *his brothers*

2:13D Or *fellow Hebrew*

Exodus 3 Notes

3:12A Or *serve*

3:14B Or *I AM BECAUSE I AM*, or *I WILL BE WHO I WILL BE*

Exodus 4 Notes

4:7A Lit *out of his cloak*

4:10B Lit *heavy of mouth and heavy of tongue*

4:12C Lit *will be with you*

4:13D Lit *send by the hand of whom You will send*

4:15E Lit *be with*

4:21F Or *will make him stubborn*

Exodus 6 Notes

6:8A Lit *raised My hand*

6:12B Lit *I have uncircumcised lips*

6:30C Lit *I have uncircumcised lips*

Exodus 7 Notes

7:16A Or *serve* ; Ex 4:23

8:12B Or *frogs, as he had agreed with*

8:20C Or *serve*

8:21D Or *insects*

8:21E Lit *are*

8:26F Or *allowable*

Exodus 9 Notes

9:14A Lit *your heart*

9:17B Or *still obstructing*

9:31C Lit *was ears of grain*

9:32D Lit *are late*

Exodus 10 Notes

10:1A Lit *Mine in his midst*

10:2B Lit *tell in the ears of*

10:19C Lit *sea*

10:25D Lit *also give in our hand*

Exodus 11 Notes

11:1A Or *had said*

11:1B Or *go, it will be finished* —

11:3C Or *had given*

11:3D Lit *was very great*

11:3E Or *in the eyes of*

11:7F Lit *point its tongue*

11:8G Lit *people at your feet*

Exodus 12 Notes

12:4A Or *household*

12:9B Or *or boiled at all in*

12:11C Lit *it: with your loins girded*

12:20D Or *settlements*

12:47E Lit *do*

12:48F Lit *may come near to do it*

Exodus 13 Notes

13:9A Lit *reminder between your eyes*

13:16B Or *phylactery*

Exodus 14 Notes

14:6A Lit *people*

14:8B Lit *with a raised hand*

14:9C Or *chariot drivers*

14:25D Or *fall off*

14:25E Or *and they drove them*

Exodus 15 Notes

15:2A Or *might*

15:9B Or *conquer*

15:16C Or *silent*

15:16D Or *created*

Exodus 16 Notes

16:5A Lit *as gathering day to day*

16:16B Lit *an omer*

16:18C Lit *by an omer*

16:22D Lit *two omers*

16:32E Lit *A full omer*

16:33F Lit *a full omer*

16:36G Lit *The omer is*

Exodus 17 Notes

17:13A Or *people*

17:15B Or *Yahweh-nissi*

17:16C Or *hand was on*, or *hand was against* ; Hb obscure

Exodus 18 Notes

18:7A Lit *other about well-being*

18:11B Hb obscure

18:22C Lit *lighten from on you*

18:23D Lit *go to their place in peace*

Exodus 20 Notes

20:18A Lit *saw*

20:20B Lit *that the fear of Him may be in you, and you do not*

20:23C Hb obscure

Exodus 21 Notes

21:2A Lit *to go forth*

21:3B Lit *he is the husband of*

21:6C Or *to God* ; that is, to His sanctuary or court

21:7D Or *concubine*

21:13E Lit *he was not lying in wait*

21:14F Or *maliciously*

21:19G Lit *his inactivity*

21:20H Lit *hand*

21:20I Or *must suffer vengeance*

21:21J Or *not suffer vengeance*

21:21K Lit *money*

21:28L Or *a bull*, or *a steer*

22:3M Lit *if the sun has risen over him*

22:8N Or *to God*

22:9O Lit *That is it*

22:9P Or *before God*

22:9Q Or *one whom God condemns*

22:15R Lit *rented, it comes with*

22:27S Lit *skin*

22:28T Or *judges*

Exodus 23 Notes

23:1A Lit *join hands with*

23:5B Or *load, you must refrain from leaving it to him; you must set it free with him*

23:8C Or *and subverts the cause*

23:13D Lit *mouth*

23:16E Lit *labors*

23:21F Or *embitter*

23:27G Lit *will send terror of Me ahead of you*

23:28H Or *send panic*

23:30I Lit *fruitful*

23:31J Lit *the Sea of the Philistines*

23:31K Lit *the River*

Exodus 24 Notes

24:10A Or *lapis lazuli*

24:11B Lit *not stretch out His hand against*

Exodus 25 Notes

25:5A Or *and dolphin skins*, or *and fine leather* ; Hb obscure

25:7B Or *carnelian*

25:7C Traditionally, *breastplate*

25:10D Lit *two and a half cubits its length, one and a half cubits its width, and one and a half cubits its height*

25:17E Lit *two and a half cubits its length, one and a half cubits its width*

25:23F Lit *two cubits its length, one cubit its width, and one and a half cubits its height*

25:25G Lit *Make it a handbreadth*

25:36H Lit *piece with it*

25:39I Lit *It*

25:39J Lit *a talent*

Exodus 26 Notes

26:2A Lit *28 cubits*

26:2B Lit *four cubits*

26:4C Lit *the one curtain on the end*

26:8D Lit *30 cubits*

26:8E Lit *four cubits*

26:13F Lit *The cubit*

26:13G Lit *the cubit*

26:14H Or *of dolphin skins*, or *of fine leather* ; Hb obscure

26:15I Or *frames*, or *beams*

26:16J Lit *10 cubits*

26:16K Lit *a cubit and a half*

26:24L Lit *and together they are to be complete*

Exodus 27 Notes

27:1A Lit *five cubits in length and five cubits in width*

27:1B Lit *wide; and its height three cubits*

27:2C Lit *piece with it*

27:5D Or *altar's rim, so that the grid comes halfway down*

27:9E Lit *100 cubits*

27:10F Or *connecting rods*

27:11G Lit *100 [cubits]*

27:11H Or *connecting rods*

27:12I Lit *50 cubits*

27:13J Lit *50 cubits*

27:14K Lit *15 cubits*

27:15L Lit *15 [cubits]*

27:16M Lit *twenty-cubit*

27:18N Lit *be 100 by the cubit, and the width 50 by 50, and the height five cubits*

Exodus 28 Notes

28:3A Lit *all wise of heart*

28:4B Hb obscure

28:5C Lit *receive*

28:8D Lit *waistband of its ephod, which is on it*

28:8E Lit *piece with the ephod*

28:16F Lit *a span its length and a span its width*

28:17G Or *beryl*

28:18H Or *malachite*, or *garnet*

28:18I Or *lapis lazuli*

28:18J Hb obscure; LXX, Vg read *jasper*

28:19K Hb obscure

28:32L Hb obscure

28:41M Lit *anoint them, fill their hand*

28:42N Lit *loins*

Exodus 29 Notes

29:9A Lit *you will fill the hand of Aaron and the hand of* ; Ex 29:23-24

29:24B Lit *in the hands of his*

29:29C Lit *him for anointing in them and for filling their hand*

29:33D Lit *made to fill their hand*

29:36E Or *Make a sin offering on*

29:40F Lit *offer a tenth*

29:40G Lit *a fourth of a hin*

29:40H Lit *a fourth of a hin*

Exodus 30 Notes

30:2A Lit *one cubit its length and one cubit its width*

30:2B Lit *wide; and two cubits its height*

30:2C Lit *piece with it*

30:10D Or *to make atonement*

30:10E Or *to make atonement*

30:10F Or *on*

30:15G Or *to ransom*

30:16H Lit *the silver of the atonement*

30:16I Or *to ransom*

30:23J Lit *500* (shekels)

30:23K Lit *250* (shekels)

30:23L Lit *250* (shekels)

30:24M Lit *500* (shekels)

30:24N Lit *a hin*

Exodus 31 Notes

31:6A Lit *every person skilled of heart*

31:10B Hb obscure

Exodus 32 Notes

32:1A Or *us gods*

32:4B Or *Israel, this is your god*, or *Israel, these are your gods*

32:8C Or *Israel, this is your god*, or *Israel, these are your gods*

32:23D Or *us gods*

32:25E Hb obscure; Or *resulting in derision*

Exodus 34 Notes

34:10A Lit *in all nations*

34:10B Lit *created*

34:14C Lit *Yahweh — His name is Jealous*, or *Yahweh is jealous for His name, He*

34:19D Hb obscure

34:25E Lit *slaughter*

34:29F Lit *with Him*

34:35G Lit *see Moses' face, that the skin of his face*

Exodus 35 Notes

35:7A Or *and dolphin skins*, or *and fine leather* ; Hb obscure

35:10B Lit *the skilled of heart*

35:19C Hb obscure

35:23D Or *or dolphin skins*, or *or fine leather* ; Hb obscure

35:25E Lit *wise of heart*

35:35F Lit *with wisdom of heart*

Exodus 36 Notes

36:1A Lit *wise of heart*

36:2B Lit *wise of heart*

36:8C Lit *the wise of heart*

36:9D Lit *28 cubits*

36:9E Lit *four cubits*

36:15F Lit *30 cubits*

36:15G Lit *four cubits*

36:19H Or *of dolphin skins*, or *of fine leather* ; Hb obscure

36:20I Or *made frames*

36:21J Lit *10 cubits*

36:21K Lit *a cubit and a half*

36:29L Lit *and together they are to be complete*

36:29M Lit *its*

Exodus 37 Notes

37:1A Lit *two and a half cubits its length, one and a half cubits its width, and one and a half cubits its height*

37:6B Lit *two and a half cubits its length and one and a half cubits its width*

37:10C Lit *two cubits its length, one cubit its width, and one and a half cubits its height*

37:12D Lit *a handbreadth*

37:22E Lit *piece with it*

37:24F Lit *a talent*

37:25G Lit *a cubit its length, a cubit its width, and two cubits its height*

37:25H Lit *piece with it*

Exodus 38 Notes

38:1A Lit *five cubits its length and five cubits its width*

38:1B Lit *three cubits*

38:2C Lit *piece with it*

38:4D Or *rim*

38:9E Lit *100 cubits*

38:10F Or *connecting rods*

38:11G Lit *100 cubits*

38:11H Or *connecting rods*

38:12I Lit *50 cubits*

38:13J Lit *50 cubits*

38:14K Lit *15 cubits*

38:15L Lit *15 cubits*

38:17M Or *connecting rods*

38:18N Lit *20 cubits*

38:18O Lit *five cubits*

38:18P Lit *high in width*

38:19Q Or *connecting rods*

38:21R Lit *Levites by the hand of*

38:24S Lit *29 talents and 730 shekels*

38:25T Lit *100 talents and 1,775 shekels*

38:26U Lit *a beka*

38:27V Lit *100 talents*

38:27W Lit *100 talents*

38:27X Lit *one talent*

38:28Y Lit *1,775* (shekels)

38:28Z Or *connecting rods*

38:29A Lit *70 talents and 2,400 shekels*

Exodus 39 Notes

39:1A Hb obscure

39:9B Lit *a span its length and a span its width*

39:10C Or *beryl*

39:11D Or *malachite*, or *garnet*

39:11E Or *lapis lazuli*

39:11F Hb uncertain; LXX, Vg read *jasper*

39:12G Hb obscure

39:23H Hb obscure

39:26I Lit *bell and pomegranate, bell and pomegranate, on the hem of the robe around*

39:28J Lit *and the headdresses of headbands*

39:34K Or *of dolphin skins*, or *of fine leather* ; Hb obscure

39:41L Hb obscure

Exodus 40 Notes

40:2A Lit *on the day of the first month, on the first of the month*

Leviticus 1 Notes

1:2A Or *LORD, from the livestock you*

1:3B Or *it*

1:6C Lit *its pieces*

1:12D Lit *its pieces*

1:14E Or *or pigeons*

1:16F Or *its crop*, or *its crissum*

Leviticus 2 Notes

2:9A Lit *portion of it*

Leviticus 3 Notes

3:13A Or *dash*

Leviticus 4 Notes

4:3A Or *purification*

4:22B Or *ruler*

4:27C Lit *the people of the land*

Leviticus 5 Notes

5:4A Lit *in one of such things*

5:11B Lit *if his hand is not sufficient for*

5:11C Lit *one-tenth of an ephah*

5:11D Or *wheat* ; Ex 29:2

5:11E Lit *flour as a sin offering*

6:2F Or *an investment*

6:10G Lit *undergarments on his flesh*

6:18H Or *statute*

6:20I Lit *a tenth of an ephah*

6:21J Hb obscure

6:27K Lit *wash what it spattered on*

Leviticus 7 Notes

7:10A Lit *oil, will be a man like his brother*

7:18B Or *will bear his guilt*

7:20C Lit *while his uncleanness is upon him*

7:24D Lit *fat of a carcass or the fat of a mauled beast*

7:34E Or *statute*

7:36F Or *statute*

7:38G Or *he*

Leviticus 8 Notes

8:2A Or *purification*

8:14-15B Or *offering, and he slaughtered [it].* [15] *Then Moses*

8:15C Or *it by making •atonement for it*

8:18-19D Or *ram,* [19] *and he slaughtered it. Moses*

8:22-23E Or *ram,* [23] *and he slaughtered [it]. Moses*

8:33F Lit *because he will fill your hands for seven days*

Leviticus 9 Notes

9:2A Or *purification*

Leviticus 10 Notes

10:3A Or *will be treated as holy*

10:3B Or *will be glorified*

10:13C Or *statute*

10:20D Lit *acceptable in his sight*

Leviticus 11 Notes

11:13A Or *griffon-vulture*

11:13B Or *black*

11:13C Or *the osprey*, or *the bearded vulture*

11:14D Or *hawk*

11:14E Or *buzzards*, or *hawks*

11:16F Or *eagle owl*

11:16G Or *the night hawk*, or *the screech owl*

11:16H Or *long-eared owl*

11:17I Or *tawny*

11:17J Or *fisher owl*, or *pelican*

11:17K Or *the ibis*

11:18L Or *little*

11:18M Or *the pelican*, or *the horned owl*

11:18N Or *Egyptian vulture*

11:19O Or *heron*

11:19P Or *cormorant*, or *hawk*

11:29Q Or *mole rat*, or *rat*

11:29R Or *of thorn-tailed* or *dabb lizard*, or *of crocodile*

11:30S Or *the spotted lizard*, or *the chameleon*

11:30T Or *the gecko*, or *the newt*, or *the salamander*

11:30U Or *sand lizard*, or *newt*, or *snail*

11:30V Or *salamander*, or *mole*

11:42W Lit *fours, to anything multiplying pairs of feet*

Leviticus 12 Notes

12:6A Or *purification*

12:8B Lit *if her hand cannot obtain what is sufficient*

12:8C Or *purification*

Leviticus 13 Notes

13:2A Or *discoloration*

13:2B Or *rash*, or *eruption*

13:16C Or *recedes*

13:16D Or *flesh again*

13:30E Or *is scall* ; Hb obscure

13:39F Hb obscure

13:55G Hb obscure

Leviticus 14 Notes

14:3A Lit *the person afflicted with skin disease*

14:10B Lit *three-tenths* ; probably $^{3}/_{10}$ of an ephah

14:10C Lit *one log*

14:12D Lit *one log*

14:15E Lit *one log*

14:21F Lit *and his hand is not*

14:21G Lit *him, and one-tenth* ; probably $^{1}/_{10}$ of an ephah

14:21H Lit *one log*

14:22I Lit *pigeons, for which his hand is sufficient*

14:24J Lit *one log*

14:30K Lit *of that for which his hand is sufficient*

14:31L Lit *[sacrificing] that for which his hand is sufficient*

14:32M Lit *someone on whom there is*

14:32N Lit *disease whose hand is not sufficient for*

14:34O Lit *land of your possession*

14:35P Lit *appeared to me*

14:37Q Or *eruptions* ; Hb obscure

14:41R Lit *dust*

14:42S Lit *dust*

14:48T Lit *healed*

14:54U Or *for a scall*

Leviticus 16 Notes

16:21A Lit *wilderness in the hand of a ready man*

16:32B Lit *and will fill his hand*

Leviticus 17 Notes

17:4A Lit *tabernacle — blood will be charged against that person*

17:10B Lit *will set My face*

17:11C Or *to ransom*

Leviticus 18 Notes

18:6A Lit *any flesh of his flesh*

18:10B Lit *because they are your nakedness*

18:11C Lit *daughter, a relative of*

18:20D Lit *to give your emission of semen to*

18:23E Lit *to give your emission to*

Leviticus 19 Notes

19:16A Lit *not stand against*

19:17B Or *your fellow Israelite*

19:20C Or *compensation*

19:23D Lit *uncircumcised*

19:26E Or *[anything] over its blood*

19:29F Lit *profane*

19:31G Or *spirits of the dead*

19:31H Or *familiar spirits*

19:36I Lit *honest ephah* ; an *ephah* is a dry measure of grain equivalent to about 23 quarts.

19:36J Lit *honest hin* ; a *hin* is a liquid measure of about 1 gallon.

Leviticus 20 Notes

20:3A Lit *will set My face*

20:4B Lit *country ever close their eyes from that man when he*

20:5C Lit *will set My face*

20:5D Lit *prostitute themselves with*

20:6E Or *spirits of the dead*

20:6F Or *familiar spirits*

20:6G Lit *will set My face*

20:9H Lit *on him*

20:11I Lit *on them*

20:12J Lit *on them*

20:13K Lit *on them*

20:15L Lit *man gives his emission to*

20:17M Lit *and he sees her nakedness and she sees his nakedness*

20:27N Lit *is in them*

20:27O Lit *on them*

Leviticus 21 Notes

21:4A Lit *unclean a husband among his people*

21:7B Or *a prostitute* or *a defiled woman*

21:9C Or *prostitution*

21:10D Lit *and one has filled his hand*

21:10E Or *not uncover his head*

21:15F Lit *not profane his seed*

21:20G Or *or emaciated*

Leviticus 22 Notes

22:4A Or *has leprosy* or *scale disease*

22:8B Lit *eat a carcass or a mauled beast*

22:10C Lit *No stranger*

22:12D Lit *man, a stranger*

22:12E Lit *the contribution of holy offerings*

22:25F Lit *nor from the hand of*

22:27G Lit *under*

Leviticus 23 Notes

23:12A Or *a male lamb in its first year*

23:13B Lit *two-tenths [of an ephah]*

23:13C Lit *one-fourth of a hin*

23:15D Lit *count; they will be seven*

23:15E Or *Sabbaths*

23:17F Lit *two-tenths [of an ephah]*

23:24G Or *blast* ; traditionally trumpet blasts

23:34H Or *Feast of Tabernacles*

Leviticus 24 Notes

24:5A Lit *two-tenths [of an ephah]*

24:10B Lit *went out*

Leviticus 25 Notes

25:23A Lit *residents with Me*

25:26B Lit *but his hand reaches*

25:33C Hb obscure

25:35D Lit *and his hand falters with*

25:42E Lit *sold with a sale of a slave*

Leviticus 26 Notes

26:11A Or *tabernacle*

26:13B Lit *to walk uprightly*

26:17C Lit *will set My face*

26:39D Lit *Those of you*

Leviticus 27 Notes

27:13A Lit *your*

27:15B Lit *your*

27:16C Lit *for a homer*

27:16D Or *grain*

27:19E Lit *your*

27:23F Lit *your*

Numbers 1 Notes

1:3A Lit *everyone going out to war in Israel*

Numbers 2 Notes

2:17A Lit *each on his hand*

Numbers 3 Notes

3:7A Or *to guard*

3:8B Or *to guard*

3:8C Or *and guard*

3:28D Or *for guarding*

3:32E Or *for guarding*

3:38F Or *who guarded*

Numbers 4 Notes

4:3A Lit *everyone entering the service*

4:6B Or *of dolphin skin*, or *of fine leather* ; Hb obscure

4:8C Or *of dolphin skin*, or *of fine leather* ; Hb obscure

4:10D Or *of dolphin skin*, or *of fine leather* ; Hb obscure

4:11E Or *of dolphin skin*, or *of fine leather* ; Hb obscure

4:12F Or *of dolphin skin*, or *of fine leather* ; Hb obscure

4:14G Or *of dolphin skin*, or *of fine leather* ; Hb obscure

4:16H Or *the sanctuary and its furnishings*

4:20I Or *at the covering of the holy objects*

4:25J Or *of dolphin skin*, or *of fine leather* ; Hb obscure

Numbers 5 Notes

5:13A Lit *and man lies with her [and has] an emission of semen*

5:15B Lit *a tenth of an ephah*

5:18C Or *to uncover her head*

5:21D Or *flood*

Numbers 6 Notes

6:2A Or *vow, to live as a Nazirite for*

6:4B Or *from unripe grapes to hulls*

6:5C Lit *A razor is not to pass over his head*

6:11D Lit *set apart*

6:26E Lit *LORD lift His face to you*

6:26F Or *prosperity*

6:27G Or *put My name on*

Numbers 7 Notes

7:13A Lit *dish, 130 its shekel-weight*

7:13B Lit *70 shekels*

7:14C Lit *10* (shekels)

7:19D Lit *dish, 130 its shekel-weight*

7:19E Lit *70 shekels*

7:20F Lit *10* (shekels)

7:25G Lit *dish, 130 its shekel-weight*

7:25H Lit *70 shekels*

7:26I Lit *10* (shekels)

7:31J Lit *dish, 130 its shekel-weight*

7:31K Lit *70 shekels*

7:32L Lit *10* (shekels)

7:37M Lit *dish, 130 its shekel-weight*

7:37N Lit *70 shekels*

7:38O Lit *10* (shekels)

7:43P Lit *dish, 130 its shekel-weight*

7:43Q Lit *70 shekels*

7:44R Lit *10* (shekels)

7:49S Lit *dish, 130 its shekel-weight*

7:49T Lit *70 shekels*

7:50U Lit *10* (shekels)

7:55V Lit *dish, 130 its shekel-weight*

7:55W Lit *70 shekels*

7:56X Lit *10* (shekels)

7:61Y Lit *dish, 130 its shekel-weight*

7:61Z Lit *70 shekels*

7:62A Lit *10* (shekels)

7:67B Lit *dish, 130 its shekel-weight*

7:67C Lit *70 shekels*

7:68D Lit *10* (shekels)

7:73E Lit *dish, 130 its shekel-weight*

7:73F Lit *70 shekels*

7:74G Lit *10* (shekels)

7:79H Lit *dish, 130 its shekel-weight*

7:79I Lit *70 shekels*

7:80J Lit *10* (shekels)

7:85K Lit *130* (shekels)

7:85L Lit *70* (shekels)

7:85M Lit *2,400* (shekels)

7:86N Lit *10* (shekels)

7:86O Lit *120* (shekels)

Numbers 8 Notes

8:21A Lit *waved*

8:26B Or *to keep guard*

Numbers 9 Notes

9:22A Or *a year*

Numbers 10 Notes

10:29A Or *said to Hobab's brother-in-law*

Numbers 11 Notes

11:1A Lit *in the ears of*

11:4B Or *The mixed multitude* ; Hb obscure

11:6C Or *our lives are wasting away*, or *our throat is dry*

11:10D Lit *and it was evil in the eyes of Moses*

11:23E Lit *LORD's arm too short*

11:31F Lit *two cubits*

11:31G Or *on*, or *above*

11:32H Lit *10 homers*

Numbers 12 Notes

12:7A Or *is entrusted with*

12:8B Lit *mouth to mouth*

Numbers 13 Notes

13:21A Or *near Lebo-hamath*

Numbers 14 Notes

14:15A Lit *people as one man*

14:25B Lit *valley*

14:30C Lit *I raised My hand*

14:34D Lit *a day for the year, a day for the year*

14:34E Or *My opposition*

Numbers 15 Notes

15:4A Lit *a tenth* (of an ephah)

15:4B Lit *a fourth hin*

15:5C Lit *a fourth hin*

15:6D Lit *two-tenths* (of an ephah)

15:6E Lit *a third hin*

15:7F Lit *a third hin*

15:9G Lit *three-tenths* (of an ephah)

15:9H Lit *a half hin*

15:10I Lit *a half hin*

15:30J Lit *with a high hand*

Numbers 16 Notes

16:3A Lit *Enough of you*

16:7B Lit *Enough of you, sons of Levi*

16:11C Or *Aaron, what has he done*

16:22D Or *breath* ; Nm 27:16

Numbers 18 Notes

18:7A Or *veil. So you are to perform the service; a gift of your priesthood I grant*

18:10B Or *it in a most holy place*

Numbers 19 Notes

19:12A Or *ashes* ; lit *with it*

Numbers 20 Notes

20:1A Lit *the people*

20:16B Or *a messenger*

20:20C Lit *with numerous people and a strong hand*

Numbers 21 Notes

21:4A Lit *soul of the people*

21:6B Lit *burning*

21:20C Or *overlook Jeshimon*

21:24D Or *was at Az*

21:27E Lit *ones who speak proverbs*

21:27F Or *firmly founded*

21:35G Lit *left to him*

Numbers 22 Notes

22:5A Or *of the Amawites*

22:36B Or *at Ir-moab*, or *at Ar of Moab*

Numbers 23 Notes

23:10A Or *numbered a fourth*

23:14B Or *to the field of Zophim*

23:21C Or *not observe sin in Jacob; not see wrongdoing*

23:22D Or *Egypt; they have the horns of a wild ox*

23:28E Or *overlooks Jeshimon*

Numbers 24 Notes

24:1A Lit *set his face*

24:6B Or *like date palms*

24:8C Or *He has*

24:17D Or *Him*

24:17E Or *Him*

24:17F Or *frontiers*

24:17G Or *Sethites*

Numbers 25 Notes

25:1A Or *in Shittim*

25:4B Or *impale*, or *hang*, or *expose* ; Hb obscure

25:11C Or *jealousy*

Numbers 27 Notes

Numbers 28 Notes

28:5A Lit *one-tenth of an ephah*

28:5B Lit *a fourth of a hin*

28:7C Lit *a fourth of a hin*

28:9D Lit *two-tenths* (of an ephah)

28:12E Lit *three-tenths* (of an ephah)

28:12F Lit *two-tenths* (of an ephah)

28:13G Lit *one-tenth* (of an ephah)

28:14H Lit *a half hin*

28:14I Lit *bull, a third hin*

28:14J Lit *a fourth hin*

28:20K Lit *three-tenths* (of an ephah)

28:20L Lit *two-tenths* (of an ephah)

28:21M Lit *one-tenth* (of an ephah)

28:28N Lit *three-tenths* (of an ephah)

28:28O Lit *two-tenths* (of an ephah)

28:29P Lit *one-tenth* (of an ephah)

Numbers 29 Notes

29:1A Or *blast* ; traditionally, *trumpet blasts*

29:3B Lit *three-tenths* (of an ephah)

29:3C Lit *two-tenths* (of an ephah)

29:4D Lit *one-tenth* (of an ephah)

29:9E Lit *three-tenths* (of an ephah)

29:9F Lit *two-tenths* (of an ephah)

29:10G Lit *one-tenth* (of an ephah)

29:14H Lit *three-tenths* (of an ephah)

29:14I Lit *two-tenths* (of an ephah)

29:15J Lit *one-tenth* (of an ephah)

Numbers 30 Notes

30:15A Or *will bear her guilt*

Numbers 31 Notes

31:5A Or *clans*

31:30B Or *who protect*

31:52C Lit *16,750 shekels*

Numbers 32 Notes

32:7A Lit *discouraging the hearts of*

32:41B Or *renamed Havvoth-jair*

Numbers 33 Notes

33:3A Lit *with a raised hand* ; Ex 14:8

33:49B Or *Abel-shittim*

Numbers 34 Notes

34:2A Lit *inheritance — the land of Canaan*

34:4B Lit *of Scorpions* ; Jos 15:3; Jdg 1:36

34:8C Or *to Lebo-hamath*

Numbers 35 Notes

35:4A Lit *1,000 cubits*

35:5B Lit *2,000 cubits*

35:5C Lit *2,000 cubits*

35:5D Lit *2,000 cubits*

35:5E Lit *2,000 cubits*

Deuteronomy 1 Notes

1:7A Or *the Shephelah*

1:7B Lit *the great river, the river Euphrates*

1:34C Lit *the sound of your*

1:39D Lit *who today*

1:46E Lit *Kadesh for many days, according to the days you stayed*

Deuteronomy 2 Notes

2:5A Lit *land as far as the width of a sole of a foot*

2:12B Lit *them before them*

2:36C Or *was too high for*

Deuteronomy 3 Notes

3:11A Or *His sarcophagus was made of basalt*

3:11B Lit *Nine cubits its length and four cubits its width, by a man's cubit*

3:14C Or *Havvoth-jair*

Deuteronomy 4 Notes

4:4A Lit *have held on*

4:27B Lit *be left few in number*

Deuteronomy 5 Notes

5:28A Lit *the sound of your*

Deuteronomy 6 Notes

6:4A Or *Yahweh is our God; Yahweh is One*, or *The LORD is our God, the LORD alone*, or *The LORD our God is one LORD*

6:8B Or *phylactery* ; Mt 23:5

6:8C Lit *symbol between your eyes*

Deuteronomy 7 Notes

7:10A Lit *He pays back to their faces*

7:10B Lit *to pay back to their faces*

7:13C Lit *bless the fruit of your womb*

Deuteronomy 8 Notes

8:15A Lit *burning*

Deuteronomy 10 Notes

10:6A Or *from the wells of Bene-jaakan*, or *from the wells of the Jaakanites*

10:20B Lit *Hold on*

Deuteronomy 11 Notes

11:4A Lit *to this day*

11:10B Lit *foot*

11:18C Or *phylactery* ; Mt 23:5

11:18D Lit *symbol between your eyes* ; Ex 13:16; Dt 6:8

11:22E Lit *and hold on*

Deuteronomy 12 Notes

12:3A Lit *that*

12:6B Lit *and the contributions from your hands*

12:7C Lit *you put your hand to*

12:11D Lit *tenth, the contributions from your hands*

12:17E Lit *or the contributions from your hands*

12:18F Lit *you put your hand to*

Deuteronomy 13 Notes

13:4A Lit *and hold on*

13:8B Lit *Your eye must not pity him*

Deuteronomy 14 Notes

14:1A Or *forehead*

Deuteronomy 15 Notes

15:2A Lit *owner of a loan of his hand*

15:10B Lit *and let not your heart be grudging*

15:10C Lit *you put your hand to*

15:18D Lit *Let it not be hard in your sight*

Deuteronomy 17 Notes

17:20A Lit *will lengthen days on his kingdom*

Deuteronomy 18 Notes

18:1A Or *His*

18:5B Lit *name all the days*

18:8C Hb obscure

Deuteronomy 19 Notes

19:3A Or *to prepare the roads*

19:3B Lit *flee there*

19:6C Lit *heart*

19:6D Lit *did not have a judgment of death*

Deuteronomy 20 Notes

20:6A Lit *not put it to use*

20:6B Lit *man put it to use*

Deuteronomy 21 Notes

21:5A Lit *and according to their mouth will be*

21:14B Hb obscure

21:17C Lit *mouth of two*, or *two mouthfuls*

Deuteronomy 22 Notes

22:30A Lit *not uncover the edge of his father's garment* ; Ru 3:9; Ezk 16:8

Deuteronomy 23 Notes

23:1A Lit *man bruised by crushing*

23:18B Lit *a dog's*

23:20C Lit *you put your hand to*

23:23D Lit *promised with your mouth*

Deuteronomy 24 Notes

24:3A Lit *if the second man who has taken her as his wife*

24:13B Lit *return what he has given as security*

24:14C Lit *within the gates*

Deuteronomy 25 Notes

25:5A Lit *live together*

25:13B Lit *have a stone and a stone*

Deuteronomy 27 Notes

27:20A Lit *has uncovered the edge of his father's garment* ; Ru 3:9; Ezk 16:8

Deuteronomy 28 Notes

28:4A Lit *The fruit of your womb*

28:8B Lit *you put your hand to*

28:11C Lit *abundantly in the fruit of your womb*

28:18D Lit *The fruit of your womb*

28:20E Lit *you put your hand to*

28:22F Or *sword*

28:24G Lit *powder and*

28:32H Lit *day, and not for power your hand*

28:50I Lit *a nation strong of face*

28:53J Lit *eat the fruit of your womb*

28:54K Lit *you his eye will be evil*

28:54L Lit *wife of his bosom*

Deuteronomy 29 Notes

29:19A Lit *may bless himself in his heart*

Deuteronomy 30 Notes

30:2A Lit *soul according to*

30:3B Or *will end your captivity*

30:4C Lit *skies*

30:9D Lit *hands in the fruit of your womb*

30:20E Lit *and hold on*

Deuteronomy 31 Notes

31:2A Lit *no longer go out or come in*

31:11B Lit *comes to appear*

31:17C Lit *will be for devouring*

31:19D Lit *Israelites; put it in their mouths*

31:20E Lit *be fat*

31:21F Lit *because the mouths of*

31:21G Or *know the plans they are devising*

31:24H Lit *scroll the words to their completion*

31:30I Lit *recited the words to their completion*

Deuteronomy 32 Notes

32:5A Or *Him; through their fault* ; Hb obscure

32:8B Or *Most High divided the nations*

32:11C Or *He stirs up*

32:12D Lit *him, and no foreign god with Him*

32:14E Lit *the blood of grapes*

32:21F Lit *with no gods*

32:21G Lit *with no people*

32:28H Lit *understanding in them*

32:42I Or *the long-haired heads of the enemy*

Deuteronomy 33 Notes

33:2A Or *fiery law* ; Hb obscure

33:2B Or *ones, from His southland to the mountain slopes*

33:3C Or *peoples*

33:3D Lit *His*, or *its*

33:3E Hb obscure

33:7F Or *He contends for them*

33:11G Or *abilities*

33:12H Or *Let the LORD's beloved rest*

33:12I Or *and He dwells among his mountain slopes*

33:16J Lit *dwelt*

33:17K Lit *and his horns are*

33:29L Or *high places*

Deuteronomy 34 Notes

34:2A Lit *Western*

34:6B Or *He was buried*

Joshua 1 Notes

1:4A Lit *and to the Great Sea, the going down of the sun*

1:8B Or *meditate on*

1:14C Or *over armed*

Joshua 2 Notes

2:1A Or *from Shittim*

2:9B Or *land panics at your approach*

2:11C Lit *and spirit no longer remained in anyone*

2:12D Lit *to your father's house*

2:12E Or *a sign of truth*

2:19F Lit *if a hand should be on him*

2:24G Or *also panics at our approach*

Joshua 3 Notes

3:1A Or *left Shittim*

3:4B Lit *2,000 cubits*

3:4C Lit *yesterday and the day before*

3:8D Lit *waters of the Jordan*

3:13E Lit *soles of the feet*

Joshua 4 Notes

4:3A Lit *feet of the priests*

4:5B Lit *shoulder according to the number*

4:8C Lit *Jordan according to the number*

4:9D Or *Now Joshua set up the 12 stones [that had been] in the middle*

4:9E Lit *feet of the priests*

4:18F Lit *and the soles of the feet of the priests*

Joshua 5 Notes

5:1A Lit *and they did not have spirit in them any more*

5:3B Or *The Hill of Foreskins*

Joshua 6 Notes

6:11A Lit *at the camp*

6:17B Lit *messengers*

Joshua 7 Notes

7:3A Or *send two or three military units of*

7:4B Lit *men from the people*

7:5C Or *to Shebarim*

7:10D Lit *Why have you fallen on your face?*

7:15E Lit *burned with fire*

7:17F Lit *forward man by man*

7:19G Or *and praise Him*

7:21H Lit *Shinar*

7:25I Lit *him*

7:25J Lit *burned them with fire*

7:26K Or *of Trouble*

Joshua 8 Notes

8:11A Lit *the people of war*

8:13B Lit *way: all the*

8:29C Or *impaled*

8:29D Or *wooden stake*

Joshua 9 Notes

9:1A Or *the Shephelah*

9:25B Lit *us as is good and as is right in your eyes do*

Joshua 10 Notes

10:6A Lit *Don't let your hand go from*

10:13B Or *of the Upright*

10:21C Lit *No one sharpened his tongue against*

10:26D Or *impaled*

10:26E Or *wooden stakes*

10:27F Or *wooden stakes*

10:40G Or *the Shephelah*

10:42H Lit *land at one time*

Joshua 11 Notes

11:2A Or *the Shephelah*

11:2B Or *and in Naphoth-dor*

11:16C Or *the Shephelah*

11:16D Or *its Shephelah*

Joshua 12 Notes

12:3A Or *and from Teman*

12:8B Or *the Shephelah*

12:23C Or *in the Slopes of Dor*

Joshua 13 Notes

13:5A Or *to Lebo-hamath*

13:26B Or *Lidbir*, or *Lo-debar*

13:27C Lit *Chinnereth beyond the Jordan to the east*

13:30D Or *all of Havvoth-jair*

Joshua 14 Notes

14:11A Lit *for going out and coming in*

Joshua 15 Notes

15:2A Lit *Sea at the tongue that turns southward*

15:3B Lit *of scorpions*

15:33C Or *the Shephelah*

15:34D Or *En-gannim-tappuah*

15:35E Or *Adullam-socoh*

15:62F Or *Ir-hamelach*

Joshua 17 Notes

17:4A Lit *our brothers*

17:14-17B Lit *one lot and one territory*

Joshua 18 Notes

18:8A Lit *the ones going around*

18:18B Or *the Arabah*

18:18C Or *the Arabah*

18:28D Lit *Jebusite*

Joshua 19 Notes

19:8A Or *the Negev*

19:29B Or *sea, in the region of Achzib*

19:47C Lit *territory of the sons of Dan went out from them*

19:47D Lit *and called Leshem, Dan, after the name of*

Joshua 20 Notes

20:4A Lit *in the ears of*

Joshua 21 Notes

21:25A Or *Ibleam*

21:36B Or *Jahaz*

Joshua 22 Notes

22:5A Lit *commands, hold on*

22:7B Lit *to his half*

22:10C Or *to Geliloth by*

22:11D Or *at Geliloth by*

22:22E Or *The Mighty One, God, the LORD! The Mighty One, God, the LORD!*, or *God, the LORD God! God, the LORD God!*

Joshua 23 Notes

23:10A Lit *promised you*

Joshua 24 Notes

24:12A Or *sent terror*

Judges 1 Notes

1:7A Lit *toes are gathering*

1:9B Or *the Shephelah*

1:35C Or *Amorites determined to live in*

1:35D Lit *When the hand of the house of Joseph was heavy*

Judges 2 Notes

2:3A Lit *traps*

2:5B Or *Weeping*

2:7C Lit *extended their days after*

2:14D Lit *into the hand of*

2:15E Lit *the hand of the LORD*

2:18F Lit *enemies all the days of the judge*

Judges 3 Notes

3:1A Lit *had known*

3:2B Lit *not known it*

3:3C Or *as Lebo-hamath*

3:4D Lit *by the hand of*

3:8E Lit *into the hand of*

3:8F Lit *Doubly-Evil*

3:16G Lit *sword a gomed in length*

3:24H Lit *was covering his feet*

Judges 4 Notes

4:2A Or *Harosheth-ha-goiim*

4:13B Or *Harosheth-ha-goiim*

4:16C Or *Harosheth-ha-goiim*

Judges 5 Notes

5:2A Or *the locks of hair are loose*

5:5B Or *LORD, this [One of] Sinai*

5:7C Hb obscure

5:7D Or *you*

5:10E Hb obscure

5:11F Hb obscure

5:27G Lit *between*

5:28H Lit *Why have the hoofbeats of his chariots delayed*

5:29I Lit *answers her words*

5:30J Hb obscure

5:31K Lit *perish in this way*

Judges 6 Notes

6:11A Or *angel*

6:11B Or *he*

6:13C Lit *Please, my Lord*, or *Please, my lord*

6:13D Lit *this found us out*

6:19E Lit *an ephah*

6:34F Lit *LORD clothed Himself with*; 1Ch 12:18; 2Ch 24:20

Judges 7 Notes

7:2A Lit *them*

7:2B Lit *brag against Me*

7:8C Lit *took in their hands*

7:11D Lit *of those who were arranged in companies of 50*

7:17E Lit *said to them*

7:20F Lit *trumpets to blow*

Judges 8 Notes

8:5A Lit *are at my feet*

8:6B Lit *Are the hands of*

8:7C Or *tear*

8:10D Lit *men who drew the sword*

8:11E Lit *on the route of those who live in tents*

8:15F Lit *Are the hands of*

8:26G Lit *1,700 shekels*

8:28H Lit *they no longer raised their head*

8:33I Lit *Baal of the Covenant*, or *Lord of the Covenant*

Judges 9 Notes

9:2A Lit *your bone and your flesh*

9:4B Lit *Baal of the Covenant*, or *Lord of the Covenant*

9:9C Lit *and go to sway*

9:11D Lit *and go to sway*

9:13E Lit *and go to sway*

9:31F Hb obscure

9:33G Lit *him as your hand will find*

9:38H Lit *replied to him*

9:46I Or *the crypt*, or *the vault*

Judges 10 Notes

10:4A Or *called Havvoth-jair*

10:7B Lit *into the hand of*

10:15C Lit *Do to us what is good in Your eyes*

10:18D Lit *The people, rulers*

Judges 11 Notes

11:35A Lit *have been among those who trouble me*

Judges 12 Notes

12:3A Lit *come to me*

Judges 13 Notes

13:5A Lit *And a razor is not to go up on his head*

13:9B Lit *to the voice of*

13:12C Lit *work*

13:25D Or *in Mahaneh-dan*

Judges 14 Notes

14:3A Lit *Is there not*

14:3B Lit *because she is right in my eyes*

14:6C Lit *LORD rushed on*

14:7D Lit *because she was right in the eyes of Samson*

14:13E Lit *replied to him*

14:16F Lit *said to her*

Judges 15 Notes

15:8A Lit *He struck them hip on thigh*

15:11B Lit *answered them*

15:13C Lit *said to him*

15:14D Lit *LORD rushed on*

15:18E Lit *through the hand of*

Judges 16 Notes

16:2A Lit *quietly all night*

16:5B Lit *him and see*

16:9C Lit *are on you*

16:12D Lit *are on you*

16:14E Lit *are on you*

16:16F Lit *him and he became short to death*

16:17G Lit *A razor has not gone up on my head*

16:20H Lit *are on you*

16:25I Or *When they were feeling good*

Judges 17 Notes

17:3A Or *image and a cast image*

17:4B Or *image and a cast image*

17:6C Lit *did what was right in his eyes*

17:10D Lit *replied to him*

Judges 18 Notes

18:7A Hb obscure

18:12B Or *called Mahaneh-dan*

18:14C Or *image, the cast image*

18:17D Or *image, the cast image*

18:18E Or *image, the cast image*

18:19F Lit *Put your hand on your mouth*

Judges 19 Notes

19:3A Lit *speak to her heart*

19:11B Lit *Come, please*

19:13C Lit *said to his servant*

19:15D Lit *stopped there*

19:24E Lit *do what is good in your eyes*

19:25F Lit *knew*

Judges 20 Notes

20:40A Lit *up to the sky*

Judges 21 Notes

21:3A Lit *has this occurred in Israel*

21:10B Lit *12,000 of their sons of valor*

21:22C Lit *at this time*

21:25D Lit *did what was right in his eyes*

Ruth 1 Notes

1:1A Lit *In the days of the judging*

1:11B Lit *More to me sons in my womb*

1:13C Lit *marrying a man*

1:13D Lit *daughters, for more bitter to me than you*

1:15E Or *gods*

1:19F Lit *excited because of them*

1:20G Lit *answered them*

Ruth 2 Notes

2:8A Lit *Haven't you heard, my daughter?*

2:13B Lit *and spoken to the heart of*

2:17C Lit *about an ephah*

2:20D Or *His*

2:22E Lit *go out*

Ruth 3 Notes

3:7A Lit *and his heart was glad*

3:9B Or *Spread the edge of your garment* ; lit *Spread the wing of your garment* ; Ru 2:12

3:10C Lit *kindness at the last than at the first*

3:11D Lit *all the gate of my people*

3:14E Lit *up before a man could recognize his companion*

3:16F Lit *Who are you*

Ruth 4 Notes

4:1A Lit *Boaz said so-and-so come*

4:4B Lit *should uncover your ear, saying*

1 Samuel 1 Notes

1:1A Or *from Ramathaim, a Zuphite from*

1:5B Or *gave only one* ; Hb obscure

1:11C Lit *a seed of men*

1:11D Lit *and no razor will go up on his head*

1:13E Lit *praying to her heart*

1:18F Lit *and her face was not to her again*

1:20G Lit *In the turning of the days*

1:23H Lit *what is good in your eyes*

1:24I Lit *bull and an ephah*

1:24J Lit *And the youth was a youth*

1 Samuel 2 Notes

2:9A Lit *feet*

2:28B Lit *selected him*

2:33C Lit *grief to your eyes*

2:33D Lit *die men*

1 Samuel 3 Notes

3:18A Lit *what is good in His eyes*

3:19B Lit *He let no words fall to the ground*

1 Samuel 4 Notes

4:3A Or *He*

4:7B Lit *yesterday or the day before*

4:15C Lit *his eyes stood* ; 1Kg 14:4

1 Samuel 5 Notes

5:2A Lit *to Dagon*

1 Samuel 6 Notes

6:5A Lit *will lighten the heaviness of His hand from you*

6:21B Lit *and bring it up to you*

1 Samuel 7 Notes

7:3A Lit *you and set your hearts on*

1 Samuel 8 Notes

8:21A Lit *them in the LORD's ears*

1 Samuel 9 Notes

9:2A Lit *From his shoulder and up higher than any of the people*

9:8B Lit *a quarter of a shekel*

9:15C Lit *had uncovered Samuel's ear, saying*

9:19D Lit *answered Saul*

1 Samuel 10 Notes

10:5A Or *to Gibeath-elohim*

10:5B Or *governors*

10:7C Lit *do for yourself whatever your hand finds*

10:9D Lit *turned his shoulder*

10:9E Lit *God turned to him another heart*

10:23F Lit *people, and he was higher than any of the people from his shoulder and up*

10:27G Lit *gift, and he was like a mute person*

1 Samuel 11 Notes

11:4A Lit *in the ears of*

11:10B Lit *do what is good in your eyes*

1 Samuel 12 Notes

12:3A Lit *bribe and will hide my eyes with it?*

1 Samuel 13 Notes

13:3A Or *governor*

13:4B Or *governor*

13:14C Lit *man according to His heart*

13:21D Lit *of a pim* ; about $^{1}/_{4}$ ounce of silver

1 Samuel 14 Notes

14:4A Lit *There was a tooth*

14:15B Or *and a great terror spread*

14:19C Lit *Withdraw your hand*

14:25D Lit *All the land*

14:26E Lit *but there was none who raised his hand to his mouth*

14:27F Lit *he returned his hand to his mouth*

14:36G Lit *Do what is good in your eyes*

14:40H Lit *Do what is good in your eyes*

1 Samuel 15 Notes

15:9A Lit *and the second*

15:14B Lit *sheep in my ears*

15:20C Lit *answered Samuel*

15:32D Hb obscure

15:32E Lit *turned*

1 Samuel 16 Notes

16:4A LXX reads *were astonished*

16:7B Lit *what is of the eyes*

16:12C Or *ruddy*

1 Samuel 17 Notes

17:4A Lit *was six cubits and a span*

17:5B Lit *helmet on his head*

17:5C Lit *5,000 shekels*

17:7D Lit *600 shekels*

17:17E Lit *this ephah*

17:18F Lit *the leader of 1,000*

17:32G Lit *let a man's heart fall over*

17:42H Or *ruddy*

17:54I Lit *the Philistine's*

1 Samuel 18 Notes

18:8A Lit *furious; this saying was evil in his eyes*

18:10B Or *prophesy*

18:20C Lit *Saul, the thing was right in his eyes*

18:23D Lit *words in David's ears*

18:26E Lit *David, it was right in David's eyes*

18:26F Lit *And the days were not full*

1 Samuel 20 Notes

20:2A Lit *without uncovering my ear*

20:12B Lit *and uncover your ear*

20:13C Lit *will uncover your ears*

20:16D Lit *LORD require it from the hand of David's enemies*

20:30E Lit *your mother's genitals*

1 Samuel 21 Notes

21:5A Lit *vessels*

21:12B Lit *David placed these words in his heart*

21:13C Lit *madman in their hand*

1 Samuel 22 Notes

22:8A Lit *No one uncovers my ear*

22:8B Lit *or uncovers my ear*

22:15C Lit *didn't know a thing, small or large*

22:17D Lit *didn't uncover my ear*

1 Samuel 23 Notes

23:19A Lit *Is David not . . . Jeshimon?*

23:22B Lit *watch his place where his foot will be*

23:23C Or *thousands*

1 Samuel 24 Notes

24:3A Lit *to cover his feet*

24:5B Lit *David's heart struck*

24:7C Or *restrained*

24:10D Or *my eye*

24:15E Lit *render a verdict for*

24:19F Lit *go on a good way*

24:20G Or *will flourish*

1 Samuel 25 Notes

25:5A Or *Nabal, and ask him for peace*

25:6B Lit *To life*

25:7C Lit *you have shearers*

25:8D Lit *good*

25:9E Lit *name*

25:18F Lit *sheep, five seahs*

25:22G Lit *of those of his who are urinating against the wall*

25:25H Lit *for as is his name is, so he is*

25:25I Lit *and foolishness is with him*

25:28J Or *trouble*

25:29K Lit *bundle*

25:34L Lit *had anyone urinating against a wall*

25:36M Lit *Nabal's heart was good on him*

25:36N Lit *anything small or great*

25:37O Lit *when the wine had gone out of Nabal*

25:37P Lit *Then his heart died within him*

25:37Q Lit *became a stone*

1 Samuel 27 Notes

1 Samuel 28 Notes

28:13A Or *a god*, or *a divine being*

1 Samuel 29 Notes

29:3A Hb obscure

29:6B Lit *It was good in my eyes*

29:6C Lit *you going out and coming in*

2 Samuel 1 Notes

1:18A Or *of the Upright*

1:22B Lit *empty*

2 Samuel 2 Notes

2:16A Or *Helkath-hazzurim*

2:29B Or *marched through the Bithron*

2 Samuel 3 Notes

3:26A Or *cistern*

3:27B Lit *And he died for the blood of Asahel*

3:31C Or *the bier* ; lit *the bed*

2 Samuel 4 Notes

4:4A Lit *His nurse*

2 Samuel 5 Notes

5:1A Lit *your bone and flesh*

5:8B Or *temple*, or *palace*

5:20C Or *Baal-perazim* ; 2Sm 6:8; 1Ch 13:11

2 Samuel 6 Notes

6:3A Or *and his brothers*

6:8B Or *Perez-uzzah* ; 2Sm 5:20

6:14C Or *whirling*

6:22D Lit *more and I will be humble in my own eyes*

2 Samuel 7 Notes

7:19A Lit *Yet this*

7:19B Or *custom*, or *instruction*

2 Samuel 8 Notes

8:1A Or *took control of the mother city* ; Hb obscure

8:4B Or *chariot horses*

2 Samuel 10 Notes

10:12A Lit *the LORD do what is good in His eyes*

2 Samuel 11 Notes

11:11A Lit *servants*

11:26B Lit *her husband*

2 Samuel 12 Notes

12:4A Lit *for the man who had come to him*

12:8B Lit *bosom*

12:11C Or *to your neighbor*

12:11D Lit *in the eyes of this sun*

12:12E Lit *and before the sun*

12:25F Or *prophet to name*

12:30G Lit *a talent*

2 Samuel 13 Notes

13:11A Lit *said to her*

13:16B Lit *she said to him*

13:18C Or *an ornamented* ; Gn 37:3

13:32D Lit *In fact, it was established on the mouth of Absalom*

2 Samuel 14 Notes

14:19A Lit *Is the hand of Joab in*

14:20B Lit *to go around the face of the matter*

14:24C Lit *king's face*

14:26D Lit *200 shekels*

2 Samuel 15 Notes

15:24A Or *Abiathar went up*

15:26B Lit *me what is good in His eyes*

2 Samuel 16 Notes

16:6A Lit *all King David's*

16:11B Lit *son who came from my belly*

2 Samuel 17 Notes

17:9A Or *pits*, or *ravines*

17:9B Lit *And it will be when a falling on them at*

17:15C Lit *Like this and like this*

17:15D Lit *and like this and like this*

17:20E Or *brook* ; Hb obscure

17:23F Lit *He commanded his house*

17:25G Or *Jether*

17:29H Hb obscure

2 Samuel 18 Notes

18:9A Lit *was between heaven and earth*

18:11B Lit *Joab said to the man who told him*

2 Samuel 19 Notes

19:6A Lit *be right in your eyes*

19:7B Lit *speak to the heart of*

19:14C Lit *he turned the heart of*

19:18D Lit *do what is good in his eyes*

19:27E Lit *do what is good in your eyes*

19:37F Lit *what is good in your eyes*

19:38G Lit *what is good in your eyes*

2 Samuel 20 Notes

20:6A Lit *and snatch away our eyes*

20:7B Lit *out following him*

2 Samuel 21 Notes

21:3A Lit *will bless*

21:4B Lit *“Not for us silver and gold with*

21:6C Or *impale*, or *expose*

21:9D Or *impaled*, or *exposed*

21:13E Or *impaled*, or *exposed*

21:16F Or *Raphah*

21:16G Lit *300* (shekels)

21:18H Or *Raphah*

21:20I Or *Raphah*

21:22J Or *Raphah*

2 Samuel 22 Notes

22:9A Or *ablaze from Him*

22:12B Or *sieve*, or *mass* ; Hb obscure

22:23C Lit *Indeed, all His ordinances have been in front of me*

22:30D Or *ridge*

22:34E Or *on my high places*

22:41F Lit *You gave me the neck of my enemies*

2 Samuel 23 Notes

23:1A Or *raised up by the high [God]*

23:15B Lit *And David craved*

23:20C Or *two warriors*

23:30D Or *from Nahale-gaash*

2 Samuel 24 Notes

24:22A Lit *take what is good in his eyes*

24:24B Lit *50 shekels*

1 Kings 1 Notes

1:2A Lit *them*

1:4B Lit *he did not know*

1:6C Or *grieved*

1:7D Lit *His words were*

1:48E Lit *and my eyes are seeing*

1 Kings 2 Notes

2:14A Lit *then said, "I have a word for you."*

2:16B Lit *don't make me turn my face*

1 Kings 3 Notes

3:1A Lit *Solomon made himself a son-in-law*

3:6B Lit *and with You*

3:7C Lit *am a little youth and do not know to go out or come in*

3:8D Lit *chosen many*

3:11E Lit *for many days*

3:11F Lit *life*

3:18G Lit *No stranger*

3:26H Lit *because her compassion grew hot*

1 Kings 4 Notes

4:21A 1Kg 5:1 in Hb

4:22B Lit *30 cors*

4:22C Lit *60 cors*

4:23D Hb obscure

4:28E Lit *judgment*

1 Kings 5 Notes

5:11A Lit *20,000 cors*

1 Kings 6 Notes

6:2A Lit *60 cubits*

6:2B Lit *20 cubits*

6:2C Lit *30 cubits*

6:3D Lit *20 cubits*

6:3E Lit *10 cubits wide*

6:4F Hb obscure

6:5G Lit *built the house of chamber*

6:5H Lit *made ribs* or *sides*

6:6I Lit *five cubits*

6:6J Lit *six cubits*

6:6K Lit *seven cubits*

6:8L Hb obscure

6:10M Lit *five cubits*

6:16N Lit *20 cubits*

6:17O Lit *front of me*; Hb obscure

6:17P Lit *40 cubits*

6:20Q Lit *20 cubits*

6:20R Lit *20 cubits*

6:20S Lit *20 cubits*

6:21T Lit *he caused to pass across*

6:23U Lit *10 cubits*

6:24V Lit *five cubits*

6:24W Lit *10 cubits*

6:25X Lit *10 cubits*

6:26Y Lit *10 cubits*

6:27Z Lit *the second*

6:31A Hb obscure

6:33B Hb obscure

1 Kings 7 Notes

7:2A Lit *100 cubits*

7:2B Lit *50 cubits*

7:2C Lit *30 cubits*

7:4D Lit *frames, window to window*

7:4E Lit *three times*; = at 3 different places

7:5F Lit *frames, opposing window to window*

7:5G Lit *three times*; = at 3 different places

7:6H Lit *50 cubits*

7:6I Lit *30 cubits*

7:6J Hb obscure

7:8K Lit *daughter he had taken*

7:10L Lit *ten cubits and eight cubits*

7:15M Lit *18 cubits*

7:15N Lit *12 cubits*

7:16O Lit *five cubits*

7:16P Lit *five cubits*

7:17Q Lit *tassels*

7:19R Lit *four cubits*

7:20S Lit *encircling the second*

7:23T Lit *sea*

7:23U Lit *10 cubits*

7:23V Lit *five cubits*

7:23W Lit *30 cubits*

7:24X Lit *10 per cubit*

7:26Y Lit *a handbreadth*

7:26Z Lit *2,000 baths*

7:27A Lit *bronze stands*

7:27B Lit *four cubits*

7:27C Lit *four cubits*

7:27D Lit *three cubits*

7:29E Or *hammered-down*

7:31F Lit *a cubit*

7:31G Lit *one and a half cubits*

7:32H Lit *was one and a half cubits*

7:35I Lit *half a cubit*

7:38J Lit *40 baths*

7:38K Lit *four cubits*

7:50L Or *dishes*, or *spoons* ; lit *palms*

1 Kings 8 Notes

8:28A Lit *Turn*

8:31B Lit *and he lifts a curse against him to curse him*

8:37C Lit *besieges him in the land of his gates*

8:38D Lit *knowing in his heart of a plague*

8:47E Lit *they return to their heart*

8:50F Lit *rebellions that they have rebelled*

8:58G Lit *causes our hearts to be inclined*

8:65H Or *from Lebo-hamath*

8:66I Lit *the eighth day*

1 Kings 9 Notes

9:7A Lit *send from My presence*

9:8B Lit *hiss*

9:14C Lit *120 talents*

9:28D Lit *420 talents*

1 Kings 10 Notes

10:10A Lit *120 talents*

10:14B Lit *666 talents*

10:16C Lit *600* (shekels)

10:17D Lit *three minas*

10:22E Or *baboons*

10:25F Or *vessels*, or *weapons*

10:25G Or *fragrant balsam*

10:29H Lit *600 shekels*

10:29I Lit *150 shekels*

1 Kings 11 Notes

11:7A Lit *Molech*

11:11B Lit *Since this was with you*

1 Kings 12 Notes

12:11A Lit *with scorpions*

12:14B Lit *with scorpions*

12:28C Or *here are your gods*

12:33D Or *He went up to*

1 Kings 13 Notes

13:24A Lit *met*

1 Kings 14 Notes

14:4A Lit *see, for his eyes stood* ; 1Sm 4:15

14:10B Lit *eliminate Jeroboam's one who urinates against the wall*

14:10C Hb obscure

14:14D Hb obscure

14:27E Lit *the runners*

1 Kings 15 Notes

15:10A Lit *mother's*

15:13B Lit *mother*

15:29C Lit *Jeroboam anyone breathing until*

15:30D Lit *provoked in the provocation of*

1 Kings 16 Notes

16:11A Lit *leave him one who urinates against the wall*

16:24B Lit *for two talents*

1 Kings 17 Notes

17:16A Lit *by the hand of*

1 Kings 18 Notes

18:27A Or *has turned aside*; possibly to relieve himself

18:32B Lit *altar corresponding to a house of two seahs of seed*

1 Kings 20 Notes

20:39A Lit *a talent*

1 Kings 21 Notes

21:21A Lit *eliminate Ahab's one who urinates against the wall*

1 Kings 22 Notes

22:24A Lit *Which way did*

22:27B Lit *him on bread of oppression and water of oppression*

2 Kings 1 Notes

1:11A Lit *He answered*

1:12B Lit *a fire of God*

1:17C Lit *Jehoram* ; 2Kg 8:16

2 Kings 3 Notes

2 Kings 4 Notes

4:38A Lit *sitting before him*

2 Kings 5 Notes

5:1A Lit *man before his master*

5:3B Lit *master was before*

5:5C Lit *10 talents*

5:5D Lit *6,000 [shekels]*

5:7E Lit *only seeking an occasion against*

5:18F Lit *worship, and he leans on my hand, and I*

5:22G Lit *a talent*

5:23H Lit *two talents*

5:23I Lit *two talents*

5:24J Or *citadel*

5:26K Lit *"Did not my heart go*

2 Kings 6 Notes

6:1A Lit *we are living before you*

6:10B Lit *not once and not twice*

6:25C Lit *a fourth of a kab*

6:25D Or *seedpods*, or *wild onions*

2 Kings 7 Notes

7:1A Lit *a seah*

7:1B Lit *two seahs*

7:16C Lit *a seah*

7:16D Lit *two seahs*

7:18E Lit *two seahs*

7:18F Lit *a seah*

2 Kings 8 Notes

8:16A Lit *Judah; Jehoshaphat had been king of Judah*

8:29B Lit *Ramah*

2 Kings 9 Notes

9:8A Lit *eliminate Ahab's one who urinates against a wall*

9:13B Lit *on the bones of the steps*

9:18C Lit *What to you and to peace*

9:19D Lit *What to you and to peace*

2 Kings 10 Notes

10:3A Lit *the good and the upright*

10:5B Lit *Do what is good in your eyes*

10:15C Lit *heart upright like my heart is with your heart*

10:33D Lit *Arnon Valley and Gilead and Bashan*

2 Kings 11 Notes

11:6A Hb obscure

11:8B Lit *king when he goes out and when he comes in*

11:12C Or *him the copy of the covenant*, or *him a diadem*, or *him jewels*

2 Kings 12 Notes

12:5A Hb obscure

12:5B Lit *repair the breach of the house wherever there is found a breach*

12:6C Lit *breach* in 2Kg 12:5-12

2 Kings 13 Notes

13:9A Lit *Joash*

2 Kings 14 Notes

14:1A Lit *Joash*

14:1B Lit *Joahaz*

14:13C Lit *Jehoash*

14:13D Lit *400 cubits*

14:23E Lit *Joash*

14:27F Lit *Joash*

14:28G Lit *recovered Damascus and for Judah in Israel* ; Hb obscure

2 Kings 15 Notes

15:5A Lit *house of freedom,* or *house of exemption*

15:19B Lit *1,000 talents*

15:20C Lit *50 shekels*

15:25D Hb obscure

2 Kings 16 Notes

16:15A Hb obscure

16:17B Lit *the stands*

16:17C Lit *sea*

2 Kings 17 Notes

17:4A Lit *as year by year*

17:7B Lit *feared*

17:9C Or *Israelites spoke untrue words*

17:14D Lit *they stiffened their neck like the neck of*

2 Kings 18 Notes

18:14A Lit *300 talents*

18:14B Lit *30 talents*

18:19C Lit *What is this trust which you trust*

18:26D Lit *Judahite*

18:28E Lit *Judahite*

18:31F Lit *a blessing*

2 Kings 19 Notes

19:21A Lit *behind you*

19:23B Lit *by the hand of*

2 Kings 20 Notes

20:1A Lit *Command your house*

20:3B Lit *what is good in Your eyes*

20:11C Lit *shadow on the steps*

20:18D Or *court officials*

2 Kings 21 Notes

21:24A Lit *the people of the land*

2 Kings 22 Notes

22:9A Lit *and returned a word to the king and said*

22:20B Lit *returned a word*

2 Kings 23 Notes

23:3A 2Ch 34:31 reads *platform*

23:3B Lit *people took a stand in*

23:6C Lit *the sons of the people*

23:7D Or *clothing*

23:30E Lit *the people of the land*

23:33F Lit *100 talents*

23:33G Lit *one talent*

23:35H Lit *the people of the land*

2 Kings 24 Notes

24:17A Lit *his*

2 Kings 25 Notes

25:17A Lit *18 cubits*

25:17B Lit *three cubits*

25:19C Lit *five men who look on the king’s face*

25:19D Lit *the people of the land*

1 Chronicles 2 Notes

2:23A Lit *took from them*

2:23B Or *captured Havvoth-jair*

2:42C Lit *and the sons of Mareshah*

2:52D Lit *Manuhoth*

1 Chronicles 3 Notes

3:6A Lit *Elishama* ; 2Sm 5:15; 1Ch 14:5

3:11B Lit *Joram*

1 Chronicles 4 Notes

4:8A Or *Hazzobebah*

4:10B Or *so that I will not experience pain*

4:14C Or *the Ge-harashim*

4:21D Lit *house*

4:22E Or *who ruled over Moab*

1 Chronicles 5 Notes

5:25A Lit *the peoples of the land*

1 Chronicles 7 Notes

7:22A Or *his brothers*

1 Chronicles 8 Notes

8:40A Lit *valiant ones who string the bow*

1 Chronicles 9 Notes

9:4A Lit *Bani, from the sons*

9:31B Lit *with things prepared in pans*

1 Chronicles 10 Notes

10:12A Or *terebinth*, or *large tree*

1 Chronicles 11 Notes

11:1A Lit *your bone and flesh*

11:14B Lit *But they*

11:17C Lit *And David craved*

11:22D Or *was a valiant man*

11:22E Or *He killed two Moabite warriors*

11:23F Lit *who measured five cubits*

1 Chronicles 12 Notes

12:18A Lit *Spirit clothed Himself with* ; Jdg 6:34; 2Ch 24:20

12:22B Or *like the ultimate army*

1 Chronicles 13 Notes

13:5A Or *to Lebo-hamath*

13:7B Or *and his brothers*

13:11C Or *Perez-uzzah*

13:13D Lit *to himself*

1 Chronicles 14 Notes

14:11A Or *Baal-perazim*

1 Chronicles 15 Notes

15:29A Or *whirling*

1 Chronicles 16 Notes

16:12A Lit *judgments of His mouth*

16:16B Lit *and His oath*

1 Chronicles 17 Notes

17:17A Lit *thing in Your eyes*

17:17B Hb obscure

17:25C Lit *have uncovered the ear of*

1 Chronicles 18 Notes

18:4A Or *chariot horses*

1 Chronicles 19 Notes

19:6A Lit *1,000 talents*

19:10B Lit *the choice ones* ; 2Sm 6:1

19:13C Lit *the LORD do what is good in His eyes*

1 Chronicles 20 Notes

20:1A Lit *At the time of the return of the year*

20:2B Lit *a talent*

20:4C Or *the Rephaites*

20:6D Or *Raphah*

20:8E Or *Raphah*

1 Chronicles 21 Notes

21:1A Or *An adversary* ; Jb 1:6; Zch 3:1-2

21:15B Lit *but as he was destroying*

21:23C Lit *do what is good in his eyes*

21:25D Lit *600 shekels of gold by weight*

1 Chronicles 22 Notes

22:14A Lit *100,000 talents of gold and 1,000,000 talents of silver*

1 Chronicles 23 Notes

23:6A Lit *Gershon*

23:29B Lit *the griddle*

1 Chronicles 24 Notes

24:26A Or *Mushi; Jaaziah's sons: Beno.*

24:27B Or *sons, Jaaziah: Beno,*

1 Chronicles 25 Notes

25:5A Or *Him* ; lit *by the words of God to lift a horn*

25:11B Variant of Zeri

1 Chronicles 26 Notes

26:25A Or *Shelomoth*

26:26B Or *Shelomoth*

26:28C Or *Shelomoth*

1 Chronicles 27 Notes

27:1A Lit *that came in and went out month by month for all months of*

27:15B Lit *belonging to Othniel*

27:28C Or *the Shephelah*

27:32D Lit *was with*

1 Chronicles 28 Notes

28:12A Or *he received from the Spirit*

28:18B Or *chariot, that is* ; Ps 18:10; Ezk 1:5,15

28:19C Hb obscure

1 Chronicles 29 Notes

29:2A Or *mosaic*

29:4B Lit *3,000 talents*

29:4C Lit *7,000 talents*

29:7D Lit *5,000 talents*

29:7E Or *drachmas*, or *darics*

29:7F Lit *10,000 talents*

29:7G Lit *18,000 talents*

29:7H Lit *100,000 talents*

29:14I Lit *and from Your hand we have given to You*

29:17J Lit *found*

29:17K Or *now with joy I’ve seen Your people who are present here giving*

2 Chronicles 1 Notes

1:5A Or *it*

1:17B Lit *600 shekels*

1:17C Lit *150 shekels*

2 Chronicles 2 Notes

2:10A Lit *20,000 cors*

2:10B Lit *20,000 cors*

2:10C Lit *20,000 baths*

2:10D Lit *20,000 baths*

2:11E Lit *Tyre said in writing*

2:13F Lit *Huram my father*

2 Chronicles 3 Notes

3:3A Lit *length — cubits in the former measure —*

3:3B Lit *60 cubits*

3:3C Lit *20 cubits*

3:4D Lit *20 cubits*

3:4E Lit *20 cubits*

3:5F Lit *The house*

3:8G Lit *20 cubits*

3:8H Lit *20 cubits*

3:8I Lit *600 talents*

3:9J Lit *50 shekels*

3:11K Lit *20 cubits*

3:11L Lit *five cubits*

3:11M Lit *five cubits*

3:12N Lit *five cubits*

3:12O Lit *five cubits*

3:13P Lit *20 cubits*

3:13Q Lit *the house*

3:15R Lit *35 cubits*

3:15S Lit *five cubits*

2 Chronicles 4 Notes

4:1A Lit *20 cubits*

4:1B Lit *20 cubits*

4:1C Lit *10 cubits*

4:2D Lit *10 cubits*

4:2E Lit *five cubits*

4:2F Lit *30 cubits*

4:3G Lit *10 per cubit*

4:5H Lit *a handbreadth*

4:14I Lit *the stands*

4:16J Lit *Huram my father*

4:22K Or *dishes*, or *spoons* ; lit *palms*

2 Chronicles 6 Notes

6:13A Lit *five cubits*

6:13B Lit *five cubits*

6:13C Lit *three cubits*

6:19D Lit *Turn*

6:22E Lit *and he lifts a curse against him to curse him*

6:28F Lit *if his* (Israel's) *enemies besiege him in the land of his gates* ; Jos 2:7; Jdg 16:2-3

6:29G Lit *plague*

6:39H Lit *and do their judgment* or *justice*

2 Chronicles 7 Notes

7:8A Or *from Lebo-hamath*

2 Chronicles 8 Notes

8:18A Lit *Huram*

8:18B Lit *450 talents*

2 Chronicles 9 Notes

9:9A Lit *120 talents*

9:13B Lit *666 talents*

9:15C Lit *600* (shekels)

9:16D Lit *300* (shekels)

9:21E Or *baboons*

9:24F Or *vessels*, or *weapons*

9:24G Or *fragrant balsam*

2 Chronicles 10 Notes

10:10A Or *waist*

10:11B Lit *with scorpions*

10:14C Lit *with scorpions*

2 Chronicles 11 Notes

11:5A Lit *he built cities for a fortress*

11:20B Possibly *granddaughter* ; 2Ch 13:2

11:21C Possibly *granddaughter* ; 2Ch 13:2

2 Chronicles 12 Notes

12:10A Lit *the runners*

2 Chronicles 13 Notes

13:8A Or *God* ; 1Kg 12:28

13:20B Lit *He did not restrain the power of Jeroboam*

2 Chronicles 15 Notes

15:7A Lit *don't let your hands fail*

15:13B Or *insignificant or great*

15:16C Lit *mother* ; 1Kg 15:2; 2Ch 11:22

15:17D Lit *wholehearted all his days*

2 Chronicles 16 Notes

16:4A *Abel-beth-maacah* in 1Kg 15:20

16:10B Lit *the house of stocks*

2 Chronicles 18 Notes

18:1A Lit *made himself a son-in-law to Ahab* ; 1Kg 3:1; Ezr 9:14

18:26B Lit *him on bread of oppression and water of oppression*

2 Chronicles 19 Notes

19:2A Lit *to his face*

2 Chronicles 20 Notes

20:12A Lit *but on You our eyes*

20:21B Lit *saying*

2 Chronicles 21 Notes

21:19A Lit *evil*

21:20B Lit *He walked in no desirability*

2 Chronicles 22 Notes

22:1A Lit *the former ones*

22:2B Lit *daughter*

22:5C Lit *Rammites*

22:6D Lit *in Ramah*

22:10E Lit *seed*

2 Chronicles 23 Notes

23:7A Lit *king when he comes in and when he goes out*

23:9B Or *spears and large and small shields*

23:18C Lit *song on the hands of*

2 Chronicles 24 Notes

24:14A Or *dishes*, or *spoons* ; lit *palms*

24:20B Lit *God clothed Himself with* ; Jdg 6:34; 1Ch 12:18

2 Chronicles 25 Notes

25:6A Lit *100 talents*

25:9B Lit *100 talents*

25:17C Lit *Joash*

25:23D Lit *400 cubits*

2 Chronicles 26 Notes

26:10A Or *the Shephelah*

26:10B Or *in Carmel*

26:21C Lit *a house of freedom*

2 Chronicles 27 Notes

27:5A Lit *100 talents*

27:5B Lit *10,000 cors*

27:5C Lit *10,000 cors*

27:6D Lit *he established his ways before*

2 Chronicles 28 Notes

28:18A Or *the Shephelah*

2 Chronicles 29 Notes

29:6A Lit *and they gave the back of the neck*

29:8B Lit *hissing*

29:31C Lit *Now you have filled your hands*

29:34D Lit *upright of heart* ; Ps 32:11; 64:10

2 Chronicles 30 Notes

30:5A Or *in great numbers*

30:5B Lit *often, according to what is written*

30:8C Lit *Don't stiffen your neck*

30:8D Lit *hand*

30:10E Lit *but they*

30:12F Lit *to give them one heart*

30:22G Lit *spoke to the heart of*

2 Chronicles 31 Notes

31:1A Lit *Manasseh, until finishing*

31:3B Lit *The king's portion*

31:16C Or *30* ; 1Ch 23:3

2 Chronicles 32 Notes

32:1A Lit *said to himself*

32:2B Lit *that his face was for*

32:6C Lit *he spoke to their hearts*

32:8D Lit *With him an arm of flesh*

32:9E Lit *with his dominion was against*

32:18F Lit *Judahite*

32:22G Lit *He led them* ; Ps 23:2

2 Chronicles 33 Notes

33:25A Lit *the people of the land*

2 Chronicles 34 Notes

34:32A Lit *take a stand.*

2 Chronicles 35 Notes

35:5A Lit *the sons of the people*

35:7B Lit *the sons of the people*

35:11C Lit *sprinkled from their hand*

35:12D Lit *the sons of the people*

35:13E Lit *the sons of the people*

35:21F Lit *house*

2 Chronicles 36 Notes

36:1A Lit *the people of the land*

36:3B Lit *100 talents*

36:3C Lit *one talent*

36:10D Lit *At the return of the year*

36:13E Lit *He stiffened his neck*

36:22F Lit *Lord by the mouth of*

Ezra 1 Notes

1:5A Lit *everyone whose spirit God had stirred*

1:6B Lit *supported their hands*

1:10C Or *similar*

Ezra 2 Notes

2:2A Lit *the men of the people of Israel*

2:69B Or *drachmas*, or *darics*

2:69C Lit *5,000 minas*

Ezra 3 Notes

3:5A Lit *for the new moons*

3:5B Lit *well as those of everyone making a freewill offering to*

3:9C Or *Hodaviah* ; Neh 7:43; 1 Esdras 5:58

3:13D Lit *the people*

Ezra 4 Notes

4:1A Lit *the sons of the exile*

4:4B Lit *people of the land*

4:4C Lit *relaxed the hands of*

4:6D Lit *people of the land*

4:7E Lit *translated. Aramaic:*

4:9F Lit *Then Rehum*

4:9G Or *ambassadors*

4:9H Aram obscure

4:10I Lit *Osnappar*

4:13J Aram obscure

4:14K Lit *have eaten the salt of the palace*

4:18L Or *been read clearly*

4:22M Lit *the kings*

Ezra 5 Notes

5:3A Or *finish its furnishings*

5:5B Lit *But the eye of their God was*

5:8C Or *huge*

5:9D Or *finish its furnishings*

5:17E Lit *treasure house*

Ezra 6 Notes

6:1A Lit *Babylon where the treasures were stored*

6:3B Lit *be brought forth*

6:3C Lit *60 cubits*

6:3D Lit *60 cubits*

6:4E Or *huge*

6:5F Lit *Jerusalem, to its place,*

6:6G Lit *their*

6:12H Lit *who stretches out its hand*

6:21I Lit *land to them*

6:22J Lit *their hands*

Ezra 7 Notes

7:22A Lit *100 talents*

7:22B Lit *100 cors*

7:22C Lit *100 baths*

7:22D Lit *100 baths*

7:22E Lit *without instruction*

7:25F Lit *to your*

7:28G Lit *because the hand of the LORD my God was on me*

Ezra 8 Notes

8:3A Or *males* ; also in vv. 4-14

8:15B Or *canal*

8:17C Lit *Casiphia, and I put in their mouth the words to speak to*

8:21D Or *Canal*

8:26E Lit *650 talents*

8:26F Lit *100 talents*

8:26G Lit *100 talents*

8:27H Or *1,000 drachmas*, or *1,000 darics*

8:31I Or *Canal*

8:31J Lit *The hand of our God was on us*

Ezra 9 Notes

9:2A Lit *they*

9:2B Lit *hand of the leaders*

9:10C Lit *say after*

9:13D Lit *and gave us a remnant like this*

Ezra 10 Notes

10:8A Lit *would •set apart all his possessions for destruction*

10:16B Lit *name, for*

10:19C Lit *gave their hand*

Nehemiah 1 Notes

1:6A Lit *sins of the Israelites*

1:9B Lit *skies*

Nehemiah 2 Notes

2:2A Lit *Why is your face*

2:2B Lit *sadness of heart*

2:3C Lit *my face*

2:5D Lit *city, the house of the graves of my fathers,*

2:8E Lit *enter*

2:8F Lit *for the gracious hand of my God was on me*

2:12G Lit *animal with me*

2:13H Or *Dragon's*

2:18I Lit *they put their hands*

Nehemiah 3 Notes

3:5A Lit *not bring their neck to the work of*

3:6B Or *Jeshanah*

3:7C Or *Mizpah, the seat*

3:13D Lit *1,000 cubits*

3:25E Or *and the upper tower that juts out from the palace*

3:31F Or *Muster*

Nehemiah 4 Notes

4:2A Or *the army*

4:5B Or *provoked [You] in front of*

4:10C Lit *Judah said*

4:12D Lit *us 10 times*

4:12E Or *again from every place, "You must return to*

4:23F Lit *Each his weapon the water*

Nehemiah 5 Notes

5:5A Lit *but there is not the power in our hand*

5:10B Or *us forgive these debts*

5:11C Lit *hundredth*

5:15D Lit *40 shekels*

5:18E Lit *And that which was prepared each*

Nehemiah 6 Notes

6:2A Or *together at Kephirim in*

6:6B Lit *Gashmu*

6:9C Lit *saying, "Their hands will fail*

6:9D Lit *my hands*

6:10E Or *by night*

6:16F Lit *and fell greatly in their eyes*

Nehemiah 7 Notes

7:70A Or *drachmas*, or *darics* ; also in vv. 71-72

Nehemiah 8 Notes

8:3A Lit *The ears of all the people listened*

Nehemiah 9 Notes

9:15A Lit *lifted Your hand*

9:29B Lit *They gave a stubborn shoulder*

Nehemiah 10 Notes

10:29A Lit *and enter in a curse and in an oath*

10:32B Lit *give one-third of a shekel*

10:33C Lit *rows of bread*

Nehemiah 11 Notes

11:23A Lit *for*

11:24B Lit *was at the king's hand*

11:31C Or *descendants from Geba [lived in]*

Nehemiah 13 Notes

13:1A Lit *read in the ears of*

13:4B Or *an associate*

13:21C Lit *again, I will send a hand*

13:24D Lit *Judahite*

Esther 1 Notes

1:6A Or *alabaster*

1:6B Or *of porphyry*

1:6C Or *alabaster*

1:13D Or *understood propitious times*

1:14E Lit *Those near him*

Esther 2 Notes

2:2A Lit *The young men of the king who served him*

2:7B Lit *uncle's daughter*

2:9C Lit *and carried faithful love before him*

2:21D Lit *and they sought to stretch out a hand against*

Esther 3 Notes

3:6A Lit *to stretch out a hand against*

3:9B Lit *will weigh 10,000 silver talents on the hands of*

Esther 4 Notes

4:5A Lit *what is this and why is this*

4:11B Lit *king these*

Esther 5 Notes

5:2A Lit *she obtained favor in his eyes* ; Est 2:15,17

5:6B Lit *During the banquet of*

5:8C Lit *If I have found favor in the eyes of the king*

5:9D Lit *left rejoicing and good of heart*

5:14E Lit *50 cubits*

Esther 6 Notes

6:12A Lit *mourning*

Esther 7 Notes

7:1A Lit *drink*

7:3B Lit *If I have found favor in your eyes*

7:5C Lit *who would fill his heart to do this*

7:9D Lit *50 cubits*

7:9E Lit *who spoke good for*

Esther 8 Notes

8:7A Lit *stretched out his hand against*

8:16B Lit *had light*

8:17C Lit *good day*

Esther 9 Notes

9:2A Lit *cities to send out a hand against the seekers of their evil*

9:3B Lit *and those who do the king's work* ; Est 3:9

9:10C Lit *not put their hands on*

9:15D Lit *not put their hands on*

9:16E Lit *and gained relief from*

9:16F Lit *not put their hands on*

9:22G Lit *Jews gained relief from*

Esther 10 Notes

10:1A Or *imposed forced labor on the land and the coasts of the sea*

Job 1 Notes

1:5A Lit *for the number of*

1:6B Or *the adversary*

1:16C Lit *The fire of God*

1:21D Lit *will return there* ; Ps 139:13,15

1:22E Lit *or ascribe blame to God*

Job 2 Notes

2:10A Lit *sin with his lips*

Job 3 Notes

3:5A Lit *May a darkening of daylight*

3:6B Lit *or enter the number of months*

3:9C Lit *the eyelids*

3:24D Or *My sighing serves as my food*

Job 4 Notes

4:6A Lit *ways*

4:15B Or *A spirit*

4:15C Or *and the hair on my body stood up*

4:18D Or *error* ; Hb obscure

Job 5 Notes

5:5A Hb obscure

5:12B Lit *their hands*

5:15C Lit *from the sword of their mouth* ; Ps 55:21; 59:7

5:21D Lit *be hidden from the whip of the tongue*

Job 6 Notes

6:4A Lit *Almighty are in*

6:6B Hb obscure

6:10C Lit *hidden*

6:14D Lit *To the despairing his friend loyalty*

6:16E Or *turbid*

Job 7 Notes

7:5A Or *and dirty scabs*

7:5B Lit *skin hardens*

7:10C Lit *know*

7:12D Or *the sea god*

7:15E Or *suffocation*

7:15F Lit *than my bones*

7:16G Or *are futile*

7:19H Lit *swallow my saliva?*

Job 8 Notes

8:13A Lit *Such are the ways*

8:14B Or *cut off* ; Hb obscure

8:18C Lit *swallowed*

Job 9 Notes

9:3A Or *court, God would not answer him*

9:8B Or *and walks on the back of the sea god*

9:9C Or *Aldebaran*

9:9D Or *chambers*

9:12E Or *dissuade*

9:24F Or *land*

9:24G Lit *covers the faces of*

Job 10 Notes

10:3A Lit *shine on*

10:13B Lit *was with You*

10:14C Lit *notice me*

10:16D Lit *If he lifts up*

10:17E Or *You bring fresh troops*

10:17F Lit *Changes and a host are with me*

10:19G Lit *As if*

10:22H Lit *chaotic, and shines as*

Job 11 Notes

11:2A Lit *a man of lips*

11:5B Lit *and open His lips*

Job 12 Notes

12:3A Lit *With whom are not such things as these*

12:4B Lit *his*

12:4C Lit *him*

12:6D Or *secure; to those who bring their god in their hands*

12:21E Lit *and loosens the belt of*

Job 13 Notes

13:6A Lit *to the claims of my lips*

13:13B Lit *quiet before me*

13:14C Lit *I take my flesh in my teeth*

13:23D Lit *sins are to me*

13:27E Lit *paths. You mark a line around the roots*

Job 14 Notes

14:5A Lit *set his*

Job 15 Notes

15:2A Lit *windy* ; Jb 16:3

15:2B Lit *his belly*

15:13C Or *spirit*

15:20D Lit *the number of*

15:27E Lit *with his fat*

Job 16 Notes

16:3A Lit *windy* ; Jb 15:2

16:7B Or *it*

16:8C Or *have seized me* ; Hb obscure

16:13D Or *arrows*

16:14E Lit *through me, breach on breach*

16:15F Lit *horn*

Job 17 Notes

17:2A Lit *are with*

17:3B Lit *me with You*

17:3C Lit *Who is there that will strike himself into my hand*

17:6D Lit *become a spitting to the faces*

Job 18 Notes

18:4A Lit *He who tears himself in his anger*

18:12B Or *disaster hungers for him*

18:17C Or *name in the streets*

Job 19 Notes

19:3A Hb obscure

19:4B Lit *mistake lives with*

19:10C Lit *gone*

19:12D Lit *they raise up their way*

19:15E Or *The resident aliens in my household*

19:17F Lit *and the sons of my belly*

19:19G Lit *of the men of my council*

19:25H Or *know that my Redeemer is living*

19:25I Or *earth*

19:25J Or *dust at the last*, or *dust as the Last One*

19:26K Lit *skin which they destroyed*, or *skin they destroyed in this way*

19:26L Or *apart from*

19:27M Or *not a stranger*

19:27N Lit *My kidneys grow faint*

Job 20 Notes

20:2A Lit *because of my feeling within me*

20:3B Lit *and a spirit from my understanding*

20:7C Lit *have seen*

20:10D Or *children must compensate*

20:16E Lit *tongue*

20:20F Lit *Because he does not know ease in his stomach*

20:22G Lit *In the fullness of his excess*

20:25H Or *gallbladder*

Job 21 Notes

21:8A Lit *established before them with them*

21:17B Lit *their disaster*

21:23C Lit *in bone of his perfection*

21:24D Or *His sides are* ; Hb obscure

21:24E Lit *is full of milk*

21:24F Lit *and the marrow of his bones is watered*

21:29G Lit *signs*

21:33H Lit *The clods of the wadi are*

Job 22 Notes

22:21A Lit *peace; by them*

22:28B Lit *out for you*

22:29C Lit *bowed of eyes*

Job 23 Notes

23:5A Lit *the words*

23:10B Lit *way with me*

23:14C Lit *these with Him*

23:17D Or *silenced*

Job 24 Notes

24:8A Lit *they embrace*

24:11B Lit *olives between their rows*

24:16C Lit *dig*

24:16D Lit *they seal for themselves*

24:18E Lit *are insignificant*

24:22F Or *God prolongs [the life of]*

Job 25 Notes

25:2A Lit *in His heights*

Job 27 Notes

27:5A Lit *will not remove my integrity from me*

27:11B Lit *what is with the Almighty*

Job 28 Notes

28:3A Lit *probes all*

28:4B Lit *far from with inhabitant, things forgotten by foot*

28:6C Or *lapis lazuli*

28:16D Or *lapis lazuli*

28:26E Or *decree*

Job 29 Notes

29:11A Lit *When an ear heard, it called me blessed, and when an eye saw, it testified for me*

29:18B Or *as the phoenix*

29:24C Lit *they did not cast down*

Job 30 Notes

30:4A Or *saltwort*

30:12B Hb obscure

30:12C Lit *stretch out*

30:12D Lit *and raise up their destructive paths*

30:18E Hb obscure

30:24F Lit *a heap of ruins*

30:27G Lit *My bowels boil*

30:28H Or *walk in sunless gloom*

30:30I Lit *blackens away from me*

Job 31 Notes

31:1A Or *a virgin*

31:10B Lit *men kneel down over*

31:11C Lit *crime judges*

31:18D Lit *and from my mother's womb*

31:20E Lit *his loins*

31:21F Lit *I raise my hand*

31:27G Lit *and my hand kissed my mouth*

31:33H Or *as Adam*

31:39I Lit *or caused the breath of its tenants to breathe out*

Job 32 Notes

32:8A Or *is the Spirit in a person*

32:17B Lit *answer my part*

32:18C Lit *and the spirit of my belly*

32:19D Lit *belly*

Job 33 Notes

33:7A Lit *you; my pressure*

33:8B Lit *heard a sound of*

33:13C Lit *court, for He does not answer all his words*

33:17D Lit *and cover pride within a man*

33:18E Or *from perishing by the sword*

33:21F Lit *away from sight*

33:23G Or *to vouch for a person's uprightness*

33:25H Hb obscure

33:27I Lit *and the same was not to me*

33:32J Lit *If there are words*

Job 34 Notes

34:1A Lit *answered*

34:6B Lit *arrow*

34:26C Lit *In a place of spectators*

Job 35 Notes

35:14A Or *How then can*

35:14B Lit *say*

Job 36 Notes

36:4A Lit *my words are not false*

36:5B Lit *He is mighty in strength of heart*

36:12C Or *will perish by the sword*

36:16D Lit *from a mouth of narrowness*

36:18E Or *you into mockery*

36:18F Or *bribe*

36:19G Or *cry for help*

36:21H Or *for you have preferred this to*

36:27I Lit *He draws in waterdrops*

36:27J Or *His*

36:33K Lit *His*, or *Its*

36:33L Lit *thunder announces concerning Him* or *it*

Job 37 Notes

37:1A Lit *from its place*

Job 38 Notes

38:4A Lit *know*

38:9B Lit *swaddling clothes*

38:10C Lit *I broke My statute on it*

38:15D Lit *Their light*

38:21E Lit *born; the number of your days is great*

38:24F Or *where lightning is distributed*

38:26G Lit *life in it*

38:30H Lit *water hides itself as the stone*

38:32I Or *Mazzaroth* ; Hb obscure

38:32J Or *lead Aldebaran*

38:33K Or *God's*

38:34L Lit *lift up your voice to*

38:36M Or *the inner self* ; Ps 51:6

Job 39 Notes

39:2A Lit *months they fulfill*

39:3B Or *they send away their labor pains*

39:4C Lit *return to them*

39:13D Hb obscure

39:18E Hb obscure

39:19F Hb obscure

39:21G Lit *He goes out to meet the weapon*

39:23H Or *scimitar*

39:24I Lit *He swallows the ground*

39:25J Lit *he says, "Aha!"*

Job 40 Notes

40:2A Lit *God respond to it*

40:12B Lit *wicked in their place*

40:13C Lit *together; bind their faces in the hidden place*

40:21D Lit *plants, in the hiding place*

40:24E Lit *capture it in its eyes*

Job 41 Notes

41:2A Lit *reed*

41:5B Lit *or bind him*

41:8C Lit *your*

41:14D Lit *open the doors of his face*

41:16E Lit *One by one they approach*

41:17F Lit *another; they cling together and*

41:18G Or *sneezing*

41:18H Lit *eyelids*

41:23I Lit *together, hard on him*

41:25J Or *the divine beings*

41:32K Lit *a path*

41:34L Lit *the children of pride*

Job 42 Notes

42:3A Lit *me, and I did not*

42:7B Lit *speaking these words*

Psalm 1 Notes

1:1A Lit *not walk in*

1:1B Lit *stand in*

1:1C Or *or sit in the seat*

1:3D Or *beside irrigation canals*

1:3E Lit *in its season*

1:5F Lit *stand in*

Psalm 2 Notes

2:1A Or *conspire*, or *rage*

2:2B Or *anointed one*

2:3C Lit *and throw their ropes from us*

2:4D Lit *who sits*

2:6E Or *king*

2:7F Or *me, "You are My son*

2:7G Or *your*

2:8H Or *your*

2:8I Or *your*

2:9J Or *you*

2:9K Lit *a potter's vessel*

2:12L Lit *Kiss*

2:12M Or *son, otherwise he*

2:12N Lit *perish way*

2:12O Or *his*

2:12P Or *him*

Psalm 4 Notes

4:1A Or *God of my righteousness*

4:4B Or *Tremble*

4:5C Or *Offer right sacrifices* ; lit *Sacrifice sacrifices of righteousness*

Psalm 5 Notes

5:8A Or *of those who lie in wait for me*

5:9B Lit *in his mouth*

Psalm 6 Notes

6:2A Or *sick*

6:6B Lit *bed*

Psalm 7 Notes

7:2A Lit *he*

7:2B Lit *ripping, and without a rescuer*

7:4C Or *me and have spared*

7:6D Or *me; ordain*

7:8E Lit *integrity on me*

7:9F Lit *examines hearts and kidneys*

7:10G Lit *on*

7:12H Lit *He*

7:12I Lit *bent* ; that is, bent the bow to string it

Psalm 8 Notes

8:1A Lit *earth, which has set Your splendor upon the heavens*

8:5B Or *gods*, or *a god*, or *heavenly beings* ; lit *Elohim*

8:6C Or *authority*

Psalm 9 Notes

9:4A Lit *my justice and my cause*

9:16B Or *justice, snaring*

Psalm 10 Notes

10:3A Or *he blesses the greedy*

10:4B Lit *wicked according to the height of his nose*

10:5C Or *prosperous*

10:15D Lit *account You do not find*

Psalm 11 Notes

11:1A Lit *to your mountain, bird*

11:2B Lit *their*

11:4C Lit *His eyelids examine*

11:6D Lit *be the portion of their cup*

Psalm 12 Notes

12:4A Lit *That say, "By our tongues we are strengthened*

12:8B Lit *walk about*

Psalm 13 Notes

13:2A Or *up counsels*

Psalm 14 Notes

14:5A Or *There*

14:5B Lit *with the generation of the*

14:7C Or *restores His captive people*

14:7D Or *let Jacob rejoice; let Israel be glad.*

Psalm 15 Notes

15:4A Lit *in his eyes the rejected is despised*

Psalm 16 Notes

16:2A Or *"Lord, my good; there is none besides You."*

16:5B Or *allotted portion*

16:8C Lit *front of me*

Psalm 17 Notes

17:3A Or *[evil]; my mouth will not sin*

17:7B Or *love, You who save with Your right hand those seeking refuge from adversaries*

17:9C Lit *from the presence of*

17:9D Or *who plunder me*

17:10E Lit *have closed up their fat*

17:11F Lit *They set their eyes*

17:12G Lit *He is*

17:15H Lit *form*

Psalm 18 Notes

18:8A Or *ablaze from Him*

18:14B Or *multiplied*

18:22C Lit *Indeed, all His ordinances have been in front of me*

18:29D Or *ridge*

18:33E Or *on my high places*

18:40F Or *You gave me the necks of my enemies*

18:44G Lit *At the hearing of the ear*

Psalm 19 Notes

19:1A Or *expanse*

19:2B Or *Day to day pours out speech, and night to night communicates knowledge*

19:4C Lit *In them*

19:5D Lit *his*

19:6E Lit *its circuit is*

Psalm 20 Notes

20:9A Or *LORD, save. May the king*

Psalm 21 Notes

21:11A Lit *they stretch out evil against*

21:12B Lit *aim with your bowstrings*

Psalm 22 Notes

22:1A Or *My words of groaning are so far from delivering me*

22:7B Lit *separate with the lip*

22:8C Or *Rely on*

22:8D Lit *let Him*

22:10E Lit *was cast on You from the womb*

22:17F Lit *they*

22:20G Lit *my only one*

22:21H Lit *answered*

22:25I Lit *my praise*

22:25J Lit *Him*

22:26K Or *poor*, or *afflicted*

Psalm 23 Notes

23:3A Or *me in paths of righteousness*

23:4B Or *the valley of the shadow of death*

23:6C Lit *Lord for length of days* ; traditionally *Lord forever*

Psalm 24 Notes

24:4A Or *not lifted up his soul*

Psalm 25 Notes

25:1A Or *To You, Lord, I lift up my soul*

25:6B Or *everlasting*

25:13C Or *earth*

25:17D Or *Relieve the distresses of my heart*

Psalm 27 Notes

27:14A Lit *Lord; let your heart be strong*

Psalm 29 Notes

29:1A Or *you angels*, or *you sons of the mighty* ; lit *LORD sons of [the] gods*

29:2B Or *in holy attire*, or *in holy appearance*

29:9C Or *the oaks shake*

Psalm 31 Notes

31:5A Or *You have redeemed*, or *You will redeem*, or *spirit. Redeem*

31:9B Lit *my soul and my belly*

31:17C Or *them perish*, or *them wail*

31:20D Lit *canopy*

31:21E Or *a fortified city*

31:24F Lit *Let your heart be strong*

Psalm 32 Notes

32:4A Hb obscure

32:6B Lit *time of finding*

Psalm 34 Notes

34:16A Or *cut off*

34:17B Lit *They*

Psalm 35 Notes

35:13A Lit *prayer returned to my chest*

35:16B Hb obscure

35:20C Lit *but devise deceitful words*

35:21D Lit *Our eyes saw!*

Psalm 37 Notes

37:3A Or *and cultivate faithfulness*

37:9B Or *earth*

37:11C Or *earth*

37:14D Lit *their*

37:17E Or *power*

37:22F Or *earth*

37:24G Or *LORD supports with His hand*

37:29H Or *earth*

37:35I Hb obscure

37:37J Or *posterity*

37:38K Or *posterity*

Psalm 38 Notes

38:3A Hb *shalom*

38:9B Lit *is in front of*

38:10C Or *and the light of my eyes — even that is not with me*

38:19D Or *numerous*

Psalm 40 Notes

40:2A Or *watery*

40:6B Lit *You hollow out ears for me*

40:8C Lit *instruction within my inner being*

40:9D Lit *not restrain my lips*

Psalm 41 Notes

41:9A Lit *Even a man of my peace*

Psalm 44 Notes

44:14A Lit *shaking of the head*

Psalm 45 Notes

45:6A Or *Your divine throne is*, or *Your throne is God's*

45:6B Or *your*

Psalm 46 Notes

46:9A Lit *chariots with fire*

Psalm 47 Notes

47:9A Lit *shields*

Psalm 48 Notes

48:11A Lit *daughters*

Psalm 49 Notes

49:2A Lit *both sons of Adam and sons of man*

49:7B Or *Certainly he cannot redeem himself*, or *Yet he cannot redeem a brother*

49:8C Or *costly, it will cease forever*

49:12D Or *honor*

49:13E Lit *and after them with their mouth they were pleased*

49:14F Hb obscure

49:16G Or *glory*

49:17H Or *glory*

49:20I Or *with honor*

Psalm 50 Notes

50:1A Or *The Mighty One, God, the* L*ORD*, or *The God of gods, the* L*ORD*

50:1B Lit *from the rising of the sun to its setting*

50:2C Or *God shines forth*

50:17D Or *and cast My words behind you*

50:21E Lit *out before your eyes*

Psalm 51 Notes

51:9A Lit *Hide Your face*

51:10B Or *right*

51:12C Or *and sustain me with a noble spirit*

51:17D Lit *The sacrifices of God are*

51:18E Or *rebuild*

Psalm 52 Notes

52:7A Or *riches, and grew strong in his evil desire* ; lit *his destruction*

Psalm 53 Notes

53:6A Or *restores His captive people*

Psalm 54 Notes

54:3A Lit *They do not set God before them*

54:4B Or *is with those who sustain my life*

Psalm 55 Notes

55:1A Lit *hide Yourself from*

55:3B Or *threat*, or *oppression*

55:6C Lit *"Who will give to me . . . dove?*

55:9D Or *destroy*

55:9E Lit *and divide their tongue*

Psalm 56 Notes

56:2A Or *many fight against me, O exalted One*, or *many fight against me from the heights*

56:6B Or *They attack*

56:8C Or *misery*

56:12D Lit *On me the vows*

Psalm 57 Notes

57:2A Or *who avenges me*

57:8B Lit *glory*

Psalm 58 Notes

58:1A Or *Can you really speak righteousness in silence?*

58:7B Or *their arrows as if they were circumcised* ; Hb obscure

58:7C Or *they wither like trampled grass*

58:9D Or *thorns, He will sweep it away, whether raw or cooking*, or *thorns, He will sweep him away alive in fury*

Psalm 59 Notes

59:7A Lit *swords are on*

59:13B Lit *know to the ends of*

Psalm 60 Notes

60:1A Lit *have burst through*

60:1B Or *Turn back to us*

60:4C Or *can rally before the archers*, or *can rally because of the truth*

60:6D Or *has promised by His holy nature*

Psalm 62 Notes

62:10A Lit *increases, do not set heart*

Psalm 63 Notes

63:5A Lit *with fat and fatness*

63:11B Or *him*

Psalm 64 Notes

64:5A Or *thing*; lit *word*

64:5B Or *They hold fast to an evil purpose*, or *They establish for themselves an evil purpose*

64:5C Or *us*, or *it*

Psalm 65 Notes

65:1A Or *Praise is silence to You*, or *Praise awaits You*

65:3B Or *can forgive*, or *can wipe out*

65:4C Or *house, Your holy temple*

65:9D Lit *prepare it*

65:11E Lit *ways drip with fat*

Psalm 66 Notes

66:9A Lit *He sets our soul in life*

66:12B Or *a place of satisfaction*

Psalm 68 Notes

68:4A Or *rides through the desert*

68:4B Lit *Yah*

68:6C Or *prisoners with joyous music* ; Hb uncertain

68:8D Lit *God, this Sinai*

68:13E Or *If*

68:13F Or *campfires*, or *saddlebags* ; Hb obscure

68:14G Or *Black Mountain*

68:17H Or *in holiness*

68:18I Lit *among*

68:18J Or *even those rebelling against the LORD God's living there*, or *even rebels are living with the LORD God* ; Hb obscure

68:24K Or *in holiness*

68:27L Hb obscure

68:30M Or *peoples, trampling on those who take pleasure in silver*, or *peoples, trampling on the bars of silver*, or *peoples, who trample each other for bars of silver*

68:31N Or *They bring red cloth*, or *They bring bronze*

Psalm 69 Notes

69:35A Or *and rebuild*

Psalm 71 Notes

71:18A Lit *me until I*

Psalm 72 Notes

72:3A Or *peace*

72:7B Or *peace*

72:14C Lit *their blood is*

72:14D Or *valuable*

Psalm 73 Notes

73:4A Lit *For there are no pangs to their death*

73:4B Lit *fat*

73:10C Lit *turn here*

73:10D Lit *and waters of fullness are drained by them*

73:15E Lit *betrayed the generation of Your sons*

73:16F Lit *it was trouble in my eyes*

73:21G Lit *my kidneys*

73:24H Or *will receive me with honor*

73:26I Lit *rock*

Psalm 74 Notes

74:3A Lit *Lift up Your steps*

74:4B Lit *in Your meeting place*

74:7C Lit *they to the ground*

74:8D Lit *every meeting place of God in the land*

74:11E Lit *From Your bosom*

Psalm 76 Notes

76:7A Or *are awe-inspiring*

76:10B Hb obscure

76:11C Or *tribute with awe*

Psalm 77 Notes

77:10A Lit *"My piercing*

Psalm 78 Notes

78:18A Lit *in their heart*

78:25B Lit *Man*

78:25C Lit *mighty ones*

78:28D Or *in its camp, all around its tents*

78:38E Or *He wiped out*, or *He forgave*

78:38F Or *stir up*

78:49G Or *angels*

78:60H Hb *adam*

78:63I Lit *virgins were not praised*

78:64J Lit *His*

Psalm 79 Notes

79:8A Or *hold the sins of past generations*

79:9B Or *and wipe out*, or *and forgive*

Psalm 80 Notes

80:5A Lit *a one-third measure*

80:10B Lit *the cedars of God*

80:15C Hb obscure

80:15D Or *son*

80:16E Lit *burned with fire*

80:16F Or *may they*

Psalm 81 Notes

81:3A Lit *feast*

81:16B Lit *him*

Psalm 82 Notes

82:1A Or *the heavenly beings*, or *the earthly rulers* ; lit *elohim*

Psalm 83 Notes

83:2A Lit *have lifted their head*

83:5B Lit *they cut a covenant*

83:8C Lit *they are an arm*

Psalm 84 Notes

84:2A Or *flesh shout for joy to*

84:6B Or *Valley of Tears*

84:6C Or *pools*

Psalm 85 Notes

85:1A Or *restored Jacob from captivity*

Psalm 87 Notes

87:7A Lit *"All my springs, are*

Psalm 88 Notes

88:5A Or *set free*

88:5B Or *hand*

88:18C Or *from me, my friends. Oh darkness!*

Psalm 89 Notes

89:6A Or *the angels*, or *the sons of the mighty*

89:7B Or *ones, revered by*

89:19C Or *exalted a young man*

89:22D Or *not exact tribute from*

89:29E Lit *as days of heaven*

89:39F Lit *have dishonored his crown to the ground*

89:44G Hb obscure

Psalm 90 Notes

90:5A Or *You overwhelm them* ; Hb obscure

90:10B Lit *The days of our years in them*

90:12C Or *develop a heart of wisdom*

Psalm 93 Notes

93:2A Lit *from then*

93:5B Or *holiness characterizes*

Psalm 94 Notes

94:15A Or *heart will support* ; lit *heart after*

Psalm 95 Notes

95:7A Lit *sheep of His hand*

Psalm 97 Notes

97:8A Lit *daughters*

97:11B Lit *Light is sown*

97:12C Or *memory, of His holiness* ; lit *praise the mention*

Psalm 101

101:4A Lit *not know*

101:7B Lit *in front of my eyes*

Psalm 102

102:6A Or *a pelican of the desert*

102:20B Lit *free sons of death*

102:24C Lit *my days*

Psalm 103

103:5A Lit *satisfies your ornament* ; Hb obscure

103:16B Lit *place no longer knows it*

Psalm 104 Notes

104:4A Or *angels*

104:7-8B Or *away. They flowed over the mountains and went down valleys*

104:16C Lit *are satisfied*

104:19D Lit *moon for*

104:19E Or *the appointed times*

104:24F Lit *possessions*

104:30G Or *Spirit*

Psalm 105 Notes

105:5A Lit *judgments of His mouth*

105:9B Lit *and His oath*

105:24C Lit *He*

105:38D Lit *them*

Psalm 106 Notes

106:28A Lit *sacrifices for dead ones*

106:32B Lit *and it was evil for Moses*

Psalm 107 Notes

107:4A Lit *They*

107:5B Lit *their soul fainted*

107:10C Lit *They*

107:10D Or *the shadow of death*

107:12E Lit *hearts*

107:14F Or *the shadow of death*

107:23G Lit *They*

107:25H Lit *of it*

107:26I Lit *souls*

107:29J Lit *of them*

107:30K Lit *when they*

107:43L Lit *and let them consider*

Psalm 108 Notes

108:1A Lit *praises, even my glory*

108:7B Or *has promised by His holy nature*

Psalm 109 Notes

109:4A Lit *but I, prayer*

109:6B Or *adversary*

109:15C Lit *Let them*

109:15D Or *cut off*

109:24E Lit *denied from fat*

109:25F Lit *to them*

Psalm 110 Notes

110:2A Lit *Rule in the midst of Your*

110:3B Lit *power*

110:3C Hb obscure

Psalm 111 Notes

111:10A Lit *follow them*

Psalm 115 Notes

115:8A Or *May those who make them become*

115:16B Lit *LORD's heavens*

Psalm 118 Notes

118:5A Or *answered me with freedom*

Psalm 119 Notes

119:9A Or *keeping it according to Your*

119:28B Or *I weep*

119:32C Lit *You enlarge my heart*

119:33D Lit *way*

119:33E Or *will keep it as my reward*

119:54F Lit *song in the house of my sojourning*

119:57G Lit *You are my portion, LORD*

119:109H Lit *in my hand*

119:112I Or *statutes; the reward is eternal*

119:120J Lit *My flesh shudders*

119:128K Lit *I therefore follow carefully*

Psalm 120 Notes

120:4A Lit *with coals of the broom bush*

Psalm 121 Notes

121:5A Lit *is your shelter at your right hand*

Psalm 126 Notes

126:1A Or *Lord returned those of Zion who had been captives*

126:4B Or *Return our captives*

Psalm 127 Notes

127:2A Or *yes, He gives such things to His loved ones while [they] sleep*

Psalm 129 Notes

129:6A Or *it can be pulled out*

Psalm 132 Notes

132:3A Lit *enter the tent of my house*

132:3B Lit *into the couch of my bed*

132:11C Lit *set the fruit of your womb*

132:18D Lit *but on him his crown*

Psalm 138 Notes

138:1A Or *before the gods*, or *before judges*, or *before kings* ; Hb *elohim*

138:3B Hb obscure

138:4C Lit *hear the words of Your mouth*

Psalm 139 Notes

139:9A Lit *I take up the wings of the dawn; I dwell at the end of the sea*

139:13B Lit *my kidneys*

139:14C Hb obscure

139:17D Or *precious*

139:24E Or *idolatrous*

Psalm 140 Notes

140:4A Lit *to trip up my steps*

140:9B Lit *Head of those who surround me*

140:11C Hb obscure

Psalm 141 Notes

141:5A Lit *my head*

141:5B Lit *of them*

141:6C Or *judges*

141:6D Lit *cliff, and they*

141:8E Or *not pour out my life*

141:9F Lit *from the hands of*

Psalm 144 Notes

144:6A Lit *scatter them*

144:7B Lit *down Your hands*

144:14C Or *will bear heavy loads*, or *will be pregnant*

144:14D Or *be no plague, no miscarriage*

Psalm 145 Notes

145:10A Lit *Your*

145:14B Lit *bowed down*

Psalm 146 Notes

146:4A Or *spirit*

146:8B Lit *bowed down*

Psalm 147 Notes

147:5A Lit *understanding has no number*

147:10B Lit *legs*

147:14C Or *peace*

147:18D Or *breath*

Psalm 148 Notes

148:8A Or *fire*

Psalm 149 Notes

149:6A Lit *throat*

Proverbs 1 Notes

1:4A Or *simple*, or *gullible*

1:6B Or *an enigma*

1:11C Lit *Let's ambush for blood*

1:11D Lit *person for no reason*

1:14E Lit *us; one bag will be for all of us*

1:16F Lit *to shed blood*

1:18G Lit *they ambush for their blood*

1:19H Lit *takes the life of its masters*

1:21I Lit *at the head of*

1:23J Lit *back to my reprimand*

Proverbs 2 Notes

2:2A Lit *you, stretching out your ear*

2:7B Or *resourcefulness*

2:16C Or *foreign woman*

Proverbs 3 Notes

3:2A Lit *days, years of life*

3:6B Lit *will make your paths straight*

3:8C Lit *navel*

3:16D Lit *Length of days*

3:22E Or *be your throat*

3:22F Or *grace*

3:26G Or *be at your side*

3:27H Lit *in the power of your hands*

3:32I Or *confidential counsel*

3:35J Or *but haughty fools dishonor*, or *but fools exalt dishonor*

Proverbs 4 Notes

4:23A Or *heart with all diligence*

4:25B Lit *eyelids*

4:26C Or *Clear a path*

Proverbs 5 Notes

5:1A Lit *wisdom; stretch out your ear*

5:3B Lit *her palate is*

5:13C Lit *or turn my ear*

Proverbs 6 Notes

6:1A Or *friend*

6:1B Lit *or shaken hands for* or *with*

6:2C Lit *mouth*

6:5D Lit *hand*

6:5E Lit *hand*

6:24F Lit *smooth*

6:26G Or *On account of a prostitute, [one is left with] only a loaf of bread*

6:26H Lit *but a wife of a man*

6:27I Lit *man take fire to his bosom*

6:32J Lit *commits adultery with a woman*

6:33K Or *plague*

Proverbs 7 Notes

7:7A Or *simple*, or *gullible*, or *naive*

7:10B Or *prostitute with a guarded heart*

7:13C Lit *she makes her face strong and says*

7:21D Lit *smooth*

7:23E Or *his*

7:26F Or *and powerful men are all her victims*

Proverbs 8 Notes

8:3A Lit *the mouth of*

8:14B Or *resourcefulness*

8:22C Or *possessed*, or *begot*

8:22D Lit *way*

8:30E Or *a confidant*, or *a child*, or *was constantly*

8:36F Or *who sins against me*

Proverbs 9 Notes

9:7A Lit *man his blemish*

Proverbs 10 Notes

10:22A Or *and He adds no trouble to it*

10:27B Lit *LORD adds to days*

Proverbs 11 Notes

11:7A Or *strength*

11:16B Or *ruthless*

11:21C Lit *Hand to hand*

Proverbs 12 Notes

12:4A Or *A wife of quality*, or *A wife of good character*

12:12B Or *desire a stronghold of evil*

12:26C Or *man guides his neighbor*

12:28D Or *righteousness, and in its path there is no death*

Proverbs 13 Notes

13:6A Lit *guards integrity of way*

13:11B Lit *whoever gathers upon [his] hand*

13:22C Or *inheritance: his*

Proverbs 14 Notes

14:4A Or *clean*

14:9B Or *at guilt offerings*

14:11C Lit *flourish*

14:15D Lit *the prudent understand*

14:16E Or *and falls*

14:23F Lit *but word of lips*

Proverbs 15 Notes

15:4A Lit *but crookedness in it*

15:23B Lit *in an answer of his mouth*

15:30C Lit *makes fat*

15:31D Lit *An ear that*

15:32E Lit *acquires a heart*

Proverbs 16 Notes

16:2A Lit *weighs spirits*

16:5B Lit *hand to hand*

16:7C Or *he*

16:10D Or *A divination is on the lips of a king*

16:21E Lit *and sweetness of lips*

16:23F Lit *learning upon his lips*

16:24G Lit *throat*

16:24H Lit *bones*

16:26I Lit *mouth*

16:32J Lit *and ruling over one's spirit*

Proverbs 17 Notes

17:4A Lit *to lips of iniquity*

17:11B Or *a merciless angel*

17:18C Lit *sense shakes hands*

17:26D Or *noble unfairly*

17:27E Lit *spirit*

Proverbs 18 Notes

18:2A Lit *to uncover his heart*

18:4B Or *waters; a fountain of wisdom is a flowing river*.

18:8C Lit *to the chambers of the belly*

18:9D Lit *master of destruction*

18:10E Lit *raised high*

18:16F Lit *gift makes room*

Proverbs 19 Notes

19:2A Lit *who is hasty with feet*

19:7B Hb uncertain

19:8C Lit *acquires a heart*

19:16D Or *despises*, or *treats lightly*

19:17E Lit *to him*

19:18F Lit *don't lift up your soul to his death*

19:20G Lit *in your end*

19:23H Lit *will spend the night satisfied*

Proverbs 20 Notes

20:4A Lit *plow in winter*

20:4B Lit *inquires*

20:7C Lit *sons*

20:10D Lit *Stone and stone, measure and measure*

20:23E Lit *A stone and a stone*

20:27F Lit *breath*

20:27G Lit *the chambers of the belly*

20:30H Lit *beatings the chambers of the belly*

Proverbs 21 Notes

21:2A Lit *LORD weighs the hearts*

21:6B Or *a breath blown away*

21:6C Lit *is vanity, ones seeking death*

21:10D Or *favor*

21:14E Lit *a bribe in the bosom*

21:18F Or *in place of*

21:20G Lit *it*

21:26H Lit *He craves a craving*

Proverbs 22 Notes

22:2A Lit *poor meet*

22:2B Lit *all*

22:9C Lit *Good of eye*

22:17D Lit *Stretch out your ear*

22:18E Or *you; let them be*, or *you, so that*

22:21F Lit *give dependable words*

22:24G Lit *with a master of anger*

22:26H Lit *who shakes hands*

Proverbs 23 Notes

23:1A Or *who*

23:2B Lit *you are the master of an*

23:6C Lit *eat bread of an evil eye*

23:9D Lit *in the ears of*

23:22E Or *because*

23:33F Or *will speak perversities* or *inverted things*

Proverbs 24 Notes

24:7A Lit *is too high for*

24:21B Or *those given to change*

Proverbs 25 Notes

25:4A Lit *will come out* ; Ex 32:24

25:7B Lit *you before a noble whom your eyes see*

25:8C Or *neighbor*

25:9D Or *neighbor*

25:10E Lit *and your evil report will not turn back*

25:11F Or *like apples of gold in settings of silver*

25:20G Lit *natron,* or *sodium carbonate*

25:25H Or *a weary person*

25:27I Lit *seek their glory, glory*

Proverbs 26 Notes

26:9A Lit *thorn that goes up into*

26:22B Lit *to the chambers of the belly*

Proverbs 27 Notes

27:13A Lit *a foreign woman*

27:17B Lit *and a man sharpens his friend's face*

27:21C Or *gold, but a man [is tested] by his praise*

Proverbs 28 Notes

28:6A Lit *who twists two ways*

28:12B Lit *glory*

28:17C Lit *the blood of a person*

28:18D Lit *who is twisted regarding two ways*

28:22E Lit *A man with an evil eye*

28:23F Lit *is smooth*

28:26G Lit *his heart*

28:27H Lit *who shuts his eyes*

Proverbs 29 Notes

29:5A Lit *is smooth on*

29:7B Lit *justice*

29:9C Lit *rest*

29:10D Or *person, and seek the life of the upright*

29:11E Lit *spirit*

29:13F Lit *oppressor meet*

29:15G Lit *youth sent away*

29:18H Lit *vision*

29:21I Hb obscure

29:22J Lit *a master of rage*

29:25K Lit *raised high*

Proverbs 30 Notes

30:1A Or *son of Jakeh from Massa* ; Pr 31:1

30:2B Lit *I am more stupid than a man*

30:5C Lit *refined*

30:9D Lit *grabbing*

30:13E Lit *and its eyelids lifted up*

30:28F Or *spider*

30:31G Or *a greyhound*

Proverbs 31 Notes

31:1A Or *of Lemuel, king of Massa*, or *of King Lemuel, a burden*

31:5B Lit *he*

31:5C Lit *sons of affliction*

31:8D Lit *Open your mouth*

31:8E Lit *who are mute*

31:8F Lit *all the sons of passing away*

31:9G Lit *Open your mouth*

31:9H Lit *and justice for*

31:10I Or *a wife of quality*, or *a wife of noble character*

31:15J Or *tasks*

31:16K Or *vineyard by her own labors*

31:17L Lit *She wraps strength around her like a belt*

31:20M Lit *Her hand reaches*

31:24N Or *sashes*

31:26O Or *and the teaching of kindness*

31:27P Lit *and does not eat the bread of idleness*

31:29Q Lit *daughters*

31:31R Lit *the fruit of her hands*

Ecclesiastes 1 Notes

1:1A Or *of Qoheleth*, or *of the Leader of the Assembly*

1:8B Or *words*

1:11C Or *of the things that*

1:11D Or *of the things that*

1:12E Or *Teacher, was*

1:14F Or *a feeding on wind*, or *an affliction of spirit*

1:16G Lit *said with my heart*

1:16H Or *discerned*

1:17I Or *a feeding on wind*, or *an affliction of spirit*

Ecclesiastes 2 Notes

2:3A Lit *to pull my body*

2:8B Or *many treasures that people delight in*

2:11C Lit *all my works that my hands had done*

2:20D Lit *And I turned to cause my heart*

2:24E Lit *and his soul sees good*

Ecclesiastes 3 Notes

3:2A Lit *uproot what is planted*

3:11B Or *beautiful*

3:11C Or *has put a sense of past and future into their minds*, or *has placed ignorance in their hearts*

3:12D Lit *his*

3:15E Or *God calls the past to account*, or *God seeks what is past*, or *God seeks the persecuted* ; lit *God seeks [the] pursued*

3:22F Lit *after him*

Ecclesiastes 4 Notes

4:8A Lit *person, but there is not a second,*

4:15B Lit *with*

Ecclesiastes 5 Notes

5:9A Or *An advantage for the land in every respect is a king for a cultivated field* ; Hb obscure

Ecclesiastes 6 Notes

6:1A Or *it is common among men*

6:3B Lit *how many years*

6:7C Lit *mouth*

6:10D Lit *name already*

Ecclesiastes 7 Notes

7:15A Lit *days*

7:21B Lit *Don't give your heart*

Ecclesiastes 8 Notes

8:8A Or *life-breath*

Ecclesiastes 9 Notes

9:9A Or *futile*

Ecclesiastes 10 Notes

10:2A Lit *his*

10:2B Lit *his*

10:11C Lit *master of the tongue*

Ecclesiastes 11 Notes

11:5A Or *know how the life-breath comes to the bones in*

Ecclesiastes 12 Notes

12:2A Or *with*

12:5B Or *grasshopper is weighed down*, or *grasshopper drags itself along*

12:11C Or *by a shepherd*

Song of Songs 1 Notes

1:1A Or *The Song of Songs, which is Solomon's*

1:2B Unexpected change of grammatical persons, here from *he* and *his* to *your*, is a Hb poetic device.

1:2C Or *your caresses are*, or *your lovemaking is*

1:3D Or *wonder virgins*

1:4E Or *The king has brought*

1:6F Lit *my vineyard, which is mine*

1:7G Or *who wanders*

1:8H Lit *go out for yourself into*

1:9I Lit *my*

1:12J Or *is at his table*

1:12K Lit *nard*

1:17L Or *firs*, or *pines*

Song of Songs 2 Notes

2:1A Or *meadow saffron*

2:1B Or *lotus*

2:3C Or *apple*

2:4D Lit *the house of wine*

2:4E Or *and his banner over me is love*

2:5F Or *apples*

2:6G Or *Let his left hand be under . . . and his right arm embrace me*

2:7H Lit *until it pleases*

2:12I Or *pruning*

2:14J Or *form*

2:17K Lit *breathes*

2:17L Or *the Bether mountains*, or *the mountains of spices* ; Hb obscure

Song of Songs 3 Notes

3:1A Or *bed night after night*

3:5B Lit *until it pleases*

3:10C Or *base*, or *canopy*

3:10D Or *leather*

Song of Songs 4 Notes

4:2A Lit *and no one bereaved among them*

4:3B Or *speech*

4:3C Or *temple*, or *cheek*, or *lips*

4:6D Lit *breathes*

4:13E Or *park*, or *orchard*

Song of Songs 5 Notes

5:1A Lit *pluck*

5:1B Or *Drink your fill, lovers*

5:6C Lit *My soul went out*

5:6D Or *spoken*

5:7E Or *veil*, or *shawl*

5:10F Or *is radiant and ruddy*

5:11G Or *is [like] palm leaves* ; Hb obscure

5:12H Lit *milk sitting in fullness*

5:14I Lit *hands*

5:14J Lit *filled* ; Sg 5:2,12

5:14K Lit *abdomen*

Song of Songs 6 Notes

6:1A Lit *your love*

6:6B Lit *and no one bereaved among them*

6:7C Or *temple*, or *cheek*, or *lips*

6:8D Or *and virgins* ; Sg 1:3

6:12E Or *of Amminadib*, or *of my people of a prince* ; Hb obscure

6:13F Or *the peaceable one*

6:13G Or *dance of Mahanaim*

Song of Songs 7 Notes

7:1A Lit *daughter of a nobleman* or *prince*

7:2B Or *belly*

7:5C Lit *head upon you is*

7:9D Lit *palate*

7:11E Or *the villages*

Song of Songs 8 Notes

8:1A Lit *Would that you were like a brother to me*

8:6B Or *the blaze of the LORD*

8:7C Lit *all the wealth of his house*

8:10D Or *was*

8:12E Lit *My vineyard, which is mine, is before me* ; Sg 1:6

Isaiah 1 Notes

1:1A Lit *saw in the days*

1:2B Or *sons*

1:4C Or *sons*

1:17D Or *Aid the oppressed*

1:21E Or *prostitute*

1:22F Or *burnished lead*

1:22G Or *wine*

1:25H Or *burnished lead*

1:25I Lit *dross as with lye*

1:26J Lit *judges as at the first*

1:26K Lit *advisers as at the beginning*

Isaiah 2 Notes

2:6A Or *They teem*, or *They partner* ; Hb obscure

2:7B Lit *Its*

2:11C Lit *Mankind's proud eyes*

Isaiah 3 Notes

3:3A Or *skilled craftsman*

3:3B Or *medium*

3:4C Or *mischief-makers*

Isaiah 4 Notes

4:2A Or *plant*

4:5B Or *For glory will be a canopy over all*

Isaiah 5 Notes

5:7A Lit *man*

5:10B Lit *ten-yoke*

5:10C Lit *one bath*

5:10D Lit *one homer*

5:10E Lit *[one] ephah*

5:13F Lit *its*

5:13G Lit *its*

5:21H Lit *clever before their face*

5:30I Lit *its clouds*

Isaiah 6 Notes

6:1A Lit *seam*

6:5B Or *I must be silent*

6:10C Lit *heart*

Isaiah 7 Notes

7:2A Lit *Aram has rested upon Ephraim, his heart*

7:8B Lit *For the*

7:14C Or *virgin is pregnant, will*

7:15D Or *sour milk*

Isaiah 8 Notes

8:1A Hb obscure

8:1B Lit *with the pen of a man*

8:6C Or *and rejoiced over*

8:8D Or *wings*

8:10E Or *For Immanuel*

8:19F Or *gods*

Isaiah 9 Notes

9:16A Or *are confused*

Isaiah 10 Notes

10:13A Or *I brought down their kings*

10:27B Hb obscure

Isaiah 11 Notes

11:4A Lit *the rod*

11:4B Lit *with the breath*

11:15C Or *dry up*

11:15D Lit *the Sea of Egypt*

Isaiah 13 Notes

13:5A Or *earth*

13:10B Or *Orions*

13:17C Lit *who have no regard for*

Isaiah 14 Notes

14:9A Lit *rams*

14:12B Or *Day Star, son of the dawn*

14:13C Or *of Zaphon*

14:23D Or *hedgehogs*

14:29E Or *stock*

Isaiah 15 Notes

15:2A Or *wails over Nebo and over*

15:4B Lit *out, he trembles within himself*

Isaiah 16 Notes

16:4A Or *you; Moab — be a refuge for him*

16:9B Or *Battle cries have fallen*

16:10C Lit *wine*

Isaiah 17 Notes

17:4A Lit *and the fat of his flesh*

Isaiah 18 Notes

18:1A Or *of sailing ships*

18:2B Hb obscure

Isaiah 19 Notes

19:6A Or *wilt*, or *become black*

19:10B Or *foundations*

19:11C Lit *a son*

19:11D Lit *a son of ancient*

Isaiah 20 Notes

20:2A Lit *off the sackcloth from your loins*

Isaiah 21 Notes

21:3A Lit *Therefore my loins are*

21:4B Lit *my twilight*

Isaiah 22 Notes

22:4A Lit *of the daughter of my*

22:5B Or *Vision — a tearing down of a wall*, or *Vision — Kir raged* ; Hb obscure

22:6C Lit *chariots of man*

22:14D Lit *will not until you die*

22:17-18E Hb obscure

Isaiah 23 Notes

23:1A Hb *Kittim*

23:10B Or *longer any harbor*

Isaiah 24 Notes

24:11A Lit *streets she cries*

24:16B Hb obscure

Isaiah 25 Notes

25:5A Lit *In*

25:6B Lit *wine, fat full of marrow*

25:10C Or *trampled under Him*

Isaiah 26 Notes

26:16A Hb obscure

26:19B Lit *live; my body they*

26:19C Lit *For your dew is a dew of lights*

Isaiah 27 Notes

27:8A Hb obscure

Isaiah 28 Notes

28:9A Or *He*

28:9B Or *He*

28:9C Lit *Those*

28:9D Lit *Those*

28:10E Hb obscure

28:13F Hb obscure

28:16G Lit *will not hurry*

28:19H Or *The understanding of the message will cause sheer terror*

Isaiah 29 Notes

29:1A Or *Altar Hearth*, or *Lion of God* ; Hb obscure

29:2B Or *Altar Hearth*, or *Lion of God* ; Hb obscure

29:5C Lit *foreigners*

29:10D Lit *you a spirit of*

29:11E Lit *If one gives it to one who knows the document, saying, "Read this, please"*

29:12F Lit *who does not know the document, saying, "Read this, please"*

29:13G Lit *their mouth and honor Me with its lips*

Isaiah 30 Notes

30:4A Or *Judah's*

30:6B Or *Southland*

30:20C Or *teachers*

30:20D Or *themselves*

30:20E Or *teachers*

30:27F Lit *the name Yahweh*

30:27G Hb obscure

Isaiah 32 Notes

32:19A Hb obscure

Isaiah 33 Notes

33:15A Lit *to bloods*

33:15B Lit *eyes from seeing evil*

33:18C Lit *counter*

33:18D Lit *weigher*

33:18E Lit *who counts towers*

Isaiah 34 Notes

34:3A Or *melt*, or *dissolve*

34:7B Or *will go*

34:7C Or *will drink its fill of*

34:11D Or *The pelican*

34:11E Or *the hedgehog*

34:15F Or *The arrow snake*, or *The owl*

Isaiah 35 Notes

35:1A Or *meadow saffron*

Isaiah 36 Notes

36:4A Lit *What is this trust that you trust*

36:11B Lit *Judahite*

36:13C Lit *Judahite*

36:16D Lit *a blessing*

Isaiah 37 Notes

37:22A Lit *behind you*

37:24B Lit *by the hand of*

Isaiah 38 Notes

38:1A Lit *Command your house*

38:1B Lit *live*

38:3C Lit *what is good in Your eyes*

38:5D Lit *days*

38:7E Lit *this thing*

38:7F Lit *said*

38:8G Lit *And the sun*

38:10H Lit *quiet*

38:10I Lit *days*

38:12J Lit *thrum*

38:20K Lit *to*

Isaiah 40 Notes

40:2A Lit *Speak to the heart of*

40:5B Lit *flesh*

40:7C Or *wind*, or *Spirit*

40:7D Lit *it*

40:13E Or *measured*, or *comprehended*

40:20F Or *who is too poor for such an offering*, or *who chooses mulberry wood as a votive gift* ; Hb obscure

40:26G Lit *Lift up your eyes on high*

Isaiah 41 Notes

41:2A Hb obscure

41:9B Or *seized*

41:27C Lit *First to Zion*

Isaiah 42 Notes

42:5A Lit *spirit*

42:6B Or *you by [My] righteousness* ; lit *you in righteousness*

42:10C Lit *their*

42:19D Hb obscure

42:24E Lit *to loot*

42:25F Lit *he did not put on heart*

Isaiah 43 Notes

43:12A Lit *not a foreigner*

43:12B Or *that*

43:14C Or *will break down all their bars*

43:14D Hb obscure

Isaiah 44 Notes

44:2A Lit *from the womb, and He*

44:7B Lit *declare them —*

44:14C Lit *To cut down for himself*

44:18D Lit *They*

44:18E Or *for their eyes are shut*

44:20F Or *He shepherds*

Isaiah 45 Notes

45:1A Lit *unloosen the loins*

45:5B Lit *gird*

45:9C Lit *a clay pot with clay pots of the ground*

45:9D Or *making? Your work has no hands.*

45:11E Or *Me the coming things about*

45:14F Lit *pray*

45:21G Lit *and approach*

Isaiah 46 Notes

46:8A Hb obscure

Isaiah 47 Notes

47:3A Hb obscure

47:11B Or *to atone for it*

47:13C Lit *dividers of the heavens*

47:14D Lit *hand*

Isaiah 48 Notes

48:1A Lit *have come from the waters of*

48:4B Lit *is an iron sinew*

48:10C Or *chosen*

48:14D Lit *among them*

Isaiah 49 Notes

49:1A Or *Islands*

49:7B Or *by the nation*

49:7C Lit *princes and they*

49:12D Lit *sea*

49:18E Lit *all of them*

49:21F Lit *where are they*

49:23G Lit *princesses*

Isaiah 50 Notes

50:8A Lit *us stand*

50:8B Lit *Who is lord of My judgment*

Isaiah 51 Notes

51:5A Or *islands*

51:5B Lit *arm*

51:6C Or *die in like manner*

51:14D Hb obscure

Isaiah 52 Notes

52:4A Or *them at last*, or *them for nothing*

52:13B Or *will be successful*

52:15C Or *startle*

Isaiah 53 Notes

53:1A Or *believed our report*

53:3B Lit *And like a hiding of faces from Him*

53:6C Or *has placed on Him* ; lit *with*

53:8D Or *and as for His generation, who considered [Him]?*

53:10E Or *Him; He made Him sick.*

53:10F Or *If*

53:12G Or *Him with*

53:12H Or *receive with*

Isaiah 54 Notes

54:11A Lit *in antimony*

54:11B Or *lapis lazuli*

54:12C Lit *suns* ; perhaps *shields* ; Ps 84:11

54:17D Lit *refute every tongue*

Isaiah 55 Notes

55:2A Lit *enjoy fatness*

Isaiah 56 Notes

56:10A Or *His*, or *Its*

Isaiah 57 Notes

57:1A Or *away because*

57:3B Lit *and she acted as a prostitute*

57:8C Lit *you cut*

57:8D Lit *hand*

57:10E Lit *found life of your hand*

57:17F Lit *him; hiding and I am angry*

57:19G Lit *creating fruit of the lips*

Isaiah 58 Notes

58:1A Lit *with throat*

58:7B Lit *not hide yourself from*

58:9C Lit *yoke from your midst*

58:12D Lit *foundations generation and generation*

58:13E Lit *keep your foot from*

58:13F Lit *or speak a word*

Isaiah 60 Notes

60:5A Lit *expand*

60:6B Lit *cover you*

60:13C Lit *glorify the place of My feet*

Isaiah 61 Notes

61:1A Lit *bind up*

61:3B Lit *a dim spirit*

Isaiah 62 Notes

62:4A Or *Hephzibah*

62:4B Or *Beulah*

62:5C Lit *and the rejoicing of the groom*

62:12D Lit *will call them*

Isaiah 63 Notes

63:1A Or *righteousness*

63:4B Lit *For day of vengeance in My heart*

63:4C Or *blood revenge*

63:11D Or *he*, or *they*

63:14E Lit *him*

63:15F Lit *The agitation of Your inward parts*

63:17G Lit *our heart from fearing*

63:18H Or *Your people possessed Your holy place*

Isaiah 64 Notes

64:5A Lit *angry; in them continually and we will be saved* ; Hb obscure

64:6B Lit *menstrual*

64:7C Lit *melt by the hand*

64:11D Or *glorious* ; Is 60:7

Isaiah 65 Notes

65:6A Lit *repay into their lap*

65:7B Lit *reward into their lap*

65:8C Or *there's a blessing*

65:20D Lit *her, no longer infant of days*

65:25E Lit *as one*

Isaiah 66 Notes

66:2A Lit *broken*

66:12B Or *glory*

66:14C Lit *your bones*

66:17D Hb obscure

Jeremiah 2 Notes

2:6A Or *shadow of death*

2:10B Lit *to the islands of Kittim*

2:14C Lit *born of a house*

2:18D Lit *of Shihor*

2:24E Lit *donkey taught*

2:24F Lit *her month*

2:31G Or *We have taken control*, or *We can roam*

2:37H Lit *with them*

Jeremiah 3 Notes

3:3A Lit *have a prostitute's forehead*

3:9B Lit *From the lightness of*

3:12C Lit *not cause My face to fall on you*

3:15D Lit *shepherds according to My heart*

3:20E Lit *friend*

Jeremiah 4 Notes

4:1A Or *Repent*

4:2B Or *will bless themselves*

4:10C Lit *sword touches*

4:11D Lit *to the daughter of My*

4:12E Lit *comes for Me*

4:19F Lit *My inner parts, my inner parts*

4:19G Lit *the walls of*

Jeremiah 5 Notes

5:7A Or *adultery and trooped to the*, or *adultery and lodged at the* ; Hb obscure

5:8B Lit *well-equipped* ; Hb obscure

5:8C Lit *early-rising* ; Hb obscure

5:12D Lit *He does not exist*

5:21E Lit *without heart*

5:26F Hb obscure

Jeremiah 6 Notes

6:2A Or *silence*

6:7B Or *well keeps its water fresh, so she keeps her evil fresh*

6:10C Or *and bear witness*

6:11D Lit *with fullness of days*

6:24E Lit *and our hands fail*

6:26F Lit *Daughter of My*

Jeremiah 7 Notes

7:5A Lit *justly between a man and his neighbor*

7:13B Lit *you rising early and speaking*

7:25C Lit *you, each day rising early and sending*

7:26D Lit *but stiffened their neck*

7:28E Or *Faithfulness*

7:29F Lit *off your consecration*

7:31G Lit *of the fireplace*

7:31H Lit *command, and it did not arise on My heart*

7:32I Lit *They will bury in Topheth*

Jeremiah 8 Notes

8:7A Hb obscure

8:11B Lit *of the daughter of My*

8:13C Lit *Gathering I will end them*

8:14D Or *there be silenced*

8:14E Or *silenced*

8:19F Lit *of the daughter of my*

8:21G Lit *of the daughter of my*

8:22H Lit *of the daughter of my*

Jeremiah 9 Notes

9:1A Lit *slain among the daughter of my*

9:7B Lit *of the daughter of My*

9:20C Lit *Your ears must receive*

9:26D Or *who live in distant places*

Jeremiah 10 Notes

10:1A Or *against*

10:9B Or *Ophir*

10:13C Lit *At His giving of the voice*

10:17D Lit *bundle*

Jeremiah 11 Notes

11:7A Lit *today, rising early and warning*

11:19B Or *pet*

11:19C Lit *bread*

11:20D Lit *kidneys*

Jeremiah 12 Notes

12:2A Lit *are near in their mouth*

12:2B Lit *kidneys*

12:5C Or *you are secure*

12:9D Hb obscure

Jeremiah 13 Notes

13:1A Lit *around your waist*

13:4B Lit *wearing around your waist*

13:16C Or *brings a shadow of death*

13:22D Lit *your heels have suffered violence*

13:24E Lit *them*

Jeremiah 14 Notes

14:3A Lit *little ones*

Jeremiah 15 Notes

15:3A Lit *families*

15:11B Lit *free for good*

15:15C Lit *In the slowness of Your anger*

Jeremiah 16 Notes

16:5A Lit *house of mourning*

16:13B Or *compassion*

Jeremiah 17 Notes

17:3A Lit *plunder, your high places because of sin*

17:10B Lit *kidneys*

17:18C Lit *double*

Jeremiah 18 Notes

18:3A Lit *pair of stones*

18:16B Lit *hissing*

18:18C Lit *let's strike him with the tongue*

18:21D Lit *by death*

Jeremiah 19 Notes

19:3A Lit *shudder their ears* ; 1Sm 3:11; 2Kg 21:12

19:5B Lit *mentioned, and it did not arise on My heart*

Jeremiah 20 Notes

20:10A Hb *Magor-missabib* ; Jr 20:3

20:10B Lit *Every man of my peace*

20:12C Lit *kidneys*

Jeremiah 21 Notes

21:2A Lit *Nebuchadrezzar*

21:10B Lit *set My face*

Jeremiah 22 Notes

22:14A Lit *My windows*

22:20B Or *friends*, or *allies*

22:22C Lit *will shepherd*

22:22D Or *friends*, or *allies*

Jeremiah 23 Notes

23:10A Lit *Their manner of running*

23:15B Or *pollution*

23:36C Or *longer remember*

Jeremiah 25 Notes

25:3A Lit *you; rising early and speaking*

25:4B Lit *prophets, rising early and sending*

25:4C Lit *even inclined your ears*

25:5D Lit *his*

25:16E Or *vomit*

25:23F Or *who live in distant places*

25:28G Or *When*

Jeremiah 26 Notes

26:5A Lit *you, rising early and sending*

26:19B Or *and appease the LORD*

26:23C Lit *the sons of the people*

Jeremiah 27 Notes

27:5A Lit *to whomever is upright in My eyes*

27:11B Lit *work*

Jeremiah 29 Notes

29:14A Or *will end your captivity*

29:19B Lit *prophets, rising up early and sending*

29:25C Lit *Because you*

Jeremiah 30 Notes

30:3A Or *will end the captivity*

30:18B Or *certainly end the captivity*

Jeremiah 31 Notes

31:14A Lit *fatness*

31:22B Or *new on earth*

31:22C Or *woman*

31:22D Or *female surrounds*, or *female courts* ; Hb obscure

31:23E Or *I end their captivity*

Jeremiah 32 Notes

32:4A Lit *His mouth will speak with his mouth*

32:33B Lit *them, rising up early and teaching*

32:35C Lit *them, and it did not arise on My heart*

32:44D Or *will end their captivity*

Jeremiah 33 Notes

33:6A Or *fragrance* ; Hb obscure

33:7B Or *will end the captivity*

33:11C Or *will end the captivity*

33:26D Or *Instead, I will end their captivity*

Jeremiah 34 Notes

34:3A Lit *and his mouth will speak to your mouth*

34:5B Lit *Alas, lord*

34:14C Or *who was sold*

Jeremiah 35 Notes

35:14A Lit *you, rising up early and speaking*

35:15B Lit *Rising up early and sending*

Jeremiah 36 Notes

36:4A Lit *From Jeremiah's mouth*

36:6B Lit *wrote from my mouth*

36:17C Lit *From his mouth*

36:18D Lit *From his mouth*

36:23E Lit *columns, he would tear it*

36:27F Lit *written from Jeremiah's mouth*

36:32G Lit *it from Jeremiah's mouth*

Jeremiah 37 Notes

37:4A Lit *was coming in and going out*

37:10B Lit *the pierced*

Jeremiah 38 Notes

38:11A Or *treasury*

38:21B Or *promise* ; lit *word*

38:22C Or *wives*

38:22D Lit *The men of your peace*

38:22E Or *incited*

38:28F Or *captured. This is what happened when Jerusalem was captured:*

Jeremiah 39 Notes

39:5A Lit *Arabah*

Jeremiah 40 Notes

40:4A Lit *Babylon, stop*

40:10B Lit *to stand*

Jeremiah 42 Notes

42:16A Lit *will cling after you*

Jeremiah 43 Notes

43:12A Or *will wrap himself in the land of Egypt as a shepherd wraps himself in*

43:13B Or *Beth-shemesh*

Jeremiah 44 Notes

44:4A Lit *prophets, rising up early and sending*

44:14B Lit *lifting up their soul*

Jeremiah 45 Notes

45:1A Lit *scroll from Jeremiah's mouth*

45:3B Lit *I labored in my*

Jeremiah 46 Notes

46:4A Or *mount up, riders*

46:22B Lit *Her sound, she will go like a snake*

Jeremiah 47 Notes

47:3A Lit *because of laziness of hands*

Jeremiah 48 Notes

48:5A Lit *Luhith, weeping goes up with weeping*

48:6B Or *like Aroer* ; Is 17:2; Jr 48:19

48:9C Hb obscure

48:10D Or *negligently*

48:15E Or *Moab is destroyed; he has come up against its city*

48:41F Or *Kerioth has*

48:47G Or *will end the captivity*

Jeremiah 49 Notes

49:3A Or *sheep pens*

49:4B Or *about your strength, your ebbing strength*

49:6C Or *will end the captivity*

49:16D Lit *Your horror*

49:19E Lit *pride*

49:35F Lit *first*

49:39G Or *will end the captivity*

Jeremiah 50 Notes

50:3A Lit *escape; they will walk*

50:12B Lit *Look! The last of*

50:26C Lit *from the end*

50:38D Or *of dreaded gods*

50:39E Or *desert demons*

50:44F Lit *pride*

50:44G Lit *them*

Jeremiah 51 Notes

51:1A Or *stir up the spirit of a destroyer*

51:1B Lit *heart of my adversaries*

51:3C Hb obscure

51:16D Lit *At His giving of the voice*

51:23E Lit *yoke*

51:27F Hb obscure

51:34G Lit *has rinsed me off*

Jeremiah 52 Notes

52:11A Lit *in a house of guards*

52:12B Lit *Jerusalem; he stood before*

52:21C Lit *18 cubits*

52:21D Lit *12 cubits*

52:22E Lit *five cubits*

52:25F Lit *seven men who look on the king's face*

Lamentations 1 Notes

1:3A Or *because of*

1:8B Or *become impure*

1:14C Or *The yoke of my transgressions is bound* ; Hb obscure

1:15D Or *has announced an appointed time*

1:16E Lit *my eye, my eye flows*

1:20F Lit *is turned within me*

Lamentations 2 Notes

2:4A Lit *killed all the delights of the eye* ; Ezk 24:16

2:6B Lit *booth*

2:9C Or *the law*

2:11D Lit *My liver is poured out on the ground*

2:15E Lit *hiss*

2:18F Lit *and the daughter of your*

2:20G Or *infants in a healthy condition* ; Hb obscure

2:22H Or *terrors*

2:22I Or *I bore healthy* ; Hb obscure

Lamentations 3 Notes

3:10A Lit *is to me*

3:16B Or *and trampled me*

3:18C Or *splendor*

3:19D Or *I remember*

3:34E Or *earth*

3:52F Or *Those who were my enemies for no reason*

3:53G Or *They ended my life in* ; Hb obscure

3:62H Lit *lips*

3:65I Or *them an obstinate heart* ; Hb obscure

3:66J Lit *under the LORD's heavens*

Lamentations 4 Notes

4:1A Or *The sacred gems*

4:7B Lit *bones*

4:7C Or *lapis lazuli*

4:20D Lit *nostrils*

4:22E Or *not deport you again*

Lamentations 5 Notes

5:6A Lit *We gave the hand to*

5:10B Or *black* ; Hb obscure

Ezekiel 1 Notes

1:12A Or *spirit*

1:20B Or *spirit*

1:26C Or *lapis lazuli*

1:26D Lit *expanse that was over their head*

Ezekiel 2 Notes

2:3A Or *Israelites [and] to*

2:4B Lit *hard of face*

Ezekiel 3 Notes

3:3A Lit *feed your belly*

Ezekiel 4 Notes

4:4A Or *punishment*

4:10B Lit *20 shekels*

4:10C Or *it at set times*

4:11D Lit *hin*

Ezekiel 5 Notes

5:10A Lit *you*

Ezekiel 6 Notes

6:6A Hb obscure

6:12B Or *besieged*

Ezekiel 7 Notes

7:7A Hb obscure

7:13B Lit *sold, while still in life is their life*

7:20C Or *They turned their beautiful ornaments into objects of pride, and*

Ezekiel 9 Notes

Ezekiel 10 Notes

10:1A Or *lapis lazuli*

10:11B Lit *go after it*

Ezekiel 11 Notes

11:3A Or *The time is not near to build houses.*

11:15B Or *own brothers, your relatives*

11:19C Lit *flesh*

Ezekiel 12 Notes

12:10A Lit *are among them*

12:19B Lit *its*

Ezekiel 13 Notes

13:17A Lit *set your face*

Ezekiel 14 Notes

14:7A Lit *Me for himself*

Ezekiel 16 Notes

16:4A Hb obscure

16:7B Or *matured and developed the loveliest of ornaments*

16:15C Hb obscure

16:16D Hb obscure

16:47E Lit *they in all your ways*

16:50F Or *them as you have seen*

Ezekiel 17 Notes

17:5A Hb obscure

Ezekiel 19 Notes

19:9A Or *put him in a cage*

19:11B Or *thick foliage*

19:14C Lit *from the branch of its parts*

Ezekiel 20 Notes

20:5A Lit *I lifted My hand*

20:6B Lit *lifted My hand*

20:15C Lit *lifted My hand*

20:23D Lit *lifted My hand*

20:28E Lit *lifted My hand*

20:42F Lit *lifted My hand*

Ezekiel 21 Notes

21:4A Lit *off from you*

21:6B Lit *with broken loins*

21:10C Hb obscure

21:13D Hb obscure

21:14E Or *penetrates*

21:15F Hb obscure

21:15G Hb obscure

21:22H Lit *The divination for*

21:22I Lit *rams, open the mouth in*

21:23J Lit *them*

21:25K Lit *come in the time of the punishment of the end*

21:26L Lit *This not this*

21:27M Or *comes to whom it rightfully belongs, and I will give it to Him*

21:29N Lit *come in the time of the punishment of the end*

Ezekiel 22 Notes

22:26A Lit *close their eyes from*

Ezekiel 23 Notes

23:16A Lit *of her eyes*

23:32B Or *It will bring*

23:42C Or *Sabeans*

23:46D Or *I will summon*

Ezekiel 24 Notes

24:5A Lit *bones*

24:7B Lit *For her blood*

24:10C Or *and stir the broth*

24:12D Hb obscure

24:17E Lit *men*

24:22F Lit *men*

Ezekiel 25 Notes

25:9A Lit *with the cities, with its*

25:16B Lit *the seacoast*

Ezekiel 26 Notes

26:8A Lit *ramp against you*

26:17B Lit *and all her inhabitants who put their terror on all her inhabitants* ; Hb obscure

26:20C Lit *the lower parts of the earth*

Ezekiel 27 Notes

27:9A Lit *sailors were with*

27:11B Or *quivers* ; Hb obscure

27:13C Lit *souls of men*

27:16D Hb obscure

27:16E Hb obscure

27:16F Hb obscure

27:17G Or *resin* ; Hb obscure

27:18H Or *and wool from Zahar*

27:19I Or *Dan*

27:19J Hb obscure

27:21K Lit *trading*

27:24L Hb obscure

27:25M Or *and very glorious*

27:27N Lit *with all your assembly among you*

27:32O Hb obscure

27:36P Lit *hiss*

Ezekiel 28 Notes

28:2A Lit *Because your*

28:12B Or *sealer*

28:12C Hb obscure

28:13D Hb obscure

28:13E Or *lapis lazuli*

28:13F Or *malachite*, or *garnet*

28:13G Or *beryl*

28:14H Or *With an anointed guardian cherub*

28:16I Or *and the guardian cherub banished you*

28:23J Or *within her by the sword*

28:24K Lit *longer have*

Ezekiel 29 Notes

29:3A Or *crocodile*

29:12B Or *Egypt the most desolate of*

29:12C Or *be the most desolate of*

Ezekiel 30 Notes

30:5A Or *all Arabia*

30:5B Lit *Cub* ; Hb obscure

30:7C Or *be the most desolate of*

30:7D Or *will be the most ruined of*

30:10E Or *pomp*, or *wealth*

30:15F Or *pomp*, or *wealth*

30:16G Or *foes daily*

30:17H Or *and the women* ; lit *and they*

30:18I Or *Egypt*

Ezekiel 31 Notes

31:3A Or *thick foliage*

31:10B Or *thick foliage*

31:10C Lit *its heart*

31:14D Or *thick foliage*

31:15E Or *I covered it with the underground deep*

31:17F Lit *arm*

Ezekiel 32 Notes

32:2A Or *Lion of the nations, you are destroyed;*

32:2B Lit *their*

32:18C Lit *the lower parts of the earth*

32:24D Lit *the lower parts of the earth*

32:26E Lit *Meshech-tubal*

32:27F Or *Do they not . . . heads?*

Ezekiel 33 Notes

33:5A Lit *on him*

33:24B Lit *these*

33:31C Lit *you like the coming of a people*

Ezekiel 34 Notes

34:10A Lit *their hand*

34:26B Lit *season; they will be showers*

Ezekiel 36 Notes

36:5A Lit *gave*

36:5B Or *contempt, to empty it of* ; Hb obscure

36:7C Lit *lift up My hand*

36:26D Lit *stone from your flesh*

36:37E Lit *flock of people*

36:38F Lit *the flock of consecrated things, as the flock*

Ezekiel 37 Notes

37:9A Or *wind*, or *spirit*

37:10B Or *wind*, or *spirit*

Ezekiel 38 Notes

38:2A Or *the prince of Rosh,*

38:8B Lit *from the sword*

38:13C Lit *young lions*, or *villages*

38:18D Lit *up in My anger*

Ezekiel 39 Notes

39:1A Or *Gog, prince of Rosh,*

39:11B Hb obscure

39:14C Or *basis, some to pass through the land, and with them some to bury those*

39:26D Lit *will bear*

39:28E Lit *behind there any longer*

Ezekiel 40 Notes

40:5A Lit *six cubits by the cubit and a handbreadth*

40:5B Lit *was one rod*

40:5C Lit *was one rod*

40:7D Lit *was one rod*

40:7E Lit *and one rod*

40:7F Lit *five cubits*

40:7G Lit *was one rod*

40:9H Lit *eight cubits*

40:9I Lit *two cubits*

40:11J Lit *10 cubits*

40:11K Lit *length*

40:11L Lit *13 cubits*

40:12M Lit *one cubit*

40:12N Lit *six cubits*

40:13O Lit *25 cubits*

40:14P Lit *60 cubits*

40:14Q Hb obscure

40:15R Lit *50 cubits*

40:19S Lit *100 cubits*

40:21T Lit *50 cubits*

40:21U Lit *25 cubits*

40:23V Lit *100 cubits*

40:25W Lit *50 cubits*

40:25X Lit *25 cubits*

40:27Y Lit *100 cubits*

40:29Z Lit *50 cubits*

40:29A Lit *25 cubits*

40:30B Lit *five cubits*

40:33C Lit *50 cubits*

40:33D Lit *25 cubits*

40:36E Lit *50 cubits*

40:36F Lit *25 cubits*

40:42G Lit *one and a half cubits*

40:42H Lit *one cubit*

40:43I Lit *one handbreadth*

40:43J Or *ledges*

40:47K Lit *100 cubits*

40:48L Lit *five cubits*

40:48M Lit *14 cubits*

40:48N Lit *three cubits*

40:49O Lit *20 cubits*

40:49P Lit *12 cubits*

Ezekiel 41 Notes

41:1A Lit *six cubits*

41:2B Lit *10 cubits*

41:2C Lit *five cubits*

41:2D Lit *40 cubits*

41:2E Lit *20 cubits*

41:3F Lit *two cubits*

41:3G Lit *six cubits*

41:3H Lit *seven cubits*

41:4I Lit *20 cubits*

41:5J Lit *six cubits*

41:5K Lit *four cubits*

41:6L Lit *another three and 30 times*

41:7M Hb obscure

41:8N Lit *a full rod of six cubits of a joint* ; Hb obscure

41:9O Lit *five cubits*

41:10P Lit *20 cubits*

41:11Q Lit *five cubits*

41:12R Lit *70 cubits*

41:12S Lit *five cubits*

41:12T Lit *90 cubits*

41:13U Lit *100 cubits*

41:15V Or *ledges*

41:21-22W Or *and in front of the sanctuary was something that looked like* [22] *an altar*

41:22X Lit *three cubits*

41:22Y Lit *two cubits*

41:25Z Hb obscure

41:26A Hb obscure

Ezekiel 42 Notes

42:2A Lit *100 cubits*

42:2B Lit *50 cubits*

42:3C Lit *20 [cubits]*

42:4D Lit *10 cubits*

42:4E Lit *100 cubits*

42:7F Lit *50 cubits*

42:8G Lit *100 cubits*

42:12H Or *protective* ; Hb obscure

42:16I Lit *500 in rods*

42:16J Lit *rod all around*

42:17K Lit *500 in rods*

42:17L Lit *rod all around*

42:18M Lit *500 in rods*

42:18N Lit *rod all around*

42:19O Lit *500 in rods*

42:19P Lit *rod all around*

Ezekiel 43 Notes

43:7A Or *monuments*

43:9B Or *monuments*

43:13C Lit *in cubits (a cubit being a cubit plus a handbreadth)*

43:13D Lit *one cubit*

43:13E Lit *one span*

43:14F Lit *two cubits*

43:14G Lit *one cubit*

43:14H Lit *four cubits*

43:15I Hb obscure

43:15J Lit *four cubits*

43:16K Lit *12 cubits*

43:17L Lit *14 cubits*

43:17M Lit *one-half cubit*

43:17N Lit *one cubit*

43:26O Lit *will fill its hands*

Ezekiel 44 Notes

44:12A Lit *I lifted My hand*

Ezekiel 45 Notes

45:1A Lit *25,000 [cubits]*

45:2B Lit *square all around*

45:2C Lit *500 by 500 [cubits]*

45:2D Lit *50 cubits*

45:3E Lit *this measured [portion]*

45:3F Lit *25,000 [cubits]*

45:3G Lit *10,000 [cubits]*

45:3H Lit *be*

45:5I Lit *25,000 [cubits]*

45:5J Lit *10,000 [cubits]*

45:6K Lit *5,000 [cubits]*

45:6L Lit *25,000 [cubits]*

45:9M Lit *Enough of you*

45:10N Lit *an honest ephah*

45:10O Lit *and an honest bath*

45:11P Lit *the ephah*

45:11Q Lit *the bath*

45:11R Lit *one-tenth of a homer*

45:11S Lit *one-tenth of a homer*

45:11T Lit *be [based] on the homer*

45:13U Lit *One-sixth of an ephah*

45:13V Lit *a homer*

45:14W Lit *oil, the bath, the oil*

45:14X Lit *be a tenth of the bath from the*

45:14Y Lit *10 baths, a homer*

45:24Z Lit *an ephah*

45:24A Lit *a hin*

Ezekiel 46 Notes

46:5A Lit *an ephah*

46:5B Lit *a hin*

46:7C Lit *an ephah*

46:7D Lit *a hin*

46:9E Or *the festivals*

46:11F Lit *an ephah*

46:11G Lit *a hin*

46:14H Lit *one-sixth of an ephah*

46:14I Lit *one-third of a hin*

46:22J Hb obscure

46:22K Lit *40 [cubits]*

46:22L Lit *30 [cubits]*

46:23M Or *a row*

Ezekiel 47 Notes

47:3A Lit *1,000 cubits*

47:4B Lit *1,000 cubits*

47:4C Lit *1,000 cubits*

47:5D Lit *1,000 cubits*

47:8E Or *enters the sea, being brought out to the sea* ; Hb obscure

47:14F Lit *lifted My hand*

47:22G Lit *They will be to you*

Ezekiel 48 Notes

48:8A Lit *25,000 [cubits]*

48:9B Lit *25,000 [cubits]*

48:9C Lit *10,000 [cubits]*

48:10D Lit *25,000 [cubits]*

48:10E Lit *10,000 [cubits]*

48:10F Lit *10,000 [cubits]*

48:10G Lit *25,000 [cubits]*

48:13H Lit *25,000 [cubits]*

48:13I Lit *10,000 [cubits]*

48:13J Lit *25,000 [cubits]*

48:13K Lit *10,000 [cubits]*

48:15L Lit *5,000 [cubits]*

48:15M Lit *25,000 [cubits]*

48:16N Lit *4,500 [cubits]*

48:16O Lit *4,500 [cubits]*

48:16P Lit *4,500 [cubits]*

48:16Q Lit *4,500 [cubits]*

48:17R Lit *250 [cubits]*

48:17S Lit *250 [cubits]*

48:17T Lit *250 [cubits]*

48:17U Lit *250 [cubits]*

48:18V Lit *10,000 [cubits]*

48:18W Lit *10,000 [cubits]*

48:20X Lit *25,000 [cubits]*

48:20Y Lit *25,000 [cubits]*

48:21Z Lit *25,000 [cubits]*

48:21A Lit *border, and to the west,*

48:21B Lit *25,000 [cubits]*

48:30C Lit *4,500 [cubits]*

48:32D Lit *4,500 [cubits]*

48:33E Lit *4,500 [cubits]*

48:34F Lit *4,500 [cubits]*

48:35G Lit *18,000 [cubits]*

Daniel 1 Notes

1:1A Or *Nebuchadrezzar*

1:2B Lit *Shinar*

1:2C Or *gods*

1:3D Or *his eunuchs*

1:5E Lit *to stand before the king*

1:10F Lit *would make my head guilty*

1:15G Lit *fatter of flesh*

1:20H Lit *hands*

Daniel 2 Notes

2:5A Lit *be made into limbs*

2:14B Or *executioners*

2:15C Or *urgent*

2:23D Lit *matter*

2:29E Lit *happen after this*

2:34F Lit *off not by hands*

2:40G Lit *all these*

2:43H Lit *another in the seed of men*

2:45I Lit *mountain, not by hands*

2:45J Lit *happen after this*

Daniel 3 Notes

3:1A Lit *statue, its height 60 cubits, its width six cubits*

3:5B Or *lyre*

3:5C Or *sambuke*

3:5D Or *pipe*

3:8E Lit *and eat the pieces of*

3:18F Lit *But if not*

3:22G Or *harsh*

3:22H Lit *the flame of the fire*

3:25I Or *of a divine being*

3:27J Lit *fire had not overcome*

3:28K Or *messenger*

Daniel 4 Notes

4:11A Lit *of all the*

4:16B Lit *animal as seven times pass over him*

4:26C Lit *enduring*

Daniel 5 Notes

5:2A Or *When he tasted*

5:2B Or *father*, or *grandfather*

5:5C Lit *part of the hand*

5:5-6D Lit *writing,* [6] *the king's brightness changed*

5:9E Lit *his brightness changed on him*

5:10F Lit *your brightness change*

5:23G Lit *and all your ways belong to Him*

5:26H Or *a mina*

5:27I Or *a shekel*

5:28J Or *half a shekel*

Daniel 6 Notes

6:1A Lit *It was pleasing before Darius*

6:3B Lit *Now this Daniel*

6:18C Hb obscure

6:20D Lit *said to Daniel*

6:24E Lit *had eaten his pieces*

6:28F Or *Darius, even*

Daniel 7 Notes

7:1A Lit *beginning*

7:15B Lit *was distressed in the middle of its sheath*

7:25C Lit *wear out*

7:25D Lit *change times*

7:25E Or *for three and a half years*

7:28F Lit *my brightness changed on me*

Daniel 8 Notes

8:3A Lit *I lifted my eyes and looked*

8:5B Lit *a horn of a vision*

8:23C Lit *have become complete*

8:23D Lit *king, and understanding riddles*

Daniel 9 Notes

9:11A Lit *The curse and the oath*

9:12B Lit *against rulers who ruled us*

9:18C Lit *Stretch out Your ear*

9:25D Or *until an anointed one, a prince*

9:26E Lit *Its*, or *His*

9:26F Or *end of a*

9:27G Or *will enforce a covenant*

9:27H Or *And the desolator will be on the wing of abominations*, or *And the desolator will come on the wings of monsters* (or *of horror*); Hb obscure

Daniel 10 Notes

10:8A Lit *my splendor was turned on me to ruin*

10:9B Lit *a sleep on my face*

10:17C Lit *Can I, a servant of my lord*

10:19D Lit *afraid, man*

Daniel 11 Notes

11:7A Lit *from the shoot of her roots*

11:10B Lit *advance and overflow and pass through*

11:13C Lit *At the end of the times*

11:17D Lit *him the daughter of women*

11:20E Or *not openly*

11:21F Or *come without warning*

11:23G Or *a few people*

11:24H Or *Without warning*

11:28I Or *the Jewish people and religion*

11:29J Lit *but the last*

11:37K Or *God*

11:39L Or *those he acknowledges*

11:41M Lit *the first*

11:43N Lit *Cushites at his steps*

11:45O Or *the seas at*

Daniel 12 Notes

12:7A Lit *raised his right and his left*

Hosea 1 Notes

1:6A Or *Lo-ruhamah*

1:9B Or *Lo-ammi*

1:9C Lit *not be yours*

1:11D Or *and flourish in* ; Hb obscure

Hosea 2 Notes

2:1A Lit *Say to*

2:14B Lit *speak to her heart*

2:16C Or *My master*

2:18D Or *war on the earth*

Hosea 3 Notes

3:2A Lit *silver, a homer of barley, and a lethek of barley*

Hosea 4 Notes

4:4A Hb obscure

4:8B Or *sin offerings*

4:12C Lit *promiscuously from under*

4:18D Lit *Her shields* ; Ps 47:9; 89:18

4:18E Hb obscure

4:19F Lit *wind will bind it in its wings*

Hosea 5 Notes

5:2A Hb obscure

5:5B Lit *against his face*

5:11C Or *follow a command* ; Hb obscure

5:13D Or *to King Yareb*

Hosea 6 Notes

6:5A Or *have cut down the prophets*

6:7B Or *they, as at Adam*, or *they, like men,*

6:11C Or *you. Judah, when I*

Hosea 7 Notes

7:5A Lit *wine — he stretches out his hand to scorners* ; Hb obscure

7:3-7B These vv. may refer to a king's assassination; Hb obscure.

7:10C Lit *against his face*

7:12D Lit *news to*

Hosea 8 Notes

8:4A Lit *themselves that it might be cut off*

8:5B Lit *calf*

8:12C Or *Though I wrote out . . . instruction, they are*

8:13D Hb obscure

Hosea 10 Notes

10:1A Or *ravaged*

10:2B Or *divided*

10:6C Or *to King Yareb*

10:7D Or *will be cut off*

10:7E Or *a stick*

10:11F Lit *will pass over*

Hosea 11 Notes

11:6A Or *devour his empty talkers*, or *devour his limbs* ; Hb obscure

11:9B Or *come into any city* ; Hb obscure

11:12C Or *to the Holy One* ; Hb obscure

Hosea 12 Notes

12:1A Or *feeds on*, or *tends*

12:4B Or *Him*

12:8C Lit *crime which is sin*

Hosea 13 Notes

13:2A Or *Those who make human sacrifices*

13:10B Lit *your*

13:10C Or *judges*

13:13D Lit *he will not present himself at the opening of the womb for sons*

13:14E Or *Should I ransom . . . Should I redeem . . . ?*

13:15F Or *among reeds*

Hosea 14 Notes

14:2A Lit *repay the bulls of our*

Joel 1 Notes

1:11A Or *The farmers are dismayed, the vinedressers wail*

1:17B Or *clods* ; Hb obscure

1:20C Or *animals pant for* ; Hb obscure

Joel 2 Notes

2:3A Lit *consumes*

2:16B Or *elders*

2:23C Or *righteousness*

Joel 3 Notes

3:18A Or *Shittim*

Amos 1 Notes

1:1A Or *the shepherds*

1:2B Or *dry up*

1:5C Lit *gate bars*

1:9D Lit *and did not remember*

Amos 2 Notes

2:13A Or *hinder* ; Hb obscure

Amos 3 Notes

3:12A Or *Israelites will be rescued, those who sit in Samaria on a corner of a bed or a*

3:12B Hb obscure

Amos 4 Notes

4:2A Lit *coming on you*

4:6B Lit *you cleanness of teeth*

4:11C Lit *God*

4:13D Or *his*

Amos 5 Notes

5:8A Or *turns the shadow of death*

5:9B Hb obscure

5:9C Or *stronghold*

5:13D Or *the prudent will perish*

5:16E Lit *will say, "Alas! Alas!"*

5:16F Lit *and those skilled in lamentation*

5:26G Or *you will lift up*

Amos 6 Notes

6:5A Hb obscure

6:5B Or *compose on*

6:10C Lit *His uncle*

6:10D Lit *remove bones*

6:14E Or *from Lebo-hamath*

Amos 7 Notes

7:12A Lit *Eat bread*

7:14B Or *am*

7:14C Or *am*

7:17D Lit *unclean*

Amos 8 Notes

8:3A Or *palace*

8:5B Lit *reduce the ephah and make the shekel great*

8:10C Lit *every loin*

8:14D Or *power*

Amos 9 Notes

9:10A Or *You will not let disaster come near*

9:14B Or *restore My people Israel from captivity*

Obadiah Notes

3A Or *in Sela* ; probably = Petra

4B Or *to build high*

11C Or *forces*

12-14D Or *You should not* throughout vv. 12-14

12E Lit *not make your mouth big*

14F Hb obscure

18G Lit *they*

18H Lit *them*

20I Or *of this host of the Israelites* ; Hb obscure

21J Or *Those who have been delivered*

Jonah 1 Notes

1:2A Or *has come up to*

1:6B Or *God*

1:9C Or *fear*

1:12D Lit *sea that's against you*

1:17E Lit *in the belly of*

Jonah 2 Notes

2:1A Lit *from the belly of*

2:3B Lit *river*

2:5C Or *me, threatening my life*

2:9D Or *Deliverance*

Jonah 3 Notes

3:3A Or *was a great city to God*

3:5B Or *believed God*

3:8C Or *injustice*

3:8D Lit *violence in their hands*

Jonah 4 Notes

4:6A Lit *to deliver him from his evil*

4:11B Or *men*

Micah 1 Notes

1:2A Or *land*

1:3B Or *high places*

1:8C Or *eagle owls* ; lit *daughters of the desert*

1:11D Lit *its standing place* ; Hb obscure

1:15E Lit *glory*

Micah 2 Notes

2:5A Lit *LORD stretching the measuring line by lot*

2:11B Or *spirit*

Micah 3 Notes

3:7A Lit *mustache*

Micah 4 Notes

4:8A Or *flock, Ophel*

4:10B Hb obscure

Micah 5 Notes

5:2A Lit *His going out*

5:2B Or *from ancient times*

5:14C Or *shrines*

Micah 6 Notes

6:5A Or *Shittim*

6:9B Or *attention, you tribe. Who has ordained it?* ; Hb obscure

6:10C Hb obscure

6:14D Hb obscure

6:16E Lit *and its*

6:16F Lit *residents a hissing*

Micah 7 Notes

7:9A Or *righteousness*

7:16B Or *ashamed in spite of*

Nahum 1 Notes

1:2A Lit *is a master of*

1:5B Lit *lifts*

1:8C Lit *her place*

1:10D Hb obscure

1:12E Lit *intact*

1:14F Lit *It will not be sown from your name any longer*

Nahum 2 Notes

2:1A Lit *Strengthen*

2:2B Or *like*

2:7C Hb obscure

2:8D Hb obscure

2:13E Lit *will burn her chariots in smoke*

Nahum 3 Notes

3:8A Or *No-amon*

3:8B Lit *sea from sea*

3:9C Lit *your*

3:11D Or *will be overcome*

3:16E Or *sheds [its skin]*

Habakkuk 1 Notes

1:3A Lit *observe*

1:8B Or *and quicker*

1:9C Hb obscure

1:11D Or *wind, and transgress and incur guilt*

Habakkuk 2 Notes

2:2A Lit *one who reads in it may run*

2:4B Hb obscure

2:4C Or *faithfulness*

2:5D Or *man does not endure* ; Hb obscure

2:9E Or *dynasty*

2:15F Or *venom*

Habakkuk 3 Notes

3:6A Or *surveys*

3:9B Or *set*

3:9C Hb obscure

3:10D Lit *hands*

3:13E Lit *foundation*

3:19F Lit *on my*

Zephaniah 1 Notes

1:9A Hb obscure

1:11B Or *the market district*

1:11C Or *Canaanites*

1:12D Lit *who thicken on their dregs*

Zephaniah 2 Notes

2:1A Or *shameless*

2:14B Lit *every wild animal of a nation*

2:14C Or *the pelican*

2:14D Or *the hedgehog*

2:14E Lit *sing*

2:14F Hb obscure

2:15G Or *hisses*

Zephaniah 3 Notes

3:1A Or *filthy*

3:3B Lit *Her*

3:3C Or *that had nothing to gnaw in*

3:9D Lit *with one shoulder*

3:18E Hb obscure

Haggai 1 Notes

1:5A Lit *Place your heart on*

1:7B Lit *Place your heart on*

1:9C Lit *blew on*

1:10D Or *So above you*

Haggai 2 Notes

2:3A Lit *Is it not in your eyes?*

2:9B Or *The glory of this latter house*

2:16C Hb obscure

Zechariah 1 Notes

2:8A Or *me*

2:8B Or *apple*

2:9C Or *my*

2:9D Or *me*

2:11E Or *me*

Zechariah 3 Notes

3:1A Or *the adversary*

3:4B Lit *He*

Zechariah 4 Notes

4:2A Or *seven lips to*

4:10B Lit *the tin stone*

Zechariah 5 Notes

5:2A Lit *20 cubits*

5:2B Lit *10 cubits*

5:6C Lit *It's an ephah*

Zechariah 6 Notes

6:5A Or *winds*

Zechariah 7 Notes

7:7A Or *prosperous*

Zechariah 9 Notes

9:1A Or *eyes of the LORD are on mankind —*

9:8B Or *house as a guard*

9:9C Or *and has salvation*

9:13D Lit *Javan*

Zechariah 10 Notes

10:3A Lit *male goats*

10:4B Lit *them*

10:4C Lit *also from them the . . ., from them every*

10:11D Lit *He*

Zechariah 11 Notes

11:3A Lit *for the majesty of the Jordan is*

11:16B Lit *young*

11:16C Or *exhausted*

11:17D Lit *be against*

Zechariah 12 Notes

12:10A Or *out the Spirit*

12:10B Or *to*

Zechariah 13 Notes

13:5A Or *sold*

13:6B Lit *wounds between your hands*

13:8C Lit *two-thirds in it*

Zechariah 14 Notes

14:6A Lit *light; the precious things*

14:10B Or *will be inhabited*

14:10C Or *the former gate*

14:15D Lit *be on*

14:18E Lit *family*

14:21F Or *merchant*

Malachi 1 Notes

1:4A Or *will return and build*

1:4B Or *LORD is angry with*

1:5C Or *great over*

1:11D Or *Burnt offerings*

1:11E Or *is great . . . are presented . . . is great*

1:13F Lit *blow at*

1:13G Or *injured*

1:14H Or *Because I am . . . Yahweh of Hosts, My name*

Malachi 2 Notes

2:8A Lit *corrupted*

2:11B Or *profaned what is holy to the LORD*

2:12C Lit *off one waking or answering* ; Hb obscure

2:15D Or *Did the One not make them? So their flesh and spirit belong to Him*, or *No one who does this even has a remnant of the Spirit in him* ; Hb obscure

2:15E Lit *So guard yourselves in your spirit*

2:16F Or *The LORD God of Israel says that He hates divorce and the one who*

2:16G Lit *Therefore, guard yourselves in your spirit*

Malachi 3 Notes

4:2A Or *like stall-fed calves*

4:6B Or *earth*

Matthew 1 Notes

1:1A Or *The book of the genealogy*

1:16B Lit *Mary, from whom was born*

1:21C *Jesus* is the Gk form of the Hb name “Joshua,” which = “The LORD saves” or “Yahweh saves.”

Matthew 2 Notes

2:2A Or *star at its rising*

2:2B Or *to pay Him homage*

2:8C Or *and pay Him homage*

2:9D Or *star . . . at its rising*

2:11E Or *they paid Him homage*

2:16F Lit *were from two years*

Matthew 3 Notes

3:7A Lit *to his baptism*

3:8B Lit *fruit worthy of*

3:11C Or *in*

3:11D Or *to carry*

3:11E Or *in*

Matthew 4 Notes

4:9A Or *and pay me homage*

4:16B Lit *dawned on them*

4:23C Or *every kind of*

Matthew 5 Notes

5:2A Lit *Then opening His mouth*

Matthew 7 Notes

7:28A Lit *had ended these words*

Matthew 8 Notes

8:3A Lit *cleansed*

8:9B Lit *under me*

8:13C Or *that hour* ; lit *very hour*

8:29D Lit *What to us and to You*

Matthew 9 Notes

9:2A Lit *then they*

9:8B Lit *afraid*

9:10C Lit *came, they were reclining* (at the table); at important meals the custom was to recline on a mat at a low table and lean on the left elbow.

9:18D Lit *daughter has now come to the end*

9:21E Or *be delivered*

9:22F Lit *hour*

9:33G Lit *the man who was unable to speak*

9:35H Or *every kind of*

Matthew 10 Notes

10:1A Or *every kind of*

10:4B Lit *the Cananaean*

10:4C *Iscariot* is probably "a man of Kerioth," a town in Judea.

Matthew 12 Notes

12:20A Or *until He has successfully put forth justice*

12:22B Lit *mute*

Matthew 14 Notes

14:3A Or *bound*

14:6B Lit *danced in the middle*

14:14C Lit *Coming out* (of the boat)

14:15D Lit *and the time* (for the evening meal) *has already passed*

14:19E Lit *to recline*

14:24F Lit *already many stadia* ; 1 *stadion* = 600 feet

14:25G Lit *fourth watch of the night* = 3 to 6 a.m.

14:35H Lit *sent into*

Matthew 15 Notes

15:2A Lit *eat bread* = eat a meal

15:23B Lit *she is yelling behind us* or *after us*

15:28C Lit *hour*

Matthew 16 Notes

16:5A Lit *disciples went to the other side*

16:22B Lit *Mercy to You = May God have mercy on You*

Matthew 17 Notes

17:2A Or *transfigured*

17:5B Or *enveloped* ; Ex 40:34-35

17:15C Lit *he is moonstruck* ; thought to be a form of epilepsy

17:18D Lit *rebuked him* or *it*

17:18E Lit *the demon*

17:18F Lit *hour*

17:25G Lit *Jesus anticipated him by saying*

Matthew 18 Notes

18:1A Lit *hour*

Matthew 20 Notes

20:21A Lit *Say*

Matthew 21 Notes

21:41A Lit *him the fruits in their seasons*

Matthew 22 Notes

22:15A Lit *trap Him in [a] word*

22:16B Lit *don't look on the face of men* ; that is, on the outward appearance

22:26C Lit *so until the seven*

22:28D Lit *all had her*

22:36E Lit *is great*

22:46F Lit *answer Him a word*

Matthew 26 Notes

26:43A Lit *because their eyes were weighed down*

26:58B Or *high priest's palace*

26:58C Or *the officers*, or *the servants*

26:58D Lit *end*

26:66E Lit *What does it seem to you?*

26:73F Or *speech*

Matthew 27 Notes

27:6A Lit *the price of blood*

27:22B Lit *"Him — be crucified!"*

27:24C Lit *that it availed nothing*

27:38D Or *revolutionaries*

27:39E Lit *passed by blasphemed* or *were blaspheming*

27:43F Or *if He takes pleasure in Him*

27:45G Lit *From the sixth hour to the ninth hour*

27:45H Or *whole earth*

27:54I Or *the Son of God*

27:65J Or *"Take*

27:66K Lit *stone with the guard*

Matthew 28 Notes

28:12A Lit *After they*

28:14B Lit *this is heard by the governor*

28:14C Lit *will persuade*

Mark 1 Notes

1:4A Or *John the Baptist came*, or *John the Baptizer came*

1:4B Or *a baptism based on repentance*

1:8C Or *in*

1:11D Or *In You I am well pleased*

1:14E Or *gospel*

1:14F Either *from God* or *about God*

1:24G Lit *What to us and to You*

1:42H Lit *made clean*

Mark 2 Notes

2:6A Or *thinking in their hearts*

2:15B Lit *reclining* (at the table); at important meals the custom was to recline on a mat at a low table and lean on the left elbow.

Mark 3 Notes

3:18A Lit *the Cananaean*

3:19B *Iscariot* is probably "a man of Kerioth," a town in Judea.

3:20C Or *eat a meal* ; lit *eat bread*

Mark 5 Notes

5:7A Lit *What to me and to You*

5:7B Or *adjure*

5:23C Lit *My little daughter has it finally* ; = to be at the end of life

Mark 6 Notes

6:5A Lit *miracle*

6:15B Lit *Others said, "A prophet*

6:20C Or *Herod feared*

6:26D Lit *and those reclining at the table*

6:39E Lit *people recline*

6:48F Or *them struggling as they rowed*

6:48G Lit *Around the fourth watch of the night* = 3 to 6 a.m.

6:51H Lit *were astounded in themselves*

Mark 7 Notes

7:31A Or *into*

7:35B Lit *opened, the bond of his tongue was untied*

Mark 9 Notes

9:2A Or *transfigured*

9:15B Or *surprised*

Mark 10 Notes

10:22A Or *he became gloomy*

10:51B Hb for you *my teacher*

Mark 12 Notes

12:13A Lit *trap Him in (a) word*

12:14B Lit *don't look on the face of men* ; that is, on the outward appearance

12:23C Lit *the seven had her as a wife*

12:28D Lit *Which command is first of all?*

12:42E Lit *dropped in two lepta, which is a quadrans* ; the *lepton* was the smallest and least valuable Gk coin in use. The *quadrans*, $^{1}/_{64}$ of a daily wage, was the smallest Roman coin.

Mark 14 Notes

14:11A Or *money* ; in Mt 26:15 it is specified as 30 pieces of silver; see Zch 11:12-13

14:40B Lit *because their eyes were weighed down*

14:54C Or *the officers* ; lit *the servants*

14:54D Lit *light*

14:64E Lit *How does it appear to you?*

14:72F Or *he burst into tears*, or *he broke down*

Mark 15 Notes

15:25A Lit *was the third hour*

15:27B Or *revolutionaries*

15:29C Lit *passed by blasphemed*

15:33D Lit *the sixth hour*

15:33E Or *whole earth*

15:33F Lit *the ninth hour*

15:34G Lit *the ninth hour*

15:39H Or *the Son of God* ; Mk 1:1

Luke 1 Notes

1:1A Or *events that have been accomplished*, or *events most surely believed*

1:4B Or *informed*

1:7C Lit *child*

1:7D Lit *Elizabeth was sterile* or *barren*

1:7E Lit *in their days*

1:12F Lit *and fear fell on him*

1:18G Lit *in her days*

1:34H Lit *since I do not know a man*

1:38I Lit *Look, the Lord's slave*

1:41J Lit *leaped in her abdomen* or *womb*

1:42K Lit *and the fruit of your abdomen* (or *womb*) *is blessed*

1:44L Lit *in my abdomen* or *womb*

1:46M Or *soul magnifies*

1:55N Or *offspring* ; lit *seed*

1:58O Lit *the Lord magnified His mercy with her*

1:71P Lit *the hand*

1:74Q Lit *from the hand of enemies*

Luke 2 Notes

2:1A Or *the whole inhabited world*

2:2B Or *This registration was the first while*, or *This registration was before*

2:9C Or *Lord appeared to*

2:9D Lit *they feared a great fear*

2:10E Or *the whole nation*

2:14F Or *earth to men of good will*

2:19G Lit *these words*

2:21H Or *conceived in the womb*

2:23I Lit *"Every male that opens a womb*

2:23J Lit *be called holy*

2:27K Lit *And in the Spirit, he came into*

2:32L Or *the nations*

2:34M Or *spoken against*

2:35N Or *schemes*

2:36O Lit *in many days*

2:36P Lit *years from her virginity*

2:37Q Or *she was a widow until the age of 84*

2:38R Lit *very hour*

Luke 3 Notes

3:1A Or *ruler*

3:3B Or *baptism based on repentance*

3:5C Lit *be humbled*

3:6D Lit *all flesh*

3:9E Lit *the ax lies at*

3:11F Lit *tunics*

3:15G Or *hearts*

3:16H Or *in*

3:16I Or *in*

Luke 4 Notes

4:2A Lit *were completed*

4:7B Lit *will fall down before me*

4:15C Or *glorified*

4:22D Or *They were testifying against Him*

4:29E Lit *brow*

4:34F Or *Ha!*, or *Ah!*

4:34G Lit *What to us and to You*

Luke 5 Notes

5:2A Lit *boats standing by the lake*

5:9B Lit *For amazement had seized him and all those with him*

5:15C Lit *the word*

5:29D Lit *were reclining* (at the table); at important meals the custom was to recline on a mat at a low table and lean on the left elbow.

Luke 6 Notes

6:20A Lit *Then lifting up His eyes to*

Luke 7 Notes

7:6A Lit *and He already was not far from*

7:8B Lit *under me*

7:14C Or *the bier*

7:16D Or *awe*

7:16E Or *come to help*

7:29F Lit *they justified God*

Luke 8 Notes

8:25A Lit *Who then is this?*

8:28B Lit *What to me and to You*

8:42C Lit *she was dying*

8:47D Lit *she had not escaped notice*

Luke 9 Notes

9:11A Or *healed* ; in this passage, different Gk words are translated as heal. In Eng, "to heal" or "to cure" are synonyms with little distinction in meaning. Technically, we do not heal or cure diseases. People are healed or cured from diseases.

9:12B Lit *When the day began to decline*

9:17C Lit *Then were picked up by them*

9:19D Lit *has risen*

9:31E Or *departure* ; Gk *exodus*

9:32F Lit *were weighed down with sleep*

9:39G Lit *convulsions with foam*

9:39H Or *bruising*, or *mauling*

9:45I Lit *about this statement*

9:51J Lit *He stiffened His face to go* ; Is 50:7

Luke 10 Notes

10:39A Lit *to His word* or *message*

10:40B Or *tell her to help me*

Luke 11 Notes

11:38A Lit *He did not first wash*

Luke 12 Notes

12:1A Or *Meanwhile*, or *At this time*, or *During this period*

Luke 13 Notes

13:11A Lit *had a spirit of disability*

13:11B Or *straighten up completely*

13:12C Or *He summoned her*

13:23D Or *are the saved few?* (in number); lit *are those being saved few?*

Luke 14 Notes

14:1A Lit *eat bread* ; = eat a meal

Luke 17 Notes

17:11A Or *through the middle of*

17:14B Lit *cleansed*

Luke 18 Notes

18:39A Or *those in front rebuked him*

Luke 19 Notes

19:8A Or *I give*

19:8B Or *I pay*

19:48C Lit *people hung on what they heard*

Luke 20 Notes

20:1A Lit *It happened on one of the days*

20:7B Or *know where it was from*

20:20C Or *upright* ; that is, loyal to God’s law

20:20D Lit *catch Him in [a] word*

20:21E Lit *You don’t receive a face*

20:26F Lit *catch Him in [a] word*

20:26G Lit *in front of the people*

20:33H Lit *had her as wife*

Luke 21 Notes

21:2A Lit *two lepta* ; the *lepton* was the smallest and least valuable Gk coin in use.

Luke 22 Notes

22:5A Or *money* ; Mt 26:15 specifies 30 pieces of silver; Zch 11:12-13

22:45B Lit *sleeping from grief*

22:66C Or *council of elders*

Luke 23 Notes

23:8A Or *sign*

23:12B Lit *friends with one another*

23:16C Gk *paideuo*; to discipline or "teach a lesson"; 1Kg 12:11,14 LXX; 2Ch 10:11,14; perhaps a way of referring to the Roman scourging; Lat *flagellatio*

23:39D Or *began to blaspheme*

23:44E Lit *about the sixth hour*

23:44F Or *whole earth*

23:44G Lit *the ninth hour*

23:53H Or *interred*, or *laid*

23:54I Lit *was dawning* ; not in the morning but at sundown Friday

Luke 24 Notes

24:5A Lit *and inclined their faces to the ground*

24:13B Lit *village, which name is*

24:13C Lit *about 60 stadia* ; 1 *stadion* = 600 feet

24:16D Lit *their eyes*

24:34E Gk is specific that this refers to the Eleven and those with them.

John 1 Notes

1:1A The *Word* (Gk *Logos*) is a title for Jesus as the communication and the revealer of God the Father; Jn 1:14,18; Rv 19:13.

1:5B Or *grasp*, or *comprehend,* or *overtake* ; Jn 12:35

1:7C Or *through it* (the light)

1:9D Or *The true light who comes into the world gives light to everyone*, or *The true light enlightens everyone coming into the world.*

1:11E The same Gk adjective is used twice in this verse: the first refers to all that Jesus owned as Creator (*to His own*); the second refers to the Jews (*His own people*).

1:11F The same Gk adjective is used twice in this verse: the first refers to all that Jesus owned as Creator (*to His own*); the second refers to the Jews (*His own people*).

1:12G Or *become*

1:13H Lit *bloods* ; the pl form of *blood* occurs only here in the NT. It may refer either to lineal descent (that is, blood from one's father and mother) or to the OT sacrificial system (that is, the various blood sacrifices). Neither is the basis for birth into the family of God.

1:13I Or *not of human lineage, or of human capacity, or of human volition*

1:14J Or *and dwelt in a tent* ; lit *and tabernacled* ; this word occurs only here in John. A related word, referring to the Festival of Tabernacles, occurs only in 7:2; Ex 40:34-38.

1:14K *Son* is implied from the reference to the Father and from Gk usage.

1:18L Lit *is in the bosom of the Father*

1:26M Or *in*

1:31N Or *in*

1:33O *He* refers to God the Father, who gave John a sign to help him identify the Messiah. Vv. 32-34 indicate that John did not know that Jesus was the Messiah until the Spirit descended upon Him at His baptism.

1:33P Or *in*

1:33Q Or *in*

1:39R Lit *about the tenth hour*. Various methods of reckoning time were used in the ancient world. John probably used a different method from the other 3 Gospels. If John used the same method of time reckoning as the other 3 Gospels, the translation would be: *It was about four in the afternoon.*

1:41S In the NT, the word Messiah translates the Gk word *Christos* ("Anointed One"), except here and in Jn 4:25 where it translates *Messias*.

1:43T Or *he*, referring either to Simon Peter (vv. 41-42) or Andrew (vv. 40-41)

John 2 Notes

2:6A Lit *2 or 3 measures*

2:11B Lit *this beginning of the signs* ; Jn 4:54; 20:30. Seven miraculous signs occur in John's Gospel and are so noted in the headings.

John 3 Notes

3:29A Lit *with joy rejoices*

3:31B Or *of earthly things*

John 4 Notes

4:5A Lit *piece of land*

4:6B Lit *the sixth hour* ; see note at Jn 1:39; an alt. time reckoning would be *noon*

4:9C Or *do not share vessels with*

4:25D In the NT, the word Messiah translates the Gk word *Christos* (“Anointed One”), except here and in Jn 1:41 where it translates *Messias*.

4:39E Lit *because of the woman’s word*

4:41F Lit *because of His word*

4:50G Lit *the word*

4:52H Or *seven in the evening* ; lit *at the seventh hour* ; see note at Jn 1:39; an alt time reckoning would be *at one in the afternoon*

John 5 Notes

5:13A Lit *slipped away, there being a crowd in that place*

John 6 Notes

6:19A Lit *25 or 30 stadia* ; 1 *stadion* = 600 feet

6:60B Lit *hear*

6:71C Lit *Judas, of Simon Iscariot*

John 7 Notes

7:2A Or *Booths*

7:39B Lit *the Spirit was not yet* ; the word *received* is implied from the previous clause.

7:42C Lit *seed*

John 8 Notes

8:11A Or *Sir* ; Jn 4:15,49; 5:7; 6:34; 9:36

8:33B Or *offspring* ; lit *seed* ; Jn 7:42

8:53C Lit *Who do You make Yourself?*

8:59D Or *Jesus hid Himself*

John 9 Notes

9:24A *Give glory to God* was a solemn charge to tell the truth; Jos 7:19.

9:32B Lit *From the age*

John 10 Notes

10:22A Or *Hanukkah*, also called *the Feast of Lights* ; this festival commemorated the rededication of the temple in 164 B.C.

10:24B Lit *How long are you taking away our life?*

10:24C Or *openly*, or *publicly*

John 11 Notes

11:18A Lit *15 stadia* ; 1 *stadion* = 600 feet

11:33B The Gk word is very strong and probably indicates Jesus' anger against sin's tyranny and death.

11:38C See note at 11:33.

11:39D Lit *he already stinks*

John 12 Notes

12:11A Lit *going away*

12:34B Or *exalted*

12:38C Lit *which he said*

12:43D Lit *loved glory of men more than glory of God* ; v. 41; Jn 5:41

John 13 Notes

13:23A Lit *reclining at Jesus' breast* ; that is, on His right; Jn 1:18

John 18 Notes

18:30A Lit *an evil doer*

18:40B Or *robber* ; see Jn 10:1,8 for the same Gk word used here

John 19 Notes

19:12A Lit *Pilate was trying*

19:14B Lit *the sixth hour* ; see note at Jn 1:39; an alt. time reckoning would be *about noon*

19:20C Or *Aramaic*

19:29D Or *with hyssop*

19:31E Lit *great*

19:39F Lit *100 litrai* ; a Roman *litrai* = 12 ounces

John 20 Notes

20:1A Lit *She saw the stone removed*

20:16B *Rabbouni* is also used in Mk 10:51

20:18C Lit *these things*

20:22D Lit *He breathed and said to them*

20:31E Or *that the Messiah, the Son of God, is Jesus*

John 21 Notes

21:1A The Sea of Galilee; *Sea of Tiberias* is used only in John; Jn 6:1,23

21:6B Lit *they cast*

21:7C Lit *he girded his garment*

21:8D Lit *about 200 cubits*

21:14E Lit *was revealed* (v. 1)

21:23F Lit *this word*

21:25G Lit *scroll*

Acts 1 Notes

1:4A Or *He was eating*, or *He was lodging*

1:14B Or *prayer, with their wives and Mary*

Acts 2 Notes

2:14A Lit *let this be known*

2:15B Lit *it's the third hour of the day*

2:23C Or *used the hand of lawless ones*

2:30D Lit *one from the fruit of his loin*

2:37E Lit *they were pierced to the heart*

2:40F Or *crooked*, or *twisted*

2:45G Or *to all, according to one's needs*

Acts 3 Notes

3:1A Lit *at the ninth hour*

3:5B Or *he paid attention to them*

3:15C Or *the Prince*, or *the Ruler*

3:21D Or *receive*, or *retain*

Acts 4 Notes

4:2A Lit *proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead*

4:6B Or *high-priestly class*, or *high-priestly clan*

4:11C Lit *the head of the corner*

4:27D Lit *peoples*

4:35E Lit *person as anyone had need*

Acts 5 Notes

5:18A Lit *laid hands on*

5:37B Lit *and drew people after him*

Acts 6 Notes

6:2A Or *to serve tables*

Acts 7 Notes

7:1A Lit *"Are these things so?"*

7:23B Lit *40, it came into his heart*

7:54C Or *were cut to the quick*

7:55D Lit *and*

Acts 8 Notes

8:10A Or *This is the power of God called Great*

8:13B Or *he kept close company with*

8:16C Or *yet fallen on*

8:24D Gk words *you* and *pray* are pl

8:26E Or *is a desert place*

8:35F Lit *Philip opened his mouth*

8:40G Or *Philip was found at*, or *Philip found himself in*

8:40H Or *Ashdod*

Acts 9 Notes

9:29A Lit *Hellenists* ; that is, Gk-speaking Jews

9:34B Or *and get ready to eat*

Acts 10 Notes

10:3A Lit *About the ninth hour*

10:9B Lit *about the sixth hour*

10:14C Perhaps *profane*, or *non-sacred* ; Jews ate distinctive food according to OT law and their traditions, similar to modern kosher or non-kosher foods.

10:30D Lit *at the ninth hour*

10:37E Or *word* ; lit *thing*

10:46F Or *and magnifying*

Acts 11 Notes

11:2A Lit *those of the circumcision*

11:14B Lit *speak words*

11:18C Or *repentance to life*

11:28D Or *the whole world*

Acts 12 Notes

12:12A Lit *John who was called Mark*

12:18B Or *was no small disturbance*

Acts 13 Notes

13:2A Or *were worshiping*

13:17B Lit *with an uplifted*

13:24C Lit *Before the face of His entrance*

13:27D Lit *fulfilled them*

13:33E Or *I have begotten You*

13:34F Lit *faithful holy things*

13:47G Lit *the end*

Acts 14 Notes

14:8A Lit *from his mother's womb*

14:22B Lit *the souls of the*

14:28C Or *spent no little time*

Acts 15 Notes

15:23A Lit *Writing by their hand:*

15:27B Lit *things through word*

15:37C Lit *John who was called Mark*

Acts 16 Notes

16:3A Lit *wanted this one*

16:16B Or *a spirit by which she predicted the future*

16:18C Lit *out this hour*

Acts 17 Notes

17:4A Lit *as well as not a few*

17:18B Lit *this seed picker* ; = one who picks up scraps

17:19C Or *Mars Hill*, the oldest and most famous court in Athens with jurisdiction in moral, religious, and civil matters

Acts 18 Notes

18:3A Or *leatherworkers*, or less likely *manufacturers of theatrical properties*

18:6B Lit •*clean*

18:19C Or *and addressed*

18:25D Or *in the Spirit*

18:26E Lit *they received him*

Acts 19 Notes

19:12A Or *that also sweatbands and sweatcloths* or *handkerchiefs*

19:23B Lit *was not a little*

19:24C Lit *provided not a little*

19:31D Lit *not to give himself*

Acts 20 Notes

20:22A Or *in the Spirit*

20:26B Lit •*clean*

Acts 21 Notes

21:38A Lit *4,000 men of the Assassins*

21:39B Lit *of no insignificant city*

Acts 22 Notes

22:14A Lit *to hear a voice from His mouth*

Acts 23 Notes

23:23A Lit *at the third hour tonight*

Acts 24 Notes

24:23A Lit *him*

Acts 25 Notes

25:3A Lit *asking a favor against him*

Acts 27 Notes

27:4A Lit *sailed under the lee*

27:7B Lit *sailed under the lee*

27:14C Lit *Euraquilo*, a violent northeast wind

27:16D Or *Clauda*

27:27E Lit *thought there was land approaching them*

27:28F Lit *20 fathoms*

27:28G Lit *15 fathoms*

Acts 28 Notes

28:4A Gk *Dike*, a goddess of justice

28:11B Gk *Dioscuri*, twin sons of Zeus

28:14C Lit *brothers*

28:15D Lit *brothers*

Romans 1 Notes

1:1A Or *Jesus, a called apostle*

1:3B Lit *was of the seed of David*

1:4C Or *the spirit of holiness*, or *the Holy Spirit*

1:5D Or *Him for* ; lit *Him into*

1:5E Or *the obedience that is faith*, or *the faithful obedience*, or *the obedience that comes from faith* ; Rm 16:26

1:5F Or *Gentiles*

1:8G Or *because your faith*

1:13H Lit *I don't want you to be unaware*

1:13I Lit *have some fruit*

1:14J Or *non-Greeks*

1:17K Or *revealed out of faith into faith*

1:17L Or *The one who is righteous by faith will live*

1:19M Or *what is known*

1:26N Lit *natural use*

1:27O Lit *natural use*

1:27P Or *in themselves*

1:32Q Lit *things are worthy of death*

1:32R Lit *even take pleasure in*

Romans 2 Notes

2:1A Lit *Therefore, O man, every one*

2:4B Or *patience, because you do not recognize*

2:13C Or *will be justified* or *acquitted*

2:20D Or *the embodiment*

2:29E Or *heart — spiritually, not literally*

2:29F In Hb, the words Jew, Judah, and praise are related.

Romans 3 Notes

3:5A Or *shows*, or *demonstrates*

3:5B Lit *I speak as a man*

3:9C Lit *Greeks*

3:19D Lit *those in the law*

3:19E Or *become guilty before God*, or *may be accountable to God*

3:20F Or *will be declared righteous*, or *will be acquitted*

3:21G When capitalized, *the Law and the Prophets* = OT

3:22H Or *through the faithfulness of Jesus Christ*

3:23I Or *and lack the*

3:25J Or *as a propitiatory sacrifice*, or *as an offering of atonement*, or *as a mercy seat* ; 2Co 5:21; Heb 9:5

3:26K Or *and justify*, or *and acquit*

3:27L Or *what principle?*

3:27M Or *a principle*

Romans 4 Notes

4:1A Lit *our ancestor according to the flesh*

4:2B Or *was declared righteous*, or *was acquitted*

4:5C Or *who acquits*, or *who justifies*

4:11D Lit *righteousness of faith*

4:13E Lit *righteousness of faith*

4:16F Or *not to those who are of the law only*

4:25G Or *because of*

4:25H Or *because of*

4:25I Or *acquittal*

Romans 5 Notes

5:12A Or *have sinned*

5:14B Or *figure*, or *pattern* ; = an OT person or thing that prefigures a NT person or thing

5:16C Or *acquittal*

5:18D Lit *is justification of life*

Romans 6 Notes

6:4A Or *in newness*

6:6B Lit *man* ; = the person before conversion

6:6C Lit *that the body of sin*

6:7D Or *justified* ; lit *acquitted*

6:7E Lit *from sin*

6:13F Or *members*

6:13G Or *members*

6:16H Lit *that to whom you offer yourselves*

6:17I Or *entrusted*

6:19J Lit *I speak humanly* ; Paul is personifying sin and righteousness as slave masters.

6:19K Or *your human nature*

6:19L Or *members*

6:20M Lit *free to righteousness*

6:21N Lit *what fruit do you have*

6:22O Or *holiness*

Romans 7 Notes

7:5A Lit *of our members*

7:6B Lit *in newness*

7:13C Lit *good become death to me?*

7:21D Or *law*

7:22E Lit *inner man*

7:23F Lit *my members*

7:23G Lit *my members*

7:25H Or *Thanks be to God* — (it is done) *through Jesus Christ our Lord!*

Romans 8 Notes

8:3A Or *weak*

8:3B Lit *in the likeness of sinful flesh*

8:5C Or *those who are*

8:5D Or *those who are*

8:9E Or *provided that*

8:10F Or *the body will die*

8:10G Or *spirit*

8:17H Or *provided that*

Romans 9 Notes

9:1A Or *testifying with me by the Holy Spirit*

9:3B Lit *were anathema*

9:5C Lit *them, according to the flesh*

9:5D Or *the Messiah, the One who is over all, the God who is blessed forever*, or *Messiah. God, who is over all, be blessed forever*

9:7E Lit *seed*

9:7F Lit *called*

9:8G Lit *children of the flesh*

9:10H Or *Rebekah conceived by the one act of sexual intercourse*

9:16I Or *on the one running*; lit *on the one willing*

9:28J Or *land*

9:29K Gk *Sabaoth* ; this word is a transliteration of the Hb word for *Hosts*, or *Armies*.

Romans 10 Notes

10:4A Or *goal*

10:15B Or *welcome*, or *timely*

Romans 11 Notes

11:8A Lit *stupification*

11:9B Lit *table*

11:11C Or *transgression*

11:12D Or *transgression*

11:14E Lit *flesh*

11:26F Or *And then all*

11:29G Or *are not taken back*

Romans 12 Notes

12:6A Or *the*

12:19B Lit *the*

Romans 13 Notes

13:6A Lit *to this very thing*

13:8B Or *Leave no debt outstanding to anyone*

Romans 14 Notes

14:1A Or *weak in the Faith*

14:22B Lit *have faith*

14:23C Or *faith*

14:23D Or *faith*

Romans 15 Notes

15:5A Lit *God of*

15:23B Lit *now, having no longer a place in these parts*

15:28C Lit *delivered this fruit*

15:31D Lit *that my service for*

Romans 16 Notes

16:1A Others interpret this term in a technical sense: *deacon*, or *deaconess*, or *minister*, or *courier*

16:3B Traditionally, *Priscilla*, as in Ac 18:2,18,26

16:5C Lit *the firstfruits*

16:6D Or *Maria*

16:7E Either a feminine name or "Junias," a masculine name

16:7F Or *are outstanding among*

16:18G Lit *belly*

16:22H Or *letter in the Lord, greet you*

16:26I Or *the obedience that is faith*, or *the faithful obedience*, or *the obedience that comes from faith* ; Rm 1:5

1 Corinthians 1 Notes

1:14A Or *I am thankful*

1:20B Or *wise*

1:26C Lit *wise according to the flesh*

1:29D Lit *that not all flesh*

1 Corinthians 2 Notes

2:11A Or *things*

2:11B Or *things*

2:13C Or *things with spiritual words*

2:14D Or *unspiritual*; lit *natural*

2:14E Or *judged*, or *discerned*

2:15F Or *judge*, or *discern*

2:15G Or *judged*, or *discerned*

1 Corinthians 3 Notes

3:3A Lit *and walking according to man*

3:4B Lit *not [just] human*

3:9C Or *are coworkers belonging to God*

3:15D Lit *yet so as through fire*

1 Corinthians 4 Notes

4:3A Lit *a human day*

1 Corinthians 5 Notes

5:11A Or *now I wrote*

5:11B Lit *anyone named a brother*

1 Corinthians 6 Notes

6:4A Or *life, appoint those* (as a command)

6:6-8B Lit *brothers*

6:9C Lit *adulterers, passive homosexual partners, active homosexual partners*

6:13D Lit *both it and them*

1 Corinthians 7 Notes

7:1A Lit *not to touch*

7:2B Lit *because of immoralities*

7:6C Lit *say this* ; some interpret the word as referring to v. 2, vv. 2-5, v. 5 (wholly or in part), or v. 6

7:10D Or *separate from*, or *divorce*

7:14E Lit *the brother*

7:17F Lit *called each*

7:20G Lit *in the calling*

7:21H Or *But even though you can become free, make the most of your position as a slave.*

7:28I Lit *in the flesh*

7:36J Or *virgin, if his passions are strong,*

7:38K Or *marries off*

7:38L Or *marry her off*

1 Corinthians 8 Notes

8:11A Or *destroyed*

1 Corinthians 9 Notes

9:5A Lit *a sister as a wife*

9:23B Lit *partner of it*

1 Corinthians 10 Notes

10:6A Lit *they desired*

10:7B Or *to dance*

10:8C Lit *them committed sexual immorality*

10:9D Lit *them tested*

10:10E Lit *them complained*

10:10F Or *the destroying angel*

10:18G Lit *Look at Israel according to the flesh*

1 Corinthians 11 Notes

11:3A Or *the husband is the head of the wife*

11:6B Lit *a woman*

11:16C Or *no such*

11:27D Lit *be guilty of the body*

1 Corinthians 12 Notes

12:1A Or *concerning spiritual things*, or *spiritual gifts*

12:6B Lit *God acts all things in all*

12:13C Or *with*, or *in*

1 Corinthians 13 Notes

13:12A Or *indirectly*

1 Corinthians 14 Notes

14:2A Or *in spirit*, or *in his spirit*

14:10B Lit *and none is without a sound*

14:11C Gk *barbaros* = in Eng "a barbarian." To a Gk, a *barbaros* was anyone who did not speak Gk.

14:12D Lit *zealous of spirits* ; *spirits* = human spirits, spiritual powers, or the Holy Spirit

14:16E Or *praise by the Spirit*

14:16F Lit *the one filling the place of the uninformed*

14:22G Lit *that languages are for a sign*

1 Corinthians 15 Notes

15:1A Or *I make known*

15:2B Or *believed without careful thought*, or *believed in vain*

15:8C Or *one whose birth was unusual, He*

15:14D Or *proclamation is useless, and your faith also is useless*, or *proclamation is empty, and your faith also is empty*

15:32E Lit *Ephesus according to man*

15:32F Lit *what to me the profit?*

15:34G Lit *Sober up righteously*

15:37H Lit *but a naked seed*

1 Corinthians 16 Notes

16:2A Or *Each Sunday*

16:9B Lit *for a door has opened to me, great and effective*

16:11C *With the brothers* may connect with Paul or Timothy.

16:22D Or *Maran atha* (an Aram expression transliterated into Gk) = *Our Lord has come!*

2 Corinthians 1 Notes

1:1A Lit *the*

1:4B Or *trouble*, or *tribulation*, or *trials*, or *oppression* ; the Gk word has a lit meaning of being under pressure.

1:12C The word *fleshly* (characterized by flesh) indicates that the wisdom is natural rather than spiritual.

1:17D Or *a worldly*, or *a fleshly*, or *a selfish*

1:19E Or *Silas* ; Ac 15:22-32; 16:19-40; 17:1-16

1:24F Or *we lord it over*, or *we rule over*

2 Corinthians 2 Notes

2:1A Lit *I decided this for myself*

2:1B Lit *not again in sorrow to come to you*

2:2C Lit *the one pained*

2:14D Or *always leads us in a triumphal procession*, or *always causes us to triumph*

2:14E Lit *in the Christ*, or *in the Messiah* ; 1Co 15:22; Eph 1:10,12,20; 3:11

2 Corinthians 3 Notes

3:3A Lit *ministered to*

3:5B Lit *from*

3:14C Lit *their thoughts were hardened*

3:18D Or *are reflecting*

3:18E Or *from the Spirit of the Lord*, or *from the Lord, the Spirit*

2 Corinthians 4 Notes

4:4A Or *the gospel of the glorious Christ*, or *the glorious gospel of Christ*

4:17B See note at 2Co 1:4.

2 Corinthians 5 Notes

5:12A Lit *in face*

5:14B Or *For the love of Christ impels*, or *For the love of Christ controls*

5:16C Or *regard*

5:16D Lit *anyone according to the flesh*

5:16E Or *have regarded*

5:16F Lit *Christ according to the flesh*

5:16G Or *regard*

5:21H Or *be a sin offering*

2 Corinthians 6 Notes

6:1A Or *As we work together*

6:11B Lit *Our mouths have been open*

6:15C Or *Beliar*, a name for the Devil or antichrist in extra-biblical Jewish writings

2 Corinthians 7 Notes

7:1A Or *spirit, perfecting holiness*

7:2B Lit *Make room for us*

7:5C Lit *our flesh*

7:7D Or *lamentation*, or *mourning*

7:13E Lit *the joy of Titus*

2 Corinthians 8 Notes

8:10A Lit *to will*

8:11B Lit *finish the doing*

8:13C Lit *but from equality*

8:18D Lit *churches, in the gospel*

8:19E Or *grace*

2 Corinthians 9 Notes

9:4A Or *in this confidence*

9:6B Lit *And this*

9:13C Or *your obedient confession to*

9:14D Or *will long for*

2 Corinthians 10 Notes

10:2A Or *are living as a non-Christian* ; lit *are walking according to flesh*

10:3B Lit *flesh*

10:3C Lit *war according to flesh*

10:4D Lit *fleshly*

10:7E Or *You are looking at things outwardly*

2 Corinthians 11 Notes

11:1A Or *Yes, you are putting up with me*

11:10B Or *silenced*

11:12C Lit *cut off*

11:15D Lit *end*

11:17E Or *business*, or *confidence*

11:18F Lit *boast according to the flesh*

11:23G Lit *and in deaths*

11:28H Lit *Apart from*

2 Corinthians 12 Notes

12:7A Or *me, an angel*

12:15B Lit *for your souls*, or *for your lives*

12:19C Or *Have you thought . . . to you?*

12:20D Lit *be as you want*

12:21E Or *come again my God will*

2 Corinthians 13 Notes

13:1A Lit *mouth*

13:5B Or *you are disqualified*, or *you are counterfeit*

13:9C Or *become complete*, or *be restored*

Galatians 1 Notes

1:7A Or *gospel*

1:8B Or *you, let him be condemned*, or *you, let him be condemned to hell* ; Gk *anathema*

1:11C Lit *not according to man*

1:16D Lit *flesh and blood*

1:20E Lit *Behold, before God*

Galatians 2 Notes

2:6A Or *God is not a respecter of persons* ; lit *God does not receive the face of man*

2:11B Or *he was in the wrong*

2:16C Or *by the faithfulness of Jesus Christ*

2:16D Or *by the faithfulness of Christ*

2:16E Lit *law all flesh will not*

2:17F Or *servant*

2:18G Lit *rebuild those things that*

2:20H Or *flesh*

Galatians 3 Notes

3:2A Lit *by law works or faith hearing* or *hearing the message*

3:5B Lit *by law works or faith hearing* or *hearing the message*

3:9C Or *with believing Abraham*

3:15D Lit *I speak according to man*

3:15E Or *will*, or *testament*

3:22F Lit *under sin*

3:24G The word translated *guardian* in vv. 24-25 is different from the word in Gl 4:2. In our culture, we do not have a slave who takes a child to and from school, protecting the child from harm or corruption. In Gk the word *paidogogos* described such a slave. This slave was not a teacher.

Galatians 4 Notes

4:3A Or *spirits*, or *principles*

4:8B Or *beings*

Galatians 5 Notes

5:19A Lit *obvious, which are:*

5:22B Or *faithfulness*

Ephesians 1 Notes

1:4A Or *In His sight in love*

1:10B Or *dispensation* ; lit *house law* (Gk *oikonomia*)

1:10C Lit *the fulfillment of times*

1:11D Or *we also were chosen as an inheritance*, or *we were also made an inheritance*

1:14E *The possession* could be either man’s or God’s

1:17F Or *the Father of glory*

1:17G Or *you the Spirit*

1:18H Lit *the eyes of your heart*

1:21I Lit *every name named*

Ephesians 2 Notes

2:2A Lit *ruler of the domain of the air*

2:2B Lit *sons of disobedience*

2:4C Lit *love with which He loved us*

2:16D Or *death in Himself*

Ephesians 3 Notes

3:5A Lit *to the sons of men*

3:12B Or *through His faithfulness*

Ephesians 4 Notes

4:2A Or *tolerating*

4:4B Lit *called in one hope*

4:8C Or *He led the captives*

4:9D Or *the lower parts, namely, the earth*

4:10E Or *fulfill* ; Eph 1:23

4:19F Lit *with greediness*

4:21-22G Or *Jesus. This means: take off* (as a command)

4:22H Lit *man* ; = a person before conversion

4:22-23I Or *desires; renew* (as a command)

4:23-24J Or *minds; and put on* (as a command)

4:29K Lit *for the building up of the need*

4:30L Or *Spirit, by whom you were sealed*

Ephesians 5 Notes

5:3A Or *be named*

5:6B Lit *sons of disobedience*

5:16C Lit *buying back the time*

5:26D Or *having cleansed*

Ephesians 6 Notes

6:1A Lit *parents in the Lord*

6:2B Or *is a preeminent commandment*

6:3C Or *life on the earth*

6:5D Lit *according to the flesh*

6:6E Lit *from soul*

6:11F Or *schemes*, or *tricks*

6:21G Or *deacon*

6:24H Lit *all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in incorruption*

Philippians 1 Notes

1:3A Or *for your every remembrance of me*

1:6B Or *work among you*

1:7C Or *because you have me in your heart*

1:10D Or *until*

1:13E Lit *praetorium*, a Lat word that can also refer to a military headquarters, to the governor's palace, or to Herod's palace.

1:17F Lit *sincerely, intending to raise tribulation to my bonds*

1:19G Or *vindication*

1:27H Lit *soul*

Philippians 2 Notes

2:6A Or *to be grasped*, or *to be held on to*

2:11B Gk *kurios* = Yahweh; Is 42:8 LXX

2:16C Or *Offer*, or *Hold out*

Philippians 3 Notes

3:9A Or *through the faithfulness of Christ*

3:14B Or *upward*

Philippians 4 Notes

4:3A Or *true Syzygus*, possibly a person's name

4:17B Lit *fruit*

Colossians 1 Notes

1:1A Lit *the*

1:6B Or *and truly recognized God's grace*

1:9C Or *all spiritual wisdom and understanding*

1:12D Or *holy ones'*

Colossians 2 Notes

2:9A Or *of the deity*

2:9B Or *nature lives in a human body*

2:15C Or *them through it* ; = through the cross

2:16D Or *or sabbaths*

2:17E Or *substance belongs to*

2:18F Or *no one cheat us out of your prize*

2:18G Lit *fleshly*

2:23H Lit *value against indulgence of the flesh*

Colossians 3 Notes

3:5A Lit *death the members on the earth*

3:9B Lit *man* ; = a person before conversion

3:10C Lit *his*

3:11D Lit *Where*

3:23E Lit *do it from the soul*

1 Thessalonians 1 Notes

1:1A Or *Silas* ; Ac 15:22-32; 16:19-40; 17:1-16

1:8B Or *in every place news of your faith*

1:9C Lit *report about us*

1 Thessalonians 2 Notes

2:16A Or *to the end*

1 Thessalonians 3 Notes

3:3A Or *are destined for*

1 Thessalonians 4 Notes

4:1A Lit *walking*

4:4B Or *to acquire his own wife* ; lit *to possess his own vessel*

4:6C Lit *things*

4:11D Lit *to practice one's own things*

4:12E Or *may live respectably*

4:12F Or *not need anything*, or *not be in need*

4:14G Or *in*

4:15H Or *a word of the Lord*

4:15I Or *certainly not precede*

4:16J Or *command*

4:18K Or *comfort*

1 Thessalonians 5 Notes

5:14A Or *who are disorderly*, or *who are undisciplined*

2 Thessalonians 1 Notes

1:1A Or *Silas* ; Ac 15:22-32; 16:19-40; 17:1-16

2 Thessalonians 2 Notes

2:3A Or *rebellion*

2:4B Or *temple*

2 Thessalonians 3 Notes

3:2A Or *for the faith is not in everyone*

3:8B Or *bread*

3:12C Or *bread*

1 Timothy 1 Notes

1:10A Or *slave traders*

1 Timothy 2 Notes

2:15A Lit *if they continue*

1 Timothy 3 Notes

3:2A Or *hospitable, skillful in teaching*

1 Timothy 5 Notes

5:3A Lit *Honor*

5:9B Lit *be enrolled*

5:17C Or *of respect and remuneration* ; lit *of double honor*

5:22D Lit *to lay hands on* = to ordain

5:24E Lit *follow*

1 Timothy 6 Notes

6:1A Or *owners*

6:8B Or *food and shelter*

6:10C Or *is the root*

6:19D Or *foundation*

2 Timothy 1 Notes

1:6A Or *to rekindle*

1:7B Or *us the Spirit*

1:12C Or *guard what I have entrusted to Him*, or *guard my deposit*

2 Timothy 2 Notes

2:20A Or *special*

2:20B Or *ordinary*

2:21C Lit *from these*

2:21D Or *an honorable*

2:24E Or *everyone, skillful in teaching*

2 Timothy 3 Notes

3:16A Lit *breathed out by God* ; the Scripture is the product of God's Spirit working through men; 2Pt 1:20-21.

2 Timothy 4 Notes

4:3A Or *to hear what they want to hear* ; lit *themselves, itching in the hearing*

Titus 1 Notes

1:1A Or *according to*

1:1B Or *corresponds*

1:6C Or *believing*

1:10D Lit *the circumcision*

Titus 2 Notes

2:11A Or *appeared, bringing salvation* ; or *appeared with saving power*

2:15B Or *despise*

Philemon Notes

5A Lit *faith that you have toward*

9B Or *an ambassador*

10C In Gk, Onesimus means useful.

12D Lit *you — that is, my inward parts*

Hebrews 1 Notes

1:2A Lit *ages*

1:3B Or *reflection*

1:3C Or *representation*, or *copy*, or *reproduction*

1:3D Or *He sat down on high at the right hand of the Majesty*

1:5E Or *have begotten You*

1:6F Or *And again, when He*

1:7G Or *spirits*

1:7H Or *ministers*

1:8I Or *about*

1:9J Or *associates*

1:13K Or *enemies a footstool for Your feet*

Hebrews 2 Notes

2:2A Or *valid*, or *reliable*

2:10B Or *pioneer*, or *leader*

2:11C Or *father*, or *origin*, or *all are of one*

2:17D Lit *things*

Hebrews 3 Notes

3:14A Or *confidence*

Hebrews 4 Notes

4:1A Or *that any of you might seem to have missed it*

4:3B Or *rest), just as*

Hebrews 5 Notes

5:1A Lit *things*

5:7B Lit *In the days of His flesh*

Hebrews 6 Notes

6:2A Or *about baptisms*

6:6B Or *while*

6:15C Lit *he*

Hebrews 7 Notes

7:5A Lit *have come out of Abraham's loins*

7:6B Lit *their*

7:7C Or *Beyond any dispute*

7:10D Lit *still in his father's loins*

7:16E Or *fleshly*

7:25F Or *He is able to save completely*

Hebrews 8 Notes

8:8A Lit *with them*

Hebrews 9 Notes

9:24A Or *antitype*, or *figure*

9:28B Lit *time, apart from sin,*

Hebrews 10 Notes

10:29A Or *ordinary*

Hebrews 11 Notes

11:1A Or *assurance*

11:1B Or *conviction*

11:3C Or *the worlds were,* or *the ages were*

11:3D Or *word*

11:11E Or *By faith Abraham, even though he was past age — and Sarah herself was barren — received the ability to procreate since he*

11:18F Lit *called*

11:19G Or *a foreshadowing*, or *a parable*, or *a type*

Hebrews 12 Notes

12:2A Or *us, looking to Jesus*

12:2B Or *the founder and completer*

12:2C Or *who instead of the joy lying before Him* ; that is, the joy of heaven

12:8D Lit *discipline, of which all have become participants*

12:13E Or *so that the lame will not be turned aside*

12:23F Or *registered*

12:28G Or *let us give thanks*, or *let us have grace*

Hebrews 13 Notes

13:3A Or *mistreated, since you are also in a body*

13:12B Or *set apart*, or *consecrate*

13:17C Or *rulers*

13:19D Lit *to do this*

13:21E Or *perfect*

James 1 Notes

1:8A Or *A doubting*, or *A double-minded*

1:12B Lit *trial*, used as a collective

1:13C Or *evil persons*, or *evil things*

1:21D Lit *evil excess*

1:21E Lit *save your souls*

1:23F Lit *at the face of his birth*

1:27G Or *before the*

James 2 Notes

2:14A Or *Can faith*, or *Can that faith*, or *Can such faith*

James 3 Notes

3:2A Lit *in word*

3:2B Lit *to bridle the whole body*

3:3C Lit *whole body*

3:9D Or *praise the*

James 4 Notes

4:1A Lit *war in your members*

4:4B Or *Unfaithful people!*

4:5C Or *He who caused the Spirit to live in us yearns jealously*, or *the spirit He caused to live in us yearns jealously*, or *He jealously yearns for the Spirit He made to live in us*

James 5 Notes

5:4A Gk *Sabaoth* ; this word is a transliteration of the Hb word for *Hosts*, or *Armies*.

5:5B Or *hearts in*

5:11C Or *have persevered*

1 Peter 1 Notes

1:6A Or *In this [fact] rejoice*

1:7B Lit *may be found for*

1:9C Or *your lives*

1:11D Or *inquired about the person or time*

1:11E Or *the sufferings of Christ*

1:11F Lit *the glories after that*

1:13G Lit *Therefore, when you have the loins of your mind girded*

1:20H Or *foreknown*

1:22I Or *purified your souls*

1:22J Or *intensely*

1 Peter 2 Notes

2:6A Or *valuable*

2:6B Lit *head of the corner*

2:6C Or *be disappointed*

2:8D Or *a stone causing stumbling*

2:8E Or *a rock to trip over*

2:9F Or *generation*, or *nation*

2:9G Or *the mighty deeds*

2:11H Or *against the soul*

2:12I Or *among the nations*, or *among the pagans*

2:13J Or *creature*

2:13K Lit *king*

2:17L Lit *king*

2:18M Or *unscrupulous* ; lit *crooked*

2:19N Lit *if, because of conscience toward God*

2:25O Or *Overseer*

1 Peter 3 Notes

3:1A Lit *may be gained*

3:3B Lit *and of putting around of gold items*

3:4C Lit *Instead, the hidden man of*

3:7D Lit *understanding as the weaker vessel*

3:8E Lit *sympathetic, loving the brothers*

3:13F Or *mistreat*, or *do evil to*

3:13G Or *you are partisans for the good* ; lit *you are zealots*

3:15H Or *sanctify* ; lit *set apart*

3:15I Or *who demands of you an accounting*

3:16J Lit *good*

3:16K Or *keeping a clear conscience*

3:16L Lit *your good behavior in Christ*

3:17M Lit *if the will of God should will*

3:18N Or *the Righteous One in the place of the unrighteous many*

3:18O Or *in the flesh*

3:18P Or *in the spirit*, or *in the Spirit*

3:19Q Or *In whom*, or *At that time*, or *In which*

3:20R Lit *souls*

3:21S Or *the appeal*

1 Peter 4 Notes

4:1A Or *arm*

4:1B Or *perspective*, or *attitude*

4:1C Or *the one who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin*

4:2D Lit *for desires of human beings*

4:3E Or *Gentiles*

4:4F Lit *you don't run with them into the same pouring out*

4:6G Or *in the flesh*

4:6H Or *in the spirit*

4:12I Lit *the burning*

4:15J Or *as one who defrauds others*

1 Peter 5 Notes

5:5A Lit *you tie around yourselves*

5:6B Lit *in time*

5:10C Lit *Himself*

5:10D Or *a little while*, or *to a small extent*

5:12E Or *Silas* ; Ac 15:22-32; 16:19-40; 17:1-16

2 Peter 1 Notes

1:1A Or *obtained a faith of the same kind as ours*

1:3B Lit *As His*

1:3C Or *to*

1:15D Or *my death*

2 Peter 2 Notes

2:5A Lit *righteousness, as the eighth*

2:18B Or *people who are barely escaping*

2 Peter 3 Notes

3:12A Or *and speed the coming*

3:18B Or *now and forever*

1 John 1 Notes

1:6A Or *not living according to*

1 John 2 Notes

2:5A Or *truly completed*

2:10B Or *in it*

2:15C Lit *things in*

2:16D Lit *that is in*

1 John 3 Notes

3:1A Or *at what sort of love*

3:4B Or *also commits iniquity*

3:6C Or *not keep on sinning*

3:6D Or *who keeps on sinning*

3:8E Or *practices*

3:9F Or *not practice sin*

3:9G Or *to keep on sinning*

3:12H Or *slaughtered*

1 John 4 Notes

4:2A Or *confesses Jesus to be the Christ*

4:9B Or *revealed in us*

4:10C Or *a*

4:12D Or *remains among*

4:15E Or *acknowledges*

4:18F Or *fear has its own punishment* or *torment*

1 John 5 Notes

5:16A Lit *He*

5:16B Or *is a sin*

5:18C Or *the one who is born of God keeps himself*

2 John Notes

1A Or *Presbyter*

1B Or *Kyria*, a proper name; probably a literary figure for a local church known to John; the children would be its members.

6C Lit *in it*

7D Or *confess Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh*

12E Lit *mouth to mouth*

3 John Notes

1A Or *my beloved*

2B Or *Beloved*

2C Lit *as your soul prospers*

5D Or *Beloved*

5E Lit *are doing a faithful thing*

8F Or *coworkers for*

11G Or *Beloved*

14H Lit *mouth to mouth*

Jude Notes

7A Lit *and went after other flesh*

12B Or *like spots*

14C Or *came*

15D Lit *convict all*

19E Or *natural*

Revelation 1 Notes

1:1A Or *Revelation of*, or *A revelation of*

1:1B Or *soon*

1:2C Or *witness*

1:2D Lit *as many as he saw*

1:3E Or *follow*, or *obey*

1:4F Or *the sevenfold Spirit*

1:6G Or *made us into* (or *to be*) *a kingdom of priests* ; Ex 19:6

1:7H Or *impaled*

1:7I Or *all the tribes of the land*

1:7J Or *will wail because of Him*

1:9K Lit *the witness of Jesus*

1:10L Or *in spirit* ; lit *I became in the Spirit*

1:13M Or *like a son of man*

1:15N Lit *many*

1:16O Lit *like the sun shines in its power*

Revelation 3 Notes

Revelation 4 Notes

4:2A Or *in spirit* ; lit *I became in the Spirit*

4:6B Lit *In the middle of the throne*

4:8C Or *they never rest*

Revelation 5 Notes

5:6A Or *standing in the middle of*

5:9B Or *purchased*

Revelation 6 Notes

6:1A Lit *saw when*

6:1B Or *Go!*

6:2C Lit *went out conquering and in order to conquer*

6:3D Or *Go!*

6:4E Or *was granted* ; lit *was given*

6:5F Or *Go!*

6:7G Or *Go!*

6:8H Or *a greenish gray*

6:9I Lit *souls*

6:10J Or *Master*

6:12K Lit *I saw when He opened*

6:12L Or *the full moon*

Revelation 7 Notes

7:2A Lit *angels to whom it was given*

7:14B Lit *My lord*

7:15C Or *will spread His tent over*

Revelation 9 Notes

9:3A Or *authority*

9:10B Or *authority*

9:11C Or *as king over them*

9:11D Or *destruction*

9:11E Or *destroyer*

9:21F Or *magic potions*, or *drugs* ; Gk *pharmakon*

Revelation 10 Notes

10:1A Or *a halo on his head*

10:1B Or *feet*

10:6C Or *be a delay*

10:7D Or *slaves*

10:11E Lit *And they said to me*

10:11F Or *prophesy again against*

Revelation 11 Notes

11:1A Lit *Arise*

11:2B Or *Gentiles*

11:3C Lit *I will give to*

11:7D Or *wild animal*

11:8E Lit *Their corpse*

11:8F Or *lie on the broad street*

11:8G Or *spiritually*, or *symbolically*

11:9H Lit *And from*

11:11I Or *spirit*

Revelation 12 Notes

12:1A Or *great symbolic display* ; see Rv 12:3

12:3B Or *another symbolic display*

12:3C Or *crowns*

12:5D Or *rule*

12:6E Lit *God, that they might feed her there*

12:17F Or *seed*

Revelation 13 Notes

13:1A The beasts in Rv 13:1,11 are customarily referred to as “he” or “him” rather than “it.” The Gk word for a beast (*therion*) is grammatically neuter.

13:3B Lit *be slain to death*

13:3C Lit *amazed after the beast*

13:5D Or *to rule*

13:6E Lit *He opened his mouth in*

13:8F Or *scroll*

13:8G Or *written in the book of life of the Lamb who was slaughtered from the foundation of the world*

13:10H Lit *Here is the perseverance*

13:11I Or *ram*

13:14J Or *statue*, or *likeness*

13:15K Or *give breath*, or *give life*

13:16L Or *stamp*, or *brand*

13:18M Or *This calls for wisdom*

13:18N Or *count*, or *figure out*

13:18O Or *is a man's number*, or *is the number of a person*

Revelation 14 Notes

14:2A Or *voice*

14:3B Or *purchased*

14:4C Or *purchased*

14:8D Lit *Another angel, a second*

14:8E Or *wine of her passionate immorality*

14:9F Lit *Another angel, a third*

14:11G Lit *They have no rest*

14:12H Lit *Here is the perseverance*

14:12I Or *and faith in Jesus*, or *and faithfulness to Jesus*

14:14J Or *like a son of man*

14:20K Lit *1,600 stadia*

Revelation 15 Notes

15:1A Or *and awesome symbolic display*

15:2B Or *harps of God* ; = harps belonging to the service of God

Revelation 16 Notes

16:2A Lit *and a severely painful sore*

16:3B Lit *and every soul of life*

16:8C Or *It*

16:8D Or *authority*

16:9E Or *authority*

16:10F Lit *They*

16:17G Or *on the air*

16:19H Or *the Gentile cities*

16:20I Lit *mountains were not found*

16:21J Lit *about a talent* ; talents varied in weight upwards from 75 pounds

Revelation 17 Notes

17:1A Or *by many*

17:3B Or *in spirit*

17:3C Lit *was filled*

17:9D Or *This calls for the mind with wisdom*

17:17E Or *sovereignty*

17:18F Or *has sovereignty* or *rulership*

Revelation 18 Notes

18:2A Or *prison*

18:5B Or *sins have reached up*

18:12C Or *bronze*, or *copper*

18:13D Or *amomum*, an aromatic plant

18:13E Or *perfume*

18:13F Or *bodies*

18:20G Or *God pronounced on her the judgment she passed on you* ; see Rv 18:6

18:24H Lit *in her*

Revelation 19 Notes

19:10A Or *to*

19:10B Or *the Spirit*

19:12C Or *diadems*

19:13D Or *a robe dipped in*

19:15E Or *rule*

19:17F Or *in*

Revelation 20 Notes

20:4A Lit *souls*

20:6B Or *authority*

20:13C Lit *each*

Revelation 21 Notes

21:3A Or *tent*, or *tabernacle*

21:4B Or *the first things*

21:10C Or *in spirit*

21:16D A *stadion* (sg) = about 600 feet; 12,000 *stadia* = 1,400 miles.

21:21E Or *The public square*

Revelation 22 Notes

22:2A Or *was a tree of life*, or *was a tree that gives life*

22:3B Lit *in it*

22:6C Or *soon*

Introduction to Genesis

AUTHOR

Although the author of Genesis is not identified in the book, its integral part in the Pentateuch (Genesis—Deuteronomy) suggests that the author of these five books was the same person. The books of the Pentateuch give evidence of unity through their common plot, theme (divine promises), central figure (Moses), and literary interconnections. Jewish and Christian traditions attribute the Pentateuch to Moses, whose life paralleled the events of Exodus—Deuteronomy (cp. 2 Ch 23:18; Lk 16:29,31; Ac 28:23).

Passages in Exodus—Deuteronomy testify that Moses authored diverse materials (Ex 17:14; 24:4-8; Nm 33:2; Dt 31:9,22). Although we cannot be certain about the contents of the "book of the law [of Moses]" (Jos 1:7-8; 8:31; 23:6; 2 Kg 14:6), its association with Moses established a "psychology of canonicity" that set the pattern of divinely authoritative writings (Nm 12:6-8; Dt 18:15; 34:10). Scholars have usually recognized that minor post-Mosaic contributions must exist in the Pentateuch, such as the report of Moses' death (Dt 34). Some have contended that the first-person ("I") sections were written by Moses and that another author set them in a third-person ("Moses") narrative frame. Prior to the nineteenth century, the consensus remained that Moses wrote the essential whole, probably during the wilderness sojourn.

THE RELIABILITY OF GENESIS

Since the events of Genesis preceded Moses, this raises the question of where he got his information. For most of the Christian era, the principal explanation was divine revelation coupled with the availability of written records, such as genealogies and stories.

Gradually, though, by the nineteenth century, a new consensus arose among "critical" scholars. They believed that the Pentateuch was the product of a series of unnamed Jewish editors who progressively stitched together pieces of preexisting sources dating from the tenth to the sixth centuries B.C. Instead of being Mosaic, the Pentateuch was viewed as a mosaic. Such scholars today often view the stories in the Bible's first five books as fabrications conceived hundreds of years after the supposed events, perhaps during the exile.

There is significant evidence, however, that Genesis reflects the political and cultural setting of the second millennium B.C. The structure and contents of chapters 1–11 generally parallel the Babylonian epic *Atrahasis* (c. 1600 B.C.). Social and religious practices among the patriarchs correlate better with the earlier period than with the first millennium BC. For example, Abraham's marriage to his half-sister Sarah was prohibited under the Mosaic law (20:12; Lv 18:9). It is unlikely that the Jews of the exilic period would have fabricated offensive events or preserved such stories unless these were already well-entrenched traditions. Also the prevalent use of the *El* compounds for the name of God (e.g., God Almighty–*El Shaddai*, 17:1) in Genesis contrasts with their virtual absence in first-millennium B.C. texts. The tolerant attitude toward Gentiles and the unrestricted travels of the patriarchs do not suit the later setting. The evidence, when considered as a whole, supports the position that Genesis remembers authentic events.

GENESIS AND ANCIENT MYTHS

The parallels between chapters 1–11 and creation and flood myths have elicited the question, Is the Bible merely a Hebrew version of myths about beginnings?

When weighing the importance of parallels, these principles should be kept in mind. First, not all parallels are equally significant, since minor ones can be attributed to common content.

Second, the identity of who is borrowing from whom cannot be definitively concluded. Often it is best to assume a universal memory as the source. Third, the functions of the stories are much different. For example, the flood story of the Babylonian *Gilgamesh Epic* is incidental to the main idea of telling how Gilgamesh sought immortality. In the Bible, by contrast, the flood narrative is central to the development of the theme.

That the Bible's theology is divergent from the polytheism of antiquity argues against the Bible's dependence on sources from other cultures. The author of Genesis was aware of the cultural context of the nations and often crafted his accounts to counter the prevailing view. The historical framework of chapters 1–11 (e.g., "these are the records of," 2:4; 5:1) and the genealogies (chaps. 4–5; 10–11) indicate that the author presented a historical account, not a literary myth.

Genesis Articles

Are the Days of Genesis to Be Interpreted Literally?

by Ted Cabal

This question has stoked controversy among conservative Christians in recent times, but it has proved to be of little interest to theistic evolutionists (those who accept evolution as God's mechanism in creation) and those rejecting Genesis as God's inerrant Word. The debate has been primarily between young- and old-earth creationists, who believe that God literally created the various kinds of living things (as opposed to the common descent of Darwinism). Both sides hold that humans have not descended from other species, and both reject the atheism and macroevolutionary theory of neo-Darwinism.

The two creationist camps, however, differ in interpreting the creation days of Genesis. If the days were consecutive 24-hour periods, and if the earth was created on the first day, then calculations based on biblical genealogies reveal that the earth was created only thousands of years ago. If the days were either of indeterminate length or nonconsecutive, then the Bible does not reveal when the earth was created. Interestingly, both sides agree that the genealogies reveal that Adam and Eve were specially created only thousands of years ago.

Young earth creationists (YCs) interpret the days as 24-hour, consecutive periods for reasons such as the following: (1) The days in Gn 1 are consecutively numbered and comprised of an "evening and morning." (2) Exodus 20:8-11 commands a literal week of six days of work and one day of rest based on God's original creation/rest week. The two weeks would seem, then, to be of equal duration. (3) According to Rm 5:12, "sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin," but old-earth creationism would have animal death entering the world before the sin of Adam and Eve.

Old earth creationists (OCs) argue against 24-hour creation days for reasons such as these: (1) The Hebrew word for "day" (*yom*) is used in different ways in the creation account. For instance, Gn 1:5 refers *yom* only to daytime (daylight), not nighttime. Also, Gn 2:4, literally translated, speaks of "the *yom* that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens." (2) God's rest on the seventh "day" has no evening and morning (Gn 2:2-3), and Heb 4:3-11 portrays this same Sabbath as continuing to the present time. (3) Adam could not have named all the birds and animals in 24 hours according to Gn 2.

Both sides believe they have strong arguments favoring their interpretation and rebutting the other side. And historically, debate regarding biblical interpretation has often led to a clearer understanding of God's Word. But it is also highly debatable whether this issue merits the rancor and division often attending it. Some YCs accuse OCs of compromising the Bible with evolutionary science. Some OCs charge YCs with undermining biblical credibility by generating a false conflict between science and the Scriptures.

Happily, one thing is not debatable among those who believe the Bible: even if the correct interpretation of the creation days is not readily apparent in the present generation, the Bible can be trusted in every way. Debates about biblical interpretations should not be interpreted as the failure of Holy Scripture.

Evolution: Fact or Fantasy?

by Phillip E. Johnson

Evolution is a fact only at a very small scale. It is fantasy when it is used to explain how plants and animals came into existence or how human beings supposedly evolved from apelike ancestors. We might summarize the fantasy by saying that, where the theory of evolution is true, it is not very interesting, and where it is most interesting, it is not true.

If "evolution" merely refers to a process of cyclical (back and forth) variation in response to changing environmental conditions, then evolution is a fact that can be observed both in nature and in laboratory experiments.

For example, when a population of insects is sprayed with a deadly chemical like DDT, the most susceptible insects die but the individuals most resistant to the poison survive to breed and leave offspring, which inherit the genes that provide resistance. After many generations of insects have been sprayed, the entire surviving population may be comprised of the DDT-resistant variety, and some new form of insect control will have to be applied. Such changes are not permanent, however, because the resistant mosquitoes are more fit than the others only for as long as the insecticide is applied. When the environment becomes free of the toxic chemical, the insect population tends to revert to what it was before.

A similar effect explains how disease-causing bacteria become resistant to antibiotic drugs like penicillin, which then are no longer as effective in controlling the disease as they formerly were.

Almost all illustrations of "evolution in action" in textbooks or museum exhibits are similar to these examples. They involve no increase in complexity or appearance of new body parts or even permanent change of any kind. Small-scale, reversible population variations of this sort are usually called microevolution, although "adaptive variation" would be a better term.

It is misleading to describe adaptive variation as "evolution," because the latter term commonly refers also to macroevolution. Macroevolution is the grand story of how life supposedly evolved by purely natural processes from very simple beginnings to become complex, multicelled plants and animals, and eventually human beings, without God's participation being needed at any step along the way.

Charles Darwin assumed that macroevolution was merely microevolution extended over very long periods of time. Biology textbooks, museums, and television programs still teach people to make the same assumption, so that examples of microevolution are used as proof that complex animals and even human beings evolved from simpler organisms by a similar process.

The primary flaw in the story of macroevolution is that all plants and animals are packed with information—the complicated instructions that coordinate the many processes enabling the body and brain to function. Even Richard Dawkins, the most famous living advocate of Darwin's theory, admits that every cell in a human body contains more information than all the volumes of an encyclopedia, and every one of us has trillions of cells in his or her body, which have to work together in marvelous harmony.

The greatest weakness of the theory of evolution is that science has not discovered a process that can create all the necessary information, which can be likened to the software that directs a computer. Without such a demonstrated creative process, evolution is merely a story, because its supposed mechanism can neither be duplicated in a laboratory nor observed in nature.

It is true that there are patterns of similarity among living creatures. For example, humans, apes, mice, worms, and even plants have many similar genes. The important question is not whether there are similarities among all living things but whether those similarities came about through a natural

process akin to the observable examples of adaptive variation that we find in textbooks and museum exhibits.

One mistake Christians often make in debating evolution is to take on too many issues at once, rather than starting with the most important problem and solving it first. For example, evolution requires a time scale of many millions of years, while many people understand the Bible to allow for an earth history of only a few thousand years. The evolutionary time scale is debatable, but debating it involves several complex scientific disciplines and distracts attention from the most important defect of the theory of evolution. The only mechanism the evolutionists have is a combination of random variation and natural selection, illustrated by the survival of the insects that happened to be resistant to an insecticide. This Darwinian mechanism has never been shown to be capable of creating new genetic information or new complex body parts such as wings, eyes, or brains. Without a mechanism that can be demonstrated to be capable of the necessary creation, the theory of evolution is just a fantasy with no real scientific basis.

The Bible teaches, "In the beginning God created" and "In the beginning was the Word." A simple way of explaining this basic principle is to say that a divine intelligence existed before anything else and that intelligence was responsible for the origin of life and for the existence of all living things, including human beings. No matter how much time we might allow for evolution to do the necessary creating, the evidence shows that the process would never get started, because all evolution can do is to further minor variations in organisms that are already living, without any change in their basic classification. When the Bible says, "In the beginning God created" (Gn 1:1), it is presenting us with a fact, which we need to know to understand everything else, including what we were created for and how God wants us to live.

The Bible also says that God created men and women in His own image. That, too, is a fact. If it were not true, there would be no science, because no theory of evolution can demonstrate how intelligence came into existence, including the intelligence of misguided people who misuse science to try to explain creation without allowing any role to God.

"In the beginning was the Word." The Bible says it and, properly understood, the evidence of science confirms it. Anyone who says otherwise is peddling fantasy, not fact.

Are the Biblical Genealogies Reliable?

by Kenneth A. Mathews

Biblical genealogies must be understood in the context of the ancient Near East. Typically, genealogies expressed more than family descent. They reflected political and socioreligious realities among people groups. For example, "Salma fathered Bethlehem" (1 Ch 2:51) describes the founder of the village Bethlehem. Therefore the genealogies were fluid, showing differences due to changing political and social realities.

The adoption of Joseph's sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, by Jacob created a new way of interpreting the 12-tribe configuration (Gn 48:5). "Joseph" appears in the blessing of Jacob (Gn 49:22-26), but the blessing of Moses counts 12 tribes by deleting Simeon and dividing the house of Joseph into Ephraim and Manasseh (Dt 33:17). Thus, as we see from this example, the contents of genealogies were selective and not intended to be exhaustive and precise.

Shortening genealogies by omitting names was commonplace. Matthew's genealogy of Jesus exhibits a pattern in which three sets of 14 generations are achieved (Mt 1:17). The number 14 was desirable because of the importance attributed to the symbolic meaning of seven ("complete, perfect"). Thus "Joram fathered Uzziah" (Mt 1:8) omits three generations (2 Ch 21:4–26:33) so as to accomplish the desired number (cp. Ezr 7:1-5 with 1 Ch 6).

From this example we discover another unexpected feature in biblical genealogies. Genetic terms, such as "son of" and "father," were flexible in meaning, sometimes indicating a "descendant" and "grandfather or forefather." The word "daughter," for example, could mean a subordinate village affiliated with a nearby city and thus be translated "surrounding settlements" (Jdg 1:27, NIV).

One technique in the ancient world for legitimizing a new king was the concoction of a fictional ancestry. Moreover, scholars often assume that persons named in genealogies are metaphors for tribes and actually have no familial connection. The charge of fiction has been leveled against the genealogies of the 12 tribes of Israel as descended from the one person Jacob (e.g., Gn 46:8-27; Nm 1:20-43; 1 Ch 2:1-2).

The argument that the term "sons of Jacob" reflects only an evolving social reality and not a reliable domestic one is an unnecessary assumption that contradicts the plain meaning of the biblical witness. The biblical account of the patriarchs reveals a family story primarily and a national one secondarily. Also, since genealogies impacted domestic, legal, and religious matters of importance, reliable genealogical records and censuses were fastidiously maintained (Nm 1:45; Ru 4:10; 1 Ch 4:33; 9:1; Neh 7:5; see Nm 27:1-11; Ezr 2:62).

A special problem is the long life spans in Genesis 5:1-32. In that passage, for example, Adam is said to have lived to be 930 years old.

The Sumerian King List presents a list of the reigns of kings and includes a reference to a great flood. The King List claims fantastic numbers, the longest reign at 72,000 years. After the flood the regal years diminish. Despite its fantastic numbers, however, the King List includes historical individuals, not just legendary ones.

Both Genesis and the Sumerian King List remember a time in the ancient past when people lived for long periods. The life spans before Noah's flood were longer and afterward gradually decreased. The long lives of the patriarchs, such as Adam and Noah, shrink to moderate figures when compared to the Sumerian King List. A significant difference is that Adam's genealogy is not for political purposes but instead shows that the descending ages of humanity were due to a moral factor when God judged a corrupt humanity (Gn 6:1-8).

Although the years are reliable, this genealogy cannot be used to reconstruct the age of the earth. Genesis does not present genealogies for establishing absolute chronology (see 1 Kg 6:1). Also, Genesis 5 does not possess a complete list. Genesis 5 and 11 exhibit 10-name genealogies that consist of stereotypical patterns. The two genealogies are also *linear*, meaning that they include only one descendant per generation (*segmented* genealogies have more; see Gn 10:1-32). Since genealogies may telescope generations (see above), and since Genesis 5 is highly stylized, it is likely an "open" (selective) genealogy that spans many generations.

Did Those Places Really Exist?

by E. Ray Clendenen

The ancient Egyptian equivalent of a "voodoo doll" was to write one's enemy's name on a clay statue or pottery vessel and then smash the pot while pronouncing a curse. Archaeologists have uncovered hundreds of such pottery pieces, called "execration texts." Dating about the time of Joseph (nineteenth–eighteenth century B.C., Egyptian twelfth dynasty), they contain the names of many towns in Palestine and their rulers considered at the time to be enemies of the Egyptian state. Many of these are towns mentioned in the Bible, which underlines the authenticity of the biblical account. They also verify that cities were ruled at the time by "kings." Some of the towns identified are Acco (Jdg 1:31), Aphek (Jos 12:18), Achshaph (Jos 11:1), Ashkelon (Jos 13:3), Beth-shean (Jos 17:11,16), Beth-shemesh (Jos 15:10), Bozrah (Gn 36:33), Damascus (Gn 14:15; 15:2), Ekron (Jos 13:3), Laish (Jdg 18:29), Midian (Ex 2:15-16), Migdol (Ex 14:2; Nm 33:7), Rehob (Nm 13:21; Jos 19:28,30), Shechem (Gn 12:6; 33:18; 37:12-14), Byblos, and Jerusalem (Jos 10:1).

Although not referring to the patriarch of Israel, the name *Aburahana* as an Egyptian transcription of a Semitic name is also found in these texts (*m* and *n* often interchange in such transcriptions).

The Hebrew word *chanikim*, rendered "trained," found in the Bible only in Genesis 14:14, is also found in the execration texts, supporting the credibility of the Genesis 14 account.

Does the Old Testament Teach Salvation by Works?

by E. Ray Clendenen

According to Genesis 15:6, Abram did not buy righteousness with his faith. Rather, God gave Abram righteousness, which means right standing or acceptability before God. The biblical message is clear and consistent in both testaments: the curse of condemnation and death that rests on everyone because of Adam's sin (Rm 5:12-21) cannot be removed and exchanged for righteousness through any amount of good deeds that one might do. The exchange can be effected only by God as a free act of His grace in response to a person's faith (Hab 2:4; Rm 1:16-17; 4:1-25; Gl 3:6-9).

What matters in this exchange is not the quality or degree of faith but rather God's grace; faith is not a means to earn acceptance with God. The apostle Paul considered Abraham a model of transforming faith even though the content of Abraham's faith was different from Paul's. Abraham simply trusted God and His promise to give him a son and then other descendants. Presumably Abraham would have supplemented God's promise here with that of Genesis 12:1-3, trusting that his offspring would be vast not only in number but also in significance, bringing blessing to the world. The content of Abraham's faith was not inconsistent with that of Paul, only less specific. Also, Abraham believed what God *would do*, and Paul believed what God *had done*.

Finally the New Testament explains that faith itself cannot purchase or serve as the foundation for acceptance with God. Only the cross of Christ can purchase our salvation. But since the eternal and timeless God is sovereign over events, He could apply the work of Christ to Old Testament believers in response to their faith, even though they had no specific knowledge of Christ.

Is Mormonism Compatible with the Bible?

by Chad Owen Brand

Joseph Smith Jr., the founder of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, claimed he was restoring the genuine church to the earth, a church absent since the first century. But is Mormonism truly Christian?

Students who ask such questions often differentiate among denominations, sects, cults, and world religions. *Denominations* are movements that differ on doctrinal issues but hold to a common core of beliefs about God, Christ, and the Scriptures. They see God as trinitarian, Christ as unique in His human-divine person, and the Scriptures as the authoritative text passed down from the prophets and apostles. *Sects* agree with the denominations on these matters, but they often have some characteristic that places them on the fringe of Christianity, such as the radical separatism of the Amish. *Cults* are connected to Christianity in that they employ Christian Scripture and appeal to Jesus, but they also differ from the traditional faith in certain core areas. They may deny or reinterpret the Trinity. They may have novel views about Christ. They may reject part of the Christian Scripture, add new texts to it, or claim to have an infallible interpretation that replaces traditional doctrine with a new approach. *World religions* are those historic traditions that include the Christian religion as well as others, such as Islam and Hinduism.

Is Mormonism Christian? If the question asks only whether Mormonism is connected to Christianity in some sense, the answer would be "Yes." But that is not enough. Religions such as Baha'i claim some connection to Christianity, and Muslims believe in the second coming of Jesus. In order for a faith to be Christian it must pass both the doctrinal test and the experiential test. Doctrinally it must be orthodox on the key issues outlined above, and experientially it must see salvation as a faith encounter with Christ alone as the pathway to being right with God. How does Mormonism stack up?

Mormonism is neither monotheistic nor, technically, trinitarian. In one of the Mormon scriptures, *The Pearl of Great Price*, we are told that the world was fashioned "by the Gods." In his famous King Follett sermon, Joseph Smith stated that God was once as we are and that we may become as He is—a God. Mormonism teaches that Father, Son, and Spirit are all God, but it denies the historic Christian view on the Trinity. Mormon scholar Robert Millet has written that the Trinity is comprised of "Three Beings." Mormonism is not trinitarian but tritheist. Mormon theology teaches that Jesus is an incarnation of Elohim, conceived as the *literal* son of God. But He is not the unique incarnation, since we also can be incarnations of the Father. Jesus is important to the whole of Mormon theology but in a different way than for traditional Christians. In Mormonism we are not saved by the atoning work of Christ but by obedience to Mormon principles. Mormons follow the Bible as Scripture, but they have placed three other texts alongside the Bible—*The Book of Mormon*, *Doctrine and Covenants*, and *The Pearl of Great Price*. It is in the last two books in particular that the novel Mormon doctrines can be found.

Because of these departures from standard Christian teachings, Mormonism falls outside orthodox Christianity.

Does the Bible Provide Guidance Regarding Genetic Engineering?

by Scott B. Rae

Since human beings weren't able to manipulate the genetic code when the Bible was written, it doesn't directly address genetic engineering. It does, however, give general principles regarding medical technology that apply to genetic technologies.

Humans are created in God's image and likeness, and so He charges them to exercise dominion over His creation (Gn 1:27-28). Their mandate? To subdue and kindly master the earth, unlocking its resources to benefit themselves and their successors—in a sense continuing the spirit of creation by being subordinate "creators" with God in unlocking the secrets of the creation to benefit humankind.

The command to subdue the earth takes on added complexity after the entrance of sin into the world in Genesis 3. Exercising dominion over creation after the fall now involves dealing with sin's effects in the world. Dominion includes working toward improving the creation or reversing the effects of the entrance of sin. The most important of sin's effects is the reality of death (Gn 3:2-3), which is universal in its scope (Rm 5:12). That is, after the fall, death, decay, and deterioration face every person. Thus dominion over creation largely involves dealing with death and disease (disease being the cause of death in most cases), which can alleviate the harshness of life after the fall, even genetic disease. In order to exercise dominion God (through general revelation) provided human beings with resources necessary for accomplishing that task. That ingenuity and wisdom come from God as His "common grace" gifts to humans (Is 28:23-29).

The knowledge and skill necessary to develop the kinds of technologies that enable humankind to subdue the creation are part of God's general revelation. Humans didn't acquire the ingenuity and skill to develop sophisticated technology on their own apart from God. It's not an accident that these technologies came to be so useful in our exercise of dominion over creation. They are gifts from God. Thus technologies that generally improve the lot of humanity and specifically help reverse the effects of sin's entrance into the world are part of God's common grace. The skill and expertise needed to bring about these creation-subduing technologies come ultimately from God, being His good gifts to humans in harnessing creation.

This is particularly the case when it comes to medical technology. Since death is one of the primary consequences of the entrance of sin into the world, and disease is the primary cause of death and physical deterioration, medical technologies bringing cures to diseases and other afflictions are among God's most gracious gifts to the human race.

Medical technology can be part of God's common grace to assist humans in fulfilling their role in exercising loving dominion. The more controversial technology of genetic engineering should be used only for therapeutic reasons (repairing damage), in keeping with the creation mandate. It should not be used for eugenic reasons (creating a kind of super race, as Hitler and the Nazis hoped to do, considering other races inferior to the so-called Aryans). C. S. Lewis warned that if "the dreams of some scientific planners are realized" by using their power to make their descendants into what they please, then their "conquest of Nature . . . means the rule of a few hundreds of men over billions upon billions of men."

Notable Christian Apologist: William Paley

by Ted Cabal

In an era that dignified science while degrading revelation, God raised William Paley (1743–1805). Receiving his education at Cambridge in mathematics, he would go on to produce history's most influential argument from design for God's existence. Written while suffering a debilitating disease, Paley's *Natural Theology* compares nature's intricate design to the complexity of a watch. If a person walking in a field stumbled upon a timepiece, they would assume it had a designer even if they had never seen a watch before. How much more should those who examine the exquisite craftsmanship of objects such as the eye infer a master Craftsman.

Many believed for much of the twentieth century that David Hume and Charles Darwin had definitively demolished the argument philosophically and scientifically. But Paley's argument is making a comeback. Mathematician/philosopher William Dembski has demonstrated recently that design inferences of the watch/Watchmaker sort can legitimately be philosophically constructed. And biologist Michael Behe has presented a powerful contemporary scientific version of the argument in Darwin's Black Box.

Paley also produced *A View of the Evidences of Christianity* in which he defended the veracity of biblical miracles. Unlike miracle claims from other sources, the stellar character of Christ and the willingness of the apostles to die for their message vouchsafe biblical miracles. Paley, in the mainstream of Christian apologetic tradition, also pointed to fulfilled prophecy as reason to trust the Bible.

Genesis Study Notes

1:1 The Hebrew word for "God," *Elohim*, is grammatically plural, but does not indicate a numerical plural (i.e., "gods"). Hebrew uses the plural form to indicate honor or intensity, sometimes called the "plural of majesty." The consistent appearance of a singular adjective (Ps 7:9) or verb (Gn 20:6) used with *Elohim* shows that the one God is intended. Where the plural adjective or verb occurs, the context determines whether *Elohim* means the "gods" of the nations (Ex 20:3) or whether the plural agreement is simply due to scribes being more grammatically precise (Gn 19:13; cp. 1:26-27). From the Israelite standpoint the oneness of the true Deity is never in question. In Dt 6:4 "The LORD," that is, *Yahweh* the God of Israel, is called "our *Elohim*," and declared to be "One."

1:14-18 The lights were "signs" that mark off time periods. They were not to be heeded as astrological signs, correlating heavenly movements with events on earth. The worship of heavenly bodies is condemned(Dt 4:19).

1:26-27 "Let Us make . . ." (3:22; 11:7; Is 6:8) does not indicate multiple gods. Such a polytheistic view would be inconsistent with the lofty theology of the chapter and with the singular "His own image" (Gn 1:27;cp. 5:1-2). Ancient theories of the universe's origin typically explained creation as the outcome of either a sexual cohabitation of male and female deities or of a battle between the major deity and some other hostile entity. The Bible uniformly affirms that God is asexual with no corresponding female consort. God made the universe by His authoritative speech, not by battling chaos deities. Genesis 1 was written in part to show that the view of the physical world current at that time (i.e., physical entities representing various deities) was wrong. The cosmos is inanimate and entirely under the control of the one God. Plural and singular forms are combined in 1:26-27 (cp. "the Spirit of God," v. 2), reflecting God's unity and yet His fullness. Subsequent scriptural revelation develops this further.

Although humans are created in the "image" and "likeness" of God (the terms are essentially synonyms; cp. 5:3), it does not follow that God has a body. "Image" or "likeness" often refers to a physical representation of something that may be non-material. Man was created to serve as God's representative to govern the earth. Since man is God's image-bearer, murder merits the strongest retribution (9:6). The OT prohibits making any material image of God (Ex 20:1-4; Dt 4:16) because God is spirit (Jn 4:24). In Lk 24:39 Jesus explains that a spirit "does not have flesh and bones" (see Is 31:3). Because God is spirit, He is invisible (Jn 1:18; Rm 1:20; Col 1:15; 1 Tm 1:17).

2:2-3 "Rested" (Hb *shabat*) does not imply fatigue but means only "ceased" because it is connected to the completion of the work of creation.

2:4-26 Chapter 2 is a second creation account only in the sense that it gives a more detailed accounting, not a contradictory one. While chapter 1 provides a general description, chapter 2 is specific. Twofold accounts were common in ancient theories of creation (e.g., the Babylonian story of Atrahasis). The differences in the order of the creation events are due to the narratives' respective purposes. The first gives a loosely chronological account, gathering creation events into a discernible pattern to show the symmetry of creation's purpose. The second is topical, focusing on the sixth day by expanding on the creation and the relationship of the man and woman. Genesis 2 presupposes chapter 1 and does not duplicate all the creation events.

2:7,21-22 The creation of the first man and woman is not myth. The author of the account intends to portray a historical event. The heading "these are the records/family records" (v. 4) occurs 11 times in Genesis to introduce genealogies and historical narratives (e.g., 5:1; 6:9; 10:1; 11:27). The first man (Hb *adam*) is treated in genealogies as a historical individual named "Adam" (5:1; Lk 3:38). Since the name *Adam* means "man(kind)," the author also intends him to represent humanity in general (Gn 3:17-18; cp. Rm 5:12-21). The account of the man and woman's creation views them as special creations, not merely types of humans. The concept of evolution of humans from lower forms is inconsistent with the author's purpose in this narrative.

2:10-14 The lack of archaeological evidence for the garden of Eden would not mean that the place existed only in myth. Despite advances in archaeology, what has been discovered of the ancient Near East is only a small percentage of what might one day be found. The two rivers Tigris and Euphrates exist today in modern Iraq. The identities of the Gihon and Pishon are uncertain but may have been local streams or canals. Floods, climatic changes, and land shifts since ancient times may well have brought about significant changes in topography.

2:19 The verb rendered "formed" can also be "had formed" (NIV), which would alleviate the alleged contradiction with the order of animals created before man (1:24-26). Moreover, chapter 2 may be understood as a topical telling, setting the creation of the animals in contrast to the creation of the woman so as to highlight her dignity as fully human.

3:1 While snakes do not speak, this is more than just a folk story explaining why people tend to find them repulsive. The animal's life is finite and will end in a future destruction ("all the days of your life," v. 14). Snakes/serpents in ancient times were associated with both life and death, wisdom and evil (Nm 21:6,8; Mt 10:16). Thus they served as effective symbols for wisdom that gives life or for evil that leads to death. Though a literal creature, the serpent in the garden embodied the evil being (Satan) that opposed God and the human couple (see Jb 1–2; Zch 3:1-2; Rm 16:20). The serpent was an unclean animal (Lv 11:42) and symbolized the enemies of God (Is 14:29; Rv 12:9; 20:2). The snake talked to the woman as would a deceitful opponent.

3:4 The couple did not immediately die physically (cp. 2:17). By God's grace, their death was postponed till a later time. But their expulsion from the garden (vv. 23-24) shows that the word of God was indeed fulfilled as the immediate consequence of their disobedience. They were cut off from access to the tree of life, which symbolized the source of life (2:9; Rv 2:7; 22:2,14,19). In Israel expulsion from the tabernacle in the camp, such as quarantine (e.g., Lv 13:46), meant that the person was ceremonially dead until he was declared fit again. The human couple's expulsion signaled their spiritual death (see Eph 2:1). That their physical death occurred is confirmed by the refrain "then he died" in Adam's genealogy (Gn 5:5). Physical death for humans was the result of disobedience in the garden (Rm 5:12-21; 6:23).

3:8 That God walked is a common figure of speech (anthropomorphism). From the human standpoint, it is not possible to describe God's interaction with people without attributing to Him some of the properties of a human body, such as back or face (Ex 33:11,23), eyes or ears (1 Kg 8:29; Ps 34:15), arm or hands (Ex 3:20; 6:6; Dt 4:34; 33:3; Is 53:1; Heb 1:10; 10:31). God does not have a physical body (see note on 1:26-27), although He can manifest Himself in the form of a man (Gn 18:16-22;32:30; Ezk 1:26) or even a burning bush (Ex 3:2-4) or a fiery pillar (Ex 13:21-22).

3:9-11 The Bible is full of affirmations of God's unlimited knowledge (see 16:13; Ex 3:7; Jb 12:13; 28:23-24; 36:4; Ps 33:13-15; 139:1-4; Is 46:10; Jr 23:24; Mt 10:29; Ac 15:8; Heb 4:13). Therefore God's questions here are rhetorical; He is not unaware of the couple's location and what had transpired in the garden. The passage describes God as a parent who instructs His children with restoration as His purpose. He did not question the serpent, because He had no plan to redeem the tempter.

3:14 The snake's penalty does not suggest a belief that snakes once walked on legs. The characteristic slithering of the snake was a sufficient symbol of its degradation. Food laws were to prohibit the eating of animals who crawled along the ground, making them abhorrent to Israel (Lv 11:42). The mention of "dust" further symbolized the snake's humiliation for its crime (see Mc 7:17).

3:15 This predicted battle between the serpent and the woman would not be a literal confrontation in the garden. The language is figurative, indicating the life-and-death struggle between the adversary and the human family borne by the woman. Like the word "sheep" in English, the word "seed" in Hebrew is both singular and plural, meaning either descendants without number, taken as a whole, or one particular descendant. The passage incorporates both meanings by referring to the ongoing opposition to the people of God by their enemies and by predicting the rise of a particular seed, Jesus Christ, who will destroy the serpent in the end (Rm 16:20; Rv 12:9-10).

3:16 The woman's penalty was not in bearing children but in the pain attached to giving birth. "Yet he will dominate you" does not warrant the enslavement of women as chattel. Woman is also created in the image of God and has the honored role of giving birth by which the blessing for all humanity is realized (1:26-28). The Lord's pronouncement predicts the future rivalry between the sexes for dominance, a rivalry resulting from the sinful condition of the man and woman. These words are not an exhortation directed to the man to dominate his wife. Hebrew law recognized the vulnerability of women and required special deference to them (Ex 22:22; Dt 25:5-10). The NT explicitly commands husbands to love and honor their wives (Eph 5:25; Col 3:19; 1 Pt 3:7), and Christian husbands and wives observe their spiritual equality (Gl 3:28) while carrying out their respective God-given roles.

3:20 Although skeptics find it absurd that Eve "was the mother of all the living," the meaning of her name makes sense in this passage. Her husband recognized that she was the source of the "seed" (v. 15) that would eventually defeat the serpent and restore

life. She was the first woman to bear children (4:1), and Adam showed faith in God's promise that she would bear more in the future.

3:22 God's admission that the man "has become like one of Us" does not indicate that the serpent's suggestion that God was insecure about His position was correct. God was not threatened by the man's wisdom when He expelled him from the garden, but it was necessary to prohibit the couple's access to the tree of life or thepenalty of death for disobedience could not be carried out. Although the human couple would die, it was ultimately merciful to deny them the tree; otherwise they would live forever in a sinful and painful world. Godgraciously provided for their new environment outside the garden (v. 21), and ultimately for their eternal salvation through the promised "seed." For the plural "Us," see note on 1:26-27.

4:4-5 God preferred Abel's offering not because He liked meat more than vegetables or shepherds more than farmers, but because Abel's offering was made in faith (Heb 11:4). He offered the best of his flock ("the firstborn"), and Cain offered only "some" of his produce (Gn 4:3; cp. Ex 23:19; Lv 2:14).

4:12,16-17 That Cain founded a city does not contradict the Lord's declaration that Cain will be a "restless wanderer." "Nod" sounds similar to the word "wanderer" (Hb *nad*), creating a wordplay between the punishment of wandering and the region where he roamed. The point of the curse is that Cain could no longer live a settled life as a farmer. Therefore he developed the first urban center "east of," that is, no longer affiliated with, his parents and their descendants.

4:15 Although the only other humans mentioned thus far are his parents, Cain's fear of retaliation for the murder of Abel is understandable. Adam fathered many children during his 930 years (5:4-5), producing future generations that could exact revenge. That God marked to safeguard Cain does not contradict the divine provision of capital punishment (9:6). By this sign God declares that the taking of life is His prerogative, in contrast to Cain's presumptuous murder of Abel. With the threatening development of widespread violence, the Lord instituted capital punishment as a societal obligation to restrict murder (6:11-12; 8:21).

4:17 The age-old question, Who was Cain's wife?, has raised the specter that Cain committed incest, which was prohibited (Lv 18:6-18). But the Mosaic laws were not given until much later, and even the implied condemnations of incest in Genesis (Lot in 19:30-38; Reuben in 35:22; 49:3-4) relate to a time later than that of Cain and his siblings.

4:19,23 The Bible nowhere explicitly forbids polygamy, and Lamech is the first of many polygamists in the OT, including favored patriarchs and kings (e.g., 29:21-30; 1 Sm 27:3). We must not assume, however, that the absence of explicit prohibition entails divine approval. First, God's mind and will may also be expressed implicitly through story and description. Here Lamech's arrogant vengefulness is clear, showing him to be a true descendant of the murderer Cain. His practice of polygamy, then, is to be understood as typical of the wicked whose willful pride seeks to be satisfied by the multiplication of wives or other symbols of status and acts of self-indulgence (Gn 26:34; 28:9; 36:2; Dt 17:17). Second, God's mind and will can be gauged from positive statements like Gn 2:21-25, which mandates the divine pattern of monogamous marriage (see Mal 2:14,16; Mt 19:4-6). Plural marriage is not, and never has been, biblical marriage. When polygamy occurred, it had predictably disastrous results for the family (e.g., 2 Sm 13:4-37). We may not fully understand why God did not denounce Abraham, Jacob, David and others when they corrupted true marriage in this way, but we should not take His silence as indicating His lack of interest in the matter.

5:24 That God "took" Enoch obliquely describes his ascension to heaven (cp. Heb 11:5). He alone in this genealogy avoided death, thereby reflecting the hope that death was not inevitable. The statement in Jn 3:13 that "no one has ascended into heaven" except the Son of Man refers in context to the acquisition of spiritual truth, not to physical ascension as with Enoch and Elijah (2 Kg 2:11). If Nicodemus cannot understand the spiritual significance of Jesus' teaching when He uses an earthly analogy (spiritual birth), he cannot understand the things of heaven where there is no analogy (Jn 3:12).

6:2-4 The "sons of God" and the "Nephilim" are not evidence of polytheism or mythical lore about a race of giants. On the contrary, the account repudiates the pagan belief concerning a race of giants by insisting that the children born to "the sons of God" were no more than "men" (v. 4)—not semi-divine beings. These were perhaps the warrior class, infamous for their acts of violent oppression in this decadent period (vv. 5-8). The "sons of God" have been traditionally identified either as fallen angels (see Jb 1:6; 2:1) who had intercourse with women (1 Pt 3:19-20; 2 Pt 2:4), or the favored descendants of Seth (see Dt 14:1; Jn 1:12-13) who intermarried with the wicked Cainite women (cp. the two genealogies in Gn 4–5). In the first interpretation, the

Nephilim are usually understood as the descendants of fallen angels. The translation "giants," popularized by the KJV, reflected the Septuagint *gigantes*, which relied on the allusion to a race of tall people in Nm 13:32-33. Based on the phrase "both in those days and afterwards" (Gn 6:4), others interpret the Nephilim as contemporaries of "the sons of God," not their children. The Nephilim of Moses' day could not have been descendants of the same Nephilim, since these were destroyed in the flood. The Hebrew spies exaggerated ("we seemed like grasshoppers," Nm 13:33) in their allusion to the "Nephilim" because of their ancient reputation for violence.

6:6-7 Although "regret" is the customary translation of the Hebrew verb in verse 6, its basic meaning is to "be pained." This is the sense here, as suggested by the parallel "be grieved." As it hurts a loving parent to see the disobedience of his children, so it pained God to see how wicked men had become. Human regret arises from one's inability to foresee or alter the effects of one's actions. But because of God's perfect knowledge and unlimited power He is not subject to these human limitations. The correspondence between human emotions and the heart of God provides insight into the mystery of God's nature. Although the Bible describes God as responding with human emotions, thecorrespondence is not exact. People often act out of sinful, irrational, or uncontrolled emotion, but God's emotion is always consistent with His righteous character and eternal purposes (cp. 2 Th 2:13). A close reading of the passage shows that God's disappointment was not with human creation but with human sin. God is not indifferent to sin's effects, but His grief is not a feeling of helplessness. Coupled with His pained heart is the just recompense of His anger (cp. Ps 78:40-41; Is 63:10).

6:9–8:22 The story of Noah and the ark testifies to the Bible's reliable memory of this catastrophic event. Other ancient cultures had similar stories, including the Sumerian account of Atrahasis and the Babylonian epic of Gilgamesh. The Bible's resemblance to these accounts can be attributed to a shared memory, rather than to borrowing. Although some remarkable parallels exist (such as the kind and purpose of the released birds, 8:7-12), the differences in detail and purpose are substantive. For example, in the Gilgamesh story the ark is a perfect cube of about 197 feet; such a vessel would capsize and sink in turbulent water. Noah's ark possessed a seaworthy shape of a long rectangular barge (450 ft. by 75 ft.). More importantly, the pagan accounts are typically polytheistic. The purpose of the flood is to rid the earth of the pesky and noisy humans whose explosive population disturbs the sleep of the gods, and the survivor receives immortality from the gods. By contrast, the biblical account presents a high moral motivation for the flood, through which God judges sin and also purifies the earth. Moreover, Noah is decidedly mortal, and God preserves the human family out of His grace. The lessons of the flood account are Noah's obedience to God's word and the perpetuation of God's blessing for humanity and the world.

6:14-22 The ability of the ark to house the many animal species known today has elicited doubt, but this is the result of a misreading of the text. The word "kinds" refers to general categories; the animals on board were representative of genera, or groups of species. Moreover, the three levels of the ark provided approximately 1.4 million cubic feet. The gathering of the animals was divinely guided (v. 22), so it is reasonable to propose that the Lord superintended the care and feeding of the animals.

6:17; 7:19-23 Although the geological record contains ample evidence of widespread, devastating local flooding, most geologists claim to see no evidence of a universal flood. Nevertheless, many ancient cultures preserved the memory of a worldwide flood. Some Christian geologists contend that only a worldwide flood can best explain the earth's sedimentary layers. The description "all the high mountains . . . were covered" indicates the same (7:19-20), and the planet's lack of sufficient water for such a flood can be explained if the water's weight pushed mountains higher than they were before. The Biblical account abounds with expressions that indicate a universal flood (e.g., "all flesh under heaven"). Some who hold to the idea of a regional flood explain this as exaggeration or hyperbole or claim that it represents only the situation as viewed from the ark. But the flood's purpose was to judge all human life with divine destruction (e.g., 6:7,12-13; cp. Lk 17:26-30; 2 Pt 2:5; 3:6), and animal life would not have to have been rescued from a local flood unless all life were located in that region. From the Bible's standpoint, Noah's flood was the greatest flood in world history (9:15).

6.19–7:3 Those unfamiliar with ancient Near Eastern narrative literary style have supposed that repetitions in the flood account result from the clumsy collage of two contradictory traditions. Repetition in Hebrewnarrative is a common device that gives emphasis, coherence, and structural symmetry. For example, the command to take on board "two" of every creature (6:19-20) is a general instruction to gather the animals in reproductive pairs. Then follow the specific instructions to collect "seven" such pairs of clean animals, which will be used for offerings (8:20), and only one pair of unclean animals (7:2-3; cp. 7:13-16). In this case, the repetition reveals that there was more than one purpose for collecting the animals. The "clean" and "unclean" distinctions would later be standardized (Lv 11; Dt 14), but recognition of these differences occurred before Moses. The Sabbath was also observed before Moses' command normalized it (Ex 16:23-29; 20:8-11).

7:4,11-12,17,24 The chronology of the flood may seem confusing but it is consistent. Noah waited on the ark seven days before the 40 days of rain began. The waters "surged" for 150 days (five months) of destruction(v. 24). This includes 40 days of rain followed by 110 days, during which the waters began to recede until the ark settled somewhere on the mountains of Ararat. In 40 more days land became visible (8:5-6). For about three weeks Noah sent out birds until the dove failed to return (8:12). But Noah had to wait another three months before he saw that the "ground was drying" (8:13), and another month before he and his shipmates could disembark, 377 days after climbing aboard.

7:12 Although some contend that Noah's flood was the first time it ever rained, therefore a new experience for Noah's generation, the Bible does not say this. The first mention of something is not necessarily the first time it occurred. Sunrise and sunset occurred before they are specifically mentioned in the text (15:12,17; 19:23).

7:13-17 The entry of Noah, his family, and the animals into the ark is repeated here (in the case of the animals twice, vv. 13,15). The repetition is part of the literary buildup to the concluding remark, "Then the LORD shut him in" (v. 16).

7:20 Where did all that water go? The story is internally consistent with its claims of God's special intervention at points in the flood events. The Lord "caused a wind to pass over the earth" (8:1). It was a divinely-induced wind that divided the sea and dried the riverbed to allow the exodus (Ex 14:21). God accomplished the drying of the earth by a unique means in the times of Noah and Moses. Some prefer the explanation that the flood was not global but local (see 6:17 note).

8:1 The expression that "God remembered" does not imply that He had forgotten. It is a figure of speech meaning that God acted on the basis of His promise to save Noah (cp. 19:29; Ps 105:42).

8:13-14 Was the date of the earth's drying the first month or the second month? The drying of the "ground" (*adamah,* v. 13) on the first of the month was the beginning, and the drying of the whole "earth" (*erets*, v. 14) was not complete until the twenty-seventh day of the second month.

8:21-22 The Lord mercifully promised not to destroy the earth again in the same manner (by flood), yet He will destroy the earth again by fire (2 Pt 3:10-13). The promise of uninterrupted seasons refers to the general pattern of seed and harvest that would provide agricultural stability for the people of earth. It does not entail the absence of famines and other natural disasters due to climatic conditions that might arise.

9:2 After the flood the animal world received a new decree imposing on them an inherent fear of humans. As with the creation decree that animals are subject to mankind, the new command is not a license for the inhumane treatment of animals. The new environment following the flood's judgment was a hostile one characterized by violence and death. Humans maintained their authority over the lower animals, but the relationship would involve struggle in a sinful, fallen world (Rm 8:19-23). All life is valuable to God (Lv 17:14), and the new decree contributed to the preservation of both human and animal life. Israel's laws provided animals for food but prohibited wanton killing (Lv 17:8-16;Dt 12:23; 15:21-23) and required special protections (Ex 20:10; 23:11; Dt 22:10; 25:4). Despite the fall, God did not revoke man's stewardship of the earth.

9:4 The purpose of prohibiting the eating of unbled meat (cp. Lv 17:10-14; Ac 15:29) was to affirm the value of life, for the blood represents the life force (Lv 17:14; 19:26) and the prerogatives of life and death belong to God alone. But the commands to Noah's family in verses 1-7, such as diet, procreation, and capital punishment, were never intended to be absolute, as was shown by subsequent laws (e.g., proscribed foods, Lv. 11). Not every divine command or prohibition in the Bible applies to everyone. Jeremiah, for example, was told not to marry (Jr 16:2), and Isaiah was told to go naked and barefoot for three years (Is 20:2-4). The prohibition required by the Jerusalem Council was a temporary measure (Ac 15:28-29), designed to appease the ritual practices of the Jews for the sake of the unity of the church. Paul's higher principle permitted the consumption of previously unlawful foods (Rm 14:20; Col 2:16-17). Unbled meat is not prohibited for Christians today, even though some groups (e.g., the Watchtower Society, see the article "Are the Teachings of Jehovah's Witnesses Compatible with the Bible?" in Lk 23) have mistakenly inferred that the Bible prohibits the transfusion of whole blood and certain products.

9:12-17 The passage does not claim that God newly created the rainbow, indicating that it had not existed before; rather, the Lord attached new meaning to the bow's appearance as "the sign of the covenant."

9:25 Although Ham was the one guilty of dishonoring his father, the curse is against his son Canaan. The Bible prohibits inflicting judgment against an innocent son in the place of his guilty father (Dt 24:16; Ezk 18:20), but it also recognizes that the influence of sinful parents typically leads children to follow their pattern of behavior (Ex 20:5). This was especially the case in ancient Israel's patriarchal society where multiple generations often lived in the household of the patriarch.

The creation account makes it clear that all people are of equal worth (Gn 1:26-27). Slavery contradicts this principle. Those OT and NT passages that provide for and regulate slavery assume it as a regrettable aspect of sinful human society. Early indications that slavery eventually would become obsolete were laws that prohibited the mistreatment of slaves (see notes on Ex 21:2,7; 21:20-21,26). The gospel and the brotherhood of the saints (Gl 3:28; Phm) undermine the practice of slavery. These considerations suggest that Noah's curse of Canaan was either figurative, or a misunderstanding of the Lord's intent. The narrative does not portray Noah as an entirely exemplary character (v. 21).

10:5,20,31 The description of the nations in chapter 10 chronologically follows the tower of Babylon incident in 11:1-9. However, the narrative reverses the order for rhetorical effect, concluding the pre-Abrahamic history with an illustration of the incorrigibility of human sin. As long as the people of the tower had a common language (11:1,6-9) they could maintain their prideful autonomy despite God's command to spread over the earth (9:1). (That the nations continued to develop diverse languages was a natural result of their dispersion, 11:8-9.) To underscore his point, the author then returns in 11:10-26 to the genealogy of Shem, ancestor of the patriarchs through whom salvation will come to the nations (12:3).

10:22; 11:10 According to 11:10, Arpachshad was Shem's firstborn. In 10:22 Shem's children are listed geographically rather than in birth order (see notes on 11:10; 11:26,32).

11:7 On the plural pronouns for God, see note on1:26-27.

11:10 Shem was 100 years old "two years after the deluge" and thus 98 at the flood. But Noah was 500 when he "fathered Shem, Ham, and Japheth" (5:32) and 600 when the flood began (7:6,11), suggesting that Shem may have been 100 at the flood. But this neglects some facts that the reader is expected to observe: (1) Shem, Ham, and Japheth were not triplets (cp. 9:24), so they were not all born when Noah was 500, making 5:32 an approximation. The NIV translation "After Noah was 500 years old" is syntactically possible, but no word for "after" is in the text. (2) Since Ham was the youngest, Noah's sons are apparently listed in order of importance rather than birth order. Japheth may have been the oldest, born when Noah was 500, allowing Shem to be born two years later. (3) We are not told whether "two years" counts from the beginning or the end of the flood period, which lasted one year and ten days (7:11; 8:14).

11:26,32 How old was Abraham when he left Haran? If Abram was the eldest son, he was born when Terah was 70. Genesis 12:4 says Abram was 75 when he departed, which would mean that he left 60 years before the death of his father. However, Stephen's sermon indicates that he left after the death of Terah (Ac 7:4), making Abram 135 years old. Was Abraham 75 or 135 when he left? There are three plausible responses. (1) Haran was the eldest son born when Terah was 70 (Gn 11:26) and Abraham was the youngest son born 60 years later when Terah was 130. Thus, 70 (birth of Haran) + 60 (birth of Abraham) + 75 (Abraham's departure) = 205. Abraham was 75 when his father died at 205. A difficulty for this proposal is the surprise of Abraham at fathering a son at 100 (17:17) when his own father did so at 130. (2) The Samaritan Pentateuch has Terah's death at "145 years"; some scholars conclude that Stephen and the Jewish author Philo (*On the Migration of Abraham*, 177) reflected an alternative tradition. (3) The author announced the death of Terah proleptically for thematic reasons, to close out the career of Terah since he plays no further part in the story. Stephen's sermon gave a general accounting of the history of Israel (e.g., sometimes telescoping events) rather than a strict chronology which did not impact his central message.

12:1 Did God call Abram from Ur or from Haran to leave Mesopotamia for Canaan? According to 11:31, it was Abram's father Terah who decided to take his family from Ur in Mesopotamia to Canaan, though we are not told why. The context of verses 1-3 suggests that Abram was in Haran when God summoned him to Canaan. According to Stephen in Ac 7:2 God appeared to Abram in Mesopotamia "before he settled in Haran" and called him to leave for a new land. If God had spoken to Abram while Abram was in Ur, this could have been part of Terah's motive for moving his family. God could then have repeated His summons to Abram to proceed to Canaan after his father had died in Haran (Gn 11:32).

12:2 Abram would not become "a great nation," as God had promised, during his lifetime. However, his descendants apparently numbered over two million by the time of the exodus (some 600,000 men, plus their wives and many children; Ex 12:37). Abram has become significant in history as the physical father of Israel and the one regarded as spiritual "father" by Jews, Christians, and Muslims. Abram became "a blessing" by his example of proper worship and proclamation of the Lord's name (12:8), as well as by his justifying faith (15:6; Rm 4:3). His name may be reflected in a tenth-century B.C. Egyptian list of places in the Negev that includes "The Enclosure of Abram."

12:3 The blessing and curse here have played out repeatedly in history. The nations or groups (plural: "those") who have blessed Abram or his descendants have been blessed by God. The individuals (singular: "him") who have cursed Abram or Israel have been "cursed," coming eventually to a bad end. This, however, is not a blank check for the actions of unbelieving Israel, as if the nation could do no wrong or deserves no criticism or has no accountability for its actions. It is a general ongoing promise. Acts 3:25 and Gl 3:8 indicate that all the families of the earth are blessed in the availability of salvation through Jesus Christ, and Gl 6:16 refers to the church as "the Israel of God" through which, by implication, that blessing is extended.

12:5 In referring to "the people [Abram] had acquired in Haran" the Bible is not sanctioning slavery. "Acquired" may refer to household servants, which wealthy families of the era had, rather than to slaves. Furthermore, even characters whom the Bible views favorably do not always act in accordance with what God approves. In evaluating their actions, we must recall that God did not reveal His will in its entirety at the beginning, but rather gradually throughout the course of biblical history. Biblical narrative often conveys the divine and human authors' evaluation of a character's actions implicitly rather than explicitly, not by denouncing the actions but by recording their outcome. The disgrace resulting from Abram's lie in verses 12-13 is an example of this.

12:6 Some have supposed the note "At that time the Canaanites were in the land" (see note on 13:7) means that in the author's day they were no longer there. If so, Moses could not be the author. But "that time" is clearly not being contrasted to the author's time but to Abram's time. The point is that when God made His promise to Abram the land was already occupied.

12:10-15 A tomb painting of Khnumhotep III at Beni Hasan from 870 B.C. depicts a trading donkey caravan of "Asiatics" visiting Egypt. Their beards, multicolored robes, weapons, and goods would have been typical of visitors from Canaan during the time of the patriarchs. During the first half of the second millennium B.C. Egyptian kings had a northern palace in the eastern Delta region near Avaris. Egyptologist Kenneth Kitchen points out that "the pharaohs were commonly partial to attractive foreign ladies, as finds and texts for the Middle and New Kingdoms attest."

13:7 "At that time" does not mean the Canaanites and Perizzites were not there when the book was written but that in Abram's time the land promised to him was already occupied (see note on 12:6). So Abram and Lot were competing not only with each other but also with others for water and food.

14:1-2 Skeptical scholars in earlier generations doubted the historical existence of some, or all, of the kings in these verses. Although these kings of ancient city-states cannot be identified (Amraphel is no longer supposed to be the later famous king Hammurabi), their names are recognized as authentic ancient names from the regions they are here said to rule.

14:3,8,10 The "Valley of Siddim" was apparently the name of the land now covered by the Dead Sea, one of the world's richest areas in mineral content (perhaps reflected by the presence of "many asphalt pits," v. 10). How the valley filled in to become a great body of water is not known, though it appears the flow of the Jordan River out of the south end of the valley into the Arabah was blocked, damming the river. That could have been caused by upheaval related to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.

14:14-16,24 Many have scoffed at the assertion that Abram and the 318 male servants and slaves of his household and his allies (v. 24) could have routed the sizeable armies of these four kings (v. 9). However, the power of the Lord has overcome much greater military odds (cp. 2 Kg 19:35-36), including a similar victory at night by Gideon and his purposely pared-down force of 300 (Jdg 7:9-22).

15:2-3 Extrabiblical texts from the ancient Near East (e.g., discoveries at Nuzi and Larsa) confirm the practice of servants becoming heirs in some cases.

15:4-6 The Lord expected Abram to believe the extraordinary assertion that, even at his advanced age, he would have his own physical child and that his descendants would be as numerous as the stars in the sky. Abram believed what the Lord told him, becoming the great model of justifying faith.

15:7 This verse does not necessarily conflict with the apparent sense of Terah rather than Abram leading his family from Ur to Haran, as suggested by 11:31. In a patriarchal culture, Abram was part of the extended household of his father.

15:8-9 Although the wording of verse 8 could be taken to reflect unbelief on Abram's part (cp. Ex 7:17; Nm 16:28; Lk 1:18), verse 6 clarifies that is not the sense intended. The Lord's response, in which He sets up a ceremony to reaffirm the covenant He is granting (Gn 15:9-10,17-18), shows that Abram was simply seeking a sign of the divine promise upon which to hang his continued confidence (cp. Is 7:10-14). Abram's complaint shows he takes God seriously.

15:13-14 Some scholars hold that Moses, or a later editor of Genesis, is here simply projecting a knowledge of later history into the narrative in the guise of advance prophecy. The logic is that it could not possibly have been known in Abram's time (2000 B.C.) that Israel would be in Egypt for "400 years" and that they would be "enslaved and oppressed" for most of that period. Such a perspective, however, is rooted in an anti-supernatural bias and flies in the face of the bulk of predictive biblical prophecy that has been fulfilled in amazing detail.

15:13,16 Verse 13 predicts the length of Israel's Egyptian captivity as "400 years." Verse 16 says it will end in "the fourth generation." That would make the average life span of a generation 100 years, which seems far-fetched by the standards of almost all of recorded history. However, since Jacob lived to be 147 years old, part of it in Egypt (47:28); Joseph lived to be 110, most of it in Egypt (50:22,26); and Moses lived to be 120, the first 40 of which were in Egypt (Dt 34:7), the idea of a hundred-year generation is plausible. In addition, the recorded life spans before the flood were much longer. It may well be that, for various reasons, human life spans were decreasing over time, just as they have gradually increased in modern times due to improvements in medicine, diet, and sanitation.

15:18 The boundaries of the promised land in the Abrahamic covenant in verse 18 can be misunderstood. It is highly unlikely that the "brook of Egypt" is the Nile River. Rather, it is almost surely the Wadi el'Arish, a riverbed that is dry much of the year (except the rainy season), located midway between southwestern Israel and the Nile. The reference to the "Euphrates River" is not to the entire length of that great river, just its northwestern arm in Syria where it is closest to Israel. Whether or not Israel has ever controlled the full extent of these boundaries is a matter of debate.

15:19-21 Over a century ago there was no historical or archaeological evidence for the existence of several of the peoples listed among these 10 nations ("Kenites . . .Jebusites"). As a result, certain scholars doubted the veracity of this verse. A century ago, however, important archaeological findings have greatly strengthened the likelihood that all 10 did, in fact, exist when Abram and Moses lived.

16:1-4 Hagar's conceiving a child by Abram seems like adultery or polygamy to modern readers, and does not reflect a later Christian standard. But it would have been common in that culture for a female servant to become a secondary wife for the purpose of bearing children (e.g., Rachel's and Leah's servants, Bilhah and Zilpah, who bore four of Jacob's sons who became heads of four of the 12 tribes of Israel). This custom was noted in the Code of Hammurabi and the Nuzi tablets.

16:6-9 This narrative may appear to sanction slavery and to devalue the human life of Hagar and her unborn son. However, the actions played out here are a reflection of the culture and Sarai's selfish jealous rage against her servant girl.

16:6-14 The trusting obedience of Hagar to the words of the Angel of the Lord strongly implies that she shared the faith of Abram (15:6). Hagar is the "mother" of the Arab peoples.

16:7,9-11,13 The angel of the Lord may have been an angel sent as a spokesman for the Lord (Hb *mal'ach* means "messenger"). However, verse 13 suggests that Hagar understood she was speaking directly to the Lord. Thus, in the history of interpretation, many have understood the Angel of the Lord to be a Christophany (i.e., a pre-incarnate appearance of the Second Person of the Trinity, later born as Jesus Christ).

16:11 Although not referring to the same people, biblical names beginning with i/j [Hb *y*] are extremely common in archaeological texts from the ancient Near East of the early second millennium B.C., the time of the patriarchs. They diminish in frequency sharply after that time. Such names include Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. According to W. C. Kaiser, Jr., "If the stories had been invented in much later times, such as those of the Babylonian Exile, the use of such names would have been most unlikely since they had little or no currency in that era."

16:12 The prophecy regarding Ishmael and his descendants may seem harsh and stereotypical. However, the description of a mobile warlike people has been true to the history of many of Ishmael's descendants among the Arab peoples. It is also striking that, while none of the 10 nations listed in 15:19-21 has survived to the present day, the Arab peoples are now among the largest ethnic groups in the world.

17:1,18 It had been 13 years since Ishmael was born and, apparently, there had been no further revelation from the Lord during that period. That would mean Abram and Sarai were under the impression that Sarai's scheme to have a child that was legally hers through her servant, Hagar, had God's blessing. Verse 18 indicates that Abram viewed Ishmael as his blood heir and was emotionally attached to him as his son and the means through which God's promise would be fulfilled.

17:1-2 The Abrahamic covenant is in the form of an unconditional contract with Abram and his divinely chosen descendant; ultimately it is guaranteed by the faithfulness of God alone (v. 2). Nevertheless it has a secondary conditional aspect. To enjoy the benefits of this covenant, Abram must still obey God's commands. This requirement is seen here in the words: "Live in My presence and be devout" (v. 1).

17:5,10-14,15,21 Throughout the Bible God's plan is clarified in successive parts, sometimes over an extended period. This gradual unfolding of His purpose in history is called "progressive revelation." In this case the revelation of the Abrahamic covenant began 24 years earlier (12:1-4). It has been restated and clarified (13:14-17; 15:17-21) and, at this point, becomes even more specific. The renaming of *Abraham* and *Sarah*, the giving of a sign for the covenant, and the statement that Sarah would physically bear the son of the promise, as well as the date of birth for the child, represent a further expansion of the revelation.

17:9-14,23-27 Many peoples of Old Testament times practiced circumcision, so it is of religious significance not only in the Judeo-Christian tradition. However, as Jr 9:25-26 and Rm 2:28-29 make clear, what set apart the circumcision related to the Abrahamic covenant was its expectation that the people would be "circumcised in heart" (i.e., trusting the Lord and obedient to the commitment represented by the outward sign of circumcision).

17:17 In ordinary human experience 90-year-old women do not have babies and 100-year-old men do not father them. The birth of Sarah's child prefigures other remarkable births that reveal God's intervention in the human scene, including the birth of John the Baptist and the virgin birth of Christ. As Mary is told, "nothing will be impossible with God" (Lk 1:37).

17:18,20-21 Abraham's prayer concerning Ishmael inv. 18 did not go unanswered. Just as there were 12 tribes of Israel, there were 12 tribes of Ishmael (v. 20; 25:16). The difference between the two was God's sovereign choice of Isaac's descendants as His covenant people (17:21).

18:1–19:2 At first glance, the identity of the persons with whom Abraham (chap. 18) and Lot (chap.19) interacted may seem confusing. There are references to "the LORD" (18:1,10), "three men" (18:2,9) and "two angels" (19:1). The best explanation is that both the Lord and angels took human form (i.e., appeared to be human beings). Of the three, the Lord conversed with Abraham (18:1,10-33), while the two angels (19:1) continued on to Sodom, where Lot responded to them (19:1-2) in a manner similar to the way in which Abraham had met the three men in 18:1-4), implying that their appearance remained human.

18:9-14 An ironic play on words occurs in chapters 17–18. Abraham laughed when he heard that Sarah and he would have a child at their advanced ages (17:17). Sarah laughed when she found out the timing of the baby's birth. They laughed at the human impossibility of this happening (v. 12). Ironically, God named the miraculously conceived child *Isaac*," which means "laughter." The only sin involved in these episodes, however, was that Sarah, out of fear of the Lord, lied about her laughter (v. 15).

18:20-21 It is possible to misunderstand these verses in two ways: (1) that God is distant from His creation; and (2) that God is not all-knowing. God already knows the wretched spiritual state of Sodom (Ps 139:1-12), which has "come up" to Him in His transcendence (i.e., existence over and beyond the created universe). However, because God is also fully immanent (i.e., personally involved with His creation), this passage speaks of His "coming down" to "see" the sinfulness of Sodom for Himself. There is an echo here of the story of the tower of Babylon; when the people thought to raise up a tower into the sky, God "came down" (Gn 11:5) to see what they had done.

18:23-32 The negotiation between the Lord and Abraham does not imply that man is able to manipulate God in order to change His mind. Rather, it demonstrates God's desire to be merciful, contrasted with mankind's wickedness and addiction to evil behavioral patterns. God is willing to forego stated judgment, as evidenced by His relenting after the repentance of the people of Nineveh in response to Jonah's preaching (Jnh 3:10). However, unlike Nineveh, not even the minimal number of 10 righteous people could be found in Sodom (Gn 18:32; 19:12-13). A broader issue here is the meaning of being "righteous." Even though the grossly wicked behavior of the people of Sodom is in view in the immediate context, the preceding account of Abraham's life emphasizes that the basis of his righteousness was faith in God's promises (15:6).

19:4-8 The term "sodomy" is derived from this passage. It is widely held that the severity of God's judgment of Sodom had to do with the prevalence of homosexuality there. This view is disputed by some, notably some religious homosexuals. Lot's offer of his virgin daughters (vv. 7-8) probably indicates a pervasive environment of sexual sin. Nevertheless, God had already said that Sodom's sin was "extremely serious" (18:20) and homosexuality is the sin spotlighted in the text (v. 5). Paul also makes clear that a tragic part of the downward spiral of mankind's sinful rebellion against God, which incurs His wrath, is homosexual behavior (Rm 1:26-27).

19:11 God sometimes protects His people through blinding those who threaten them, as here (cp. 2 Kg 6:18). He also reveals Himself to people by imparting physical (Jn 9:5,25) or spiritual (2 Kg 6:16-17) sight.

19:12-29 The theological theme of this section is similar to that in the latter part of chapter 18: God's mercy and compassion are revealed despite justly deserved judgment. In this case, the angels interact with Lot and compassionately adjust their original instructions in accord with Lot's physical limitations (vv. 17-22). Still, the proclaimed judgment arrived as soon as Lot's family was safe (vv. 23-24). Even then, Lot's wife was lost because she disobeyed the express command not to look back at the destruction (v. 26).

19:24-25,27-29 The truth of this entire chapter has been questioned due to a supposed lack of related archaeological evidence. A plausible explanation for that absence is that the locations of Sodom, Gomorrah, and the other cities of the plain are now under the Dead Sea. Possibly, as the result of geological upheaval (earthquakes are not uncommon in that area), the south end of the Jordan River rift was blocked. This created a body of water so thick in mineral content that it has not been feasible to carry out significant exploration of the deep bottom of the south end of the Dead Sea.

19:30-38 This explanation of the origins of the Moabites and Ammonites should not be taken as approval of the incestuous advantage Lot's daughters took of their father. The narrative merely describes what happened. Even in the family tree of the Messiah in Matthew 1:2-16, three of the four women mentioned (i.e., Tamar,Rahab, and "Uriah's wife") had questionable moral backgrounds. Providentially, the Lord used them in spite of the stigma attached to their names.

20:1-16 Three aspects of this episode have been thought troublesome: (1) that Abraham would fall into the same error he committed in Egypt in 12:10-20; (2) that Sarah would be taken into Abimelech's harem at her advanced age (17:17); and (3) that Abraham would rely on the shaky half-truth of Sarah being his half-sister (20:11-13). The first and third of these problems are related. Abraham had told Pharaoh that Sarah was his sister (12:13) and, though forced to leave Egypt when the deception was discovered (12:18-20), he left a much wealthier man than he had come (12:16; 13:2). Thus, it may have appeared to Abraham that

God blessed his deception. As to Sarah's age, it is significant that beauty is not mentioned as the reason for taking her into the king's harem, as it was before (12:14-15). The likely reason for taking her was her wealth, since, as Abraham's presumed "sister," she would have had some control over the family's vast holdings. It is worth noting, in addition, that in upper Mesopotamia where Abraham came from it had been common for a wealthy man to legally adopt his wife as his sister, thus enhancing her social status.

20:17-18 People in modern Western culture tend to think of pregnancy in terms of technological issues like birth control or fertility drugs. The Bible reminds us that, ultimately, it is God who opens and closes wombs. The theme of women being unable to conceive, then later being able to bear children, is a recurring motif in chapters 12–50. It sets the stage for other remarkable births in the unfolding of God's historical purpose (see note on 17:17).

21:1-2 Sarah apparently became pregnant while the events of chapter 20 were taking place. Thus, while the wombs of all the women of Gerar were closed (20:17-18), Sarah's had been opened miraculously at a very advanced age.

21:9-21 It may appear, at first glance, that God cannot make up His mind on how Abraham and Sarah should treat Hagar and Ishmael. In 16:9-10, after Sarah's attempt to expel the pregnant Hagar, the Lord ordered her to return to Sarah. In 21:11-12, He orders Abraham to listen to Sarah and send Hagar and Ishmael away. By this time, however, Ishmael is not the unborn baby of a defenseless pregnant woman, as in chapter 16. He is a teenager and the older son—the normally recognized heir—of Abraham. In addition, God's pledge that Ishmael would be the father of a nation (v. 13) implies that He would protect him, which proved to be the case (vv. 17-20).

21:22-33 The most obvious reason for the odd placement of this passage is as an update for the events of chapter 20. However, it cannot be mere coincidence that both 21:9-21 and 21:22-33 have to do with the need to provide water in the vicinity of what became known as Beer-sheba. Thus, these are side-by-side examples of God's providing for the weak and the wealthy.

22:2 If it seems barbaric to command Abraham to offer his beloved son, Isaac, God did not ask any more than He would do in sacrificing His beloved Son for the sins of the world (Jn 3:16).

22:2,5 Since God ordered Abraham to offer Isaac as a sacrifice (v. 2), some have charged that Abraham lied in telling his servants, "The boy and I will . . . come back to you" (v. 5). However, Heb 11:17,19 clarifies that Abraham's response to God's test of his faith was to believe that, if necessary, the Lord would raise Isaac from the dead.

22:12 God certainly "knew" beforehand what Abraham would do in this predicament (Ps 139:1-6). The language here simply indicates that it was a test or demonstration of Abraham's complete loyalty to God.

22:15,17 To note that God blesses Abraham because of his obedience does not alter the fact that God's covenant with Abraham is unconditional—based on God's promise rather than Abraham's fulfillment of some obligation. But a covenant is, first of all, a relationship between persons—in this case, human and divine. Within that framework, obedience always brings about divine blessing and disobedience always results in the enactment of a curse, or judgment.

22:20-24 The purpose of this passage is to update the status of Abraham's family, which had stayed in Haran when he went on to Canaan (11:27-31). It also prepares for the marriage of Isaac to Rebekah, the granddaughter of Nahor, Abram's brother (11:27; 22:20-23).

23:1-20 It may appear that this chapter is overly sentimental in relating Abraham's negotiation of the burial plot price for his beloved wife, Sarah. But its significance goes deeper. This is the only land that Abraham ever owned in Canaan, the one piece of property that served as an earnest of Israel's eventual possession of the land. Although Ephron the Hittite made as if to "give" Abraham the field (v. 11), the price he eventually extracted from him ("400 shekels of silver," v. 15) was an inordinately high price for that time. This field is also where the patriarchs Abraham (25:9-10), Isaac (35:27-29), and Jacob (49:29-32; 50:12-13) were buried.

24:2-4 Abraham was not an ethnic elitist in seeking a wife for Isaac from outside Canaan. Rather, the sinfulness of the peoples of Canaan (15:16), especially their idolatry, was repugnant to the Lord and thus to Abraham, the man of faith (15:6).

24:5-8 Abraham did not want Isaac to leave the promised land since he was to inherit it. There was always the possibility that, if he went back to Haran, he might not return.

24:10-67 This is the longest continuous passage in Genesis, and its quality of narration is striking. Generally, it is one of the classic biblical case studies on seeking to follow God's will. Specifically, it reflects how important it was for the heir of promise to have the right wife and for that marriage to come about according to God's direction.

25:1-6 After Sarah's death, Abraham remarried and, miraculously, continued to have children. The passage is notable for two reasons. First, the descendants of some of these children (e.g., the Midianites) became significant in later generations. Second, Abraham sent the children "to the land of the East," away from Isaac and the promised land. This was an effort to head off potential family conflicts, which might complicate the progress of God's promise through Isaac's descendants.

25:12-18 Although Isaac was the son of promise, the size of Ishmael's family and wider holdings developed more quickly and extensively.

25:19-26 Besides the ongoing theme in Genesis of God's opening the womb of barren women, we see here the recurring theme of the younger son displacing the older. This practice was completely contrary to the prevailing custom of the oldest son being the primary heir.

25:27-34 Though it seems outrageous for Jacob to ask for Esau's birthright as payment for some of Jacob's stew, the "irreverent" Esau had only himself to blame. With only a short-range view to the satisfaction of his immediate needs, he "sold his birthright in exchange for one meal" (Heb 12:16).

26:1-11 Because of the strong similarities between this incident and 12:10-20 and 20:1-18, some modern interpreters have expressed the opinion that it is a copy of those episodes and never actually happened. They also note that the king is, as in chapter 20, named "Abimelech." There are, however, key differences between the passages, and it is not uncommon for kings to have the same name (e.g., Darius I and II of the Medo-Persian Empire). In addition, it is possible that "Abimelech" (a compound of the words for "father" and "king") is a Philistine royal title, like Pharaoh in Egypt, which means "great house." Perhaps Isaac, while growing up, had heard the stories of what his father, Abraham, had done in those earlier incidents and decided to mimic his behavior. Given that Rebekah was not Isaac's sister in any sense, this would be a classic example of the repetition of "the sins of the fathers" by a later generation.

26:12-22,26-33 The conflicts over the wells occurred despite earlier agreements between Abraham and Abimelech (21:22-31). This happened because of jealousy over God's blessing on Isaac. A resentful response by others against those blessed by the Lord is a common theme in Genesis.

26:34-35 Though Esau married at age 40, as did Isaac his father (25:20), his parents were hardly pleased with his choices. His wives were Hittites who worshiped many gods, none of which was the one true God of Abraham and Isaac. Isaac is partly responsible for these religiously mixed marriages, since he had not made it clear to Esau what his standards were (28:1,6-9). There are two possible explanations for why Judith, the first named wife of Esau (26:34) is not mentioned in the "family records" of Esau in chapter 36. Either she did not live long enough to have children, or the marriage ended quickly in divorce.

27:1-29 Though the Lord had told Rebekeh that her older son, Esau, would serve her younger son, Jacob (25:23), that in no way excuses the elaborate deception on the part of Rebekah and Jacob to defraud Esau of his blessing as the older son. Instead of trusting the Lord to accomplish what He had promised, Rebekah took the matter into her own hands, much as Sarah had by giving Hagar to Abraham in chapter 16.

27:30-45 Esau was justified in his anger about how his blessing was stolen, but he had no right to become enraged and hold a murderous grudge (Eph 4:26-27). No one involved in this incident was an innocent bystander, given Rebekah's and Jacob's scheming and Isaac's extravagant blessing—which he thought he was giving to Esau—apparently ignoring the Lord's word to Rebekah (Gn 25:23).

27:46–28:1 Sadly, it appears to have taken Isaac's experience with Esau's wives to open his eyes in regard to the prospects for Jacob's marriage. Isaac did not emulate his own father's care in seeking a wife for his son(chap. 24).

28:6-9 Esau's attempt to regain his father's favor was misguided. In his spiritual insensitivity, he thought the problem had to do with having a wife from the right bloodline. It was, instead, a matter of faith in, and worship of, the one true God.

28:10-22 Because Jacob's vision at Bethel was his closest encounter with God up to this point in his life, he was convinced this place was unique. For him it was "the house of God," (the literal meaning of Bethel), and "the gate of heaven" (v. 17). At his stage in God's progressive revelation, he could not see that no earthly spot could play this role (Ac 7:48-50). Like his brother Esau, Jacob had not been a man of faith. But, even though the conditions he states toward the Lord (Gn 28:20-22) fall short of true faith, they represent a step in the right direction.

29:1-12 This passage echoes chapter 24. While that chapter is much longer and more detailed, the marked similarity is intended to inspire similar confidence in the Lord's provision of the right wife for Jacob.

29:13-30 Ironically Laban deceived Jacob in regard to the marriage of his daughters just as Jacob had deceived his father, Isaac, in the matter of the birthright blessing. It is uncertain whether it was an ironclad cultural custom for an older daughter to be married first, or only a custom of Laban's family. It is interesting, though, that Jacob, who had displaced his older brother, now sought to marry the younger daughter. Again we meet the Genesis theme of younger displacing older.

29:31–30:24 This period of the births of the progenitors of the tribes of Israel is characterized by tragic resentment and rivalry. Though Sarah and Hagar had experienced mutual disdain (chaps. 16; 21), the ongoing hostility between Jacob's wives profoundly marked the family life.

30:25-43 This passage is crucial as an explanation of how Jacob became wealthy in his own right. He had lived as a part of Laban's wider family wherein his own expanding family had been cared for sufficiently. But he was in no financial position to leave with his wives and children and go back to his own father and the land of promise. While this passage may appear to describe a type of magic, God instructed Jacob in this through a dream (31:10-12). The following narrative makes it clear that, throughout the six years described here, Laban repeatedly changed Jacob's wages in seeking to gain material advantage over him (31:6-7,38-42).

31:1-3 Providentially, the Lord's command for Jacob and his family to return to his father and the promised land coincided with the rapidly growing desire for retribution by Laban and his sons.

31:4-16 Jacob was concerned that Rachel and Leah would oppose leaving Laban's extended family and going to Canaan. In attempting to persuade them, he reminded them of Laban's cheating (vv. 5-7). He also came to fully realize God's protection and guidance during this time (vv. 7-13). While Rachel and Leah do not echo Jacob's growing faith, they display no loyalty to their father because of the way he has treated them (vv. 14-16).

31:19-20 The Bible does not condone, but merely observes, Rachel's "sin of commission" (i.e., stealing her father's household idols) and Jacob's "sin of omission" (i.e., not telling Laban he was leaving, though he was still employed by him as his herdsman). The narrative reveals that both sins caused larger problems, giving Laban reason to pursue and endanger Jacob's family and herds.

31:30,32-35 This passage demonstrates that, much as Jacob had learned deception from his father (26:7-10) and mother (27:5-17), Rachel took after her father as a master deceiver. Children watch their parents' behavior and learn from them, for good or evil. The narrative does not condone Rachel's deception, but portrays the realities of family life.

32:1-23 There is striking interplay in this passage between the sovereign protection of God and the responsibility of man. The two are not contradictory, but complementary. On the way, Jacob met angels (vv. 1-2) whose protection had not been apparent to him before. In addition, his prayer reflects growing faith in the Lord's promises during a time of danger (vv. 9-12). However, Jacob also does his best to appeal humbly and diplomatically (vv. 6-8,13-23) to his brother, Esau, from whom he has long been estranged.

32:24-31 The mysterious "man" (v. 24) whom Jacob wrestled with until dawn was God Himself (vv. 28,30). The Lord had taken human form previously to interact with Abraham (18:2,10,16). Remarkably, the all-powerful Lord did not see fit to overpower Jacob, but allowed him to cling tenaciously to Him all night. The concept of a Christian "wrestling with God" during particularly difficult or fearful times originates in this passage. Though Jacob physically limped away (32:25,31) from this unexpected struggle, his new divinely given name, "Israel," indicated that "he struggled with God" and prevailed, growing spiritually in the process.

32:32 The nation of Israel, so named as Jacob's descendants, abstained from eating "the thigh muscle that is at the hip socket" before Moses wrote Genesis. Observant Jews maintain this practice today.

33:1-4 Bowing seven times has been documented as a reflection of sincere regret and submission as early as the fourteenth century B.C. in Egypt. Unexpected forgiveness and reconciliation, especially when it occurs amidst volatile family squabbles or feuds, is touching and joyful.

33:8-11 Since the Hebrew word for "present" in verse 11 is the same as that used in 27:35 for Esau's expected "blessing" as the older son, it is likely Jacob is sincerely attempting to repay the "blessing" he had deceptively stolen from Esau.

33:12-17 Sadly, there is no indication that Jacob, in fact, intended to go and meet Esau in Seir (v. 14). If so, in spite of his spiritual growth and sincere regret regarding his earlier behavior, he remained deceptive.

34:1-31 Significantly, God is not mentioned in this tragic chapter. Unlike the book of Esther in which God is also not named but in which God's people do act nobly (Est 4:16), there is nothing but treachery and angry vengeance here.

34:3,18-24 Though his act was heinous, Shechem, for whom the city may have been named, desired to marry Dinah, even being willing to undergo circumcision.

34:13-31 Jacob's sons, in their deceit at Shechem, employed the divine covenant sign of circumcision (17:10-14) as a means of ambushing the men of the city. Their looting the city and taking of its wives and children, for which they evidenced no shame or repentance (34:30-31), would cause the descendants of Simeon and Levi to be dispersed among Israel with no definite allotment of territory, through their father's deathbed pronouncement (49:5-7).

35:1-7 Jacob's faith in the Lord had grown greatly, but his wives and children still worshiped the gods of Laban's household. Still, the Lord protected the family when it responded in obedience, putting away everything related to idolatry and building an altar at Bethel as the Lord had directed.

35:9-10 This explanation of why God changed Jacob's name to *Israel* does not contradict the original statement in 32:27-28, but reaffirms it. The two names are used interchangeably from this point forward in the book of Genesis.

35:16-20 Rachel is the only major figure in the Abrahamic line of promise not to be buried in the cave at Machpelah, which Abraham purchased as a burial site for Sarah (23:17-20). The naming of Benjamin, meaning "Son of the Right Hand," indicates her new son now assumed Rachel's special place of love and honor in Jacob's life.

35:22-26 Reuben, Jacob's oldest son, attempted to assert his right over his father's estate by sleeping with Jacob's concubine Bilhah, the mother of two of his brothers. By doing so, however, he forfeited his blessing as the oldest son (49:3-4).

35:27-29 Isaac lived longer than either Abraham or Jacob. That both Esau and Jacob buried Isaac implies that their reconciliation (33:1-15) continued through the rest of their father's lifetime, extending approximately 50 years after Jacob returned to the promised land.

36:1-5,9-19,43 Esau's ties by marriage to various Canaanite peoples almost assured that his descendants would engage in false worship (Neh 13:23-26). In spite of this, as Isaac's son, Esau was greatly blessed. His descendants intermarried and developed into a large, full-fledged kingdom, Edom, before Israel had a king.

36:6-8 Because of the size and continuing growth ofEsau's and Jacob's households and herds, it was necessary for them to separate, as had Abram and Lot (13:5-12). As heir of the promise to Abraham, Jacob lived in the land of Canaan, while Esau moved his family to Seir, southeast of the Dead Sea in what is now Jordan.

37:1-2 Though Isaac's death is mentioned earlier (35:27-29), the order of events here keeps the focus on Joseph. The story of Joseph explains to Moses' original readers how Israel came to Egypt.

37:2-4 It is likely that, because of the special relationship with Joseph, Jacob asked him for a report on his brothers' work habits (v. 2). The brothers resented Jacob's favoritism, of which the special garment was ample evidence.

37:5-11 The reference to "your mother" would refer to Leah, Jacob's remaining primary wife, since Rachel had died in childbirth years before (35:16-20). The observation that Jacob "kept the matter in mind" looks back on the prophecy of Jacob, the younger son, ruling over his older brother, Esau (25:23), as well as Jacob's significant dreams revealing God's will (28:12-15; 31:10-13). Jacob will live to see these prophecies fulfilled when Joseph becomes the second ruler in Egypt (46:29-30).

37:12-14 Remarkably, Jacob allowed his sons to pasture their flocks in the vicinity of Shechem, the site of their earlier treachery (chap. 34). Apparently the "terror from God" (35:5) continued to protect them in the towns surrounding Shechem.

37:15-17 The brothers had moved the family's herds from Shechem to Dothan. Though located in northern Palestine, Dothan was situated on the primary trade route between the Fertile Crescent and Egypt. Those providential circumstances led to Joseph's being carried to Egypt (vv. 28,36).

37:21-22,30-31 Two things probably motivated Reuben to try to save Joseph's life. First, as the oldest son (35:23), he was most responsible to his father for the safety of his young sibling. Second, after having sexual relations with his father's concubine, Bilhah (35:22), Reuben was undoubtedly attempting to get back in Jacob's good graces.

37:24-28 This passage reveals the low value Joseph's brothers placed on his life, as well as their cruelty. Joseph was thrown into a pit without food or water while his brothers ate a meal. In addition, when Joseph was sold into slavery his brothers accepted "20 pieces of silver" (v. 28), far less than the typical 30 pieces of silver (Ex 21:32).

37:25,28 The Midianites (25:2,4) and Ishmaelites (25:12-18) were closely related as descendants of Abraham (though not Sarah). At this time the two peoples must have enjoyed a close working relationship, since their names are used interchangeably.

37:35 When Jacob says that he will go down to "Sheol," he does not mean he will go to hell (or heaven), but that he will be reunited with his son beyond death. In the Hebrew Bible, *Sheol* is the general term for the afterlife, the abode of departed spirits beyond the grave.

38:1-30 This passage, which spotlights Judah, has been viewed by some as an awkward intrusion into the long narrative about Joseph (chaps. 37; 39–50). However, it reflects the continuing spiritual hardheartedness of Joseph's brothers, seen in their massacre of the men of Shechem (chap. 34) and in selling Joseph into slavery after nearly killing him (chap. 37). Judah's ethical failures stand in stark contrast to the solid moral character of Joseph (chap. 39).

38:8-11 Two questions might arise in connection with this passage: (1) Why did Judah have his son, Onan, sleep with Tamar, his widowed daughter-in-law, and then withhold his remaining son, Shelah, from her? (2) Why was Onan killed for "evil" behavior after having sexual relations with Tamar? In regard to (1), an established institution of the culture was the "levirate marriage," in which a widow was to be taken as wife by the closest male in her husband's family. Any children from that marriage would be legally considered those of the deceased husband. This practice was made part of the Mosaic law (Dt 25:5-10) and is central in the book of Ruth. Thus, what Judah did in giving Tamar to Onan was morally appropriate, while stalling in regard to Shelah was not. As to (2), the "evil" which caused Onan to be killed was not, as some have said, that he had sex outside marriage or that he practiced a crude form of birth control (vv. 9-10). Rather, it was his selfishness in refusing to allow his sister-in-law to become pregnant by him. He knew that, while he would have to support the child, he would not receive any of his deceased brother's estate, since it would legally belong to the child.

38:11-26 Judah's conclusion that Tamar was "more in the right" (v. 26) is not inferring that her impersonation of a prostitute was morally acceptable. Judah is acknowledging his greater fault in seeking a prostitute and his neglect of Tamar's needs as a helpless widow, to which he should have attended. The fact that Tamar chose to play the prostitute to ensnare Judah speaks volumes about his moral reputation. By wearing the customary veil of the religious prostitute, she avoided being recognized by Judah.

38:18,23,25 A "signet ring" impressed a person's distinctive seal into clay or wax, functioning much like a signature on a legal document today. Tamar was shrewd to insist on keeping Judah's signet ring as a guarantee of payment for her services. Her possession of the ring was undeniable proof of his involvement in her pregnancy.

38:27-30 This passage stands out in the narrative of Genesis for two reasons. First, it is one of several examples of the struggle between older and younger siblings in the ongoing line of Abraham. Second, the sordid incident in which Judah impregnated his daughter-in-law, Tamar, would not thwart God's plan to bless the world through Abraham. Indeed, it would lead to a demonstration of His grace when their illegitimate son would find a place in the Messiah's genealogy (Mt 1:3; Lk 3:33).

39:1-6 Joseph's success in whatever he did indicated divine blessing to Potiphar, just as Isaac's and Jacob's earlier success revealed God's favor (26:12-14; 30:43–31:1).

39:6-10 Joseph's refusal to sleep with Potiphar's wife stands in stark contrast with the behavior of his brother, Judah, who sought out a prostitute (38:15-16).

39:11-19 This passage parallels what happened to Joseph and Judah in regard to an item left behind in each case. Judah's signet ring convicted him and prevented a cover-up of his behavior (38:25). Joseph's garment, left behind when Potiphar's wife made her aggressive sexual advances, allowed her to fabricate a convincing lie about his behavior.

40:1-4 The king's "cupbearer" (or butler) and "baker" were highly trusted "officers" in ancient royal courts. They made sure the king was not poisoned in his food or drink, and because they were highly trusted, both often served as his advisers. The honor of

their positions is reflected by the fact that, though they had "offended" Pharaoh, their imprisonment was a kind of house arrest in which Joseph served as their "personal attendant."

40:5-8 Because of his own previous dreams (37:5-10), and his ability to interpret them straightforwardly, Joseph was confident the Lord would allow him to interpret the dreams of the cupbearer and the baker. Joseph's question—"Don't interpretations belong to God?"—was a bold declaration of faith, especially since he had not yet heard the dreams.

40:9-13,16-22 Though the two dreams were significantly different, they occurred the same night and were parallel in the use of the number three, which meant "three days" (v. 18) in each case. Joseph's interpretations repeat the phrase "Pharaoh will lift up your head" (vv. 13,19). The cupbearer's head was lifted up in restoration to his position, while the baker's head was lifted up in being hanged (vv. 20-22). These dreams, containing a number that designates a period of time and pointing to starkly contrasting outcomes, preview Pharaoh's dreams (41:1-7).

41:1-8 Pharaoh's dreams were dominated by the number seven and were full of the common agricultural imagery of Egypt. It was surprising that none of the "magicians" (who relied on occult knowledge), or so-called "wise men," a group of advisors found in many ancient royal courts (e.g., Dn 2:2,10), ventured an interpretation. Perhaps the down-to-earth imagery in the dreams suggested it would be obvious if their interpretation proved false, and that Pharaoh's distress concerning the dreams (Gn 41:8) might lead to their being treated somewhat like the baker.

41:9-13 It is striking that the cupbearer, in bringing up Joseph's name and skill in interpreting dreams to Pharaoh, admits his own faults (lit., "sins," v. 9). Since ancient rulers had the power of life and death over all their subjects, he was taking a risk in reminding the king of this. Perhaps the cupbearer is including his previous failure to mention Joseph to Pharaoh among his acknowledged shortcomings.

41:17-32 Given the annual overflow of the Nile River that left deposits of rich soil, a long drought with resultant famine seemed an unlikely possibility to the Egyptians. When the "thin, ugly cows" in Pharaoh's dream had devoured the "well-fed, healthy-looking cows," their appearance was as repulsive as before. This was a detail he had not told the magicians and wise men (vv. 1-8), but which he disclosed to Joseph.

41:33-36 These words could be a continuation of Joseph's God-given interpretation or they could be the advice of the divinely gifted manager that Joseph had proven to be, both in Potiphar's house (39:1-6) and in the prison (39:22-23). In either case, Joseph certainly was not interviewing for a job as overseer of the famine preparation effort.

41:37 The acceptance of Joseph's proposal by Pharaoh and his honored servants was an insult to the recognized wise men of Egypt.

41:38-39 Although Pharaoh does apparently attribute Joseph's knowledge and ability to the true God of Israel, he would not have known at this point about the Spirit of God (i.e., the Holy Spirit). Instead, his words should be translated "a spirit of the gods," since the Egyptians believed in many gods.

41:40-44,46-49 Potiphar had almost immediately trusted Joseph with everything related to his household (39:3-6), and the warden of the prison had done the same in his sphere of responsibility (39:21-23). Amazingly, Pharaoh immediately made Joseph the vizier (i.e., second ruler) over all the land of Egypt. In the description of Joseph's newfound splendor and power, the most significant item is his possession of Pharaoh's signet ring. Given Pharaoh's confidence in Joseph's intelligence and wisdom (41:39), the king's signet was virtually a blank check for anything Joseph decided to do anywhere in Egypt.

41:45,50-52 In contrast to Daniel's being given a Babylonian name to draw him into the culture of Babylon (Dn 1:6-7), Joseph's Egyptian name recognized his faith in the God of Israel. Zaphenath-paneah means "the God speaks and lives." Within Joseph's family his brother, Judah, had chosen to marry a Canaanite and had largely lowered his moral and spiritual standards to the

surrounding culture (Gn 38). Joseph's arranged Egyptian marriage (41:45), by contrast, produced two children whose names honored the one true God(vv. 50-52).

41:53–42:3 The famine of seven years' duration becomes the occasion for Joseph's reintroduction to his family. It is striking that Jacob chooses to purchase grain but not relocate from the promised land due to the famine, even though both Abram (12:10-20) and Isaac (26:1-2) had done so in similar circumstances.

42:4-6 When Joseph's 10 brothers (Benjamin remained with Jacob; v. 4) bowed down before him (v. 6), it was the literal fulfillment of Joseph's first dream (37:5-8).

42:7-22 Joseph was indeed testing his brothers (v. 15), but not in regard to their being spies (vv. 9,14). Instead, the fear and anguish they must have felt because of Joseph's accusations were similar to his pleas not to be sold into slavery (v. 21). Also, having his brothers imprisoned, even briefly (vv. 16-17), gave them a taste of what he had been through as an inmate in 39:20. Had the brothers been spiritually sensitive, they would have followed up on the strong clue in Joseph's testimony that he feared God (v. 18). At least, though they assumed Joseph was dead (v. 13), they perceived that their predicament was from the Lord and was a delayed punishment for their horrible treatment of Joseph (v. 21; cp. 37:23-28).

42:20 Joseph's insistence on seeing Benjamin was not a whim. Benjamin was his only brother born to Rachel, his mother (30:22-24; 35:16-18).

42:21-24 Joseph was deeply touched by his brothers' awareness of guilt in their mistreatment of him, and especially of learning of Reuben's attempt to save him from being sold into slavery. That is the apparent reason why Joseph chose to hold Simeon, his second oldest brother (35:23), as his hostage. As next in line to the oldest brother, he bore the most responsibility for Joseph's ill-treatment.

42:25-38 Joseph was not being cruel in his behavior. By holding Simeon, he guaranteed that his family would return to Egypt so that he could have further interaction with them. By having the money they had paid for the grain put back in each bag, he made sure they had the financial means to pay when they needed to return for more grain. However, Joseph's presumed death years before and the odd circumstances surrounding the money made Jacob that much more reluctant to allow his beloved youngest son, Benjamin, to go to Egypt.

43:1-14 This passage reflects a change of character on Judah's part and a fallback to an earlier strategy on the part of Jacob. Judah had apparently been humbled by what had happened in regard to Tamar (38:26) and now was willing to accept responsibility before his father for Benjamin's safety. Much as he had done with Esau (chaps. 32–33), Jacob chose to send gifts in appealing for mercy.

43:15-34 To be invited to eat with the powerful Egyptian official was not what Jacob's sons had expected to happen. Stranger yet was the pleasant atmosphere, in contrast to the previous encounter when Joseph had upbraided them as spies (42:9,14). The only practice they had expected was that Joseph, presumed to be an Egyptian, ate separately from his brothers. Egyptians found Hebrews to be "abhorrent" (43:32), probably because they considered their bodily hair and beards repulsive.

43:34 The text here does not condone drunkenness but describes a typical banquet behavior. Joseph's brothers were relieved to be treated so grandly, and drowned their confusion about the odd coincidences they were observing.

44:1–45:3 This extended episode hangs together seamlessly. Joseph set up his final test to establish two things. He wanted to determine whether his brothers would attempt to lie their way out of the situation. And he wanted to see if they would desert their youngest brother, Benjamin, in favor of their own self-interest—what they had done, essentially, in selling Joseph into slavery many years before. They passed both tests. They told the truth and, in the process, gave Joseph a great deal of information about relationships in the family of Jacob. Also, Judah did, in fact, offer himself in place of Benjamin to protect him, just as he had

promised his father (43:8-10). His brothers' unexpectedly righteous and sensitive response to Joseph's testing led him to reveal his identity.

44:5,15 Divination, widely practiced in Egypt and most other ancient cultures, was the attempt to extract hidden knowledge from supernatural powers other than the Lord. It was later condemned in the Mosaic law (Lv 19:26; Dt 18:10,14). Mention of it in these verses does not constitute approval of the practice; Joseph refers to it by way of threat but does not actually attempt it. Hidden knowledge had come to him from the Lord, in the interpretation of dreams (Gn 40–41).

45:4-8 This passage does not minimize the responsibility of Joseph's brothers in selling him into slavery. Joseph's statement, though, is beautifully balanced. While he holds his brothers responsible for their actions he nevertheless offers forgiveness and urges them to forgive themselves (vv. 4-5), since God used the circumstances to accomplish His wider purposes (vv. 5,7-8). His words anticipate his assurances in 50:19-20

45:6,11 The immediate reason for the move of Jacob's family to Egypt was the continuing famine, which had five more years to run, but there was a long-term consideration as well. God had revealed to Abram that his descendants would spend 400 years in an unstated country before returning to the promised land (15:13). Now it was clear that Egypt was that prophesied country of sojourn. Jacob's family did not remain in Egypt simply because they had become comfortable there.

45:8-28 Because of Pharaoh's gratitude and confidence in Joseph, he was able to settle his family in the land of Goshen (v. 10), the part of Egypt most suitable for shepherds. Goshen would also be relatively close to Joseph's abode near Pharaoh. Israel would continue to have favored status in Egypt until "a new king, who had not known Joseph, came to power in Egypt" (Ex 1:8) and enslaved them. Interestingly, Jacob had sent a very generous gift (Gn 43:11-12) through his sons to smooth the way for additional grain purchase without endangering his beloved Benjamin. Still, he seemed to expect the worst. It was an unexpected blessing not only to receive more gifts in return, but to learn that his long-mourned son, Joseph, was still alive.

45:28–46:4 Jacob was overjoyed at seeing his beloved son, Joseph, but still had serious misgivings about going to Egypt, and especially about staying there for any prolonged period. At Beer-sheba the Lord revealed two things to Jacob. First, it was God's will that Jacob's family and their descendants live in Egypt (46:3) no matter what had happened in previous generations (12:10-20; 26:2). Second, it would be Joseph, his long-lost son, who would bury Jacob's body, returning it to the promised land (46:4). Beer-sheba was the place Jacob had left when he started for Haran many years earlier (28:10).

46:8-27 This list is organized according to Jacob's sons by his wives: Leah's sons (and one daughter, Dinah; vv. 8-15); the sons of Zilpah, Leah's handmaid (vv. 16-18); the sons of Rachel (vv. 19-22); and the sons of Bilhah, Rachel's handmaid (vv. 23-25). The number 70, considered a number of completeness by the Hebrews, was maintained by not counting the wives of Jacob's sons. It is striking that, since Isaac and Rebekah only had Esau and Jacob, Jacob's family had grown to 70 persons within two more generations. This foreshadowed how large Israel would become by the time they would leave Egypt (Ex 12:37) 400 years later (Gn 15:13-14).

46:28–47:6 Joseph used his knowledge of the Egyptians' sense of ethnic superiority in favor of his family. Knowing that Egyptians considered shepherds "abhorrent" (46:34), Joseph emphasized this so that Pharaoh would send his people to Goshen, keeping them separate from the other peoples of Egypt. While they were in Canaan, the temptation to intermarry had threatened both the bloodline and the faith of God's people. Living in Goshen would make it easier to preserve their distinctiveness.

47:6-7,11 Goshen was "the best part of the land" of Egypt for shepherding flocks. Located in the wider Nile River delta, it was well-watered during the remaining years of the famine.

47:7,10 Jacob's blessing upon Pharaoh as his host in the land of Egypt was an extension of part of the Abrahamic promise in 12:3: "I will bless those who bless you."

47:8-9,28 Jacob's words should not be taken to mean that his lifespan of 130 years to that point was shorter than average. In Ps 90:10, Moses observed: "Our lives last seventy years or, if we are strong, eighty years." Jacob was comparing his lifetime, which would end at 147 years, with those of his father, Isaac (180 years; Gn 35:28), and his grandfather, Abraham (175 years; 25:7).

47:12,27 While the famine effectively erased the wealth and holdings of the people of Egypt and Canaan (vv. 13-26), Joseph took good care of his family, allowing them to be virtually insulated from the famine's devastating impact.

47:13-26 When Joseph was made second-in-command to Pharaoh in the land of Egypt, his mission was to serve in Pharaoh's best interest (41:40-44). In discharging his task, Joseph acquired most of the property of Egypt in the name of Pharaoh, which effectively made almost all the people Pharaoh's personal servants. But the people were so grateful to Joseph for their survival that they were quite willing to be "Pharaoh's slaves" (v. 25).

47:29-31 To put your hand under another's thigh and make a promise was, in ancient cultures, a most solemn way of committing yourself to carry out that promise. Over time, Jacob had begun to take more seriously the Lord's promises at Bethel to give the land of Canaan to Abraham's descendants and to bring Jacob back to that land permanently (28:13,15; 48:4). When he had first received those promises from God, he had been content to remain away from Canaan for 20 years (31:41). As he neared the end of his life, Jacob came to view things much differently.

48:1-2 Fearing that Jacob's death might be near, and that he and his sons might not get to see their father and grandfather alive again, Joseph went to Goshen to see Jacob as soon as he heard of his weakening condition.

48:3-7,22 God's promise quoted here was made to Jacob as he was leaving the promised land (28:13-15). Consequently, all of Jacob's sons except Benjamin were born outside Canaan. When Joseph was sold into slavery in Egypt, this set in motion the circumstances in which his own two sons came to be born in Egypt (41:50-52). Jacob is here effectively saying he is "adopting" Joseph's sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, into the places of honor formerly held by Reuben and Simeon. He held them responsible for two tragic acts. Reuben, the firstborn, had slept with Bilhah (35:22). Simeon, the second-born, had led the slaughter at Shechem (34:25,30). This is how Ephraim and Manasseh rose to prominence as the fathers of two of the tribes of Israel. Joseph was allotted a double portion through his sons as a result of his role in saving the family.

48:8-10 Verses 8-9 should not be understood to mean Jacob had never seen Ephraim and Manasseh or that his mind was confused in old age. Rather, because Jacob's eyesight had deteriorated, he could not see who accompanied Joseph. It is unthinkable that Jacob would have lived in Egypt for almost 17 years without ever meeting Joseph's sons (47:28).

48:11-20 This scene looks back ironically at Jacob's deception in receiving the blessing intended for his older brother Esau from his blind father, Isaac (27:1-29). In this case, even though Jacob could no longer see well physically, he had perfect insight into what he was doing in blessing Joseph's younger son, Ephraim, over the older, Manasseh.

48:22 Not enough information is presented to know what Jacob is referring to in the phrase translated "the one mountain slope that I took from the hand of the Amorites with my sword and bow." "One mountain slope" is rendered *Shechem*, which probably 'relates to the destruction and capture of that city by Jacob's sons (chap. 34). The connection seems likely because the wording in 48:22 refers to a land transfer, and Joseph is later buried in Shechem (Jos 24:32).

49:1,28 Blessing his sons before his death (v. 28), Jacob claims to be predicting what will happen to his sons' descendants, the 12 tribes of Israel (v. 28), in the distant future (lit. "the last days"). Since these things did come to pass in later history, those who deny that such prophecy could be legitimate do so only on the basis of an anti-supernatural bias.

49:3-7 Jacob's three oldest sons—Reuben, Simeon, and Levi (35:23)—all forfeited their status by rash acts. Reuben violated Bilhah, his father's concubine (35:22; 49:4). Simeon and Levi led the deadly slaughter at Shechem (vv. 5-7; 34:25).

49:8-12 Apparently because of his willingness to accept responsibility for his earlier sin and for Benjamin's safety, Judah, Jacob's fourth-born son (35:23), is graced to become the progenitor of the Messiah (49:10). This forms the basis (v. 9) for Christ's being called "the Lion from the tribe of Judah" (Rv 5:5).

49:16-17 Verse 16 seems to look ahead to Samson, the "judge" from the tribe of Dan (Jdg 13:2,24-25). Verse 17 probably refers to the gross idolatry of the tribe of Dan in Jdg 18.

49:22-26 The tribe named for Joseph's son Ephraim (48:13-20) would become the dominant tribe of the northern kingdom of Israel; the northern kingdom was sometimes referred to as "Ephraim."

49:27 The wording of this verse apparently refers to the warfare between the tribe of Benjamin and the rest of the tribes of Israel in Jdg 20.

49:29-33 What Jacob had made Joseph solemnly promise in regard to his burial (47:29-31), he now commanded to all his sons in more detail. During his trek to Egypt, God had promised that Jacob would return to the promised land after Joseph had witnessed his death (46:4). In his last words before dying (49:29-33), Jacob focused on making sure he would be buried alongside Abraham, Isaac, and his wife Leah, who had preceded him in death (v. 31).

50:1-3 Embalming was common only among royal families during this time. Joseph had his father embalmed because he could not be buried immediately. The journey back to Canaan would be a long one. The 70-day period of mourning may represent a month beyond the 40 days it took for embalming. Joseph was also embalmed at his death, so his remains could be taken to Canaan for burial when his people returned to the promised land (vv. 24-26; Jos 24:32).

50:4-14 Pharaoh not only allowed Joseph to take a leave of absence to go to Canaan and bury Jacob in the family plot in the cave of Machpelah, he also sent an impressive entourage to accompany him in honor of both Joseph and his deceased father. When they reached the threshing floor of Atad they mourned for a week, perhaps because they had just reentered the promised land.

50:15-21 Just as Jacob had feared Esau's retaliation after a long period of time (chaps. 32–33), Joseph's brothers feared he might take revenge on them after Jacob's death for selling him into slavery (37:28). So they sent a message to Joseph, citing Jacob's plea before his death for Joseph to forgive. That his brothers bowed down to Joseph was a fulfillment of his early dream (37:5-8). While he does not at all discount their guilt, Joseph had long since forgiven them, recognizing God's providential hand of protection behind what had taken place.

50:22-26 Dying at 110 years, more than 90 years of which he had lived in Egypt (37:2,36), Joseph did not live as long as his immediate forefathers: Jacob, 147 years (47:28); Isaac, 180 years (35:28); Abraham, 175 years (25:7). He did, however, live long enough to see his great-grandchildren. When he neared death, like Jacob (49:29-32) he insisted on being buried in Canaan. He was embalmed, partly because of his high position in Egypt but also so that his remains could be transported at the right time.

Exodus Articles

Can Religious Experience Show That There is a God?

by R. Douglas Geivett

The Bible reports many direct experiences of God. As we read in the OT, for example, Moses came across a burning bush in the desert, and God commanded him to return to Egypt to free his people (Ex 3–4). The Angel of the Lord promised Gideon divine deliverance from Israel's enemy the Midianites (Jdg 6:11–8:32). In Abraham's old age, and despite his having no children, the Lord promised Abraham that he and his aged wife, Sarah, would have a son through whom Abraham would become the father of a great nation (Gn 12 and 28). In 1 and 2 Kings God appears to kings and prophets with numerous warnings and promises.

In the New Testament we read of the experiences surrounding the birth announcements of Jesus and John the Baptist (Lk 1:5-38); the transfiguration (Mt 17:1-8; Mk 9:2-8; Lk 9:28-36); Paul's conversion while on his way to Damascus to persecute Christians (Ac 9:1-19); and Peter's decision, motivated by a vision, to take the gospel to the household of Cornelius (Ac 10). There are many other reports of this kind in the Bible—but the record does not end there. Every generation of believers has testified to the immediate presence of God in various ways.

Admittedly, in most cases, these religious experiences occurred in people who already believed in God. The experiences often were intended to impart reliable information or divine guidance and were frequently accompanied by miraculous confirming events. On the other hand, these experiences confirmed the participants in their belief in God, led them to testify to the existence and supremacy of the Lord, and emboldened them to act on the information and guidance they received.

This raises an important question: does religious experience provide grounds for believing that God exists? It is reasonable to think so, and here's why.

A basic principle of rationality is that how things appear in our experience is good grounds for believing that that is how things are, unless there is a good a reason to think that how things appear to us is actually mistaken. If I seem to see an orange tree in my garden, then, in general, I have good grounds for believing there is an orange tree there. But suppose that, during the past 10 years, I've never seen an orange tree there, I did not arrange for an orange tree to be planted there, my wife now looks and says she does not see an orange tree there, and I've recently been prescribed medication known for its hallucinogenic side-effects. These considerations now make it very unlikely that I am seeing what I seem to be seeing. And thus I have no good grounds for believing an orange tree is in the garden.

While alleged religious experiences do not involve the five senses, they do correspond to perceptual experiences of things like orange trees. An entity (an object or a person) is present to the consciousness of some person. So if I seem to be directly aware of God's presence, and if there are no overriding reasons why things are not as they seem, then I have good grounds for believing that God is present and hence for believing that God exists (since God would not be present if God did not exist).

But now we must ask, would my experience be evidence for others if I reported my experience to them? Is testimony about an experience of God good grounds for believing that God exists?

A basic principle is that the testimony of an experience should be trusted unless there is at least as good a reason to think that it is mistaken. If I report to others that I saw a particular orange tree, then, in general, recipients of my testimony have good grounds for believing that I saw it and hence that that particular orange tree exists. But if I have a reputation for clowning around or telling lies, or if I have no idea what an orange tree looks like, or if recipients of my testimony have strong independent

reasons for denying that there is an orange tree in the garden, then it would not be so reasonable for them to accept my testimony.

Similarly, if I report a personal experience of God, then this will be grounds for others to believe that God exists if what I report is plausible, if it is likely that my faculties are adequate for such an experience, and if I have a reputation for honesty.

In general it seems rational that, for those who have had the experience, belief in God may be grounded in an experience of God. Also, testimony about the experience may even provide grounds for belief in God for those who do not have such experiences themselves. In combination with other evidences for God's existence, direct religious experience and testimony about such an experience may provide strong motivation for believing in God. It should at least provide motivation for exploring other evidence for God's existence.

Are Miracles Believable?

by Ronald H. Nash

Miracles are essential to the historic Christian faith. If Jesus Christ was not God incarnate, and if Jesus did not rise bodily from the grave, then the Christian faith as we know it from history and the Scriptures would not—could not—be true (see Rm 10:9-10). It is, then, easy to see why enemies of the Christian faith direct many of their attacks against these two miracles of Christ's incarnation and resurrection in particular and against the possibility of miracles in general.

What one believes about the possibility of miracles comes from that person's worldview. On the question of miracles the critical worldview distinction is between naturalism and supernaturalism. For a naturalist, the universe is analogous to a closed box. Everything that happens inside the box is caused by, or is explicable in terms of, other things that exist within the box. Nothing (including God) exists outside the box; therefore, nothing outside the box we call the universe or nature can have any causal effect within the box. To quote the famous naturalist Carl Sagan, the cosmos is all that is or ever has been or ever will be. The major reason, then, why naturalists do not believe in miracles is because their worldview prevents them from believing.

If a naturalist suddenly begins to consider the possibility that miracles are really possible, he has begun to move away from naturalism and toward a different worldview. Any person with a naturalistic worldview could not consistently believe in miracles. No arguments on behalf of the miraculous can possibly succeed with such a person. The proper way to address the unbelief of such a person is to begin by challenging his naturalism.

The worldview of Christian theism affirms the existence of a personal God who transcends nature, who exists "outside the box." Christian supernaturalism denies the eternity of nature. God created the world freely and ex nihilo (out of nothing). The universe is contingent in the sense that it would not have begun to exist without God's creative act and it could not continue to exist without God's sustaining activity. The very laws of the cosmos that naturalists believe make miracles impossible were created by this God. Indeed one of naturalism's major problems is explaining how mindless forces could give rise to minds, knowledge, and sound reasoning.

Is the Old Testament Ethical?

by Christopher Wright

The prevailing prejudice against Scripture is that the Old Testament portrays a violent God of a violent people and is filled with narratives recounting horrendous events with disreputable people playing major roles. Is the Old Testament ethical? Here are some reasons why it is.

It was ethical enough for Jesus. Jesus accepted the truth and ethical validity of the OT ("the Scriptures") in His own life, mission, and teaching. His noted "you have heard that it was said . . . but I tell you" (see Mt 6–7) sayings don't contradict or criticize the OT but either deepen its demands or correct distorted popular inferences. "Love your neighbor" meant "Hate your enemy" to many in Jesus' day, even though the OT never says any such thing. Jesus reminded His hearers that the same chapter (Lv 19) also says, "Love the alien as yourself," extending this to include "Love your enemy." Jesus thus affirmed and strengthened the OT ethic.

Narratives describe what happened, not what was necessarily approved. We assume wrongly that if a story is in Scripture it must be "what God wanted." But biblical narrators dealt with the real world and described it as it was, with all its corrupt and fallen ambiguity. We shouldn't mistake realism for ethical approval. Old Testament stories often challenge us to wonder at God's amazing grace and patience in continually working out His purpose through such morally compromised people and to be discerning in evaluating their conduct according to standards the OT itself provides.

The conquest of Canaan must be understood for what it was. This event, rightly, is troubling to sensitive readers. We can't ignore its horror, but some perspectives can help us evaluate it ethically.

• It was a limited event. The conquest narratives describe one particular period of Israel's long history. Many of the other wars that occur in the OT narrative had no divine sanction, and some were clearly condemned as the actions of proud, greedy kings or military rivals.

• We must allow for the exaggerated language of warfare. Israel, like other ancient Near East nations whose documents we possess, had a rhetoric of war that often exceeded reality.

• It was an act of God's justice and punishment on a morally degraded society. The conquest shouldn't be portrayed as random genocide or ethnic cleansing. The wickedness of Canaanite society was anticipated (Gn 15:16) and described in moral and social terms (Lv 18:24; 20:23; Dt 9:5; 12:29-31). This interpretation is accepted in the NT (e.g., Heb 11:31 speaks of the Canaanites as "those who disobeyed," implying awareness of choosing to persist in sin—as the Bible affirms of all human beings). There's a huge moral difference between violence that's arbitrary and violence inflicted within the moral framework of punishment (this is true in human society as much as in divine perspective). It doesn't make it "nice," but it changes the ethical evaluation significantly.

• God threatened to do the same to Israel—and He did. In the conquest God used Israel as the agent of punishment on the Canaanites. God warned Israel that if they behaved like the Canaanites, He would treat them as His enemy in the same way and inflict the same punishment on them using other nations (Lv 26:17; Dt 28:25-68). In the course of Israel's long history in OT times, God repeatedly did so, demonstrating His moral consistency in international justice. It wasn't a matter of favoritism. If anything, Israel's status as God's chosen people, the OT argues, exposed them more to God's judgment and historical punishment than the Canaanites who experienced the conquest. Those choosing to live as God's enemies eventually face God's judgment.

• The conquest anticipated the final judgment. Like the stories of Sodom and Gomorrah and the flood, the story of Canaan's conquest stands in Scripture as a prototypical narrative, or one that foreshadows what is to come. Scripture affirms that ultimately, in the final judgment, the wicked will

face the awful reality of God's wrath through exclusion, punishment, and destruction. Then God's ethical justice will finally be vindicated. But at certain points in history, such as during the conquest period, God demonstrates the power of His judgment. Rahab's story, set in the midst of the conquest narrative, also demonstrates the power of repentance, faith, and God's willingness to spare His enemies when they choose to identify with God's people. Rahab thus enters the NT hall of fame—and faith (Heb 11:31; Jms 2:25).

An eye for an eye is remarkably humane. Unfortunately this phrase sums up for many what OT law and ethics are all about. Even then they misunderstand that this expression—almost certainly metaphorical, not literal—wasn't a license for unlimited vengeance but precisely the opposite: it established the fundamental legal principle of proportionality; that is, punishment mustn't exceed the gravity of the offense. The rest of OT law, when compared with law codes from contemporary ancient societies (e.g., Babylonian, Assyrian, Hittite), shows a remarkable humanitarian concern, especially for the socially weak, poor, and marginalized (the classic trio of "the widow, the orphan, and the alien"). Israel's laws operated with ethical priorities of human life above material property and of human needs over legal rights. Not surprisingly, then, Jesus (who clearly endorsed the same priorities) could affirm that He had no intention of abolishing the Law and the Prophets but rather of fulfilling them.

The Uniqueness of Israel's Religion

by E. Ray Clendenen

Biblical scholars have been jubilant over the discovery of law tablets and other literature from the ancient Near East as well as the ruins of structures such as multichambered temples. Such discoveries have done much to help us understand the cultural and literary climate in which Israel and its Scripture arose and developed. But with these advances comes a nagging question. Why would a religion based on revelation have so much in common with religions that are only products of human imagination?

First, paganism is a corruption of an earlier, pure religion. The worship of the only true God did not develop from animism (the belief in many spirits) to ethical monotheism (the one-God belief of the Jews) according to an evolutionary scheme, as modernists claim. The Bible teaches that paganism began to develop when sin corrupted the worship of the true God (Rm 1:18-23). Thus some of the similarities between paganism and biblical faith could result from a common memory (however faulty) of early events and an earlier legitimate worship that lingers in human personality and culture.

Second, the nations, peoples, and cultures of the world, in spite of their rejection of God, have not developed independently of the Lord's supervision (Dt 2:5,9,19; Am 1:3–2:16; 9:7). On the contrary, their course of departure has been within divinely decreed limits, and they have been included from the beginning in God's redemptive purposes (Gn 12:1-3). Thus, just as God prepared the NT world for the proclamation of the gospel, so also He prepared the ancient Near East culturally for the revelation of the divine name in Israel. That is, the forms that Israel shared with the surrounding peoples were products of God's common grace, though perverted in the nations' case (and frequently in Israel) by paganism.

Third, however the forms of paganism arose, when God began revealing to the patriarchs and early generations of Israel how He was to be worshiped, it was only reasonable that He would employ forms that would have some meaning to them. That would mean using familiar events, symbols, and practices that could be redirected and filled with new meaning. Thus, while the forms of Israel's faith shared many elements with their pagan neighbors, the substance or heart of Yahweh worship could diverge drastically.

Old Testament faith had five main distinctives. First and foremost, it was to be monotheistic and exclusivistic. Cities in the ancient Near East were often filled with temples to various gods. Each of Babylon's nine city gates was dedicated to a different god. Practitioners of other religions often expended great effort in either identifying their gods with those of other nations or demonstrating the subordination of other gods to their patron deity. But Israel's God demanded not a special place in a pantheon but exclusive allegiance. In the context of ancient Near Eastern polytheism, the call of Deuteronomy 6:4 to the worship of Yahweh as the one true God would have seemed revolutionary.

Monotheism also differed from polytheism in the nature of worship itself. By definition, polytheism precluded wholehearted devotion and loyalty to one god. If divine power existed in many gods, none could possess unlimited wisdom or power, and the activities of one god could often be counteracted by the activities of another. The divine will was thus fragmented so that a person could never be safe from divine displeasure and punishment since the will of one god may very well conflict with that of another. But if there is only one God, we can be wholehearted in our devotion to him, as Deuteronomy 6:5 goes on to demand.

The second distinctive was that the God of Israel was transcendent and self-sufficient. He was not the personification of nature with a sovereignty limited to the earth, the heavens, or the underworld. He did not need to be tended or fed in his temple like a Babylonian or Egyptian god. Nor did He need

other divine or human assistance through religious rites to maintain cosmic and political order and agricultural productivity. Egyptian temple rituals were the means by which the people contributed to holding the forces of chaos at bay, and Canaanite fertility rites ensured continuing agricultural and human productivity. Yahweh is rather the transcendent One who created an inanimate universe of nature out of nothing and who continually maintains and controls it for His glory. “The profoundest insight of Hebrew religion,” John Oswalt declares, may be that “Whatever God is, he is not the world around us.” This means that magic has no part in biblical worship.

The third distinctive is that although God is transcendent, He has not kept His character or His will hidden as did the gods of other peoples. T. Jacobsen describes the Babylonian god Enlil this way: “Man can never be fully at ease with Enlil, can never know what he has in mind. . . . In his wild moods of destructiveness he is unreachable, deaf to all appeals.” Where the other peoples had to search continually for the divine will through divination, try to awaken divine interest through bodily mutilation (1 Kg 18:26-29), and avoid misfortune through incantations and the wearing of amulets, the Lord had revealed His will in His written Word (Dt 4:6-8).

The fourth distinctive was the nature of the relationship between God and His people. Israel’s relationship with Yahweh was based on divine election in which God established in history a covenant with His people. No other ancient people in that part of the world had a covenantal relationship with their god. The Bible presents mankind as the “crown of creation” and the natural world as theirs to oversee and enjoy. But the foreign gods were primarily feudal gods of the land, which they had created for themselves. People were little more than serfs, a necessary nuisance seldom receiving more than a brief expression of pity or remorse for their grievous situation. But the Lord had formed a people, bound them to each other and to Himself by covenant, and pledged to shepherd them faithfully forever by His grace and to guard jealously their relationship to Him.

Finally, while the Lord ordained the use of ritual in worship, He abhorred ritual that aimed at divine manipulation. The only actions that pleased God were those that arose from the heart (Hs 6:4-6), and true worship was to be accompanied by joy in the Lord (Dt 12:12,18). Thus biblical religion gives at the same time a higher view of humanity and a higher view of God—omnipotent, undivided, purposeful, merciful, uniformly righteous, and deserving of our undivided love. Israel was to be a kingdom of priests, singing to the Lord and declaring His glory among the nations day after day (1 Ch 16:23).

Does the Bible Affirm Open Theism?

by John M. Frame

A group of thinkers known as "open theists," such as Clark Pinnock, John Sanders, Gregory Boyd, and William Hasker, seek to do justice to the give-and-take in Scripture between God and human beings. For example, in Exodus 32:7-10, God tells Moses He will destroy Israel for worshiping the golden calf and raise up a new nation from Moses himself. Moses intercedes, however, and in verse 14 God "changed His mind." God also seems to change his mind in several places, such as in Isaiah 38:1-5, where Isaiah prophesies that King Hezekiah will die, but in response to Hezekiah's repentance adds 15 years to his life. Another example is Jonah 3–4, where God retracts an announcement of judgment in response to Nineveh's repentance.

From these and other such passages, the open theists infer that God is a temporal being (not "above time," as in much traditional theology, but within time), that He changes His mind, that His plans are influenced by creatures, that He sometimes regrets actions that He has performed (as Gn 6:6), and that He does not have exhaustive knowledge of the future. In their view, God's regretting and relenting come about because free human decisions are utterly undetermined and unpredictable. Therefore, God must adjust His plans to the free choices of human beings.

We should not ignore these "relenting" passages. On the other hand, we should also not forget the pervasive biblical emphasis on God's sovereign control of the world and His exhaustive knowledge of past, present, and future. God brings about natural events (Ps 65:9-11; 135:5-7), even apparently random ones (Pr 16:33). He controls the smallest details of nature (Mt 10:29-30). He governs human history (Is 10:5-12; 14:24-27; Ac 17:26). If someone dies accidentally, it is because "God caused it to happen" (Ex 21:12-13). Contrary to open theism, God brings about human free decisions, even sinful ones (Gn 45:5-8; Jdg 14:4; 2 Sm 24; Is 44:28; Lk 22:22; Ac 2:23-24; Rv 17:17). He hardened Pharaoh's heart (Ex 4:21; 7:3), and others as well (Dt 2:30; Jos 11:18-20; 1 Sm 2:25; 2 Ch 25:20), for His own purposes (Rm 9:17). He is also the source of human faith (Jn 6:37,44,65; Ac 13:48; 16:14-15; 18:27; Eph 2:4-10; 2 Tm 1:9) and repentance (Zch 12:10; Ac 5:31; 11:18). So human freedom is not indeterminate as open theists maintain. We are free in that we do what we want to do, but behind our plans and desires are those of God (Jms 4:13-16).

In general, God "works out everything in agreement with the decision of His will" (Eph 1:11; cp. Lm 3:37-38; Rm 8:28; 11:33-36). And God cannot fail at anything He seeks to do (Ps 33:11; 115:3; 135:6; Pr 21:30; Is 14:27; 43:13; 46:10; 55:11; Dn 4:35; Rv 3:7).

Since God controls everything, He knows everything, including the future. Knowing the future is a test of a true prophet (Dt 18:22) and indeed of a true God (Is 41:21-23; 42:9; 43:9-12; 44:7; 48:3-7). Through His prophets God often predicts the future centuries in advance (as Gn 9:26-27). Contrary to the open theists, who think God cannot anticipate human free decisions, He often predicts human behavior in detail (1 Sm 10:1-7; Jr 37:6-10; Mt 26:34). He predicts the behavior and character of human beings in the distant future (1 Kg 13:1-4; Is 44:28–45:13).

How, then, should we understand God's "relenting"? For one thing, God states as a general policy in Jeremiah 18:5-10 that if He announces judgment and people repent, He will relent; He will do the same if He pronounces blessing and people do evil. In other words, relenting is part of God's unchanging plan, not a change forced on Him by His ignorance. Further, God is not only transcendent (beyond our experience) but also immanent (involved in our experience). He has dwelled on earth in the tabernacle and temple, in Christ, and in His general omnipresence (Ps 139:7-12). When God interacts with people in time, He does one thing, then another. He curses, then He

blesses. His actions are in temporal sequence and are therefore, in one sense, changing. But these changes are the outworking of God's eternal plan, which does not change.

It is important, then, to see God as working from both above and below, in eternity and in time, and not only within time, as open theists propose.

Introduction to Exodus

AUTHOR

Exodus has been termed "the central book of the Old Testament." Indeed its pages contain some of Scripture's greatest treasures, including the Ten Commandments, the primary accounts of the ten plagues, Israel's exodus from Egypt into freedom, God's establishment of a covenant with His people at Mount Sinai, and the construction of the tabernacle along with its sacred furnishings. Not surprisingly, much controversy has developed around this book as well. Critics have questioned its authorship, challenged the accuracy of its historical accounts, and suggested that its theological and moral teachings contradict statements found elsewhere in the Bible.

Traditional Judaism and Christianity have maintained for thousands of years that God is the author of the book of Exodus and that Moses was the human agent He used to pen its words. The acceptance of Moses as the human author of the first five books of the Bible is based first of all on biblical statements indicating that Moses wrote sacred Scripture. These statements are found within the Torah, or first five books of Scripture (Ex 24:4; 34:28; Nm 33:2; Dt 31:9,22), as well as in other parts of the Bible (Jos 8:31-32; Mk 12:19; Lk 20:28; Jn 1:45). Jesus Himself affirmed that Moses wrote Scripture (Jn 5:46). Within the Bible, the usual way of referring to the first five books of the Bible is to call them the law of Moses (Jos 8:31-32; 23:6; 1 Kg 2:3; 2 Kg 14:6; 23:25; 2 Ch 23:18; 30:16; Ezr 3:2; 7:6; Neh 8:1; Dn 9:11,13; Mal 4:4; Lk 2:22; 24:44; Jn 7:23; Ac 13:39; 15:5; 28:23; 1 Co 9:9). For an extended discussion of the authorship of the Pentateuch, see "Who Wrote the Pentateuch and When Was It Written?", p. 158).

THE RELIABILITY OF EXODUS

Some nineteenth-century skeptics rejected Mosaic authorship because they believed that Semitic writing systems had not been devised at the time he was alive. However, archaeological evidence has dispelled that objection; Semitic inscriptions written at least a hundred years earlier than Moses have been discovered in the Sinai desert. Narrative accounts in the Torah dealing with the events of Moses' lifetime contain details that suggest an eyewitness account and a thorough acquaintance with Egypt. Furthermore, references in the Torah to the land of Canaan are consistently those of one who lived outside the region, as did the Egyptian-born Moses. Linguistic evidence for an early date of composition is also found in the archaic uses of certain terms, particularly the third-person singular feminine pronoun. The way that the narrative hangs together as a whole provides evidence favoring single authorship for the first five books of the Bible.

While accepting Moses as the author of the Torah, conservative scholars have regularly acknowledged that editors living after the time of Moses helped to shape the first five books of the Bible. Evidence for this is found in the use of place names that did not exist during Moses' day (e.g., Dan; see Gn 14:14; Dt 34:1), reference to Israelite kingship (Gn 36:31), updated place names (Gn 14:2,3,7,8,17; 23:2; 35:6,19,27; 48:7), and the account of Moses' death (Dt 34:1-12). It is also possible that editors were responsible for the inclusion and final arrangement of narrative passages beyond the account of Moses' death. To admit that God may have used editors in the process of producing the finished book of Exodus and the rest of the Torah in no way reduces the central role Moses played in producing these books: Moses is legitimately their human author. These books are properly referred to as the law of Moses.

At a more basic level, some skeptics have suggested that there never was an actual person named Moses who led Israel from Egyptian slavery to freedom. For them the story of Moses presented in

Exodus—Deuteronomy is a work of fiction created for religious and political reasons. According to these critics, the absence of any mention of Moses in the records of ancient Egypt or contemporary non-Israelite Semitic cultures, as well as the extraordinary claims about him in Scripture, are enough to convince them that Moses was the invention of an ancient Israelite storyteller.

Of course, throughout the centuries Christians have had no problem accepting Moses' reality. As with many other controversial issues, the starting point for addressing this issue is considering the explicit claims of the Bible. Clearly the narratives in Exodus—Deuteronomy present Moses as a historical reality. Numerous passages in the rest of the OT (e.g., Jos 1:1-7; 14:7-11; Jdg 4:11; 1 Sm 12:6; 1 Kg 8:9; 2 Kg 18:4-6; 1 Ch 6:3; 2 Ch 5:10; Neh 1:7-8; Ps 77:20; 106:23; Is 63:11-12; Jr 15:1; Mc 6:4) as well as in the NT (Mt 19:7-8; Mk 12:26; Lk 5:14; Jn 3:14; Ac 3:22; Rm 5:14; 1 Co 10:2; 2 Co 3:7-15; 2 Tm 3:8; Heb 3:2; 11:23-24) make it clear that the biblical writers believed that Moses really lived. Jesus also implied that Moses was an actual person (Jn 5:46-47).

THE FOUNDATION STONE

In many ways the book of Exodus is the foundation stone upon which the rest of the Bible stands. Its laws established the outlines of Israel's social life and provided the authoritative basis for the religious practices that informed Israelite culture for more than a thousand years. The events in this book prepare the reader for Israel's conquest of Canaan and occupation of the land. Its regulations regarding the proper treatment of others serve as the core around which the teachings of Proverbs, the lyrics of many psalms, and the proclamations of the prophets were built.

From a NT perspective, this book is used in three main ways. First, it prefigures the life and ministry of Christ, especially in His role as our sacrificial lamb (Heb 9:12; 1 Pt 1:19; Rv 5:8-9). Second, it provides examples that illustrate the Christian life. Finally, it presents the moral and ethical framework to guide Christians in their decision making.

Exodus Study Notes

1:5 The number 70 mentioned here and in Gn 46.27 seems to contradict Stephen's figure of 75 in Ac 7:14. The number 75 can also be found at Ex 1:5 within the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the OT) and the Dead Sea Scrolls. However, these two numbers can be reconciled. The higher figure includes 5 additional sons born to Ephraim and Manasseh sometime after Jacob and his other clan members arrived in Egypt. These additional individuals are named in Nm 26:28-37 and 1 Ch 7:14-23, as well as in the Greek version of Gn 46:27.

1:7 The succession of Hebrew verbs in this verse translated as "were fruitful . . . increased rapidly . . . became numerous" is the same as those used in God's command to the first human beings in Gn 1:28. This precise parallel serves as one more piece of evidence that the Torah is a unified document.

1:8 The biblical writer's use of the term "king" to refer to the supreme leader of Egypt has been used as evidence that Moses could not have written the book of Exodus, since anyone familiar with Egyptian culture would have used the Egyptian term "pharaoh." But "pharaoh" is used 185 times elsewhere in the Torah. Moses was writing this document to a Hebrew, not Egyptian, audience. In the language of the original readers the term "king" (Hb *melek*) referred to the highest governmental official within a social system. Perhaps, for the sake of clarity for his readers as well as for literary variety, Moses chose to use the usual Hebrew term.

1:11 The mention of a city named Rameses cannot be used to prove that the events of this narrative took place during the days of Rameses II (c. 1290 B.C.). However, the Bible's chronological references (see esp. 1 Kg 6:1) suggest that the events of chapter 1 occurred at least 150 years prior to Rameses II's reign. The city's name means literally "Born of [the god] Ra." Ra was one of the most popular gods in the history of Egypt, worshiped since at least the Fourth Dynasty (c. 2772 B.C.). It is entirely possible that a city honoring this popular god was built hundreds of years before Rameses II.

1:15 The fact that only two Hebrew midwives were named here may suggest that only a small number of Israelites were living in Egypt at this time. Yet the Bible states that the Israelites had become very numerous in Egypt (v. 7), apparently numbering in the millions (cp. 38:26). The best explanation for the small number of midwives mentioned here is that these two women were the authorized representatives of a larger group of Hebrew nurses.

1:19 Were the Hebrew midwives lying? The Hebrew midwives misled Pharaoh in order to save innocent human lives. The Bible teaches that lying is wrong (20:16; Lv 19:11; Eph 4:29; Col 3:9; Rev 22:15) and that people should tell the truth (Zch 8:16). What the midwives did is not meant as an example of behavior of which God approves. Nevertheless, their act was intended to avert a far greater wrong — the murder of innocent children. Because of Pharaoh's wicked intentions in this matter, he did not deserve to hear the truth from these women. Others in the OT were recorded as deliberately misleading people in order to protect innocent human life, including Samuel (1 Sm 16:2) and Jeremiah (Jr 38:24-27). In a world marred by sin it is not always possible to choose between pure good and pure evil, and one is sometimes compelled to choose the least sinful alternative. Christians are to speak the truth in love (2 Co 4:2; Eph 4:15). Jesus set the example for Christians by telling the truth even when it produced personal pain and suffering (Mt 26:63-66; Jn 8:40-59).

2:10 Is it reasonable to suppose that Pharaoh, who had ordered the death of all male Hebrew children, would permit Moses to live (1:16)? Yes. Ancient parallels exist in which governments raised and educated select young males of hostile cultures. Daniel and several other young Israelites were raised and educated in Babylon so they could serve as government officials (Dn 1). Similarly, Moses' life was apparently spared by Pharaoh in order to prepare him as an administrator over Egypt's Hebrew slaves (see 2:11; Ac 7:22).

2:10 Why would an Egyptian princess have given Moses a Hebrew name? Because the name she chose was both an Egyptian word and a Hebrew word. In Egyptian the root word means "born," and was commonly used as an element in personal names (e.g., Pharaohs Ah*mose*, Thut*mose*). In Hebrew it means "to draw out [of water]." This bilingual wordplay fit Moses in both ways, especially since he was "drawn out" of the Nile.

2:14 This verse has been taken by some as contrary to Heb 11:27, which states that Moses was not afraid of the king's anger. Note, however, that this verse only states that Moses was afraid, not that he feared Pharaoh's wrath. What then might Moses have feared? Perhaps it was the loss of support from his fellow Israelites, since they were willing to betray him. Or perhaps he feared that he had lost his opportunity to be the deliverer of his people.

3:1 Who was Moses' father-in-law: Jethro, Reuel, Raguel, or Hobab? Reuel is the first name given (2:18). Here, only eight verses later, he is called Jethro. His name is given as Hobab in Jdg 4:11, while in Nm 10:29 we learn that Hobab was Reuel's son, Moses' brother-in-law. (The KJV has Raguel for Reuel in Nm 10:29, but the name in Hebrew is the same.) This is not an instance of two different men being identified as Moses' father-in-law. It was not uncommon for people mentioned in the Bible to be known by more than one name, especially where their names were changed because of a significant event, positive or negative. Examples in the OT include the confirmation of the Lord's covenant with an individual (Abram/Abraham, Gn 17:5), the birthing of a son (Sarai/Sarah, Gn 17:15), a life-changing encounter with God (Jacob/Israel, Gn 32:28), personal tragedy (Naomi/Mara, Ru 1:20), or defeat and domination by a foreign king (Eliakim/Jehoiakim, 2 Kg 23:34). In the NT at least two individuals are known by two names: Simon/Peter (Mt 16:17-18), and Saul/Paul (Ac 13:9). Although the Bible gives no explanation for Reuel's change of name, possibly it is a clan name or a title meaning "excellency/his excellency."

3:2 Who appeared to Moses at the burning bush—the Angel of the Lord, or the Lord Himself (v. 4)? Both terms are used in this passage. Elsewhere in the OT the two terms could be used in close proximity, in ways that draw no clear distinction between them (Gn 16:7-13; Jg 6:11-14). Since the Hebrew *mal'ach* means "messenger," one does not have to think of the "angel" here as falling into some unscriptural stereotype. Perhaps both expressions are simply different ways of referring to the one God. The intimate relationship between the Lord and the Angel of the Lord hints at the relationship demonstrated in the NT between God the Father and God the Son (see Jn 10:30).

3:6 If God cannot be seen, why was Moses afraid to look upon Him? The Bible states that God is invisible (1 Tm 1:17; 6:16) and that no one has ever seen Him (Jn 1:18; 1 Jn 4:12,20). But biblical narrative also makes it clear that God personally visited human beings at various times, and did so in awesome and mysterious ways. The divine disclosure might take the form of a phenomenon of nature—a storm (Jb 38:1), a fire (Dt 4:12), a fiery cloud (Ex 13:21), or a burning bush (vv. 2-4)—or the revelation could be human in appearance (Gn 18:1-33). But the Bible suggests that these self-expressions of God were mediated and partial, not the direct appearance of God in His fullness. The Israelites saw the fire of God, but they did not see Him; they heard God's voice, but they never saw His mouth speaking (Dt 4:12). Moses saw God's form (Nm 12:8), but never saw His face (Ex 33:20-23). When Moses became aware that the bush was burning because God's presence was within it, he showed reverent submission by practicing the timeless Asiatic custom of avoiding eye contact with a superior. To have gazed directly upon God would have been to show contemptuous pride, and risk destruction.

3:8 Which people groups did Israel actually conquer? The Bible's lists of nations that inhabited the land of Canaan differ from one another. Among the seven lists of nations provided in the Torah, only three agree completely (vv. 8,17; Dt 20:17). The first list (Gn 15:19-21) is the longest, containing the names of 10 people groups. One contains 7 names (Dt 7:1), while the others contain only six (Ex 3:8,17; Dt 20:17). There are at least two explanations for these differences. First, some of the groups may have been exterminated from the land before the time of Moses. The Kadmonites, Kenizzites, and Rephaim are mentioned only in the list given to Abraham, who lived hundreds of years earlier. According to Dt 2:20-22, the Ammonites destroyed the Rephaim. Perhaps the Kadmonites and Kenizzites were also eliminated before the time of the exodus. Second, the remaining lists may not have been intended as an exhaustive cataloging of all the cultural groups present in the land; they merely listed the major people groups with which Israel would have to deal.

3:14-15 Why did God tell Moses to say, " 'I AM' has sent me," but then later to say, "the LORD has sent me"? The Hebrew words translated "I AM" and "the LORD" are two forms derived from the same Hebrew verb. Though "I AM" is not reused as a name for God in the OT, "the LORD" is used more than 5,000 times. The phrase "the LORD" is a rendering of the Hebrew word *YHWH* ("Yahweh") that seems to mean "He [Who] Is" or "He [Who] Causes to Be." The translation of God's name into English as a title, rather than a personal name, is a way of showing reverence for Him; it continues a tradition that predates Christianity and is reflected in the NT (see Ac 2:21). Jewish readers, coming to the divine name in the text, substituted the word '*Adonai*, "Lord," and the Masoretic scribes inserted the vowel signs ("points") for '*Adonai* in the word *YHWH* as a reminder. In some older English translations *YHWH* is rendered "Jehovah," a form derived from combining the vowel sounds for '*Adonai* with the consonants for *YHWH*.

3:22 Stealing is a sin (20:15; Lv 19:11; Matt 19:18; Mk 10:19; Lk 18:20) and never condoned by God (see Eph 4:28). On the other hand, receiving reparations for crimes committed against someone is part of God's law (see Ex 22:1). The Egyptians had stolen the

freedom and labor of the Hebrews, and would now be required to pay for their misdeeds. God was not asking the Israelites to steal from the Egyptians. Furthermore, because the Israelites had gained favor in the eyes of the Egyptians they voluntarily gave goods to those they had oppressed.

4:3-8 Could a stick actually become a serpent, or a hand suddenly become leprous and then instantly healthy again? Yes, if God transforms them. According to vv. 5 and 8, God made these things happen to convince doubters that He had really appeared to Moses. An "impossible" act—that is, one occurring outside of the natural order—would be more convincing than an ordinary action. As Creator of the universe, God is not limited to actions in accordance with the laws of nature; the occurrence of these miracles would convince all but the most determined doubters that God had come to His prophet.

4:11 Would a God who claims to be love (see 2 Co 13:11-13; 1 Jn 4:8,16) make people mute, deaf, or blind? According to the Bible, God's ways are always righteous (Ps 145:17) and good (Ps 25:8; 34:8; 100:5). Yet God also performs acts of judgment against sinners, including removing a person's ability to speak or see (2 Kg 6:18; Lk 1:18-22; Ac 9:3-8). God may also allow physical problems in peoples' lives for redemptive purposes, in order to provide a witness to Jesus' healing power (see Jn 9:2-3) or to demonstrate God's sustaining grace (2 Co 12:9).

4:21 The Bible teaches that human beings are free to make choices (Gn 2:19; 4:7; Ezk 18:2-32). God is good (Ps 25:8; 34:8; 100:5) and always acts consistently with His nature. Yet people can choose to rebel against God's goodness, and consistent rebellion can lead to their hearts being "hardened." As the saying goes, "The same sun that melts butter also hardens clay." Egyptian pharaohs believed they were divine, and Pharaoh would never have been inclined to submit to the Israelites' God. Each time God placed a demand on him, he became more determined to resist. Thus it was both God's demands and Pharaoh's own pride-motivated stubbornness (Ex 8:15,32; 9:34) that led to his hardened heart. God would use Pharaoh's stubbornness for a good end, to demonstrate His power and extend His reputation (9:16).

4:24 Why did the Lord try to kill Moses? To answer this question, it is necessary to examine how Moses' life was spared; the situation was reversed only when Moses' wife circumcised his son. Since the days of Abraham God had required His people to circumcise their sons as a sign of their relationship with Him (Gn 17:10-14). As a leader of God's people, Moses was expected to set the proper example before the Israelites. When he failed to have his son circumcised before returning to Egypt he incurred the Lord's displeasure. Failure to meet God's requirement had imperiled both his life and ministry.

5:1 When Moses and Aaron asked Pharaoh to let the Israelites leave Egypt to "hold a festival" in the wilderness, they were not lying. The proper worship of the Lord had been denied the Israelites in Egypt, yet it was more fundamental to their calling as the people of God than freedom from slavery. Pharaoh had the opportunity to accommodate Israel's desire, but his denial of the request made it clear that the only way Israel could worship the Lord as He required was to leave Egypt for good (see 6:11).

5:7 Archaeology reveals that bricks made with straw were a common building material in Egypt during the OT era. Such evidence from archaeology gives the biblical narrative greater credibility.

6:3 People began calling on the name of Yahweh during Seth's lifetime (Gn 4:26), and Abraham and Sarah (Gn 14:22; 16:2), Isaac (Gn 26:22), and Jacob (Gn 27:20) explicitly used the name. Yet here the Lord seems to suggest that he had not previously been known by that name. Two possible reasons may exist for this. First, God may be saying that He is revealing Himself to Moses more fully than to anyone before him. Thus Moses and the generations to follow would have a more complete knowledge of who Yahweh is. Second, the Lord's statement may be translated from the Hebrew as a rhetorical question: "And did I not make My name Yahweh known to them?" In this case, the Lord was affirming the continuity of relationship that had existed between Himself and His people over a period of time.

6:16-20 In accordance with the promise given to Abraham (Gn 15:16) and the genealogy listed in 1 Ch (6:3,18), four generations of Israelites lived in Egypt. The Israelites had entered Egypt as permanent residents during the days of Levi (Gn 46:5-11). The majority of Levi's life was spent in Egypt, and he, his son and his grandson all died in that land. But during the eightieth year of his great grandson Moses, Israel left Egypt.

A careful reading of the Bible makes it clear that the four successive generations of tribal leaders are listed here. Even though Moses' sons Gershom and Eliezer were alive at the time of the exodus (Ex 18:1-5), they were not considered in the reckoning of

four generations because they had not yet achieved patriarchal status.

For a discussion of how much time the Israelites spent in Egypt, see note on 12:40. As to whether or not the Israelites could have achieved a population of more than 600,000 adult males in the time from Jacob until the exodus, see note on 12:37.

Some scholars are unable to reconcile the four generations mentioned here and in Gn 15:16 with the traditional Hebrew (Masoretic) Text of Ex 12:40, which states that the time the Israelites spent in Egypt amounted to 430 years. They suggest that the genealogy of Gn 46 omits several generations. In other words it is "telescoped," several generations being omitted in order to create the impression that only 4 generations of Israelites resided in Egypt. It is true that some of the genealogy lists in the Bible omit names (see the article *Are the Genealogies Reliable?*). But since the generations presented here exactly match those presented in 1 Ch 6, it is reasonable to conclude that what is presented here is a complete genealogy.

6:18 This list of Kohath's sons does not necessarily contradict the one given in 1 Ch 6:22. This list agrees exactly with the ones found in 1 Ch 6:2 and 6:18. Amminadab, mentioned as a son of Kohath in 1 Ch 6:22, may be an otherwise unmentioned fourth son of Kohath, or the name may be a secondary designation for Izhar. (For a discussion of individuals known by more than one name, see note on 3:1.)

7:3 For a discussion of the Lord's hardening Pharaoh's heart, see note on 4:21.

7:9-10 Did the Egyptians really turn their rods into serpents (see v. 12)? Another translation of the Hebrew word rendered "by their occult practices" (v. 11) is "by their flames." The Egyptian sorcerers, like modern magicians, seem to have used a bright distraction to conceal their substitution of serpents for the sticks. (The NT, in 2 Tm 3:8, gives their names as Jannes and Jambres.) The activities of these sorcerers foreshadow those of a "lawless one" who will come at the end of the age and perform pseudo-miracles (2 Th 2:9).

7:20 Did the Nile River actually turn to blood? The OT uses the Hebrew word translated "blood" in two different senses—in the literal sense, to refer to the life-giving fluid in the circulatory system of human beings and animals (Gn 4:11); and in the figurative sense, to refer to the color of blood (see Jl 2:31). Either interpretation is possible here: the Nile could have become literal blood, or it could have turned the color of blood due to the presence of some toxin within it. In either case, the Bible is describing a true miracle. God produced the results He said He would, and He did it when He said He would.

7:20-21 Were the ten plagues natural occurrences, not miracles? According to the Bible they were true miracles—signs and wonders performed by God (6:6; 7:3-4; 8:19).

Theologically, a miracle can be defined as God's working at just the right time, in just the right place, in just the right degree to produce a redemptive outcome. Miracles are acts of God, but God can make them happen in various ways. As Creator of the universe He can work miracles *through* nature, or *outside* the natural order when it suits His purposes. The events of Jos 3:16 may be an example of a miracle occurring when God worked through natural forces. But God is not bound by nature; He is Spirit (Jn 4:24) and exists outside the material order. Thus He can act in ways that differ from the patterns we call "scientific laws." Christ's resurrection from the dead is the greatest miracle of this type.

The biblical description of the events associated with the ten plagues allows for the possibility that God used natural processes to bring judgments on Egypt's gods (Ex 12:12) and set His people free from Egyptian captivity. Some have suggested that bacteria turned the waters red, and the poisoned waters killed the fish and forced the frogs to seek cool, moist places away from the Nile. When the frogs died their corpses were a breeding ground for two types of small insects. These, in turn, spread communicable diseases among both animals and humans, resulting in death to the livestock and boils upon the people. A well-timed locust plague followed by a spring hailstorm devastated Egypt's crops. Shortly thereafter a desert sandstorm or dust cloud darkened most of Egypt. Finally a devastating plague, perhaps one caused by the insects, killed both humans and beasts among the non-Israelites. God was at work in the entire sequence of events, making them occur in the appropriate location, at the designated time, and at the prescribed intensity level.

If God chose to work outside the natural order, it is reasonable to assume that the waters of the Nile were transformed for a time into actual blood. No causal chain would be needed to link the events of the first plague with those that followed up through the sixth, and possibly the tenth, as described above. God could bring small insects into existence directly from the dust of the earth (8:16-17) without resorting to natural causes. He made these ten events take place in response to Pharaoh's stubbornness. Though this second option may be less intellectually satisfying to Americans and Europeans, it is within God's power to have brought about the plagues in this way.

Which of these methods did God employ to create the ten plagues? Since both account for all the biblical facts, either is a viable possibility. It is enough to affirm that God did them and that they fully accomplished His purposes.

7:22 The Bible suggests it was human cunning, not miraculous powers, by which the Egyptian magicians turned the water from the Nile into blood. The same Hebrew expression, "by their flames," occurs here as the explanation for what they performed (see note on 7:9-10).

8:7 See note on 7:9-10.

8:26-27 The Bible never says that Moses tried to deceive Pharaoh in requesting permission to leave Egypt in order to conduct a sacrifice. Apparently, on three occasions (vv. 26-27; 10:9,25-26) the Lord told Moses to make relatively minor requests of Pharaoh —all of which would be turned down—to show the extent of his hardness of heart (see note on 5:1).

9:6 How did God kill all the Egyptians' livestock? See note on 7:20-21.

If all the Egyptians' livestock were killed in the plague, where did the livestock come from that later died in the hailstorm (vv. 19-25)? The Bible doesn't explain this; however, two possibilities exist. The first assumption is that the word "all" should be taken literally. In that case the livestock later killed in the hailstorm were imported from farther up the Nile river, perhaps from Cush; or that in the interval between the plagues the Egyptians had acquired some of the Israelites' flocks. Alternatively, the word "all" in v. 6 might be used here in a restrictive sense to mean "all that were in a particular area," or "all who were afflicted," or perhaps simply "the great majority."

9:7 For a discussion of Pharaoh's heart being hardened, see note on 4:21.

9:9 How could furnace ash create boils? It is not necessary to assume that the outbreak of boils was caused directly by contact with the ash; the Lord could have inflicted the boils independently of the dust when Moses acted in obedience to His command. As with many of the other miracles, God may have acted through nature, perhaps through a bacterium or virus, or beyond the realm of the natural, to accomplish His purposes.

9:25 For a discussion of how the Egyptians could have flocks even after a plague killed their livestock, see note on 9:6.

10:1 For a discussion of the Lord's hardening Pharaoh's heart, see note on 4:21.

10:19 For a discussion of what is meant by "Red Sea," see note on 14:16.

11:3 Self-praise is condemned in Scripture (Pr 27:2), yet Moses, traditionally viewed as the author of the Pentateuch or first five books of the Bible, appears to praise himself here. Such complimentary statements about Moses appear also in Nm 12:3 and Dt 34:10-12. The Pentateuch, however, has been subjected to a process of transmission, even in an oral stage, and it is by no means certain that Moses himself inserted these words. It is possible that they come from the same editor who provided the account of Moses' death (Dt 34:5-12). The inspired scriptures came into being when "moved by the Holy Spirit, men spoke from God" (2 Pt 1:21), but all their names may not be known to us. Still, even if Moses wrote these self-complimentary words, they are not so much an attempt to glorify himself as they are a declaration of the degree of respect the Israelites and their leader had gained among the Egyptians.

11:10 For a discussion of the Lord's hardening Pharaoh's heart, see note on 4:21.

12:3-7 Was the Passover animal supposed to be slain at the sanctuary, or at home? According to Dt 16:1-7, the only permissible place to sacrifice the lamb or goat was at the place where the Lord would choose to put His name–that is, at Jerusalem; it was forbidden to slay the animal at a person's home. But of course this requirement was not applicable to the Israelites while they were still slaves in Egypt. The instructions provided in Ex 12:7 applied specifically to the first Passover, and perhaps also the Passovers that were celebrated prior to the construction of the temple in the days of Solomon.

12:5 This passage appears to contradict Dt 16:2 regarding which animals may be used for the Passover sacrifice. The instruction of Dt 16:2 allows animals of the herd—that is, cattle or oxen—as well as lambs or goats from the flock. But a careful reading suggests that these two passages are addressing different issues. Exodus 12:5 deals with the animal that is to be eaten as part of the Passover meal, on the first night of an eight-day celebration that included both the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. On the other hand, Dt 16:2-8 mentions the kinds of sacrificial animals that were to be used for different purposes throughout the festival period. The guidelines of Dt 16:2 are spelled out in greater detail in Nm 28:16-31, which specifies that bulls, sheep, and goats were to be sacrificed on each of the days of this lengthy celebration.

12:7 It was the people's obedience to God that saved them, not the blood on the doorpost. Those who obeyed the Lord's instruction to place the blood of an unblemished male lamb or goat on the doorposts of their home were spared. By doing so, they demonstrated that they were placing their trust in a sacrificial death prescribed by God for their salvation. Since the days of the apostles, Christians have seen in this event a foreshadowing of the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ, "our Passover" (1 Co 5:7), whose blood spares us from the coming wrath of God (Rm 5:9).

12:12 For a discussion of what animals the Egyptians would have had left for the Lord to kill, see note on 9:6.

12:13 God knows all things (1 Jn 3:20) and did not need to make an inspection tour through the land, noting the blood on each doorpost to discern who was obedient to Him. The blood was the "distinguishing mark," a sign for the benefit of the Israelites that confirmed their obedience to God and His promise of salvation. The phrase "when I see the blood" is used figuratively to indicate the Lord's knowledge of those who trust Him. The expression looks ahead to God's response to those who, having entered into the death of Christ (Rm 6:3-7), are protected by His blood from the wrath of God's judgment.

12:31 If the exodus occurred as the Bible describes it, why does it receive no mention in Egyptian records? The probable answer is that the official Egyptian records were written by government functionaries not to provide an objective recording of historical events, but in order to support the existing political and religious powers of their day. Egyptian annals glorify the accomplishments of the Pharaohs and reinforce the prevailing Egyptian religious convictions. Any set of events that cast Egyptian gods and their Pharaoh (who was himself considered a god) in a bad light would hardly be mentioned in an official Egyptian document.

12:35 Some have suggested that Moses' scheme to gain Israel's freedom was to mislead Pharaoh and the Egyptians into thinking Israel would make only a brief pilgrimage into the wilderness, temporarily "borrowing" others' possessions, while his secret intent was a permanent departure. The Bible's narrative does not support this view. Far from a secret departure, Israel was publicly forced by the Egyptian government to leave the land for good, and the general Egyptian population supported Pharaoh's decision (vv. 31-33). For a discussion of Israel "stealing" from the Egyptians, see note on 3:22.

12:37 How could the Israelites have become so numerous during their years in Egypt? The Bible seems to claim that the 75 males of Jacob's family had increased to more than 600,000 males age 20 and older in Moses' time (603,550 at the time of the first censuses taken at Mount Sinai—see 38:26; Nm 1:46). This has struck many scholars as impossible, especially if one accepts that Jacob was Moses' great-great-grandfather.

Two considerations make plausible this rapid growth from 75 to 600,000 males. First, Ex 1:7 states that "the Israelites were fruitful, increased rapidly, multiplied, and became extremely numerous so that the land was filled with them." Furthermore, 1:9-12 suggests that the Israelites' dramatic population increase was the primary factor in Egypt's decision to oppress them. The Bible clearly affirms that the Israelites experienced explosive growth in population once they arrived in Egypt.

Second, the evidence in both the OT and NT suggests that 215 years elapsed between Jacob's entry into Egypt and the exodus (see note on 12:40). It is mathematically possible for Jacob's twelve sons to have produced a nation with a population of more than 600,000 males in slightly more than two centuries. During this period from five to eight generations of Israelites could have lived, depending on the family line. Moses' line was five —Levi, Kohath, Amram, Moses, Gershom and Eliezer (see 6:16-20; 1 Ch 6:1-3); Joshua's was apparently eight—Joseph, Ephraim, Shuthelah, Laadan, Ammihud, Elishama, Nun, Joshua (see 1 Ch 7:20-27). The number of sons produced by each family would vary, depending on how many generations were involved. For 8,600 Kohathite males to have been alive at the time of the exodus (see Nm 3:28) would have required each family to produce as average of seven sons; the 40,500 adult males in Joshua's tribe at the time of the exodus narrative (see Nm 2:19) would require four to five sons per family. While such large families might be considered unusual, the numbers are consistent with the claims of Ex 1. It is worth noting that many individuals in the Bible were said to have produced more than seven sons—Abraham had eight (Gn 25:1-2,9), Jacob had 12 (Ex 1:1-5), Jair and Ibzan had 30 (Jdg 10:4; 12:9), Abdon had 40 (Jdg 12:14), Ahab had 70 (2 Kg 10:1), and Gideon had 71 (Jdg 9:56).

12:40 How much time did the Israelites spend in Egypt? The Hebrew text used as the basis for English translations of this verse states literally that "the dwelling of the sons of Israel which they dwelt in Egypt was four hundred and thirty years." The Samaritan Pentateuch, on the other hand, states that the Israelites spent 215 years in Egypt. The difference in numbers may not be a true contradiction, but the result of different ways of computing Israel's time in Egypt. The Samaritan Pentateuch, following a very old tradition that is reflected in the NT (see Gl 3:17), probably arrived at the figure 215 by starting with the number 430 and then factoring in certain events associated with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. By taking into account the number of years between Abraham's visit to Egypt and the birth of Isaac (25 years, see Gn 12:4; 21:5), Isaac's age when Jacob was born (60 years, Gn 25:26), and Jacob's age at the time he entered Egypt (130 years, Gn 47:9), the editors of that version concluded that Jacob's descendants spent 215 years in the land.

The Septuagint likewise clarifies the number 430, but does so in a different way. It expands the reading found in the Hebrew text, stating that "the dwelling of the sons of Israel, *and of their fathers*, which they dwelt *in the land of Canaan, and* in the land of Egypt, was four hundred and thirty years" (italics added).

The NT provides conclusive evidence that the chronological clarifications in the Samaritan Pentateuch and Septuagint are accurate. In Gl 3:17 the apostle Paul noted that the Law was given to Israel 430 years after God's covenantal promise had been delivered to Abraham. The first-century Jewish historian Josephus (*Antiquities* 2:15:2) accepted this number, as did many significant voices in Christian history prior to the twentieth century (e.g., Tertullian, Origen, Augustine, Bishop James Ussher). When the NT evidence is considered together with that of the OT, it seems clear that 430 years elapsed from the time of Israel's *first* entrance into Egypt, and that the reckoning began with Abraham's dealings with Pharaoh (Gn 12:10-20).

12:43,48 Although the OT requires non-Jews adopting the faith of Israel to be circumcised, the NT discourages the practice (1 Co 7:18; Gl 5:2). The prophet Jeremiah foresaw a time when God would make a new covenant that would replace the one He made with Israel at Mount Sinai (Jr 31:31). Jesus Christ brought that new covenant into being through His sacrificial death on the cross (Heb 9:15). Through Christ a new relationship exists between God and humanity (2 Co 5:17; Gl 6:15), one that does not require men to be circumcised (see Ac 15:1-21).

13:12-16 Offering every firstborn male animal from their flocks required financial sacrifice on the part of the Israelites, yet the Lord required it. God is interested in more than his people's material prosperity; He also wants them to develop their values, character, and spiritual life. As each succeeding generation of Israelites gave its firstborn males to God, they would in some way recreate the exodus event. They would be reminded of the seriousness of sin; whenever they ate the meat of the animal, they would be reminded of the sacrificial meal eaten by their forefathers on the night of the exodus. By sparing their own firstborn sons through the death of a sacrificial animal, in obedience to the Lord's command, they would experience the lifesaving grace of God in a deep and unforgettable way. Unlike the Canaanites, who gave firstborn sons and daughters to their gods by killing them (Lv 18:21), the Israelites were to let their children live (Dt 18:10). They were to pay a redemption price for each child redeemed. The males of the tribe of Levi were then to serve as lifelong substitutes for the redeemed sons (Nm 3:12).

13:18 For a discussion of what is meant by "Red Sea," see note on 14:16.

13:21-22 According to Nm 10:29-31, Moses asked Hobab, son of his father-in-law Reuel (see note on Ex 3:1), to assist the Israelites during their time in the desert. As a local resident Hobab knew that area well, and his insights would be invaluable to the Israelites. His role, however, was only supportive. God would guide the covenant people to the promised land through the pillars of cloud and fire.

Was the pillar of smoke and fire simply the result of an altar fire being burnt by the priests? The Bible does not indicate the physical origin, if any, of the cloud or fire. However, it emphatically claims that throughout the exodus events the cloud was inhabited by God (v. 21) and possessed lifelike qualities. When Israel was threatened by the Egyptians the cloud moved between the Israelites and their enemies, expanding and spreading so as to hide the Israelites (14:19). Whenever Moses entered the sacred tent the cloud would descend and stand at the door (Nm 12:5). It could also come down and rise up again to execute judgment (Nm 12:5-10). These characteristics suggest that the cloud had supernatural origin and control. Even if a natural explanation could be found for it, the Bible makes it clear that this cloud was supernatural, in that God controlled it and His presence resided in it.

14:4 For a discussion of the Lord's hardening Pharaoh's heart, see note on 4:21.

14:9 For a discussion of how the Egyptians could have horses even after a plague killed their livestock, see note on 9:6.

14:16 Did the Israelites pass through a marsh—a "sea of reeds"—and not the Red Sea? Many scholars have accepted this suggestion, but a full consideration of the biblical evidence leads to the conclusion that Israel escaped the armies of Pharaoh by passing through a large and dangerous body of water. The biblical text states that the waters were deep (Is 63:13), but that God split them and made them stand "like a wall" (Ps 78:13) on either side of the fleeing Israelites (Ex 14:22,29). When the waters returned to their original position they covered the Egyptians' chariots, horses, and soldiers (v. 27; 15:1; Dt 11:4; Jos 24:7; Ne 9:11; Ps 78:53), thereby killing all the enemy (Ex 14:27-28,30; Ps 106:11). In the NT, Stephen, the apostle Paul, and the writer of Hebrews referred to the body of water as a sea (Ac 7:36; 1 Co 10:1; Heb 11:29).

Commentators have noted that the Hebrew phrase *yam suph*, traditionally translated as "Red Sea," can also mean "sea of reed." While that translation is possible, the OT always employs this phrase to refer to a deep body of water east of Egypt and adjacent to the Sinai Peninsula. In 1 Kg 9:26-28 Solomon is said to have built a fleet of trading ships that sailed on the Red Sea to the land of Ophir. Both the NT and the Septuagint translate *yam suph* as "Red Sea" (see Ac 7:36; Heb 11:29) and not "sea of reeds," or a marsh.

14:21 How could a dry path be created through the middle of the Red Sea? God performed a miracle, using, at least in part, the forces of nature. The biblical writer mentions the role of wind in this event, but that does not preclude the possibility that God used other aspects of nature of which we have no knowledge. The suggestion that a tsunami was responsible for the temporary displacement of water in the Red Sea area is interesting, but does not account for the description of a "wall" of water on either side of the fleeing Israelites (vv. 22, 29). Possibly God augmented the forces of nature with supernatural activity to create a safe passage for Israel through the body of water.

14:25 Some scholars have suggested that most of the exodus narrative is fabricated, though it may contain kernels of historical truth. They reject the Bible's claim that the Red Sea actually parted, but accept the possibility that Egyptian chariots became mired in the muddy marshlands in pursuit of escaping Asiatic slaves, allowing them to escape.

Certainly the Bible indicates that the Egyptians had trouble with their chariots, but this is not portrayed as the primary reason the Israelites' escape succeeded. Nine different books in the Bible (Ex, Dt, Jos, Ps, Is, Ac, 1 Co, Heb) explicitly affirm, or clearly assume, that the Red Sea split apart, saving Israel but destroying their pursuers. Any approach to the Bible that selectively rejects the straightforward narrative in Exodus in order to produce a naturalistic explanation of events will create more problems than it solves. Such an approach requires one to assume that the writers of eight other books in the Bible got it wrong. It reflects unwarranted pride, crediting modern readers of the Bible with a better grasp of biblical events than those who witnessed and wrote about those events.

15:3 Is God a "man of war" or the God of peace (Rm 15:33) and love (2 Co 13:11-14; 1 Jn 4:8,16)? According to the Bible, He is all of these. Just as human beings, made in the image of God (Gn 1:26-27), are capable of participating in war yet also of working for peace, so God can and does do the same. As the God of perfect justice (Gn 18:25; Ps 145:17), He will not let evil behavior go unpunished. When appropriate, He acts decisively against wrongdoers. God's acts that put an end to the activities of the wicked are expressions of His perfect love for both them and their victims. His acts of judgment bring about a greater peace.

15:11 Some have suggested that the OT teaches henotheism (the worship of only one God, though many exist) rather than monotheism (the worship of the only God who exists). Certainly the writer knew that people worshiped many different gods (12:12; 23:13, 32), but that is not to say he believed these other gods actually existed.

To the contrary, one of the great teachings in the Bible is that there is one, and only one, God (Dt 6:4; Mal 2:10; 1 Co 8:5-6; Gl 4:8; Eph 4:6), who is the creator of the entire universe (Gn 1:1; Jn 1:3; Rm 11:36; Col 1:16; Heb 1:2). At the same time, the Bible teaches that God created spiritual beings, and that people are inclined to worship them (Col 2:18; Rv 19:10). These God-created spirit beings possess superhuman powers (2 Kg 19:35) and can appear impressive (Jdg 13:6,20; Ac 12:7; 2 Co 11:14). Among the created beings in the spiritual order are those who now live in rebellion against God (2 Pt 2:4). It is possible for people to believe they are worshiping a god while worshiping a powerful demonic being instead (2 Co 11:14; Col 2:18).

Some people may treat an object manufactured by a craftsman as though it were a god (Is 44:9-19; 45:20). But such objects are obviously not God, and are infinitely inferior to the true God, who stands without peer in the spiritual realm. All worship of created things is prohibited in the Bible (see Ex 20:4-5; Lv 26:1; Dt 4:15-19; 5:8).

15:20 If women are supposed to be silent and not teach or have authority over men in churches (1 Co 14:34-35; 1 Tm 2:11-12), why was Miriam a prophetess? Apart from the fact that Miriam lived before there were churches, being a prophetess is not the same as being the pastor of a church. A prophet or prophetess is simply one who receives a message from God and passes it along to others. Though some women–as well as some men–were false prophets (Neh 6:14; Ezk 13:17; Rev 2:20), others were genuine spokespersons for God (Jdg 4:4; 2 Kg 22:14; Is 8:3; Lk 2:36; Ac 21:9). Women acting as prophets is part of God's plan (Jl 2:28), and the apostle Paul assumed that women would perform this act in church services (1 Co 11:5).

16:16 In the wilderness the Israelites apparently lived in both tents and booths. Many of them probably did not have tents when they first left Egypt, and so had to sleep in temporary structures they fashioned from available materials (Lv 23:42-43). However, they would have made tents for themselves as soon as possible after departing from Egypt.

16:31 The Bible compares the taste of manna with both honey and oil (Nm 11:8). Its flavor was evidently reminiscent of both substances. The comparisons suggest that manna, like many of today's common foods, contained both fats and sugars. Which flavor predominated may have depended on how it was prepared.

17:5-6 Providing enough water in a desert to quench the thirst of a group of more than 600.000 men, besides women and children, was a miracle of the highest order, all the more impressive considering that Israel spent 40 years in the desert. Moses' striking of the rock was not what produced the water, but rather God standing with Moses at the rock (v. 6).

17:14 If God blotted out the remembrance of Amalek, why do we still know about them? Even the inclusion of this verse in the Bible ensures that Amalek would never be forgotten. It is clear that the phrase "blot out the memory" in this context means "to remove any concern that Amalek would pose a threat to another nation." That promise was fulfilled during the days of King David (1 Sm 30:16-17).

18:5 For the name of Moses' father-in-law, see note on 3:1.

19:1-2 The meeting in chapter 18 between Moses and his father-in-law Reuel took place at "the mountain of God," which is elsewhere understood to be Mount Horeb/Sinai. Yet it is not until 19:1-2 that Israel is said to arrive at that location. Probably this section of the book of Exodus is an instance of materials being arranged thematically rather than chronologically. While events are usually told according to the order in which they occurred, sometimes it suits the writer's purpose to join materials together according to topic instead. Other biblical writers certainly did this, as can be seen in the arrangement of narratives and prophecies in the book of Jeremiah and in Matthew's presentation of the life of Jesus. The writer wanted to connect the events associated with God's giving of the Law, so he told the important but unrelated account of Moses' meeting with his father-in-law first.

19:2 Although scholars do not agree on the location of Mount Sinai, this is no reason to conclude that the events said to have taken place there never occurred. While the Bible records the names of many places where the Israelites stayed in the desert following their exodus from Egypt, those places are notoriously hard to identify. They camped only in tents or temporary huts during their years in the wilderness, and there is no record that they built roads or permanent structures or prepared fields for agricultural purposes. The mention of an oasis with twelve springs (15:27), while helpful, does not provide definitive information about which route the Israelites took to reach Mount Sinai. Thus scholars have suggested various sites in the northern, central, and southern portions of the Sinai Desert, as well as at least one site in western Saudi Arabia.

19:11,18 Was the Law given at Mount Sinai, or Mount Horeb (Dt 4:10-13)? Horeb and Sinai are two names for the same location. Early in the book of Exodus the Lord appeared to Moses at Horeb and promised him that the Israelites would worship God on that mountain (3:1-12). That promise was fulfilled in chapter 19 when Israel came to Mount Sinai. Perhaps Horeb and Sinai were names given to the same site by different people groups. Numerous other locations mentioned in the Bible were known by more than one name (cp. Gn 28:19; 31:47; Jos 15:9,10,13,25,49,54,60).

19:22 Since God had not yet established a priesthood for Israel (see 28:1), the priests mentioned here were probably those who would later become the Levitical priests. The priestly role of offering sacrifice was not limited to men specifically set apart as priests. Cain and Abel, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob all acted as priests during their days. Israelites living after the time of Jacob may also have acted as priests on behalf of their families. Moses had previously told Pharaoh the Israelites were commanded to offer sacrifices (5:3; 8:27; 10:25), indicating that he knew some of his countrymen were authorized to perform priestly rituals at that time. Such action would be permissible until the family line of Levi, especially the line of Aaron, was officially designated for priestly service (28:1; Nm 3:6).

20:1–23:33 The list of prohibited acts in these chapters is the primary and most complete list of sins, but not the only one. Other lists of a similar nature are found in the law of Moses (see also Lv 18:1–19:37; Dt 27:15-26). Though the lists differ, all are

expressions of the same presuppositions: people must love the one true God with all their being, and their neighbor as themselves (Mk 12:29-31). Any act that fails to express these demands is a sin.

20:1-17 God and Moses perceived obedience to the laws, not as a way of or precondition to salvation, but as the grateful response of those who had already been saved. God did not reveal the law to the Israelites in Egypt and then tell them that as soon as they had measured up to this standard He would rescue them. On the contrary, by grace alone, through faith they crossed the Red Sea to freedom. All that was required was belief in God's promise that He would hold up the walls of water on either side and see them safely through to the other shore.

The Decalogue begins, not with the first commandment, but with a preamble: "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the place of slavery" (v. 2; Dt 5:6). Obedience to the Decalogue or any other law has never been intended as the way of salvation but as the appropriate response to salvation already received.

20:3 For a discussion of what the Bible teaches about the existence of other gods, see note on 15:11.

20:4 This command (see Dt 4:23; 27:15) prohibited Israel from shaping images of anything that might become an object of worship. Israel was to make no physical representations of the Lord, or of any other being the nations around them might worship. Israel was to destroy any such objects made by others (Ex 23:24; 34:13; Dt 7:5; 12:3). The prohibition of images for worship did not ban artistic expression, nor prevent the production of elegant adornments used in the worship of the Lord such as the cherubim (25:18-20). The Lord created people with artistic skills which He intended them to use in representing the beauty of the world He created (e.g., Bezalel, Ex 31:1-11; 36:1-2). When He gave instructions to Moses for building the tabernacle, He commanded the Israelites to make beautiful objects of gold and silver, and ornate clothing using the finest materials available. But God expects people to worship the Creator, not His creation (see Rm 1:18-26).

20:5 Although this verse seems to say that God punishes children for the sins of their parents, that is not the case. God does not condemn children because of their parents' misbehavior (see Dt 24:16; Ezk 18:20). However, children suffer the consequences of their parents' sinful choices. A parent's adultery, substance abuse, manipulation or other dysfunctional behavior establishes a pattern that children model as they mature. The result can be a repetition of their parents' emotional brokenness leading to conflict, divorce, poverty or other conditions that make their children's, and even their grandchildren's, lives difficult.

In this verse God suggests that one reason we should obey Him is for the sake of our children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. Like ripples spreading across a pool of calm water, our actions have consequences for generations to come. We can create waves of difficulty or blessing (v. 6), according to the choices we make.

20:8-11 How are Christians obligated to "remember the Sabbath day," or seventh day of the week? May a Christian work on Saturdays? The fourth commandment is unique among the Ten Commandments in containing both ceremonial and moral elements. It establishes a key element in a religious calendar, designating one day in seven as holy. But it is also moral, directing people to be imitators of God in His rest from the work of creation, and to use His gift of time for sacred purposes. Because it can be taken in both a ceremonial and moral sense, this commandment became a center of controversy in Jesus' ministry, and continued to be so in the history of the church.

Jesus violated first-century Jewish ceremonial customs regarding the Sabbath (Mt 12:10-13; Lk 13:10-17). He also defended His disciples when they violated the Sabbath customs (Mt 12:1-8), even though OT law mandated the death penalty for those who worked on that sacred day (Ex 31:14-15; 35:2). The apostle Paul likewise de-emphasized the need for Christians to maintain Jewish customs related to the calendar (Rm 14:5; Col 2:16). At the same time, Jesus was careful to keep the moral aspects of this command, stating that "it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath" (Mt 12:12). Jesus saw beyond the ceremony to the sacred use of time. Every day, but especially the Lord's Day, is to be used to accomplish the work of God.

Should Christians use Saturday as their day of worship? Before the coming of Jesus, Jews used the seventh day as a sacred day of rest, and of prayer and study of the scriptures. However, the first day of the week could also be a special day of worship during the annual Feast of Tabernacles (see Lv 23:36). In honor of Jesus' resurrection, which occurred on the first day of the week, early first-century Christians made that day their regular day of worship (see Ac 20:7; 1 Co 16:2), calling it "the Lord's Day" (see Rev 1:10). At the same time, the NT makes it clear that Christians are not bound to rigid rules regarding days for worship (see Rm 14:5-6). It is vital for Christians to gather regularly for worship (Heb 10:25), but many interpreters believe that no day of the week is inherently better than another for doing so.

20:12 The Bible consistently teaches that we should honor and obey our parents (Lv 19:3; Dt 5:16; Pr 23:22; Mt 15:4; 19:19; Mk 7:10; 10:19; Lk 18:20; Eph 6:1-2; Col 3:20), following the example of Jesus Himself (Lk 2:51). At the same time, we are taught to make God our highest authority, esteeming Him above any earthly authority, including parents (Mt 10:37). On those rare occasions when one must choose to reject parental authority in order to obey God, family conflicts will be inevitable (see Lk

12:51-53). In spite of the tension and potential consequences, it is necessary to follow God's way (Ac 5:29). Although Jesus speaks of hating our parents (Lk 14:26), the expression does not mean what we mean by "hate"; it means simply to avoid making them the highest authority in our lives.

20:13 Should we never kill people, or simply not commit murder? According to the Bible, death was not part of God's original plan for humanity, but became part of the human experience as a result of humanity's sin (Gn 2:17; 3:19; Rm 5:12; Heb 9:27). All human beings are made in God's image (Gn 1:26-27) and therefore all human life is sacred and to be treated with special respect. At the same time, the law of Moses sanctions the taking of human life as a penalty for certain serious crimes committed against persons or God (Gn 9:6; Ex 21:12-17; 31:14-15; 35:2; Lv 20:2,9-16,27; 24:16-17,21; 27:29; Nm 35:33; Dt 13:5-9; 21:21; 22:21). The NT implicitly affirms the right of governmental authorities to impose the death penalty (Rm 13:4). The Bible's prescription of the death penalty in certain circumstances is aimed at preventing greater evils from occurring, and thus preserves the principle of the sacredness of human life. Murder, the unauthorized taking of human life, is clearly what this command prohibits.

20:14 If adultery is always wrong, why did God command a prophet to marry a promiscuous wife (Hs 1:2)? The prophet Hosea was not given permission to commit adultery, he was told to marry a woman who would be unfaithful after their marriage. The prophet's experience with his unfaithful wife became an object lesson in Israel's spiritual unfaithfulness toward God. Adultery, or sexual intercourse with another person's spouse, is always condemned in the Bible (Gn 20:3; Lv 18:20; Dt 5:18; Pr 6:32; Mt 5:27-32; 19:18; Jn 8:3-11; Gl 5:19; 2 Pt 2:14). It was considered a crime so serious that it warranted the death penalty (Lv 20:10; Dt 22:22).

20:15 For a discussion of stealing, see note on 3:22.

20:16 Strictly speaking, this commandment applies to perjury during a legal proceeding, and not to speech in general. Nevertheless God, who is Himself the Truth and speaks only the truth (Ps 119:160; Jn 1:14; 17:17) expects people to tell the truth (see note on Ex 1:19). Yet the Bible records an instance where the Lord caused, or permitted, false prophets to lie (1 Kg 22:23). That passage reflects the OT writers' tendency to attribute all things to God, recognizing that events could occur only if the Lord permitted them. King Ahab had hired false prophets to spread lies supporting his personal ambitions, and these prophets conveniently proclaimed messages in the Lord's name that agreed with the king's desires. The Lord permitted them to do what they were determined to do, to provide Ahab with the lie he wanted to hear—and which led to his death (1 Kg 22:34-37). In this way God allowed a disobedient man to bring judgment upon himself.

20:17 If God commanded people not to covet other peoples' property, why did He have the Israelites take the land of Canaan away from its inhabitants? Israel's conquest of Canaan was not to be based on the people's desire to take land owned by other people. The land was given by God as a gift to Abraham's descendants through Isaac, but it could only become theirs when the time for judgment against its inhabitants had come (Gn 15:16). Israel's invasion of Canaan and the destruction of its residents were not acts of covetousness but acts of divine judgment against the sinful culture of the inhabitants. Israel's possession of the land would also be based on their obedience to the Lord, and they would lose the land if they strayed too far from God's will for them (Dt 28:15-68), as the events of history reveal (2 Kg 17:6-23).

20:24 In this verse the Lord asks Israel to make a sacrificial altar of earth, but the instructions of 27:1,6-8 refer to bronze and wood. These passages need not be seen as contradictory. The transportable altar made of bronze and wood was box-shaped and hollow. Possibly a layer of earth was placed in the bottom before sacrifices were offered on it. The surface on which the sacrifice was laid would have been earthen, not bronze or wood. The earth could have been easily removed to lighten the altar for transporting to another location.

20:24 The narrative of events after Israel came out of Egypt is filled with instructions about burnt offerings and sacrifices, yet in Jr 7:21-22 God appears to deny giving Israel such commands during that period (see Am 5:25). The contradiction is more rhetorical than substantive. In Jr 7, God contrasts wholehearted obedience to the Lord (Jr 7:23) with the mere performance of outward ritual (Jr 7:22). God did not want Israel to put observable activity ahead of inner devotion to Him.

This same literary device of expressing a complex concept in abbreviated fashion is found in Hs 6:6, a passage that suggests that God does not desire sacrifices (cp. Am 5:21-22). God commanded sacrifices, but wanted them to come from people who could back up their commitment to God with a life of merciful concern for others.

20:26 Ascending the altar on steps would expose the sacrificial area to the underside of the priest's clothing, and possibly to his private parts. This was considered an affront to the Lord.

21:2,7 Some have suggested that these verses contradict the command in Lv 25:42, which forbids selling Israelites as slaves. However, the rules set forth in Lv 25 do not prohibit Israelites from becoming slaves. Instead, they regulate situations in which Israelites had to sell themselves to other Israelites in order to pay debts. Israelites who became slaves had to be given rights and privileges normally associated only with hired workers.

21:7-11 Was a female who became a slave always a slave, or was she to be set free after six years? The instruction of Dt 15:12 appears to provide a different guideline for the treatment of a female slave. Jewish commentators and others have suggested, however, that the regulations reflect different situations. If a slave woman was used as a sexual partner she was not to be set free, but must be given a lifetime of proper care. If she served in any other capacity, she was to be emancipated after six years.

21:10 Polygamy, like many other sins including divorce, is an expression of the hardness of people's hearts and is contrary to God's will (Mt 19:8). God's ideal from the beginning was for one man to marry one woman, and for the couple to remain in an exclusive sexual relationship for as long as both partners were alive. Biblical evidence for this is found in the fact that God created woman as a uniquely suitable helper for one man—Adam (Gn 2:18-24). When the pair disobeyed God, they could no longer implement many aspects of God's plan for human life. Because of sin conflict, oppression and death became part of the human landscape. People's sinful nature often leads to sexual misconduct. As in the case of Lamech, the first recorded polygamist (Gn 4:19), men will be inclined to take multiple sexual partners for themselves.

The law presented here and in other laws in the Torah is not meant to condone polygamy. It is not an expression of God's ideal, but a concession to humanity's hardheartedness. The law recognizes the male's sexual inclinations, but seeks to limit the injury to women that could result; all wives must be given adequate food, clothing, and intimacy. Far from approving of polygamy, the law of Moses discourages it by placing high demands on anyone who chooses this option, and it preserves the essential rights of polygamy's potential victims.

21:20-21,26 The Bible does not condone slavery any more than it condones polygamy or divorce. Instead, it establishes humane limits for an existing, evil system. Slavery had long been a feature of human society. The Israelites were always to remember that they themselves had been the victims of this practice for an extended time (Gn 37:28,36; Ex 1:8-14) as slaves in Egypt (Dt 5:15; 15:15; 16:12; 24:18,22). Accordingly, Israelite slave owners were to treat their slaves in a fair and charitable manner. They were to be given a day of rest every week (Ex 20:10) and, as beings created in God's image, were expected to attend religious festivals (Dt 12:12,18; 16:11). Israelites who were slaves were to be treated with special benevolence, and to be released after six years (Ex 21:2; Dt 15:12) or in the Year of the Jubilee (Lv 25:40-41), whichever came first. Female slaves who became wives to their owners or owner's sons were to be treated with all the respect and rights of a regular wife (Ex 21:8-11). When an Israelite's term of slavery had ended, he was to be given a gift (Dt 15:13-14). If slaves were physically abused by their owners, they were to be granted immediate freedom (Ex 21:26-27) and, unlike animals, the killing of a slave constituted a crime (v. 20).

Through these measures the law of Moses made it clear that slaves were to be treated as persons with God-given rights and standing before God. Furthermore, slavery for Israelites was to be a temporary state, not a lifetime condition. The law of Moses laid the groundwork for the eventual demise of one of the most demeaning institutions in human society.

21:23-25 Does the Bible teach that people should retaliate, or that they should "turn the other cheek" (Mt 5:38-39; Lk 6:27-29)? In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus contrasted a popular interpretation of the law of Moses with His own teachings. In doing this He was not saying that OT law was wrong, only that his adversaries' way of applying it to situations was wrong; by emphasizing the letter of the law they had missed its true intent.

The "eye for eye, tooth for tooth" passage did not require people to pay someone back for a wrong done to them. Its purpose was to establish limits for retaliation. The most one could do in response to knocking out a tooth was to knock out the other person's tooth; a person could not be killed for injuring someone's eye. As Jesus pointed out, a person who was wronged by another could choose not to retaliate for what had been done to him. Often such a response would be the best way to deal with the problem. In every case, it should be the first option considered.

21:29 For a discussion of capital punishment, see note on 20:13.

21:29-30 This passage indicates that the person responsible for the death of another might be able to ransom his life; Nm 35:31, on the other hand, suggests that the death penalty could not be commuted. Biblical commentators have long noted that these two

passages complement, rather than contradict, each other. The passage teaches that a person whose negligence caused someone else's death would have to be punished, but their life might be spared. The passage in Numbers directs that anyone who has willfully taken someone else's life must be executed.

22:25 Is it permissible to charge interest on loans? Charging interest was the normal practice in ancient western Asia. In Babylon people were permitted to charge 20 to 50 percent interest on loans of silver bullion or food. The OT also permitted Israelites to charge interest on loans made to non-Israelites (Dt 23:20), though the rate for such loans was not specified. But when it came to lending to fellow Israelites, the Lord's people were to follow a different standard: interest was not to be charged on such loans. It seems that God was teaching His people not to profit from the hardship of their brothers and sisters.

22:29 For a discussion of whether sons should be given to the Lord or redeemed, see note on 13:12-16.

23:7 If the Israelites were not to kill the innocent, why were they ordered to kill Canaanite children (see Dt 7:1-2; 20:16-17)? This verse is part of a larger section that provides guidance to judges when trying cases in Israel: in courts of law the innocent were not to be punished. But the elimination of entire cultural groups as punishment for long-term institutionalized sin was not considered a legal matter. It was an issue of divine judgment following centuries of unacceptable conduct. God ordered the Israelites to eliminate cultures that had institutionalized despicable sin. Canaanite cultures were steeped in a religion that was polytheistic, idolatrous, and highly immoral. As part of their religious corruption, those cultures permitted human sacrifice and practiced cultic prostitution (worship of their "gods" involved intercourse with women attached to their temples). All of this cultural perversity was offensive to God and was to be brought to a complete end when the iniquity of the inhabitants of Canaan was complete (Gn 15:16).

23:10-11 The produce of the Israelites' land was to be left for the poor and the animals, but it could also be eaten by the landowner's family during the seventh year (Lv 25:6). The landholder was to be considerate of the needs of the poor. They, too, must be given access to the food needed to sustain them. To assure that there would be enough food for all in the seventh year, the landowner and his family were to stockpile surplus grain from the previous year (Lv 25:21-22).

23:20-23 Did the Angel of the Lord lead the Israelites through the desert, or was it God (Dt 8:2; Ps 136:16)? The biblical answer seems to be that God led His people through His angel. For further discussion of the close connection between God and the Angel of the Lord, see note on 3:2.

24:9-11 If God is invisible (Jn 5:37; 1 Tm 1:17; 6:16), how could Moses and the elders see Him? The Bible states that no one has ever seen God directly (see Ex 33:20; Jn 1:18). Yet the Bible records a number of theophanies, or appearances of the Lord or the exalted Christ (e.g., Gn 12:7; 15:1; Is 6:1; Ezk 8:1-4; Ac 9:3-6; Rv 1:12-15). It is not easy to determine, from the biblical descriptions, whether such events are inward "visions" or outwardly visible events. The fire that Moses saw in a bush (Ex 3:2-4) and the sacred cloud that was filled with the presence of God (13:21) are instances of visible manifestations that were, nevertheless, indirect and obscured by "unapproachable light" (1 Tm 6:16). The theophany described here, which was experienced by the elders of Israel as well as by Moses and the priests, must be of the same order. Alternatively, this incident may refer to an appearance of God's divine representative, the Angel of the Lord. For further information on the connection between the Angel of the Lord and God, see the note on 3:2.

25:3 The Hebrew word for *bronze* is translated "brass" by KJV and other versions published prior to the middle of the twentieth century. However, "brass" is inaccurate. Bronze, a mixture of copper and tin, was widely used in the ancient Near East. Brass, a mixture of copper and zinc, was not available in ancient western Asia. Bronze is what Israelites were to give as an offering for the construction of the tabernacle and its furnishings.

25:10 For a discussion of when the ark of the covenant was constructed, see the note on 37:1-10.

25:15 Though God here instructs the Israelites not to remove the poles from the ark of the covenant, many English translations of Nm 4:6 suggest that they had been removed and had to be reinserted in the rings, with no indication that their removal had been an act of disobedience. But the Hebrew text of the relevant portion of Nm 4:6 simply states, "and they [the high priest Aaron and his

sons] set its poles." For centuries, many interpreters have suggested that this phrase means "and they adjusted its poles." This translational tradition removes any conflict between the Ex and Nm passages.

25:18 If God prohibited the Israelites from making images of any earthly or heavenly beings, why did He command them to make the golden cherubim? In five separate passages within the Torah God commanded the Israelites not to make carved or molded images (20:4-6; Lv 26:1; Dt 4:15-19; 5:8; 27:15). The first three of these passages (20:4-6; Lv 26:1; Dt 4:15-19) add that these objects must not be worshiped; only the final two omit the additional statement, suggesting that these were just shortened forms of the fuller commands expressed earlier.

It seems clear that God never intended to prohibit people from making things of carved wood or molded metal. If so, how could people build houses or make tools? What was prohibited was the fashioning of items intended as objects of worship. The ornately decorated ark of the covenant was not an idol, it was a throne or footstool for the living God (Nm 7:89; 1 Sm 4:4; Ps 80:1); thus, it was permissible to adorn it with the golden cherubim. Similar figures were used in other ancient Near Eastern cultures to signify the presence and authority of a ruler.

31:14-15 For a discussion of why the death penalty for violating the Sabbath does not apply to Christians, see note on 20:8-11.

31:18 The phrase "finger of God" is best understood as an anthropomorphism, that is, a metaphor comparing some aspect of God with the traits of a human being. The phrase does not assert that the Lord God possesses a human body; it affirms that God, and not Moses, was ultimately responsible for the creation of the text inscribed on the stones (cp. 24:12; 32:16; Dt 4:13; 5:22; 9:10). The wording suggests that the means by which the words were recorded was supernatural, but does not indicate the exact method God chose to inscribe them.

32:14 If God never sins, why do some Bible versions translate this verse to indicate that God planned to do evil and then repented? This verse takes its place among a series of passages in the OT that seem to indicate that God does evil (2 Sam 24:16; 1 Ch 21:15; Is 45:7; Jr 18:8; 26:13,19; Jl 2:13; Jnh 3:10; 4:2). However, the Bible affirms that God is completely righteous (Ps 119:137; Jr 12:1; Jn 17:25; Rv 16:5) and does not repent (Nm 23:19; 1 Sm 15:29). The contradiction is only apparent, and can be resolved by examining the relevant words in the Hebrew language.

The Hebrew word *ra'ah,* translated in some Bible versions as "evil," actually possesses a broad spectrum of meanings ranging from moral wickedness to "trouble," without any reference to morality. Applied to the result of God's action, the term refers to affliction. God will never behave immorally, but He will bring affliction upon those who live in defiance of His will.

Similarly, the Hebrew term *nacham* is translated in some versions as "repent," as though one is turning away from a sinful action. It is more accurately translated as "relent," to decide to pursue a different course of action. As people change their actions and wills, God changes His response to them (Jr 18:8; Jnh 3:10). Although He is prepared to bring affliction (*ra'ah*) upon people because of their sins, He is prepared to relent (*nacham*) as they repent.

32:27 For a discussion of justifications for taking human life, see note on 20:13.

32:32-33 Does God keep a book with people's names in it? Several verses indicate that God keeps written records (17:14; Ps 56:8; 69:28; 139:16; Dn 12:1; Mal 3:16; Rev 3:5; 5:1-9; 10:2-10; 13:8; 17:8; 20:12-15; 21:27; 22:7-19). But such expressions could be metaphors, using a human analogy—keeping account books—to symbolize the fact that God remembers what people do, just as biblical language regarding God's eye or hand is figurative. The point is that every person will be held accountable for his actions and words (see Ec 12:14; Mt 12:36).

33:11 If the Lord spoke face to face with Moses, why does the book later suggest that Moses never saw His face (33:20-23)? On three occasions the Bible states that God spoke "face to face" with Moses (33:11; Nm 12:8; Dt 5:4). However, it is also clear that this expression was not meant to be taken literally; in the book of Numbers, "speaking face to face" is equated with "openly, and not in riddles" (Nm 12:8). For a discussion of Moses' seeing God, see note on 3:6.

34:6-7 For a discussion of God's punishing the descendants of a person who sins, see note on 20:5.

34:14 The Hebrew word *qanna',* translated in many versions as "jealous," can also be translated as "zealous." The term describes God's expectation that human beings will make Him their highest priority in life, loving Him with all their heart, soul, and strength (Dt 6:4). As Creator of the universe and all life, God has the right to expect people to value Him most highly. This type of "jealousy" is not a bad thing. It is proper in a marriage; a wife or husband expects the spouse to be faithful in thought, word, and deed, and would be rightfully upset should the spouse prove unfaithful. The Israelite prophets sometimes compare God's relationship to His people, in His covenant, to a marriage (Jr 3:20; 31:32; Hs 2:16).

34:29-35 Does the Bible state that Moses' face glowed, or that it grew horns? The Hebrew word translated in most versions as "shone" or "glowed" is based on a root which means "horn." The Latin Vulgate translation depicted Moses as growing horns; as a result, the Renaissance sculptor Michelangelo carved a statue of Moses with horns. In the NT Paul stated that Moses' encounter with God caused his face to become glorious (2 Co 3:7); this suggests that Moses' face glowed (cp. Ps 119:130).

35:2 For a discussion of why the death penalty for violating the Sabbath does not apply to Christians, see note on 20:8-11.

37:1-9 Did the Israelites construct the ark after Moses returned with the second set of stone tablets inscribed with the Ten Commandments, or before (see Dt 10:3-5)? Moses received the command to build the ark and the directions for its construction (Ex 25:9-22) before his second journey up Mount Sinai. Deuteronomy 10 suggests that Moses built the ark, went up and down the mountain, and then put the Ten Commandments in the ark. This sequence of events would require that the events of Ex 35–37 take place before Ex 34:29. But, while these passages may be out of chronological order, it is not necessary to conclude that they are.

A harmonization of the narrative in Ex 25–37 and Dt 10 is possible if one understands that the process of building the ark began when Moses first received the command to make it. Even though the ark was not completed until later, Moses could reasonably speak of its existence earlier because it was a work in progress. Though the Ten Commandments were not placed in the ark immediately after Moses came down the mountain, they were put in it as soon as the ark was completed.

38:24-25 It seems surprising that slaves in Egypt would have possessed the 2,200 pounds of gold and 7,545 pounds of silver needed for the construction of the tabernacle and its furnishings. However, the Bible suggests that the Israelites' wealth came from the Egyptians, residents of the richest nation in the world at that time, and was gained in obedience to God's command (3:22; 12:35).

No individual Israelite would have had to obtain a large quantity of gold and silver from the Egyptians. Each of the more than 600,000 adult males was asked to give only one-fifth of an ounce of silver to supply the amount needed for the tabernacle (v. 26). The gift of each of the adult male members of the community would have averaged less than one-seventeenth of an ounce of gold. Such limited quantities could have reasonably been obtained from ancient Egypt.

38:25-26 The biblical record indicates that Moses had two separate censuses taken of the adult Israelite males during the first 14 months after they had left Egypt. The first of these, mentioned here, was carried out prior to the beginning of the second year after the exodus from Egypt (40:2) for the purpose of collecting contributions for the tabernacle construction. The second, conducted during the second month of the second year after the exodus, and described in Nm 1:1-46, was a military census intended to help the Israelites prepare for their planned invasion of Canaan.

40:20 Did the ark of the covenant contain the Ten Commandments only, or manna and Aaron's rod that budded, in addition (see Heb 9:4)? The Bible suggests that from the days of Moses at least through the time of Solomon (see 1 Kg 8:9), only the Ten Commandments were present within the ark. It is possible, however, that during a time of national apostasy—perhaps during the time of Manasseh (see 2 Kg 20:21–21:18)—an Aaronic priest tried to protect other sacred relics from the time of Moses by placing them in the ark of the covenant. God's command to place the stone slabs containing the Ten Commandments inside the ark (Dt 10:2) did not prohibit the placement of other items alongside them. Their presence together underneath the Lord's symbolic throne would symbolize three different dimensions of His gracious provision for His people: law, leadership, and sustenance.

Leviticus Articles

Who Wrote the Pentateuch and When Was It Written?

by Daniel I. Block

Although Jewish and Christian tradition almost unanimously recognize Moses as author of the Pentateuch, few issues relating to the OT now are debated as hotly, and in few issues is the gulf between critical and evangelical scholarship so wide. Many conservative scholars continue to believe that Moses wrote virtually all of the Pentateuch with his own hand. So long as critical scholars recognized Moses as an historical figure, in principle his involvement in the composition of the Pentateuch was not excluded—unless, of course he was thought to be illiterate. However, from the middle of the nineteenth century A.D., especially following Julius Wellhausen, most critical scholars have rejected Moses having a significant role in the origin of the Pentateuch.

The questioning began early with doubts whether Moses recorded his own death and burial (Dt 34), knew of a place in northern Israel called Dan (Gn 14:14; cp. Jos 19:47; Jdg 18:28-29), or referred to the conquest of Canaan as having occurred in the past (Dt 2:12). Thus scholars developed an alternative explanation for the origin of the Pentateuch known as the Documentary Hypothesis. According to the classical form of the theory, the Pentateuch is the product of a long and complex literary evolution, specifically incorporating at least four major literary strands composed independently over several centuries and not combined in the present form until the time of Ezra (fifth century B.C.). These sources are identified as J, E, D, and P. J represents a ninth century B.C. (c. 850) document that originated in Judah, distinguished by its preference for the name *Yahweh* (Jehovah, hence the "J"). The E source preferred the divine title *Elohim*, and theoretically was composed in Israel in the eighth century B.C. The D stands for Deuteronomy, supposedly written around 621 B.C. to lend support to Josiah's reforms. The priestly document, P, supposedly was composed c. 500 B.C. by priests seeking to preserve their own version of Israel's history. According to the theory, these sources were compiled and combined in the middle of the fifth century B.C. Nehemiah 8 recounts the moment when Ezra publicly read the Pentateuch as a unit for the first time. Because Joshua describes the fulfillment of the promises of land to the patriarchs and because of stylistic links to Deuteronomy, Gerhard von Rad added Joshua to the pentateuchal corpus, calling the six books the Hexateuch.

Variations of the Documentary Hypothesis prevailed for more than a century. However, due to advances in literary studies, today the state of pentateuchal scholarship is confused, with new theories or radical modifications appearing often. The new theories push the dates for pentateuchal origin ever later. R. N. Whybray argued that the Pentateuch is a unitary composition written in the fourth century B.C., inspired perhaps by the Greek *Histories* of Herodotus.

The internal evidence suggests that Moses kept a record of Israel's experiences in the desert (Ex 17:14; 24:4,7; 34:27; Nm 33:1,2; Dt 31:9,11). Furthermore, many statements in the OT credit the Pentateuch to Moses (e.g., Jos 1:8; 8:31,32; 1 Kg 2:3; 2 Kg 14:6; Ezr 6:18; Neh 13:1; Dn 9:11-13; Mal 4:4), and the NT identifies the Torah very closely with him (Mt 19:8; Jn 5:46,47; 7:19; Ac 3:22; Rm 10:5). A series of additional features within the text point to an early date for its composition: (1) the forms of the names and many of the actions of the patriarchs make best sense in a second millennium B.C. environment; (2) the narratives suggest a thorough acquaintance with Egypt; (3) Egyptian loanwords appear with greater frequency in the Pentateuch than anywhere else in the OT; (4) the name Moses itself suggests an Egyptian setting for the story; (5) the general viewpoint of the narrative is foreign to Canaan; (6) the seasons are Egyptian; the flora and fauna are Egyptian and Sinaitic; (7) in some instances the geography reflects a foreign viewpoint (e.g., a comment like that found in Genesis 33:18, "the Canaanite city of Shechem," is unlikely after the exile because by then

Israel had been in the land for 900 years); (8) and archaisms in the language (like the use of the third person singular pronoun, *hi*, for both genders).

It is doubtful he wrote the account of his death in Deuteronomy 34. Frequently the text provides explanatory notes updating facts for a later audience, such as, "Esau (that is Edom)," in Genesis 36:1; the aboriginal inhabitants of the Transjordan, Deuteronomy 2:10-12. Furthermore, the form of the cursive Canaanite script that Moses probably used was still in its infancy and was replaced with the square Aramaic script in the postexilic period, and the vowels were added a millennium later. The archaic qualities of the poems (such as Gn 49; Ex 15) in contrast to the surrounding narrative suggests the latter may have been updated periodically in accordance with the evolution of the Hebrew language. This may explain why the grammar and syntax of Deuteronomy in its present form reads much like Jeremiah, who lived long after Moses. At the same time Moses could have used a scribe or secretary.

There is no reason to doubt that Moses wrote down the speeches he delivered (Dt 31:9-13), or that when he came down from Mount Sinai, he arranged for the transcription of the revelation he had received on the mountain, if he did not write it all himself. Just as the pieces of the tabernacle were constructed and woven by skilled craftsmen and finally assembled by Moses (Ex 35–40), so literary craftsmen may have composed some bits and pieces of the Pentateuch and submitted them to Moses, who then approved them. When exactly the Pentateuch achieved its present form we may only speculate (Dt suggests some time after the death of Moses), but it seems likely that by the time David organized the temple worship, the contents of the Torah were fixed.

Does the Bible Provide Ethical Guidance for Business?

by Scott B. Rae

Scripture has much to say about economic life, and that teaching encompasses more than simply personal finance. Here's a summary of the Bible's ethical guidance for business.

First, God calls men and women to business. In Genesis 1–2 God ordains work as part of His calling to Adam and Eve. They were intended to work the garden as a part of their role in exercising dominion over creation. Work has intrinsic value and is the way in which human beings fulfill the ongoing mandate to subdue the earth. It wasn't instituted as a consequence of the entrance of sin into the world, though sin did serve to make work more taxing and difficult. From the beginning, work has been blessed by God. Thus His people working in business are doing His work in the world in the same way that a pastor is doing His work in the church. The Bible also calls people to work in order to support themselves and their families (2 Th 3:6-12; 1 Tm 5:8), to take care of the poor (Eph 4:28), to support the church and its outreaches (1 Co 16:1-3), and to provide a platform for sharing one's faith.

Second, the Bible teaches that business is to be run with integrity. The Bible makes it clear that business is to be conducted honestly and is not to be used as a mechanism to exploit others, especially the vulnerable. The Mosaic Law contains numerous mandates regarding business integrity. For example, Leviticus 19:35 mandates that one's weights and measures be accurate—something very important in an agricultural society. Further, Proverbs makes clear that God demands integrity in one's business dealings (Pr 10:9; 11:1). The prophets demanded that those in business not use their resources to exploit the poor (Am 2:6-7; 4:1; Mc 6:10-12). The command to "act justly, to love faithfulness, and to walk humbly with your God" applies to business and establishes values of justice, love, and humility that should govern one's business dealings (Mc 6:8). Jesus continued this emphasis in the NT. He instructed tax collectors to collect only what was prescribed (Lk 3:12-13), urged His hearers to take care of the poor (Mt 25:31-46), and taught that business is a legitimate enterprise if conducted with integrity (Mt 25:14-30). Likewise, the apostles suggested that work is necessary, that idleness is sinful, and that generosity for the poor is not only virtuous but mandatory.

Third, the Bible condemns greed but condones an ambition for contentment. Greed motivates most of the unethical behavior in business today as ever. The Bible is clear that greed is a vice that needs to be put away once someone comes to faith in Christ (1 Co 6:10; Col 3:5). By contrast, contentment is a virtue to be cultivated (1 Tm 6:6-8). Paul made it clear that the *love* of money, not the mere *possession* of wealth, is the root of all kinds of evil. In the ancient world, it was not uncommon for someone to acquire wealth through means that exploited others. The notion that someone could *do well* financially and also *do good* for the community is relatively new, coming as a result of the emergence of capitalism—a system that itself cannot function well without a proper ethical foundation.

Introduction to Leviticus

AUTHOR

The belief that Moses was the author of the Pentateuch (which includes the book of Leviticus) is clearly affirmed by a plain reading of the biblical text (see the article, "Who Wrote the Pentateuch and When Was It Written?" p. 158). Large amounts of the Pentateuch are attributed to Moses (Ex 24:4; 30:11,17; 33:1,5; 39:1,5,29; Lv 1:1; 4:1; 6:1; Nm 4:1; Dt 1:1, 5; 5:1; 31:22,30; 33:1) and his authorship of the Pentateuch is assumed by Jews in the post-exilic community (1 Ch 15:15; 22:13; 2 Ch 23:18; 24:6; 25:4; 30:16; 35:12; Ezr 3:2; 7:6; Neh 1:7; 8:1; 13:1; Mal 4:4) as well as the NT (Mt 8:4; Mk 12:26; Lk 16:31; 25:27,44; Jn 1:17; Ac 3:22). In John 5:46-47 Jesus responded to His own Jewish critics who questioned His practices by saying: "If you believed Moses, you would believe Me, because he wrote about Me. But if you don't believe his writings, how will you believe My words?" Could it be any clearer that Jesus and the Jews of His day had no doubts about who wrote the Pentateuch? Similarly, in Romans 10:5 Paul claims that the expression, "The one who does these things will live by them," was a statement written by Moses (cp. Lv 18:5). Jesus and the NT writers repeatedly refer to the OT as "Moses and the prophets" (Lk 16:29,31; 24:27) or the Law of Moses and the Prophets (cp. Lk 24:44; Ac 28:23).

THE SACRIFICIAL SYSTEM

Exodus closes with the glory of the Lord filling the tabernacle that His people built. Proper response to God's presence is worship. Through Leviticus God instructs His people in how He is to be worshiped. Leviticus continues a major theme of Exodus—that God is holy and His people are to be holy. This manual of worship is highly detailed but makes clear that details are important to God. Leviticus gives instructions on the consecration of priests and clearly demonstrates the consequences of not worshiping God as He instructs. Although Israel has been set apart as God's people, they are still a sinful people. Leviticus provides numerous pictures of how sinful human beings can commune with a holy God. Sacrifice is a pivotal concept in Israel's worship.

The practice of slaying an animal for a sacrifice was not unique to the Israelite tradition. The slaughtering of an animal as a "religious" expression was a common practice in the ancient world, particularly in the ancient Near East. However, the purposes for offering sacrifices in Israel could not have been more different from the motivations for sacrifice among Israel's neighbors. The rationale for sacrifices in the ancient world was confined to the maintenance and sustenance of the gods, as the gods were believed to have the same appetites and desires as humans. The motivation to present food to a god was to gain that god's favor. Pagan worship was self-serving at its core, as the person presenting the offering was using the gift for his own advantage. The offering of sacrifice from the pagan conception was actually no different than magic—a mechanism employed to effect a supernatural intervention. It is thus not surprising that in Mesopotamia, for example, the magician was as important as the priest.

The purpose of the Israelite sacrificial system was twofold—to offer a gift to God and to effect atonement. The word "atonement" addresses the need for reconciliation in the disturbed relationship between God and humans brought about by sin. The need for atonement is necessitated by the universality of sin, the seriousness of sin, and humanity's inability to remove or deal with sin. The word "atonement" is closely related to and frequently occurs in context with the prominent theological terms "forgiveness" and "reconciliation." It specifically addresses the need for removal of sin (expiation) in order to effect reconciliation with God.

Sacrificial offerings preceded the era of the Mosaic law. God had prescribed offerings from the time of Abel (Gn 4). After the flood, Noah offered burnt offerings (Gn 8:20), as did Abraham (Gn 22:9). In harmony with the OT prophets (cp. Hs 6:6; Am 5:21-24; also 1 Sm 15:22), Jesus focused on the motivation underlying the sacrificial act and taught that the offering was only acceptable to God when the worshiper's devotion was genuinely heartfelt (Mt 5:23-24; 9:13; 12:7; Mk 12:33). The OT sacrifices to God were types of the ultimate, climactic sacrifice made by Jesus Christ, the Son of God. His sacrifice can never be repeated (Rm 6:10; Heb 7:27; 9:12; 10:10), and now the most desirable sacrifice that anyone, rich or poor, can bring to God is a consecrated life (cp. Rm 12:1; 15:15-16; 2 Co 2:14-17; Php 2:17; 4:18; 2 Tm 4:6; Heb 13:15; 1 Pt 1:15-16; Rv 6:9).

Adherence to the OT sacrificial system made the nation of Israel a holy nation and distinct from other nations. Perhaps no other category of laws would contribute more to Israel's distinctiveness than the dietary laws (chap. 11). As God classified the world at creation, so God's holy people were expected to classify their world. The driving force behind this novel consideration was surely the notion that Israel had been called to be a holy people. Observation of these laws goes beyond the more limited notion of personal purity in that it distinguishes not only clean people from those who are not, but also Israelites from other nations. The main reason for the purity instructions was to keep Israel separate from the neighboring nations (Lv 18:3; 20:24,26). The dietary laws prevented Israelites from participating in pagan worship to foreign gods, as well as made the possibility of intermarriage with a nonbeliever less likely (cp. 11:44-45; Dt 14:2,21).

Leviticus Study Notes

1:1 The book of Leviticus, as part of the Pentateuch, has no general introduction. Leviticus 1:1 indicates that the tabernacle was fully operative, and this links Leviticus with the sequence of events described at the conclusion of the book of Exodus. The concept of a tabernacle or portable shrine existed in Egypt as early as the Amarna age (fifteenth and fourteenth centuries B.C.). The Egyptians normally took these tents on military campaigns and placed them at the center of their encampments.

1:2 Hebrew *qorban*, "offering," is a generic term for anything presented to God at the sanctuary. Archaeological excavations at various sites in Israel have uncovered objects inscribed with the term *qorban*. The term is transliterated also in the NT as *Corban* (Mk 7:11). The "herd" (Hb *baqar*) was the most valuable category of sacrificial animals; it is always listed first (e.g., in Nm 7:15-88; 28:11–29:38). The following laws deal with private offerings. The public national sacrifices offered each day are listed in Nm 28–29.

1:3 The characteristic feature of the burnt offering was that the whole animal (apart from its skin, 7:8, or crop, 1:16) was burned on the altar. The Hebrew term for burnt offering, *'olah*, is related to the root *'lh* which means, "to go up." This action may intend to refer to the smoke of the offering that ascends to God (cp. Jdg 13:20).

An "unblemished" animal would be an animal free from blindness, injury, maimed condition, irregular members, warts or festering sores, and damaged testicles (Lv 22:22-24). The Greek translation renders the Hebrew for "unblemished" as *amomos.* This adjective is applied to Jesus in the NT (Heb 9:14; 1 Pt 1:19).

1:4 Moses laid his hands on Joshua when appointing him leader of the Israelite people (Nm 27:18-23; Dt 34:9). In contexts that deal with sacrifices, the laying on of hands was a symbolic act in which an animal was to stand in the offender's place as a substitute. In Nm 8:10,12; 27:18,23 and Dt 34:9 it appears that the purpose of the laying on of hands was to transfer the spiritual qualities of the performer to a person or an animal. One may regard the sacrificial animal either as dying in the worshiper's place or as receiving the death penalty because of the sin transferred to it by the laying on of hands.

1:5 The Israelites understood the close connection between blood and life. The flowing away of one's blood is equivalent to the departure of life and the cessation of existence. The blood is the most holy element of the sacrifice and, as the means of atonement (cp. 17:11), could be handled only by the priest.

1:6 The exception to this sectioning of sacrificial animals was the Passover lamb, which was roasted whole (Ex 12:9).

1:9 The "pleasing aroma" of the burnt offering conveys the idea that God accepted the sacrifice.

1:14-17 The five kinds of animals specified for the burnt offering—bull, sheep, goat, turtledove, and pigeon—are exactly the five animals Abraham offered to God in Gn 15:9. As in that passage the birds were not split because they were much smaller animals.

1:15 According to rabbinic tradition, the priest applied his fingernail close to the nape of the neck to cut through the windpipe and gullet.

1:17 The burnt offering foreshadows the sacrifice of Christ on the cross (Heb 13:15-16; cp. Php 4:18; 1 Pt 2:5). Paul had the burnt offering in mind in Rm 12:1-2—the believer is to present himself entirely just as the burnt offering was entirely consumed on the altar.

2:1 The grain offering was appropriate for various occasions and often served as a less costly alternative to animal sacrifices. The grain offering was made of semolina, the choice part of wheat that was taken from the inner kernels. In non-sacrificial contexts the term for grain offering (*minchah*) designated a "tribute" or "gift" (cp. 2 Sm 8:2-6; 1 Kg 8:64; 2 Kg 8:8-9; 17:3-4; see also Gn 32:14; 43:11; 1 Kg 10:25; 2 Kg 17:4). Thus, this offering represented the duty of the worshiper to present gifts to God. In Gn 4:3-5 the different sacrifices of Cain and Abel, one consisting of grain offering and the other an animal sacrifice, are both called grain offerings (*minchah*). The grain offering normally accompanied every burnt offering, especially those in the prescribed sacred calendar (Nm 28–29). The Septuagint translation of grain offering (*thusia*) is the common word for sacrifice in the NT.

2:4 The oven was a cylindrical vessel with a large opening at the top, and frequently, a small hole at the base for air. Because of its tendency to ferment, leaven could never be placed on the altar. Fermentation would alter the nature of the grain. In addition, leaven was used in the offerings of various pagan religions.

2:9 In a few cases the grain offering sacrifice was completely consumed by the altar fire, but in most cases the priests were to eat the larger portion of the offering.

2:11 "Yeast in the dough" was a common rabbinic metaphor for man's evil inclinations (e.g., *b. Ber* 17a; see Mk 8:15; Lk 12:1; 1 Co 5:8) and was a symbol of fermentation, deterioration, and death. Bee honey was regularly offered to nearly all of the Greek gods, and was used in offerings of the Hittites and Mesopotamians. Therefore it was prohibited in Israelite worship.

2:13 The application of salt would remove whatever blood remained in the sacrificial meat after slaughter. Large quantities of salt were delivered to the postexilic temple of Jerusalem for use in the sacrificial ritual (Ezr 6:9; 7:22). Salt was the primary preservative in the ancient world. In the OT salt is associated with two covenants (Nm 18:19; 2 Chr 13:5).

3:1 The fellowship offering was an optional sacrifice that a man could bring when he so desired. It accompanied a confession offering as a freewill offering or in fulfillment of a vow (7:12-14). It afforded the worshipers the experience of joining together with the priests in a sacred meal. As a communal meal, therefore, it anticipated the Last Supper of Jesus with His disciples. It was also part of the public celebration of the Festival of Booths, or Pentecost. Whereas all other animal sacrifices were specified as to their sex, the fellowship offering could be either male of female.

3:3 The fatty portions were regarded as the choice parts of the animal.

3:4 The liver (Hb *kaved*) is literally the heavy (Hb *kvd*) organ; it weighs about three and a half pounds.

4:2 The sin offerings were efficacious only when offenses were inadvertent or unwitting; they were not applicable to defiant acts or premeditated crimes. When a voluntary sin is confessed, it falls into the category of involuntary sin for which there is sacrificial expiation. The deliberate sinner is not excluded from possible atonement if he repents, but the unrepentant sinner will receive no benefit from a sacrifice (Nm 5:6-8). No sacrifice could atone for sins of absolute defiance (Nm 15:30-31). Offenses requiring the death penalty fall into the category of sins for which sacrifices will not provide expiation. In general, these offenses can be classified as violations of the Ten Commandments. Paul identified the Messiah with the sin offering (Rm 8:3; 2 Co 5:21).

4:7 The horns of the altar are projections at each of its four corners and are part of the altar (Ex 27:2; 30:2). Altars with horns have been uncovered in Megiddo and Beer-sheba.

4:12 The portions of the priest's sin offering that could not be burned on the altar had to be burned at a special place "outside the camp." Such a designated dump for the sacrificial ashes existed outside Solomon's temple (Jr 31:39-40). In Heb 13:11-12, the death of Christ "outside the gate" is compared to the burning of the sin offering "outside the camp."

4:13 The Hebrew term *'edah* ("community") was used in Aramaic papyri from Elephantine, in Upper Egypt (present-day Aswan). A Jewish community lived there through most of the fifth century B.C.

5:5 Indeed, there are only four passages where confession (Hb *hitwaddah*) is required, and each instance deals with deliberate sins (5:1-4; 16:21; 26:40; Nm 5:6-7). Through confession, deliberate sins are converted into inadvertent sins, thereby qualifying them for sacrificial expiation (see note on 4:2). Confession of sin is basic to the Yom Kippur ritual. Leviticus 16:21 explains the procedure to be followed.

5:10 The sin offering preceded the burnt offering because one was obliged to be in good standing before God before he could worship Him. Coming immediately after the sin offering, which atoned for sin, the burnt offering symbolized the restoration of the offender and represented his first act of worship after forgiveness.

5:15-16 The term "offends" (Hb *ma'al*) refers to a betrayal of trust, whether in regard to marital infidelity, deception, or to the violation of the covenant between God and Israel by the worship of foreign gods. In legal texts, the crime of *ma'al* involves actual loss of property to other persons. The story about Achan, preserved in Jos 7, is classified as *ma'al* (see 2 Ch 26:16-18; 28:19-25; 29:19; 36:14; Neh 1:8; Ezk 17:19-20; Dn 9:7).

The "restitution offering" was a specialized kind of sin offering (cp. v. 7) required in cases when someone had been denied his rightful due. The value of the amount of which he had been defrauded had to be restored to him, plus a fine of 20 percent (5:16; 6:5). The "restitution offering" was commanded whenever another party had suffered some deprivation (14:12-18).

6:4-5 Sin is treated as a debt and places the offender under debt (see Mt 18:21-35; Lk 7:41-42). In Is 53, the Servant of the Lord offered Himself as a restitution offering. That passage looks ahead to the death of Christ, Who made full and perfect compensation for the sins of the world.

6:10-11 The priestly vestments were to be worn only in the confines of the sanctuary (Ex 28:43). In some ancient Near Eastern religions the priest performed certain rituals in the nude, but in Israel this was considered an affront to the Lord (see note on Ex 20:26).

6:12 The sacrifices offered up at the inauguration of the priesthood were consumed miraculously by a divine fire (9:24). This fire was not to be extinguished to ensure that God might accept all subsequent sacrifices.

6:22-23 Every grain offering brought by a priest on his own behalf, whether for expiation or as a voluntary offering, was to be burned entirely on the altar. Priests could benefit only for services undertaken on behalf of other Israelites.

7:31 The sons of Eli, the priest of Shiloh, failed to observe this law (1 Sm 2:15-17).

7:34 The presentation offering (*tenuphah*) and the contribution offering (*terumah*) were usually distinguished as two movements performed with an offering, the *tenuphah* being a horizontal motion "extending and bringing back," and the *terumah* being a vertical motion "raising and lowering." Recent research, based on an Egyptian relief from Karnak, indicates that the so-called "wave offering" (*tenuphah*) should now be understood as an elevation offering, a ritual of elevating and lifting the offering in dedication to God. The "contribution" offering (*terumah*) is to be understood as a gift.

8:1 Nearly every verse in chapter 8 is an adaptation of commands given in Ex 29. The family of Aaron needed to maintain a level of purity and ceremonial cleanness beyond that of their fellow worshipers, although Israel as a whole was to be "My kingdom of priests and My holy nation" (Ex 19:6; cp. 1 Pt 2:9).

8:7 In Ex 3:5 and Jos 5:15, Moses and Joshua removed their sandals when standing on sacred ground. Islamic practice still requires removal of one's shoes upon entering a mosque or shrine. Aaron's tunic and sash were woven of fine linen and embroidered with blue, purple, and scarlet woolen threads (Ex 28:39). These components correspond to the fabric of the tabernacle's lower curtains (Ex 26:36: 27:16).

8:8 The Urim and Thummim are mentioned in Scripture in only six other places (Ex 28:30; Nm 27:21; Dt 33:8; 1 Sm 28:6; Ezr 2:63; Neh 7:65). They may have been flat stones, similar to the *puru* used in Mesopotamia, and attested in Hebrew as *purim* ("lots") in Esther (Est 9:24-26). Archaeological excavations have recovered such objects from non-Israelite sanctuary sites. The Urim and Thummim may have functioned like dice in determining God's will. Rabbinic tradition dates the cessation of their use to the time of David and Solomon.

8:10 Scripture often connects the act of anointing with the receiving of God's Spirit (1 Sm 10:1-10; 16:13; Is 61:1).

8:24 These actions are analogous to what occurred at the enactment of the Sinaitic covenant (Ex 24:6-8).

9:2 The sin offering provides the foundation for all the other offerings, in that it offers both propitiation and expiation from all sin by the shedding of the blood of a substitute.

9:24 God appeared as fire in passages such as Ex 24:17 and Dt 4:12; 9:3. On four other occasions God sent fire to consume a burnt offering: (Jdg 13:15-20; 1 Kg 18:22-39; 1 Ch 21:26; 2 Ch 7:1-3).

10:1 Nadab and Abihu apparently took their fire from somewhere outside the altar area and placed it in their censers.

11:1-23 The main purpose of dietary laws was to separate Israel from the other nations. These laws had practical benefits. See the article "How Can Modern Medicine Relate to the Old Testament?" p. 233. In all four sources where the prohibited foods are enumerated (vv. 44-45; 20:25-26; Dt 14:21) the reason for such restrictions is the holiness of the Lord and His people. The handful of species fit for God's altar table was definitive for cleanness throughout the rest of the animal world. Interpreting this theologically, one might say that since God had limited His "diet" to these animals, His people must do so in imitation of their creator (Lv 11:44-45). Applying this standard, only those animals that specifically resembled the sacrificial model were allowed. These have in common cloven hoofs and rumination (chewing the cud). However, Israel alone is required to observe such special ceremonial cleanness, because they are the holy people; Dt 14:21 explicitly allows Israelites to sell carcasses to aliens and foreigners.

Looking at the larger arrangement of the chapter, note that it contains regulations concerning four major groups of animals: land animals, birds or flying creatures, water animals, and "small creeping things." This is the same general classification of animal life found in the Gn account of creation. In the text of the Torah, a generic distinction between pure and impure animals first occurs in the narrative of the flood (Gn 7:2). There is no evidence of a broad nutritional or health-related basis for the dietary classifications of the Torah. The greatest obstacle to the health being the primary reason for these laws is that the NT removes distinctions between clean and unclean foods; Jesus directed his hearers to a more fundamental distinction (Mk 7:14-23). Romans and Egyptians, also, did not eat fish without scales.

11:13-17 Carrion-eating birds of prey would be defiled by the dead carcasses of their victims as well as by the blood still present in the flesh.

11:47 The separation of the animal kingdom into the pure and the impure illustrates Israel's separation from the nations. The latter had defiled themselves by their idolatry and immorality. Israel must refrain from partaking in these practices to live a holy life founded on the way and nature of God. In the NT these laws were set aside as barriers between Jew and non-Jew.

12:1-5 Some have suggested that the longer waiting period of uncleanness upon the birth of a daughter reflects an Israelite view of the inferiority of women. Alternatively, the longer period of impurity after the birth of a daughter may reflect apprehension and

anticipation about the infant daughter's ability to eventually become a mother in her own right. Ancient Near Eastern polytheism, related to the cycles of nature, placed great emphasis on fertility; the Israelite regulations governing a new mother may represent a reaction to this emphasis. It was the discharge of blood following birth that rendered a new mother unclean for one or two weeks, similar to the time of uncleanness for a woman during her menstrual period.

12:3 Other ancient cultures practiced circumcision (Jr 9:25). With the transfer of circumcision to infancy, it became a sign of the covenant, a rite of initiation into the religious bond between Israel and its God (Gn 17:1-27).

12:4-5 A longer period of defilement should not be construed as an indication of inferior social worth. For example, a human corpse defiles more than a dead pig. The sacrifices a mother was to offer were the same for either a girl or a boy, indicating that both genders were considered equal before God.

12:8 Mary the mother of Jesus followed this regulation after His birth. She offered up two birds, the offering of the poor, for her purification (Lk 2:22-24).

13:1-46 Typically, during the OT period, disease was regarded as a punishment from God for some wrongdoing. In the case of "skin disease" (*tsara'at*) specifically, there was a tradition that it represented a punishment from God for acts of malice, illustrated for example by what happened to Miriam when she criticized Moses (Nm 12:1-10). The term does not refer to a single type of skin disease, but is a broad descriptive term covering all kinds of disfiguring diseases of the skin or scalp. Older English versions translated it as "leprosy."

13:45 Tearing the clothes, messing the hair, and covering the moustache are signs of mourning for the dead (Ezk 24:17,22).

13:46 "Outside the camp" was the farthest place from God to which the sinner and the impure were banished (10:4-5; Nm 5:1-4; 12:14-15; 31:19-24). It was also the place where wrongdoers were executed (Nm 15:35-36). To live outside the camp was to be cut off from the blessings of the covenant. It is understandable that a person diagnosed as unclean would go into mourning (Lv 13:45).

13:48 The phrase "warp or woof" occurs only in this chapter in the Bible (vv. 48,49,51,53,56,57,58) and refers to the lengthwise and cross threads in a woven garment.

14:11 The phrase "the priest who performs the cleansing" probably indicates a specialization of priestly functions. Certain priests were specifically trained for such purifications and were routinely assigned to administer them (cp. Mk 1:44). Priests in Egypt and Mesopotamia followed a similar practice.

14:12-18 The restitution offering was offered to compensate God for loss. The person with "skin disease" fell into this category because the Lord was deprived of his sacrifices, tithes, and firstfruits as long as uncleanness kept the infected person outside the worshiping community.

14:33-53 The procedures for purifying the house that has "mildew contamination" are identical to those prescribed in verses 1-32 for purifying a diseased person.

14:57 In Scripture, disease is one of the images of sin (Ps 147:3; Is 1:5-6; Jr 8:2; 30:12; Mk 2:17). The OT records several instances of people who developed serious skin disease following sacrilegious behavior (e.g., Nm 12:9-10; 2 Kg 5:27; 2 Ch 26:17-21). The Levitical law provided no means of curing such conditions. The sufferer had to wait in hope of a cure from God, without human aid. Only then could he present himself to the priest. The banishment of the diseased person from human society and God's sanctuary was analogous to the fall when Adam and Eve were expelled from Eden (Gn 3).

15:1-33 All the impurities dealt with in this chapter threatened the purity of the sanctuary (v. 31). They are discharges resulting from illness or infection, in addition to menstruation and seminal emissions. While these regulations may have involved personal hygiene, their main concern is the holiness of the worshiper.

15:18 The rites of other ancient Near Eastern religions celebrated the fertility of the gods, even to the point of dramatizing it through human sexual intercourse. Israel's faith, in contrast, prohibited sexual intercourse within sacred precincts. The uncleanness resulting from normal sexual relations is of the mildest type. Emission of semen, in intercourse (v. 18) or at other times (vv. 16-17), causes pollution, but no sacrifice was required to purify a person from it. The man (and his wife when she was involved) had simply to wash and wait until evening (vv. 16,18). Though the couple might be ritually unclean, it was not a question of their having sinned. (See the article, "Is the Bible Sexually Oppressive?" p. 987.)

15:19 A woman's time of uncleanness was longer, since her menstrual discharge would last longer than an emission of semen. Egyptians, Persians, and Arabs also subscribed to the view that menstruation entailed ritual uncleanness.

15:32-33 Good sexual hygiene may increase the fertility of both males and females. The primary purpose of these laws, however, was to make Israel holy and to prevent intermarriage with groups who were not worshipers of Yahweh. In Heb 13:4 the laws of ritual purity are cited metaphorically and applied to personal integrity within marriage. In the NT, Mk 5:25-34 reveals Jesus' general attitude concerning the uncleanness regulations; his focus was on faith for healing the condition, rather than upon the ritual pollution of the afflicted person. Jesus pointed beyond the letter of the OT regulations to the moral principles that informed them, within God's greater purpose of revealing His kingdom.

16:2 The mercy seat, 44 by 26 inches, was the cover on the top of the ark of the covenant and was connected with the cherubim.

16:8 The meaning of Azazel has been explained three ways: (1) It is a proper name for the goat itself, meaning "the goat that departs," i.e., its traditional meaning of "scapegoat." (2) It was the particular desolate and rugged area into which the goat was released. (3) It refers to the leader of the evil spirits of the wilderness, possibly to be identified with "demons" (Dt 32:17; Ps 106:37) and "satyrs" (2 Ch 11:15). The NT does not explicitly state that the scapegoat was a type of Christ. Early in church history, however, as attested in the *Epistle of Barnabas*, written c. A.D. 200, Christians saw in the scapegoat a type of Christ. As the scapegoat was led out to die in the wilderness bearing the sins of the people, so Christ was crucified outside Jerusalem for the sins of His people.

16:21 The imposition of hands on the head of an animal is clearly explained as the symbolical transference of the people's sins to the animal victims.

16:22 A tradition in Jewish literature (*Mishnah.Yoma* 6:6) attests to the fact that the goat was led to a steep cliff and pushed over backward to kill it.

16:29 In biblical literature the idiom "practice self-denial" connotes fasting (Ps 35:13; Is 58:3,10). Subsequent Jewish literature elaborated on the practice. *Mishnah Yoma* 8:1 interprets self-denial as involving five abstentions: from food and drink, bathing, use of oil on the body, wearing leather shoes, and sexual intercourse. In Judaism the Day of Atonement continues to be the most important and solemn day of the year. Since, with no temple, it is not possible to offer sacrifice, Jews observe it by fasting, abstinence, and prayers of penance as they seek God for forgiveness. Most NT references to the Day of Atonement focus on the access now available into the most holy place. When Christ died, the curtain in the temple was torn in two (Mt 27:51). Christ as our High Priest "entered the holy of holies once for all . . . by His own blood" (Heb 9:12).

17:1 Here begins a section of Leviticus that many scholars refer to as the Holiness Code, continuing through chapter 26. It is especially concerned with the holiness of the Lord's people, as a reflection of His holiness.

17:4 This ordinance was to prevent sacrifices to the goat-demons who inhabited the wilderness. To offer sacrifices to demons was a flagrant breach of the first commandment to "not have other gods besides Me" (Ex 20:3; Dt 5:7). This law could be effective only when everyone lived near the sanctuary in the wilderness period.

17:11 Blood is considered efficacious because it represents life. Creatures cannot live without it, and killing is expressed as shedding blood (Gn 9:4). The blood of the sacrificial victim offered on the altar is its "life" and can stand in place of human life. Blood essentially signifies the life given up in death.

18:1–20:27 The sexual aberrations listed in these chapters refer to irregularities known in pagan religions.

18:3 Homosexuality and bestiality were apparently common in Canaanite culture. Homosexuality (v. 22) is mentioned with reference to the Canaanites (Gn 19:5-11; Jdg 19) and also attested in Mesopotamia. Bestiality (v. 23) is also known from Egyptian, Canaanite, and Hittite sources. In the Egyptian royal family brothers married sisters. In the laws of Hammurabi and in the Hittite law codes some of the incestuous relationships listed in 18:6-18 are prohibited.

18:4 Since marriages within the extended clan were encouraged there was a tendency toward endogamy—that is, marrying within one's own group. Marriages of this kind were essential to ensure that ancestral lands would be retained within the clan. These incest laws are meant to prevent excessive inbreeding within families that were otherwise bound together as socioeconomic units.

18:8 This was the sin of Reuben (Gn 35:22; 49:4).

18:9 What was acceptable during the Patriarchal period (Gn 20:12) is now forbidden. This change in what is permitted proves the antiquity of the patriarchal traditions.

18:21 The Molech cult involved the sacrifice of children (see 20:2-5; Dt 12:31; 18:10; 2 Kg 23:10; Jr 32:35). Remnants of Molech sacrifices have been found in North Africa, and there is evidence to suggest that these rites originated in Phoenicia. The book of Jubilees (part of the OT apocryphal literature) connects intermarriage, specifically the marrying of one's children to pagans, with the sin of Molech.

18:22 Many scholars maintain that pagan priests regularly engaged in homosexual acts (see Dt 23:18; 1 Kg 14:24). While lesbianism is not explicitly forbidden in the OT, the Jewish rabbis agreed that the same laws applied to women (Rm 1:27).

18:23 Hittite laws assign the death penalty to lying with some animals, but lying with a horse or a mule carried no penalty. In Israel, all bestiality was a capital offense.

18:24-25 God was evicting the Canaanites from the land because of their evil practices (18:24; 20:24). If the Israelites followed the Canaanites' customs and practices (which they later did), the same thing would happen to them. The incident of Baal of Peor (Nm 25:1-3) illustrates the relationship between sexual immorality and idolatry.

19:1-37 In this chapter we find the most concentrated occurrence of the phrase, "I am the LORD your God" in the Bible. This passage quotes, or alludes to, all the Ten Commandments; sometimes they are expounded or developed in a new way.

19:9 "Gleanings" refers to that which falls to the ground during reaping. It was the practice in ancient Israel to cut the stalks of grain with one hand while catching what was reaped with the other. Whatever the reaper failed to catch in his other hand fell to the ground and was known as "gleanings" (see Ru 2:3,7).

19:11-18 Concern for the poor, the widow, and the orphan is widespread throughout the ancient Near East and in the OT (Ex 22:21-22; 23:9; Lv 19:33-34; Dt 15:7-11; 24:14,17; 27:19; Jr 7:6; 22:3; Zch 7:10). Israelite law is unique however, in mandating kind treatment for the alien or stranger. But the motivation for such benevolence is not derived from its social value; it is based on the need to reflect the Lord's holiness.

19:13 The term "neighbor" (Hb *rea'*) can also refer to a non-Israelite (cp. Gn 38:12,20 *friend*; Ex 11:2); that extended meaning is intended here.

19:18 According to the eminent Rabbi Akiba (c. A.D. 50–132), the expression "love your neighbor as yourself" is a central principle in the Torah.

19:19 Explanations of laws against mixtures include these: (1) Mixtures are a violation of the order God brought into the world by separating the species (Gn 1). (2) Mixtures are symbolic of mixtures of human beings; thus these laws prohibit intermarriage and assimilation. (3) Mixtures are to be avoided because they belong to the sacred sphere, namely the sanctuary, as do its officiants, the priests. The lower cover of the tabernacle and the curtain closing off the most holy place are a mixture of linen and wool (Ex 26:1,31). The high priest's ephod, breastpiece, and belt contain the same mixture (Ex 28:6,15; 39:29). Mixtures, then, characterize the holiness of the sacred sphere and those authorized to enter or serve it.

19:24-25 The Babylonians, also, regarded the fruit of the first four years as unfit for food.

19:26 The expression "with blood in it" (lit. "eating over blood") may signify a form of divination, involving the consultation of ancestral spirits. These practices existed in Greek and ancient Near Eastern societies.

19:27 Tearing out the hair of one's beard, as well as of the head, was a custom associated with mourning over the dead (cp. 21:5; Dt 14:1; Is 15:2; 22:12; Jr 16:6; Am 8:10).

19:28 Laceration was included in the rites of Baalistic fertility worship (cp. 1 Kg 18:28), and may have been a universal religious practice in the ancient Near East.

19:31 Spiritists were involved in necromancy, or purported communication with the dead (see 1 Sm 28:3-25; Is 29:4; cp. Lv 20:6; Dt 18:11; 2 Kg 21:6; 23:24; Is 8:19).

19:33 The "foreigner" (Hb. *ger*) in the Bible was most often a foreign merchant, craftsman, or mercenary soldier. This term never refers to the prior inhabitants of the land. Generous actions to foreigners were motivated by the memory of the Israelite sojourn in Egypt (Ex 23:9; Dt 5:14-15).

20:2 Crimes punishable by stoning in the OT include blasphemy (24:16; cp. 1 Kg 21:9-14), Sabbath violation (Nm 15:32-36), idolatry (Dt 13:10; 17:5), adultery with a betrothed virgin (Dt 22:24), and failure to restrain a dangerous ox (Ex 21:29). Stoning was also the penalty for incorrigible children (Dt 21:18-21) and a bride who was found not to be a virgin (Dt 22:21).

20:26 An exceptional feature of biblical law is the prominent focus on human values. In Israel, religious offenses and offenses against life tended to be punished more severely than in other ancient Near Eastern law, which regarded financial loss as more serious than loss of life. Punishment, in Israelite law, stands in marked contrast to the degrading brutality of many penalties under Assyrian law. Mutilation is demanded only once in the Pentateuch, in an extreme case (Dt 25:11-12), and there the penalty is mild compared with those in Assyrian laws. The OT demand for at least two witnesses (Dt 19:15) limited the application of penalties to flagrant violations.

21:14-15 In marrying a virgin, a priest would ensure that her children are his own. If a priest married a woman who was not a virgin, it would be possible that the first child (and therefore potential high priest) would not be of the Levitical line.

22:22-24 Many of the deformities that bar a priest from offering sacrifice (21:18-20) preclude animals from being offered as sacrifices.

23:3 The kinds of work not permitted on the Sabbath, according to the Pentateuch, included plowing and harvesting (Ex 34:21), preparing food by baking and boiling (Ex 16:23), making a fire (Ex 35:3) and gathering of wood (Nm 15:32-36). The Sabbath was to be a day of joy and praise (Ex 23:12; Dt 5:12-15; Is 58:13; Hs 2:11). It was a distinctive sign of the covenant (between Yahweh and Israel, Ex 31:13-17). As the first sacred assembly listed in the chapter, the Sabbath was the most celebrated assembly, observed every seven days. The recurrence of the Sabbath in a seven-day cycle seems to be a model for the rest of the other sacred assemblies. There are seven festivals in the year. During these festivals there are seven days of rest. Most of these festivals occur in the seventh month of the year. This elaborate system of festivals and sabbatical years underscored the importance of the Sabbath.

23:5 The orthodox Jewish view is that "twilight" means "between midday and sunset." In NT times the Passover sacrifice began around what would correspond to 3 p.m.

23:6 The Hebrew word for festival is *chag*. It is linguistically related to the Arabic expression *hajj*, a term that designates Muslim pilgrimages to Mecca. In Israel, all males were required to appear before the Lord at three feasts annually (Dt 16:16).

23:17-18 The giving of the law at Mount Sinai occurred on the occasion of the first Pentecost, or Festival of Booths (Ex 19:1). After the destruction of the second temple in A.D. 70, the Festival of Booths became a festival of the law. Several prophets use symbols from this feast when they allude to the coming reign of God (e.g., Is 52:7-13; Zch 14:16-19).

23:23-24 The seventh month (vv. 24,33) commemorated the end of the agricultural year. The festivals in this month had a more solemn character than those in the spring. Four extra Sabbaths are prescribed in the space of a month, including the most holy Day of Atonement (vv. 27-28).

23:37-44 The religious calendar was closely aligned with the agricultural year and its times of harvest. The Passover and Festival of Unleavened Bread came at the time of the barley harvest in the spring, and the Festival of Booths was celebrated during the wheat harvest in our June. The seventh month (our September–October) contained three festivals—the Festival of Trumpets, the Day of Atonement, and the Festival of Booths—and coincided with the ripening of grapes, figs and olives.

24:10-14 Blasphemy brings guilt on those who hear it as well as on the blasphemer. To rid themselves of this guilt the hearers had to lay their hands on the blasphemer's head.

24:13-23 On four other occasions Moses made a special inquiry of God about a legal decision (Nm 9:6-14; 15:32-36; 27:1-11). The death penalty was administered outside the area of settlement because of the impurity of a corpse (see Dt 17:5).

24:19-20 The principle known as *lex talionis*, or "law of such" (i.e. of corresponding retaliation) is found in other ancient law codes before the time of Moses. The laws of Eshnunna and the laws of Ur-Nammu, rediscovered through archaeology, predate the Code of Hammurabi (seventeenth century B.C.) by a few centuries. These codes, too, establish fines for personal injury.

The goal of the penal system in the Bible is compensation, or restitution. The phrase "eye for eye, tooth for tooth" was an illustration of the principle, not to be applied literally. The punishment must be proportionate to the offense (cp. Ex 21:23-25; Dt 19:21), not disproportionately severe. Only in the case of premeditated murder was such compensation forbidden (Nm 35:16-21). The principle of "life for life" must be literally enforced, because man bears the image of God (Gn 9:5-6). Jesus' statement, "Whatever you want others to do for you, do also the same for them" (Mt 7:12; Lk 6:31), is a reflection of the *lex talionis* in this broader sense (Dt 19:19).

25:4 Allowing the land to lie fallow every seventh year helped to reduce the amount of sodium in the soil due to irrigation. But it was also a way to recognize that the Lord is the ultimate owner of the land.

25:10 The Year of Jubilee, the fiftieth year, would follow the seventh sabbatical year. Thus, when the Jubilee was celebrated the land would remain uncultivated for two consecutive years.

25:10 This verse is inscribed on the Liberty Bell in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. This legislation has contributed to the Western ideal that every family has a right to own property. The Sabbath Year foreshadows the time when creation will be delivered from the bondage of corruption (Rm 8:21).

25:26-28 An owner of land who had sold his land under economic stress could redeem it at any time, either through his own resources or those of a relative. The purchaser could not refuse the right of redemption.

25:39-55 These laws are designed to make slavery as humane as possible. Slavery in the OT was somewhat akin to imprisonment in the modern world, and served a roughly similar purpose, enabling a man who could not pay a debt to work it off directly. In some respects it was less degrading and demoralizing than the modern penitentiary; for one thing the man was not cut off from outside society as he would be in prison. Harshness characterized slavery in Egypt (Ex 1:13-14).

Debt could never force a family to sell its land. Faced with financial hardship, however, an Israelite landowner could lease his land for the number of years until the next Jubilee. Land was passed from father to son; the right of redemption that went with such a patrimony permitted the original owner to reclaim full control of his family lands whenever he met the debt of obligation. That is, the lessee could not refuse to return the land to the lessor. The lessor was able to redeem the land in any one of three ways: (1) A relative could pay off the debt. (2) Whenever the head of the family accumulated enough money, he could redeem it himself. (3) At the Year of Jubilee a patrimony was automatically returned to its original owner free of debt. In the last instance Yahweh Himself was acting as the next of kin, liberating His kinsman's property.

It is evident from 2 Ch 36:21, where it is said that the land lay desolate during the captivity for 70 years to make up for its Sabbath Years, that the celebration of the sabbatical year had been neglected during the last centuries before the captivity. If the number is taken exactly, the passage points to an omission of the Sabbath Year reaching back about 500 years, i.e. to the days of Solomon (Jr 34:8-10; Ezk 7:12). There is some evidence that both Alexander the Great and Julius Caesar (109–44 B.C.) reduced the annual tribute Jews had to pay every seventh year.

26:14-39 A list of curses occurs in nearly all ancient Near Eastern treaties that have been preserved, as sanctions that guarantee the observance of the agreement. The classic collections of biblical curses in 26:14-33 and Dt 28:15-68 resemble the epilogue of the Code of Hammurabi. But Leviticus and Deuteronomy are unique in holding out the hope of survival for those who experience even the most severe punishment, exile from the homeland. The presence of these curses underscores the character of the biblical covenant as a "treaty" between Yahweh and His people.

26:21-22 The curse of devouring animals is found in other treaties, particularly the eighth century Aramaic Sefire treaty (cp. Dt 28:38,39,42; Jr 8:17). The region of Samaria, after it fell to the Assyrians, experienced something of a fulfillment of this warning (2 Kg 17:25-26; cp. Ezk 14:15). Conversely, Is 11:6-9; 35:9, and Hs 2:18 speak of the future age when animals will live in harmony with humans.

26:46 The belief that God disciplines his people in order to keep them from continuing in their sinful paths is also expressed in Dt 8:5 and Pr 3:11-12 (see Heb 12:4-11). While the ultimate curse of exile would cause Israel to forfeit her occupation of the land of her inheritance for a period of time (cp. 18:24-28), it would not threaten the existence of Israel, the seed of Abraham (Rm 11). The NT seems to regard the principle of blessing and cursing as applying to the church, individually and corporately. As in the OT, those who accept God's grace will enjoy its privileges in doing God's will but will suffer if they do not (e.g., Rm 2:6-10). Many of the horrifying judgments described in Rv 6 find their original setting in the covenant curses of Lv 26 and Dt 28.

27:1-8 These figures may represent the price of slaves of different age and gender in ancient Israel. The average earning of an Israelite worker in biblical times was about one shekel per month.

Numbers Articles

How Can Modern Medicine Relate to the Old Testament?

by John A. Bloom

Many laws in the Pentateuch (Genesis–Deuteronomy) relate to diet and hygiene for the Hebrew people. Theologians for centuries thought that these merely served a ceremonial function or formed a cultural barrier to separate Israel from the surrounding pagan cultures. However, with the rise of modern medicine and the germ theory of disease in the nineteenth century, it was recognized that obeying these laws also confers important health benefits. These commands are unique compared with the health practices of neighboring cultures in Old Testament times, suggesting that God inspired Moses in giving these laws. Moreover, they show that God's rules are not arbitrary and that He has our best interests at heart.

Laws instructing people to wash after touching the dead or sick (Lv 13–15; Nm 19), to properly dispose of excrement and blood (Lv 17:13; Dt 23:12-13), and to isolate (quarantine) diseased individuals and anything that they touch (Lv 13) are extremely effective at limiting the spread of disease. Modern medicine has also shown that circumcision brings a health benefit—the wives of circumcised men have a much lower risk of contracting cervical cancer because the lack of a foreskin reduces the male's ability to harbor and transmit the human papillomavirus. Interestingly, the study of blood clotting factor levels in newborns has also shown that circumcision on the eighth day—the age prescribed to Abraham (Gn 17:12)—is the safest time in a male's life to have this surgery.

As our understanding of germs and parasites improves, the Old Testament prohibitions against eating unclean animals, or even associating with them, receive increasing medical verification. For example, people commonly argue that we no longer need to treat pigs as unclean because we now know how to cook pork well. However, modern research on the flu virus shows that most new deadly strains of influenza arise under conditions where people are in close contact with pigs and birds. Pigs function as a bridge between the bird and human forms of influenza; thus new deadly flu outbreaks usually originate in China, Hong Kong, and other areas where people live in close proximity to pigs.

The medical benefits of many other commandments are well known, even if modern culture is not inclined to obey them. For example, avoiding adultery and fornication is the best way to protect oneself against sexually transmitted diseases (Ex 20:14; Pr 5); avoiding addictions will spare one from alcohol, drug, and tobacco-related diseases (Pr 20:1; 23:19-21,29-35); and prayer, meditation, and treating others fairly minimize the damaging effects of stress (Lv 19:13-18; Ps 23; 27:1-3; 91:3-7). Modern medicine shows that "living by the Book" brings many practical blessings, just as God promised (Ex 15:26), which makes it all the more reasonable to trust God regarding promised spiritual blessings.

Introduction to Numbers

AUTHOR

The book of Numbers is about faithfulness—portraying the faithfulness of God in dealing with a people who are often unfaithful. As a whole the book presents a challenge to the people of God to live holy and righteous lives according to the Word of God, and as a result enjoy the blessings and benefits of living in right relationship to Him.

The English title "Numbers" derives from the Septuagint name *Arithmoi,* based on the two censuses in chapters 1 and 26, as well as other references to the twelve tribes of Israel. The Hebrew title, *B^e^midbar*—"In the Wilderness," describes the geographical setting of much of the book. After deliverance from bondage and oppression in Egypt, Israel would experience God's faithfulness in the wilderness. There He provided for their needs and promised them a land of fullness and prosperity—"flowing with milk and honey" (Nm 14:8) The challenge for the people was to live faithful to God's revelation and to receive their inheritance of the land promised to Abraham and the patriarchs in the past, and to their descendants in the present and future.

Traditionally, Christian scholars have held that Moses was the author of the Pentateuch, except for the account of his death in Deuteronomy 34. In support of this view are several explicit comments which Moses personally wrote down the words of the covenant from God (Ex 24:4; Dt 31:9), the stages of the Israelite journey from Egypt to Moab (Nm 33:2), and the song of Israel's rebellion (Deuteronomy 31:19-22). In addition, hundreds of references are made to the Lord revealing Himself to Moses (from Ex 3:4 to Dt 34:4). The New Testament also ascribes the Pentateuch to Moses, usually in the context of Jesus' references to Pentateuch laws (Mt 8:4; 19:7-9; Mk 1:44; 7:10; Lk 5:14; 24:44; Jn 1:17,45). Several times references to the Scriptures are voiced in the phrase, "Moses and the prophets," in which Moses is equated with the pentateuchal Torah (Lk 16:31; 24:27,44; Ac 28:23).

Ascribing the Pentateuch to Moses would place the date of the book of Numbers
in the late fifteenth century or late thirteenth century B.C. Based on ancient archaeological and historical evidence, several parallels to this era exist internally in the book of Numbers. The census lists in chapters 1 and 26 show parallels with those found in texts from Egyptian, Mari, Ugarit, and Alalakh of the second millennium B.C., and the organization of the Israelite tribal camps in a rectangular fashion around the central shrine is similar to the encampment of the armies of Ramses II of the thirteenth century B.C. G. Wenham notes several other second millennium parallels among the people of the ancient Near East, including (1) the Late Bronze Age (1550–1200 B.C.) design of the lampstand (Nm 8:4); (2) tasseled garments (Nm 15:38); (3) the positioning of the Levites as guardians of the tabernacle (Nm 1:50-51); (4) the bronze serpent (Nm 21:9) which is similar to one found in the excavation of a Midianite shrine at Timna'; (5) and the holy day calendar (Nm 28–29) which finds parallels at both Ugarit and Emar from the fifteenth to the fourteenth centuries B.C.

Most evangelical scholars suggest that the book of Numbers originated in the age of Moses and Joshua, with varying degrees of minor expansion and editing through the early kingdom periods. The prophets of the eighth through the sixth centuries B.C. exhibit great familiarity with the words of the law, and in fact most of their oracles of judgment are founded upon knowledge of the Pentateuch.

THE NUMBER OF ISRAELITES IN THE MILITARY

ne of the most controversial issues in the interpretation of the book of Numbers is the large numbers of Israelites reflected in the military censuses of Numbers 1–2 and 26. When taken literally the

O numbers of the Israelite militia total 603,550 in the first census and 601,730 in the second census yielding a total population of four to five times the above figures, or 2 to 3 million or even more. Critical scholars challenged this interpretation based upon several external and internal issues. External to the text are the following: (1) the ability of the Sinai region to support that many people, (2) the need for at least a three to five square mile area to house such a group, (3) the lack of archaeological evidence for any sizeable population ever existing in any of the regions or sites listed in the Israelite itinerary, and (4) the lack of evidence of an immense burial and garbage disposal site anywhere in the region.

The first critique does not accept the supernatural way in which the texts of Exodus and Numbers describe God's provision of manna and meat for the people. The issue of space depends upon where one locates Mount Sinai. The traditional site of Jebel Musa in the southern Sinai peninsula may not have a broad enough single area, but other regions would have more ample space. The final two issues can be resolved through the understanding of the practices of nomadic peoples who leave relatively little trace of their material culture except in a culturally significant location, like a clan burial site.

The internal difficulties also present problems for the traditional literal approach. First, the 603,550 total male militia over 20 years of age (Nm 1:46; 2:32) would yield a total male population of perhaps a million. Dividing by the 22,273 firstborn males (Nm 3:43), one would come up with 40–50 males per family, far more than is realistic. Second, in the period of the Judges, the armies of Deborah and Barak only numbered 40,000 (Jdg 5:8), far less than the 301,000 counted in the second census for those six tribes. The same general number of 40,000 are said to have crossed the Jordan toward Jericho (Jos 4:13), and only 30,000 were deployed against Ai and Bethel in the second campaign in Joshua (Jos 8:3).

Such problems have led many scholars to propose other options for interpreting the large numbers: (1) The census represents a later period in Israel's history, such as the Davidic kingdom period. This view should be rejected since it assumes the unreliability of the numbers in their current context. (2) The numbers are hyperbolic, multiplied for rhetorical purposes perhaps by a factor of ten to highlight the providence of God in blessing Israel with an abundance of children. This view would only be acceptable if we assume the original readers understood the figurative nature of the numbers. (3) The Hebrew term *'eleph* ("thousand") should be translated as "clan" or "military unit" (cp. Nm 1:16; 10:4; 1 Sm 10:19; 23:23; Mc 5:2). In this case, Numbers 1:20-43 would enumerate 598 clans comprising 5,550 men. However, the summation in Numbers 1:46 (cp. Ex 38:26; Nm 2:32) lists not 598 but six hundred *'eleph* and three *'elaphim* (and five hundred fifty). Also, in contexts of counting, the term seems to mean "thousand," especially in the census of Numbers 1–4 where the number of thousands is always followed by the number of hundreds (except for an even 22,000 in Nm 3:39).

Any proposed solution that reduces the large numbers runs into other difficulties. A small group of Israelites could scarcely have provided the huge quantities of precious materials (over 2,000 pounds of gold alone!) for the construction of the tabernacle (Ex 38:24-29). Archaeology informs us that Pharaoh Merneptah encountered Israel as a significant people about 1230 B.C. The number of soldiers needed to invade Canaan was surely more than a few thousand. Also, the assignment of a half shekel for each warrior in Exodus 38:26 seems to confirm the literal number of 603,550 (also the round number of 600,000 in Ex 12:37).

Furthermore, the internal difficulties can be explained. The 22,273 firstborn males are those who were born in approximately a year and a half between the exodus from Egypt and the time of the census. A population that included 603,550 males would have about 200,000 males from age 20 to 30, which might result in about 20,000 marriages per year. Allowing for the possibility of two gestation periods in some cases, that population could produce 22,273 firstborn males in 18 months. As for the smaller armies in the books of Joshua and Judges, first, Deborah and Barak's army of

40,000 (only 10,000 of which marched out) reflects Barak's inability to recruit and muster all available men. While Saul was physically and rhetorically imposing and recruited an immense army (1 Sm 9:2; 11:7-8), Barak was a wimp (Jdg 4:8). The fact that only 40,000 members of the Transjordan army crossed the Jordan may reflect their decision to hold back two thirds of their forces to protect their villages and homesteads, in spite of their promises to send them all (Nm 32:20-32). And the fact that Joshua only deployed 30,000 against Ai and Bethel simply reflects Joshua's decision to use only as much force as he deemed necessary to accomplish the objective. Some soldiers would have been protecting the main camp, while others may have been unavailable for reasons of health or ceremonial uncleanness.

In conclusion, rejecting the large numbers in the Pentateuch and book of Judges seems to create far more difficulties than accepting them. Nevertheless, the issues involved are complex, and no scholarly consensus has been reached. Whatever the interpretation of the numbers, the theological importance is clear: in spite of the faithlessness of the people of Israel, God was faithful to bless and increase them even during the difficult times encountered in their wilderness journey.

Numbers Study Notes

1:1 A key starting point for understanding the book of Nm is found in the first phrase of Nm in the Hebrew Bible—"in the Wilderness." God indeed revealed Himself to a prophet named Moses in the historical context of the Sinai wilderness. Some commentators have suggested that the book was a result of the work of priestly writers and editors nearly a thousand years after Moses, who composed a mythical historical background for the so-called "law of Moses," at the instigation of the Persian government during its political and religious reforms. For a discussion of the authorship of Numbers and the other four books of the Pentateuch, see the article, "Who Wrote the Pentateuch and When Was It Written?" (p. 158).

1:2 The instruction for Moses, Aaron, and the tribal leaders to carry out a census of the available militia took place 13 months after the exodus from Egypt, placing the context in about 1440 or 1275 B.C., depending upon the dating of the exodus event.

1:5-16 The names listed for the tribal leaders of Israel suggest the antiquity of the text, in that they reflect forms used in the second millennium B.C. rather than the second half of the first millennium B.C. This argues against the later dating of the material. The names are unknown in Israelite texts of the time of Ezra and Nehemiah, the period during which critical scholars claim the book was composed. Each tribe's clan leaders were responsible for carrying out the census.

1:17-45 The format of the Israelite military census parallels that of Assyrian military censuses of the eighth century B.C. Armies were assembled and counted before going into a major campaign. In the idiom of the period this was a literal head count; the Hebrew expression is "lifting up the skulls."

1:19 Note the summary statements here and in 1:54, that Moses and Aaron led the Israelites in doing just as the Lord commanded them. This statement appears several times in Ex and Lv to express the faithfulness of the people in following the instructions from God. The success of their future endeavors depended on their obedience.

1:20 The summary formula for each of the tribal military censuses is essentially the same, with occasional special notes. Each of the tribes was counted according to "their family records by their clans and their ancestral houses, counting one by one the names of every male 20 years old or more, everyone who could serve in the army." The descendants of Reuben appear first in the list, due to Rueben's being the firstborn of Jacob by Leah.

1:32 The tribe of Joseph is divided into two clans, each of which is counted as a tribe. The book of Genesis highlights the special consideration given to Joseph, the most faithful of Jacob's sons. The dual counting of Joseph's sons compensates for the exclusion of the Levites from the military census, preserving the number of 12 for the tribes in the full reckoning of the Israelite nation.

1:44-46 The total of 603,550 for the Israelite able-bodied militia would suggest a total population of 2 to 3 million people now preparing to leave Mount Sinai.

1:47-53 Because the Levites stood with Moses in the golden cow incident (Ex 32:26), they were ordained as the special representatives of the priests, as well as the guardians, transporters, and servants of the mobile sanctuary. Thus the Levites were non-combatants and were not to be counted as part of Israel's military.

1:51 The penalty for encroaching upon the sanctity of the tabernacle is death, as noted here for the first time in Nm. Limiting access to the holiest place was a serious matter, and violation of God's holiness carried grave consequences. The priests

themselves were subject to death for violation of the ritual laws; even Aaron's sons Nadab and Abihu were struck down when they offered an unholy sacrificial fire in the tabernacle (Lv 10:1-3). Hence the Levites were to continue in their original role as the defenders of the holiness of God.

1:53 The Levites acted as the "lightning rod" for the wrath of God, so that the Israelite community might not suffer as a result of any violation of the holy place.

1:54 As noted in verse 19, Moses, Aaron, and the Israelites completed the census process just as the Lord commanded them (see comments at 1:19).

2:1-31 The subject of chapter 2 is the symmetrical organization of the tribes around the tabernacle. The priests and the three Levite clans formed the first circle of encampment around the rectangular sanctuary, and then three Israelite tribes were positioned on each of the four sides. This arrangement served several purposes. The priests were positioned at the entrance to the tabernacle, where they would receive people bringing sacrifices and special offerings. The priests and Levites together made up the first ring of protection for the sacred place against potential violation or contamination. This arrangement was a pattern for assigning property to the Levites on the immediate perimeter of certain key cities throughout the promised land (35:1-8). The symmetrical array of tribes also presents a unified picture of the Israelite people in this holy setting of the Sinai wilderness, a key theme of chapters 1–10. Beyond the 12-tribe encampment was the area to which the unclean, such as those with various diseases and impurities, were relegated. While not totally excluded from the community, they were placed outside the boundaries of the ritually pure encampment. Note the following arrangement of the camps.

2:9,16,24,31 Summary totals from the census of the three tribes of the Judah camp are given with totals consistent with those provided in chapter 1. Similar summaries are given in verses 16,24,31 for each of the four sides of the Israelite camps, with an aggregate total equal to that of 1:46 and Ex 38:26. The order of each of the sets of three tribes was to be their marching order on the journey from Sinai to the promised land.

2:17 The tent of meeting was located at the center of the Israelite community. It would be carried in the midst of the camps in accordance with the arrangements outlined in 3:5–4:49.

3:1 Aaron is named before Moses, a rare reversal in order. Recitation of a genealogy in the religious assembly was common practice in the Ancient Near East, as a way to connect worshipers with the heritage of their faith. The list of Aaron's descendants takes special note of the loss of his eldest sons, Nadab and Abihu, who were succeeded by the younger sons Eleazar and Ithamar. Even the firstborn son could be supplanted if he were unfaithful. Eleazar, the older remaining son, became the chief priest at the death of Aaron (20:22-29), and his son Phinehas would rise up as a defender of the faith in the time of Israel's idolatry at Baal of Peor (25:7-13). This passage would serve as a reminder of the awesome responsibility of the priests and Le-vites.

3:5–4:40 Some scholars assert that most of the material in the Pentateuch that relates to the duties of priests and Levites comes from a period after the return of the exiles from Babylonia (538 B.C.). Yet the job descriptions of the Levites in chapters 3–4 apply primarily to the period of the mobile sanctuary, prior to the eras of both the first (c. 962 B.C.) and second (c. 515 B.C.–70 A.D.) Jerusalem temples. Another reason given for rejecting the historical setting is the complexity of the priestly structure, which some critics claim must have developed over many centuries. But other Near Eastern peoples of the third and second millennia B.C., such as those of Sumer, Old Assyria and Old Babylonia, had priestly systems even more diverse and complex in structure, and more detailed in their prescribed rituals.

Seven times, the number of wholeness and completion, the Lord gives instruction to the Levites in chapters 3–4 (3:5,11,14,40; 4:1,17,21). The repetition of the comment that the people obeyed the Lord's instructions (3:16,42,51; 4:37,41,45,49) underscores thefaithful response of the Israelites under Moses' leadership.

3:10 For a second time, the Lord issued a warning about violating the holiness of the sanctuary (1:53). It was the responsibility of the priests and Levites to protect the holy site from encroachment by unconsecrated people.

3:11-13 These verses offer a reminder of the substitutionary role of the Levites. They stood in place of the firstborn sons of the families of Israel, whom the Lord had set aside in the exodus as a group dedicated to Him (Ex 13:2,11-16).

3:17-20 The sequence of the Levite clans here in Nm is consistent with the Levites' genealogical pattern in Ex 6:16-19, further evidence of the Pentateuch's cohesiveness.

3:21-39 The census of the tribes of Israel was for military purposes in preparation for the conquest of the promised land, but the Levites, as non-combatants, were not to be numbered. Their census is taken here, in recognition of their substitution for the Israelite firstborn and to outline the respective responsibilities of the three clans. Together the 7,500 Gershonites, 8,600 Kohathites, and 6,200 Merarites total 22,300, but verse 39 summarizes the total as 22,000. This discrepancy can be resolved in one of two ways. First, the number 22,000 can be understood as a round number, similar to the 600,000 Israelites (vs. the more precise sum in chap. 1 of 603,550) in Ex 12:37. One ancient edition of the Greek OT, known as the Lucianic, gives the total number of Kohathites as 8,300 (300 less), for an even total of 22,000 as in Nm 3:39. Several of the Hebrew Masoretic manuscripts have the same total for the Kohathites.

3:40-51 The firstborn males totaled 22,273. Taken as a portion of the 603,550 total in the military census, this would require the average Israelite woman to have 27 male children, a number unheard of in Israelite history thus far (Jacob having the most at 12, by several wives; but see comment at Ex 12:37). However, if the number is not taken literally the need for the special redemption price of five shekels each for the extra 273 Israelite males is superfluous. Five shekels was the standard price for a young slave in Late Bronze Age Egypt and Mesopotamia (1500–1200 B.C.), and is therefore consistent with the time period for the exodus event. See notes on the census numbers in the Introduction.

4:1-49 In a typical ancient Israelite literary pattern, the information is laid out in cyclical fashion proceeding from the general to the specific. Chapter 3 describes the general duties of each of the three clans of Levites, and numbers all Levites from one month old and above. Chapter 4 delineates the duties more precisely, in a census covering men 30 to 50 years of age—those who would actually perform the various security, transportation, and maintenance services. These awesome responsibilities were reserved for mature Levites, bringing greater skill to the exalted tasks assigned to these sovereignly chosen servants. This material does not come from a later secondary Priestly source from the time of Ezra or later, as some commentators assert. It is an original pattern, common in the Hebrew Bible, for laying out didactic material by means of narrative.

5:1-4 This section of community purification laws deals with diseases that render a person unclean, or unfit to take part in the worship of the holy community of faith. In some ancient cultures a person with these kinds of diseases could be relegated for life to a lower social class, limiting his or her associations with the upper classes or access to governmental resources and protection. Ancient Israel allowed no such class, or caste, system. While persons with various "skin diseases" were restricted from access to the sanctuary through the camp, this was for the purpose of preventing the contamination of the holy place. The unclean were not driven away from the community; they were quarantined on the perimeter of the camp, presumably close to the area in which their families were encamped. Leviticus 13–14 details the manner of dealing with these diseases and the process of purification whereby such individuals may be restored to the camp of the holy.

5:5-10 The second section of camp purity regulations addresses interpersonal relationships, in accordance with the *'asham* (guilt offering) legislation of Lv 6:1-7. Damage to property, fraud, or false statements affect the well-being of the community of faith and must be dealt with forthrightly. Following the confession of the sinful individual, the value of whatever he had taken from another had to be restored to the owner, plus a 20 percent penalty. The restitution of value and the maintenance of human relationships were essential to the harmony and holiness of the community. The offender's relation to the Lord was also in view, signified in the guilt offering of a ram. If the judgment were enacted after the death of the wronged individual, and that person had no kinsman redeemer to receive it, the full amount of restitution was presented to the priests.

5:11-31 The third matter of community purity relates to the family and to potential marital fidelity, in the case of a wife suspected of unfaithfulness (*sotah*). If a woman were apprehended in the act of adultery, both she and her adulterous male partner were subject to the death penalty (Lv 20:10). The ritual outlined here put the matter of a suspected, but not apprehended, adulterer in the hands of God, the only reliable witness. These provisions ensured that a woman found to be innocent would be preserved

from stoning by a mob. Throughout the book of Nm special attention is given to matters related to women, including women's property rights (27:1-11; 36:1-12) and women's vows (31:1-16;see note on 6:1-2).

5:19-22 The focal point of the section about the woman suspected of adultery is the oath of imprecation (cursing), which is framed by material that is somewhat repetitious. Some interpreters suggest the repetition is the result of combining material from multiple sources, but this type of repetitive structure is typical of Hebrew literary style. The oath takes place at the entrance to the sanctuary before God and the priest, who prepared the potion made of holy water, tabernacle dust, and the words of the curse. The husband presents a grain offering on behalf of his wife.

5:23-28 In the solemn ceremony, the woman drinks the potion and the results are left to God. Either the water-dust mixture becomes a purification offering if she is innocent, or it brings condemnation for her guilt that would lead to miscarriage or barrenness.

5:29-31 The summary statement, introduced by the phrase "this is the law [statute] regarding" (cp. Lv 16:29; Nm 6:21; 19:14) is typical in Hebrew literary style and not the result of combination of sources by a later editor.

6:1-2 In leading up to the directions for the dedication and purification of priests, the Lord gives instructions for the special Nazirite vow of the laity. Both males and females could enter into a prescribed period of special service dedicated to the Lord. As a kingdom of priests (Ex 19:6), Israel was to be God's representatives to the nations—even if only Aaronic priests were permitted to conduct the rites of the sanctuary. The instructions do not specify the activities of the Nazirite, but the ritual restrictions highlight the aspect of purity and provide for rededication if one who has taken the vow should become unclean. In the ancient world, people performed vows to God (or the "gods") out of a situation of need or distress. Such vows had specific conditions and stipulations, and involved a special ritual at the beginning and end of the period of dedication. Samson was dedicated as a Nazirite for the purpose of delivering Israel from Philistine oppression (Jdg 13:3-5). The mothers of Samson and Samuel took Nazirite vows during their time of barrenness before the birth of their sons.

6:3-4 The Nazirite vow involved total restriction from the vineyard and any of its products, not simply fermented grape juice. Priests, too, were forbidden to consume wine during their time of ritual service, but the Nazirite vow was more restrictive. The cultivation of vineyards required a settled lifestyle that tended to lose the sense of total devotion to the Lord that characterized Israel's nomadic life in the wilderness. Note the example of the Rechabites in Jr 35.

6:5-6 Those under the Nazirite vow were forbidden to use the razor on their heads, and were permitted no contamination through contact with a dead body. The length of hair would be an outward symbol to others of the Nazirite dedication. To refrain from approaching the body of a dead relative would be a reminder to the Nazirite's family, and others, of his or her total dedication to the Lord.

6:9-12 Proximity to death, to which a Nazirite could inadvertently be exposed while sleeping in a tent with an elderly relative, would bring instant contamination and require a process of re-purification, as outlined here. The other restrictions—those of the vineyard and the razor—were under the full control of the individual. If these restrictions were deliberately violated, the vow was automatically ended.

6:13-20 The ceremony when the period of the Nazirite vow was over involved one from each of the types of sacrificial offerings: (1) a sin offering (*chatta'at*) of a year-old female lamb for purification, (2) a burnt offering (*'olah*) of a year-old male lamb for consecration, and (3) a peace (fellowship) offering (*sh^{e}lomim*) of a ram for celebration.

6:21 See the note on 6:1-2.

6:22-27 The priestly blessing stems from an ancient period and is not, as some have claimed, an insertion into the narrative of a liturgical text from a later time. Evidence for its antiquity surfaced in Jerusalem in excavations at Ketef Hinnom, a burial complex overlooking the Valley of Hinnom south of the walls of the ancient city. One of the burial sites from the late seventh century or early sixth century B.C. (before the Jewish exile from Jerusalem) yielded a phylactery, or small container worn on the forehead (Dt 11:18). Within the phylactery were found two cigarette-sized silver scrolls upon which had been etched a copy of this priestly blessing. Similar blessings of peace and of the favor of divine regard (countenance, or "face") have been found in excavations at Ugarit (modern Ras Shamra, in Syria) and other sites from the second millennium B.C.

7:1-11 The time frame, after the construction of the tabernacle, is almost a year after the exodus from Egypt—that is, on the first day of the first month in the second year (Ex 40:17; Nm 9:15). This indicates that the first part of Nm is a theological presentation, rather than a chronological sequencing of events. This literary device is called "anticipatory explanation," a common feature of Hebrew narrative. The dedication ceremony recorded here took place one month prior to the military census of chap. 1. Chapters 7–10 are concerned with celebration and consecration, as the nation prepares for the journey from Mount Sinai to the promised land. This section provides information about the means (covered oxcarts) by which the Gershonites and Merarites (Levites) transported their respective portions of the tabernacle structure, as outlined in 4:24-28,31-33.

7:12-89 On successive days a representative of one of the 12 tribes presented, in turn, the items required in the Israelite celebration, including covered oxcarts, sacrificial implements, and sacrificial elements for each of the three types of offering—whole burnt, sin, and fellowship/peace offerings. The tedious (to us) repetition of identical sets of gifts underscores the participation of each tribe in providing for the needs of the sanctuary, with its various celebrations and commemorations. This was important to note, as a statement of the tribes' unity in the covenant with Yahweh. The collective tribes contributed equally to the support of the priesthood, a pattern that is broken in the Korah rebellion of chapters 16–17.

A people in communion with God was ready to worship in harmony, and to experience His abiding presence. If the leaders brought their gifts beginning on the day after the tabernacle construction (second day of Abib/Nisan), this celebration would have been completed just a day before the prescribed time for the Passover lamb sacrifice on the fourteenth day of the month, as prescribed in 9:1-15. The order of the tribes represents the journey sequence presented in 2:1-34, and accords with the arrangement of the Israelite encampment.

7:84-88 The tribal presentations conclude with a summary of all the gifts, beginning and ending with the phrase "this was the dedication gift . . . for the altar." Such a repetitive pattern is typical of the literary style of the Pentateuch.

7:89 Some scholars consider this verse an unrelated appendage to the account of the tabernacle gifts, while others see it as a blending of material from two traditions (called "Elohist" and "Priestly" in some modern scholarship). However, the incident is integral to this narrative, as it fulfills the promise of Ex 25:22. The tent of meeting, where Moses had sought revelation from God, was formerly outside the camp. But with the tabernacle construction completed it lay within, where the ark of the covenant was now housed. Moses could not enter the tent immediately after its construction, due to the smoke from the cloud of the Lord that had descended at that moment (Ex 40:34-38). But now, after the dedication of the tabernacle implements and sacrifices, he could once more seek counsel from God. This prepares the reader also for the matters concerning the Levites in the next chapter.

8:1-4 The seven-tiered menorah, mentioned among the transported items in 3:31 and 4:9, provided lighting for the actions of the priests within the tabernacle. The light also was a symbol of God's presence and glory. Instructions for its construction were given in Ex 25:31-40; 37:17-24.

8:5-26 The second phase of details regarding the Levites focuses (vv. 12-19) upon the purification rituals for their dedication in substitution for the firstborn males of the Israelite tribes. The dedication was a threefold process involving ritual cleansing, ceremonial sacrifices, and presentation to the Aaronic priesthood at the entrance to the tabernacle. Critics sometimes view this material as deriving from the supposed Priestly source, thought to have been compiled to enhance the status of the Levites in response to developments during the reign of Josiah (639–609 B.C.). Yet the responsibilities outlined in Nm would have had little place in the post-exilic second temple community of Jerusalem. The details are applicable to the time of the mobile sanctuary, that is, during the wilderness period as indicated by the text.

8:5-7 The process to remove any potential contamination entailed three steps: (1) sprinkling the Levites with special purification waters, (2) shaving their entire bodies as the Nazirite would do if the vow were broken (6:9,18), and (3) washing their clothes, as the high priest did on the Day of Atonement (Lv 16:4).

8:8-12 Two bulls were sacrificed in the ceremony, after the Levites laid their hands upon the heads of the two animals as a symbol of substitutionary identification in the atonement process. The order reflected in verse 12 follows the delineation in Leviticus, the first being a sin offering for purification and the second a burnt offering for consecration.

8:13-14 Following the sacrifices, the Levites presented themselves to the Aaronic priests and to the congregation of Israelites as a presentation offering for sanctuary service.

8:15-19 The Levites functioned as assistants to the Aaronic priests, as transporters and maintenance persons for sanctuary structures and implements, and as guardians against any encroachment upon the holiness of the sanctuary. The passage reiterates the Levites' role in substitution for the firstborn of Israel (3:46-49; Ex 13:11-16). The events of the exodus provide the historical precedent for these instructions.

8:20-22 The summary statement highlights the essential acts of Levite dedication, with an emphasis on how the collective community of the prophet Moses, the high priest Aaron, and the congregation of the Israelites faithfully did "as the LORD had commanded."

8:23-26 The addendum to the dedication of the Levites cites retirement age as 50 and the minimum age of service as 25 years, whereas 4:2 suggests a minimum age of 30. Some scholars claim that these texts stem from different pentateuchal sources, but others suggest that the Levites may have served a five-year apprenticeship. Perhaps the age limit was raised from 25 to a more mature 30 as a result of the deaths of the immature and presumptuous Nadab and Abihu (Lv 10:1-3). During the latter part of David's reign two separate censuses were taken of those 30 and above and those 20 and above(1 Ch 23:2-5 and 24-27 respectively). Later, in the reign of Hezekiah, another Levitical census was taken for those at least 20 years of age (2 Ch 31:17). Hence censuses of varying ages and kinds were taken for different purposes. Even the suggested retirement age of 50 was not totally restrictive, since the Levites were permitted to perform light duties in the tabernacle.

9:1-5 These verses introduce the setting of new Passover legislation regarding the matter of ritual purity, an issue of concern in chaps. 1–10. With the tabernacle dedicated and the gifts presented during the first two weeks of the second year after the exodus from Egypt, the prescribed time for Passover drew very near. The Passover sheep and goats were to be slaughtered as the evening approached beginning the fourteenth of Abib (Nisan in the Babylonian calendar), and the ceremonial meal of the paschal lamb, unleavened bread, and bitter herbs was to be consumed after sundown. The people acted in faithful accord, following the instructions "just as the LORD had commanded Moses."

9:6-7 Those celebrating the Passover must do so in a state of ritual purity. But several Israelites had become unclean due to death in their household. If they chose not to celebrate Passover, they were subject to banishment from the community. They approached Moses for a judgment regarding their case.

9:8-13 As was his usual recourse, Moses consulted the Lord for the answer. Critics have asserted that this issue arose as a result of the circumstances described in2 Ch 30:2, when a second-month Passover was celebrated during the reign of Hezekiah. However, the situation then was totally different. In Nm 9 the issue is the purity of the worshipers, but in 2 Ch 30 the issue is the purity of the priests and the lack of pilgrims in Jerusalem. The legislation of Nm 9 probably served as the historical precedent for the second-month Passover in the late eighth century B.C., since Nm 9:10 also cites the case of a person being on a distant journey and thus unable to keep the Passover at the prescribed time.

9:14 Israelite law gave considerable attention to the status of resident aliens who desired to identify with the worship of Yahweh. One and the same law applied to the native Israelite and the alien resident; no social, religious, or legal distinction was allowed. Note the cases in Ex 12:49 and Nm 15:14-16, among others.

9:15 The chronological sequence returns to that of 7:1 and Ex 40:17, the day when the tabernacle construction was completed.

9:17-23 This section was originally a song that was sung during the wilderness journey, as the people followed the Lord in the cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night. The song's refrain occurs in verse 18, perhaps to be translated "At the word of the Lord they set out, the children of Israel, and at the word of the Lord they camped; all the days that it dwelt, the cloud upon the tabernacle, then they camped." This "Song of the Journey" sets the stage for the departure from Mount Sinai in 10:11-36. The song also reiterates the theme of the faithfulness of the Israelites, who were to follow the Lord's leading in the movement of the cloud through the wilderness. The same sequence of marching and camping recurs in chap. 33. The NT also depicts God's presence in the imagery of the cloud, as in the Transfiguration of Jesus (Mk 9:7; Lk. 9:34), and at His ascension into heaven (Ac 1:9).

10:1-10 Another element in preparation for the march from Sinai to the promised land was the production of silver trumpets. Their purpose was to call the people to break camp and line up in their prescribed order to follow the leading of the Lord in the cloud. The trumpets would also serve to call the people to solemn assembly at the entrance to the tabernacle. As with much of the book of Nm, critics who refuse to accept the date cited in the following verses tend to relegate this material to the post-exilic Priestly source.

10:11-13 The historical setting for the second section of the book of Nm is the twentieth day of the second month of the second year after the exodus from Egypt, or about a month after the week-long Passover described in Nm 9:1-14 (Ex 13:6). Those Passover worshipers who had been unclean in the first month had been able to celebrate on the fourteenth of the second month (Nm 9:6-12). Less than two months had elapsed since the completion and dedication of the tabernacle. But after spending 11 months in the Wilderness of Sinai, the Israelites would now begin to follow the Lord's leading toward His intended destination for them, the promised land. These verses are an introductory summary of the first stages of the journey, as the Israelites followed the cloud of God from Mount Sinai to the Wilderness of Paran of the northwest Sinai region. Again the Israelites are described as faithfully following the Lord's command through Moses, in the language of the journey song of 9:17-23.

10:14-28 The orderly departure from Mount Sinai of the priests, Levites, and 12 tribes follows the pattern of the encampment detailed in 2:1–3:38. The text is internally consistent; the tribal leaders who assisted Moses and Aaron in taking the military census (1:5-15) are those leading their respective groups at the beginning of the victory march to the promised land. Order, harmony, and faithfulness mark the beginning of the wilderness journey.

10:29-32 Moses asked his brother-in-law Hobab to accompany them on the journey and experience the goodness of the blessing of God upon Israel. In the Hebrew text, Moses notes three times that the Lord intends "good(ness)" for Israel. Twice Moses promises Hobab that the goodness would be apportioned to him, as well, if he helped guide them through the wilderness. Two critical issues arise; who was Hobab son of Reuel, and was Moses lacking faith in the Lord's guidance in desiring his brother-in-law to be his eyes in the wilderness for camping sites?

Source critics suggest the dual names Reuel (Ex 2:18) and Jethro (Ex 3:1) are evidence of the combination of two pentateuchal traditions. Others suggest the reference to Hobab, whose name means "beloved friend," is a later scribal insertion, to give identity to a friend of Moses. Perhaps the patriarchal clan leader of this group of Midianites (called Kenites in Judges) was Reuel ("father" can also mean "grandfather") while the actual father-in-law of Moses was Jethro. But Jethro and Reuel could well be the same person, since dual names are often encountered in Bronze Age texts from Mesopotamia and the eastern Mediterranean region (see note on Ex 3:1). The Hebrew *choten* can mean "brother-in-law" (preferred here) or "father-in-law" (Ex 3:1). The blessing of God is fulfilled for Hobab and his Kenite clan in Jdg 1:16.

Did Moses lack faith in the Lord's ability to lead the people through this unfamiliar area? The text does not even hint at this possibility, focusing instead on Hobab as a potential recipient of the Israel's covenant blessings. Moses was the interpreter of God's direction, revealed through the cloud in the wilderness, but Hobab could provide valuable support in the desert setting native to the clans of the Midianites. The Lord was the provider of both forms of leadership.

10:33-34 Preceding the Battle Song of the Ark is a chronological marker for the first stage in the movement of the Lord's cloud. As the symbol of God's presence and leadership (Ex 40:38), the cloud would go ahead of the people at a distance over a journey of three days (about 35-45 miles), while still covering them for protection. The ark, symbolic throne of God in covenant relationship to Israel, would lead the way for the people. The three-day journey is reminiscent of Moses' request of Pharaoh to allow the Israelites to journey three days into the wilderness to worship their God. Some critical scholars believe these verses are a late insertion, though they are characteristic of the narrative style of the book of Nm.

10:35-36 Some critics also contend this song is a later insertion, yet throughout the OT major sections of narrative conclude with a poetic refrain. The reference to Israel as "the people" (Hb *ha'am*) for the first time in Nm is considered by some commentators to be an indicator of a supposed Yahwist-Elohist source (a combination of sources preferring the names *Yahweh* and *Elohim* for God). Yet the expression is used in Nm (5:21; 9:13; 27:14; 31:2) to refer to the people in texts these same critics ascribe to a hypothetical Priestly source.

11:1-34 Several times in the OT the expression is used of Israel in a derogatory sense, as here, where the rebelliousness of the people is in view. A theme in this narrative is the continuous rebellious grumbling of the people. This section stands in contrast to the previous context, in which Moses described God's intention to do "good" for Israel (10:32). Here the people are grumbling "evil" before the Lord.

11:1-3 These verses set forth the complaint pattern typical of subsequent narratives (chaps. 11–25), and found also in Ex 16:2-16. The structure consists of (1) complaint, (2) divine punishment, (3) naming the place of the event after some aspect of the event. Hence, the "fiery" judgment of God led to the place being named "blaze."

11:4-34 Advocates of source-criticism suggest this text is from the hypothetical Yahwist-Elohist source (see note on 10:35-36) that was incorporated into a supposed Priestly edition of the book of Nm, altering the perspective on the provision of food in Ex 16:1-36 and the matter of judges in Ex 18:13-27. However, these texts together reflect consistent themes in these two books of the Pentateuch: food supply from God and leadership on the human level. The two settings are different, and the response of the people to the Lord's action has deteriorated. When God supplied the needed food (Ex 16) the people gathered it gladly, but in Nm 11 they complain about His provision.

11:4-6 The people's needs are both physical and spiritual. The Hebrew *nephesh* refers to both body and soul, as in verse 6 ("our appetite is gone," lit. "our soul withers"). They complain that they are tired of the monotonous diet of manna, God's special provision, and crave the luxury of the produce of Egypt. To have that, they would return to slavery and oppression. Insatiable human craving leads to a life of bondage.

11:10-15 Though angry with the people, Moses approaches God with due respect, laying his burden on the Lord and asserting that he cannot bear the load alone. Moses is the focal leader in the first cycle of rebellion (chaps. 11–15); Aaron is the focal leader in the second cycle (chaps. 17–20); and in the third (chaps. 22–25), both men rebel, leaving God to raise up a new temporary spokesman, Balaam.

11:16-27 The work of the Spirit of God here is to enable the elders and officers to carry out the task of teaching, judging and leading the Israelites through the wilderness experiences. Moses gathers and appoints the 70 elders at the Lord's instruction, and then God ratifies those registered by sending His Spirit upon them—even the two who had remained in the camp. Later in Nm, Balaam also receives the spirit of prophecy from God (24:2).

11:16 God instructs Moses to bring 70 elders and officers to the entrance to the tabernacle for official appointment. The term for "officers" (Hb *shoterim*) also denotes scribes, perhaps responsible for the writing and collecting of documents that would eventually compose the book of Nm and the Pentateuch early in Israel's history—not centuries later as some critics would assert.

11:29 For the second time in this chapter, the Israelites are referred to as "the (LORD's) people," thought by some critics to reflect a conjectured Yahwist-Elohist source (see note on 10:35-36)

11:31 The geographical description of the quail migration corresponds to event that occurs today. Here the miracle involved a divinely ordained wind at the appropriate time, as at the parting of the Red Sea at the exodus, which brought the quail into the Israelite camp in astonishing abundance. Ancient and modern historical documentation provides evidence of the regular migration of birds from Europe and the Mediterranean region across the Sinai region toward central Africa. But the blessing turned to craving, and the craving to disease and death. Hence the location was called "Graves of Craving."

12:1-16 Aaron and Miriam were apparently challenging Moses' position as the primary recipient of revelation from God. Critical commentators have assigned this narrative to the Yahwish-Elohist source, as they do most narrative sections of the book of Nm, and claim it was inserted into its present context by the post-exilic (after 538 B.C.) "Priestly" compilers of the Pentateuch. These sources are simply hypothetical constructs based upon the assumption that the Pentateuch is a late composition, nearly a thousand years after Moses.

12:1 The supposed occasion for the complaint of Miriam (the instigator—Hb verb is feminine) was Moses' marriage to a Cushite woman, though the real reason was his positional authority as God's primary spokesman. Explanations for the Cushite identity include: (1) the woman was Moses' second wife, of Cushite origin (Nubian, i.e. modern Ethiopian or Sudanese), whom Moses perhaps had married while Zipporah was in Midian with her father Jethro; (2) Zipporah had died and Moses had recently remarried; or (3) Zipporah and the Cushite woman are one and the same, Cush being another name for the region she had come from.

12:2 The ethnic issue was a cover for the real issue, a challenge to Moses' position of leadership. Miriam and Aaron are both regarded as prophetic figures in the OT (Ex 4:16; 15:20-21; Mc 6:4).

12:7 Being called "My servant" by God and a "faithful" prophet put Moses in the category of Abraham (Gn 26:24) and the "servant" in the Servant Songs of Isaiah (Is 42–53). As "faithful" he was a trustworthy servant of the highest order.

12:8 Some translations have "face to face" (Hb *peh 'el peh*), but Moses could not look upon God's face (Ex 33:11,20-23). The expression is an anthropomorphism signifying that the will of God is communicated directly through the words of Moses.

12:9-13 Miriam's disease, described as a condition that turned her skin milky white like a dead baby's, suggests a variety of skin disorders ranging from skin cancer or psoriasis to Hansen's disease (the modern designation of leprosy). Any of these would render her unclean according to Levitical law (Lv 13–14). Both Aaron and Moses express their love and concern for their sister in their pleas on her behalf. Aaron, who has followed Miriam in rebellion, appeals rightly to Moses to plead the case of his sister to the Lord, and Moses responds.

12:14-15 The seven-day period of separation after Miriam's healing is consistent with the regulations of Lv 14:1-32.

12:16 Source critics call this verse a postscript by the Priestly compilers to reconcile a perceived discrepancy with 10:12, which states that the people journeyed from Sinai to the Wilderness of Paran. But 10:12 is a summary of the initial phase of the journey to the promised land, and the Wilderness of Paran is a broad area of northeast Sinai, bordered on the north-northeast by the Wilderness of Zin, site of Kadesh-barnea (cp. 33:15-37).

13:1–14:45 The first cycle of rebellions reaches its climax in the failure to take the promised land. The people were disheartened when the report of the 12 spies convinced most of them that overcoming the inhabitants of the land and their fortified

cities would be impossible. The rejection of the land was a rejection of God and His blessing, suggesting a desire to return to the Egyptian bondage from which God had delivered them.

13:1-2 Numbers says the Lord instructed Moses to send out the spies, whereas Dt 1:22-23 suggests that Moses sent the scouts at the people's request. Some commentators claim that the post-exilic Priestly compilers adapted the earlier Deuteronomic account, which they speculate was written just before the exile of 586 B.C., to the format of the book of Nm. But with many OT historical events, the human and the divine go hand in hand. Pharaoh, for example, hardened his own heart while God was hardening it for His own purposes (see note on Ex 4:21). Deuteronomy is Moses' description of how he dealt with the people's rebellion in rejecting the land, whereas Nm tells the story from the standpoint of divine instruction. Source critics envision Nm 13–14 as a blending of the P (Priestly) source and theJ-E (Yahwist-Elohist) source, assigning material to each on the basis of its content. This is unnecessary; the text was artfully composed as a unified presentation of the potential blessing of God if the people followed His directive to occupy the land, but the ominous result of rejecting His directive.

13:3 Note the broad geographical designation of the Wilderness of Paran from which the scouts are sent out, and the specific notation of Kadesh (-barnea) in the Wilderness of Zin (33:36-37), the starting point for their exploration (v. 21). Critical commentators suggest a combination of sources, one of which placed Kadesh in the Wilderness of Zin and the other in the Wilderness of Paran. But the Wilderness of Zin is defined by the desert drainage basin of the Nahal (Wadi) Zin, and was a subsection of the larger regional designation of the Wilderness of Paran (viewed today as the northeast quadrant of the Sinai region and a southern extension of the Negev in Israel). In separating their conjectural sources, such critics posit a Yahwist-Elohist tradition that places the Israelites at Kadesh early in their wilderness experience (13:26), while the Priestly tradition places the arrival at Kadesh in the fortieth year (20:1). The narrative sequencing suggests a lengthy stay (more than 38 years) in the Kadesh vicinity and the Wilderness of Paran, toward the Red Sea Gulf of Aqaba (Dt 1:46–2:3).

13:4-14 Source criticism tends to assign lists of names to the posited Priestly source. Here, they note that the list contains a number of unusual names, rarely used in Numbers or the Hebrew Bible, with the exception of Joshua and Caleb. Many men's names in Numbers, however, are rarely used again in the Hebrew Bible, a fact that points to the antiquity of this material as opposed to a late, post-exilic origin.

13:17-20 Moses' instructions to the scouts may be summarized in the question, "Is the land good or bad?" The parenthetic note about the season of the first ripe grapes (probably early September) refers to the land's potential productivity, of which the yield of the vineyard would be an indication. A bountiful harvest would raise the people's expectations about the coming campaign to take the land. Critics unnecessarily divide verse 17 into two sources, the first statement from the Priestly compilation and the quotation of Moses from the Yahwist-Elohist tradition.

13:21 As an example of the arbitrary manner in which some critics subdivide the narrative flow of the text, commentators have suggested that the Priestly compilers inserted this single verse into the Yahwist-Elohist narrative of verses 17-24.

13:22 The text connects the building of Hebron with the time of the construction of Zoan, in Egypt. Several critics have called this chronological link an historical inaccuracy, based on limited data from earlier excavations in the eastern Nile delta and the misidentification of sites such as Tanis, Avaris, and Zoan. Subsequent research has called their conclusions into question.

13:25 The scouting mission extended all the way into southern Lebanon, a total of about 240 miles. The 40 day journey is a realistic time period for covering that distance. Kadesh is mentioned in the region of the Wilderness of Paran, which also contains the Wilderness of Zin.

13:26-27 The report begins with a positive assessment of the fruitfulness of the land, including a vivid demonstration in the huge cluster of grapes brought from the Valley of Eshcol.

13:28-29 Some commentators considered the list of peoples living in the land to be a later description of the population of Canaan, the Hittites being those living south of Hebron in the time of Ezekiel and the Amorites not residing in Canaan until after the time of David. They reached these conclusions because those peoples were not mentioned in other sources dating from the time of Israel's wilderness sojourn. Recent discoveries, however, confirm the biblical data, revealing that a mixture of ethnic groups occupied the land of Canaan during the Late Bronze (1550–1200 B.C.) and Iron I (1200–1000 B.C.) eras.

13:30-33 Some critics see in verse 32, which regards the land as foreboding, a contradiction of verse 27 with its description of a bountiful land. However, the point of the rebellion cycle narratives was to show the goodness of God in the gift of a fruitful land (10:29), as contrasted with the evil perspective of the rebellious people (11:1). The reference tying the Anakites to the Nephilim (Gn 6:4), giants who perished in the flood, is an exaggeration by the fearful spies.

14:1-4 The rebellion culminated in the Israelite congregation's refusal to take the land in favor of returning to Egypt, the land of their bondage. Source critics suggest this account is the blending of Priestly and Yahwist-Elohist sources, even to the point of dividing in half verse 1, which by its parallelism is clearly a continuity.

14:5-9 The seemingly redundant description "the whole assembly of the Israelite community" is not the result of the blending of sources. Rather, it heightens the tension in the narrative. Moses, Aaron, Joshua, and Caleb appeal to the goodness and providential protection of God against the perceived power of the enemy.

14:10 Some critical interpreters view God's dramatic intervention at crucial points in Israel's journey as the creation of the Priestly narrators. But here (as in Ex 14:19; Nm 12:5; 16:19; 17:7) the dynamic work of God is integral to the story. It affirms that God will, when necessary, intervene in history when the survival of His people is at stake.

14:14 Moses again intervenes on behalf of a rebellious nation (see note on 12:8).

14:18-19 The expression "bringing the consequences of the fathers' wrongdoing on the children" has been taken to imply that God was unjustly assigning the guilt of the rebellious generation to those who followed. But this usage incorporates several concepts:(1) Moses first appealed to God's longsuffering and forgiveness; (2) an individual's misdeed can affect his family through successive generations; and (3) sometimes the enactment of judgment is withheld for several generations, as in the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B.C.

14:20-38 The Lord spares the present generation from the immediate judgment it deserves for the sake of the next generation which would inherit the promised land. The entire generation of men of military age would die during the wilderness sojourn (those age 60 or above), with the exception of the faithful spies Caleb and Joshua. Source critics see Caleb's blessing as coming from the supposed Yahwist-Elohist tradition, and that of Joshua as derived from Priestly and Deuteronomic sources. Such an approach fragments the text and disrupts the flow of the Hebrew narrative.

Was God's judgment on the people too severe? The text emphasizes their repeated rebellion against God (10 times) to which He has now responded. In rejecting entry into the promised land, they were rejecting an essential part of their covenant with Yahweh, which was in turn founded in His covenant with Abraham (Gn 12:1-3,7; 13:14-18; 15:18-21; 17:7-8).

14:39-45 Critics conjecture that the Yahwist-Elohist source resumes here, because the context reflects a tradition of warfare in the attempt to take Canaan. But the point of the narrative flow is the direct correspondence between the people's rejection of the Lord's directive to seize the land and their failure to take it on their own; they cannot succeed without God's blessing, and cannot have His blessing without faithful obedience. The passage stands as a unified presentation, not a composite of sources.

15:1-21 The Lord's grace and providence are implicit in His promise that the people of the next generation will enter, inherit, and reap the produce of the land despite the rebellion of the first generation. Out of those blessings they will bring offerings in celebration of the Lord's goodness and miraculous works in history, to be commemorated in the appointed feasts: Passover,

Pentecost and Tabernacles. Grain, oil and wine, all of which the Lord promised to a faithful people, were to accompany the animal sacrifices. Numbers 15:1-21 complements Lv 1–3 with details regarding the amounts and proportions of grain, oil, and wine to supplement the regular offerings. Sacrificial requirements were the same for the native Israelite and the alien residents in the land.

15:22-31 Inadvertent sins included matters in which the individual or community (1) acted unknowingly in breaking commandments, (2) was unaware of the penalty involved, or (3) failed to perform certain ritual requirements. The priest sacrificed a male goat for a sin offering and a bull for a burnt offering on behalf of the full congregation—Israelite and foreign residents—for unintentional breaking of the covenant. An individual brought a year-old female goat for such offenses. However, blatant defiance of the law was punishable by permanent banishment from the community, in which the individual bears his guilt away from the community.

15:32-36 The Sabbath was a sign of the covenant between God and Israel. Violation of its sanctity was an especially heinous offense, punishable by execution at the hand of members of the community of faith. The penalty may seem inordinately severe by modern standards, especially in light of Jesus' teaching about the Sabbath in relationship to human well-being (Mk 2:27). But this is a pivotal occasion in Israel's history, during which the Lord is laying a foundation for Israel's understanding of itself as His faithful people. He could permit no doubt about the seriousness of His purpose.

15:37-41 The blue corded tassels attached to the corners of the Israelite's garment (Dt 22:12) were a reminder of each person's fidelity to the Lord's covenant. This practice was followed in the time of Jesus and continues among orthodox Jews today. Verse 41 reiterates the heart of Yahweh's covenant declaration—that He is bound to His people as their God. It echoes His introduction to the covenant in Ex 20:2, and His words to Moses in Ex 6:2-8 in calling him to deliver the people from their Egyptian slavery.

16:1–19:22 The second cycle of rebellion focuses on the challenge to the divinely ordained preeminence ofthe Aaronic priesthood. The insurrection resulted in the deaths of the 250 followers of Korah and an additional 14,700 from the plague that ensued (chaps. 16–17). Also in view is the violation of the sanctuary; hence the initial focus of chapter 18 is the role of the Aaronic priests in protecting the holy place (18:1-7). Provision for the priests and Levites, from the tithes and offerings, occupies 18:8-32. The cycle concludes with chapter 19, which presents material related to purification from uncleanness resulting from contact with or proximity to the dead—a matter of concern in view of the thousands who died in the Korah rebellion.

16:1-35 Though this narrative is chiefly concerned with the priesthood in the challenge to the preeminence of the Aaronic line, critics suggest the story of the rebellion of Korah and friends originated in the Yahwist-Elohist tradition. This hypothetical stratum is seen in vv. 1-2,12-15,25-34, in which Korah, Dathan, Abiram, and On are the leaders of the insurrection, with the remainder of the story being compiled from two Priestly sources. Those favoring this conjecture suggest that the main theme was the Reubenites' loss of their favored firstborn status. In ancient Near Eastern patriarchal tribal societies the firstborn son usually passed on the family's religious traditions to the succeeding generation. Since Dathan and Abiram are Reubenites, this issue may be in the background of this passage. But according to all later references to this event it was Korah, a Levite from the Kohathite clan, who instigated the rebellion. The Reubenites were encamped on the south side of the tabernacle with the Korahites (2:10-11; 3:29), and this proximity facilitated the relationship between the groups. Other critics call this story an etiology, or story of origins; on their view, it was meant to explain why deep canyons exist in the Reubenite territory on the east side of the Jordan.

16:1-11 The Hebrew text of verse 1 emphasizes the role of Korah by listing his extended lineage. Use of the verb "took" in the sentence structure emphasizes his attempt to "take control" of the priesthood (v. 10). The Kohathites enjoyed a favored position among the three clans of Levi in the assignment of responsibilities in 3:27-32 and 4:1-20, but Korah desired a higher status (vv. 8-10).

16:12-19 Dathan and Abiram drew back quickly when confronted by Moses, for fear of bodily harm. Moses issued the challenge of the censers, 250 from among the insurrectionists against the one of Aaron. As they stood at the place of presentation, the entry to the tabernacle, the glory of the Lord intervened with dramatic impact upon the entire congregation of Israel.

16:20-35 When Korah rallied the Israelites in support of the rebellion, the Lord instructed Moses and Aaron to distance themselves from the crowd because of the impending judgment. The narrative stresses Moses' role as mediator as he responds in a desperate plea for mercy upon the congregation, asking the Lord to judge only the instigators of the insurrection. The Lord accepts his intervention, and only the rebellious leaders carrying the censers were consumed.

16:36-40 Death can have both contaminating and cleansing effects. Touching and even being in proximity to the dead can render one unclean. Yet, in the conclusion to this section of Nm (chap. 19), impurity from exposure to the dead is cleansed with a mixture of holy water and the ashes of a burned red cow. The fiery death of the 250 collaborators brought purification to the bronze censers, so their raw materials could be used to make an additional bronze covering for the sacrificial altar. Critics suggest this story explains the origin of the original bronze covering for the altar of burnt offering (cp. Ex 27:1-8), a view that would place these events before the departure from Sinai. This second covering, fabricated (Hb *tsippui*) by hammering out the bronze of the 250 censers, differs from that described in Ex 27 and 38.

16:41-50 Further contention against Moses and Aaron resulted in a second threat of judgment as the glory of the Lord appeared. Again the leaders fall on their faces before God and the people, and Aaron graphically displays his role as mediator in making incense atonement for the people, standing literally in the gap between life and death.

17:1-13 In a miraculous demonstration of God's ordaining of the Aaronic priesthood, Aaron's wooden staff sprouted and formed buds. Critics have dubbed this incident "folklore" or "myth," based upon a similar theme in Greek literature (the budding of theclub of Heracles). Others have labeled the story anaetiology, a tale made up to explain the presence of a staff of almond wood in the Jerusalem temple of the second temple period (see Heb 9:4). The motive for this "explanation" is political self-justification by the late Aaronic priesthood. Such efforts to explain away accounts of the miraculous depend on a bias against supernaturalism in general and the historicity of the text in particular. The account of the Korah rebellion ends on an ominous note. The concluding rhetorical question will find its answer in the two following chapters.

18:1-7 In the aftermath of the Korah rebellion against the Aaronic priesthood, the sanctity of the holy place was viewed as a grave issue for the community of faith. The Aaronic priests and the three clans of the Levites were granted, through a special gift, the responsibility of protecting the sanctuary from defilement.

18:8-32 The priests and Levites would not be given territorial grants in the promised land like the other tribes, but were supported through the people's tithes and offerings. Even the priests and Levites were required to tithe their gifts to the Lord. This section complements similar allocations described in Lv 8–9 and Nm 3–4, 8, and 35.

19:1-22 The sacrifice of the red cow was originally mandated for purification from contamination resulting from exposure to death. The demise of thousands in the Korah rebellion necessitated a means of ritual purification from such contamination. A theme in chapter 18 is the responsibility of the priests and Levites to protect the sanctuary from encroachment by the people, who may have come into contact with the bodies of those who perished.

Though some critics acknowledge the widespread belief in the Ancient Near East that contact with death brought ritual contamination, they suggest that Israelites adopted this idea late in history. Thus they assign this chapter to the late Priestly source (post-exilic, after 538 B.C.), ignoring the evidence for similar ancient beliefs and the narrative context of chapters 16–19. Later on, the Jews broadened the application of these waters of purification to include a variety of cleansing procedures for sin and impurity. This is reflected in the *Mishnah*, a compendium of traditional Jewish teaching roughly contemporary with the NT. But the origins of these practices may go back to ancient Israel in the second millennium B.C. As is often the case in the Pentateuch, ritual practice emerges out of practical need.

19:1-4 In its original instructions the red heifer ritual was to be conducted under the auspices of Eleazar the priest (mentioned twice, 19:3,4) although his father Aaron was still living (his death is cited in 20:22-29). The sevenfold sprinkling of the blood of the slaughtered cow is consistent with other blood rituals in the Pentateuch (Lv 4:6,17; 8:19; 16:14,19).

19:6 Three additional purifying ingredients (aromatic cedar wood, hyssop, and crimson wool) are cast upon the fire in the burning of the entire cow, except for its life-symbol, the blood.

19:7-10 All three priests responsible for preparing the ashes for purification ritual are deemed unclean until evening. The ashes alone cause uncleanness, but when mixed with water they become a purifying agent. This seeming paradox is similar to that of blood, which is used for the ultimate purification of the holy place on the Day of Atonement, yet renders one manifestly unclean if improperly utilized or consumed.

19:11-22 Ritual impurity from the dead requires a "sin offering" (Hb *chatta'at*) for purification in the same manner as ethical or moral offenses. The symbolic cleansing on the third and seventh days was a strict requirement; breaking this covenant stipulation would result in banishment from the community. Contamination of death could result from (1) being in, or entering, a tent where someone had just died (applies to persons and objects); (2) contact with the dead in battle or by accidental proximity; or (3) contact with a grave or its human remains.

19:11-13 Summary statements here and in verses 21-22, considered by some to be later additions, are typical in pentateuchal legal presentations (see Lv 16:29-34).

19:14-20 Repetition is a hallmark of the structure of pentateuchal legislation. It is not evidence of later addition or editorial insertion.

20:1-13 Miriam's death may have significantly affected Moses and Aaron, for it immediately precedes their sin in striking the rock at Meribah. By the end of the chapter Aaron dies, but God will use Moses to give future direction to Joshua and Israel in the matters concerning life in the promised land. This direction is presented in chaps. 26–36 and the restatement of the covenant relationship in Dt.

20:1 The third rebellion cycle begins with the death of Miriam, beloved older sister of Moses and Aaron, followed by the sin of Moses. In the structure of Nm this verse establishes the historical setting of the narrative, which then moves from the lengthy sojourn in the Wilderness of Zin area through the Edomite region and into Transjordan, then to the plains of Moab across the Jordan from Jericho. There the Israelites will remain for several months as the Lord prepares them to cross the Jordan and begin the conquest of Canaan. The narrative from Nm 22 through Dt and up to Jos 4 is set in the plains of Moab.

20:2-13 Source critics have dissected the narrative into two strands due to observed doublets (v. 4 and v. 5, also v. 3a and 2b,3b). But such repetitious elements are typical in Hebrew narrative as well as that of other Near Eastern literary cultures. The name of the site Meribah, as with the site mentioned in Ex 17:7, comes from the events that occurred at these places. It is not due to confusion of stories from ancient Priestly and Yahwistic sources.

20:14-21 Repetitious negotiations are not an unknown feature of biblical narrative; such discussions may be seen in Abraham's plea for Sodom (Gn 18:22-33) and Balak's messages to Balaam (Nm 22:1-21). The repetitious elements in verses 17 and 19 do not represent separate historical traditions, Yahwist and Elohist, as some commentators propose. Some critics suggest the description of Edomite territory here reflects a later era when the Edomites had migrated into southern Palestine after the destruction of Jerusalem. But the concepts of nation, kingdom, or kingship as encountered in the pentateuchal record should not be governed by modern conditions. The Hebrew term *melek* is used to designate the leader of many kinds of ethnic groups of varying power and area of control. Ancient territorial boundaries were continually in flux, corresponding to the strength of the current leader who was usually designated a "king." This applies to large nations, such as Assyria or Persia, as well as to smaller groups such as the Phoenicians or Philistines. The Edomites are known to have migrated again into southern Judah during the ninth and eighth centuries B.C., causing Judean rulers to erect border fortresses against potential invasion in the frontier of Arad. In the present narrative, likewise, Edomite dominion is seen to extend well west of the Arabah in the western edge of the Nahal Zin basin. Israel circumnavigated the region, heading into Moab via the Wadi Zered, Edom's traditional northern limit.

20:22-29 Source critics assign this text to the Priestly compilers. Because it places Aaron's death at Mount Hor they view it as a contradiction of Dt 10:6, which places Aaron's death at Moserah, seven stages earlier according to the itinerary in Nm 33:30-41. However,Dt 10 is not an itinerary in the technical manner of Nm 33, but lists a variety of critical life issues for the Israelite community. Included in Dt 10:1-11 are the giving of the second set of law tablets and the setting aside of the Levites, both of which occurred earlier at Mount Sinai. Mount Hor is associated with Mount Madurah, 18 miles northeast of Kadesh (Josephus, however, places it at Jebel Nebi Harim in the middle of Edom).

21:1-3 Some scholars consider this text a creation of the Yahwist, who somehow included both loss and victory at Arad in the same account. This section complements 14:40-45, in which the people of Arad defeated Israel. Here, since the fulfillment of the promise of the death of the first generation (14:26-35) was nearly complete, a victory against their former conquerors was fitting. God's vow in response to Israel's vow would give them confidence in preparation for their entry into the promised land.

21:4-9 The way of the Red Sea refers to the road from Kadesh-barnea toward Elath, here the means of avoiding the Edomites while accessing the Wadi Zered.

Reverence for serpent images abounds in the ancient literature and archaeological artifacts from the Bronze Ages; a bronze serpent was excavated in the late Bronze Age Hathor temple complex in southern Israel at Timna, some 15 miles north of Elath. In this setting God uses a common tradition of that era in a miraculous manner to bring healing to His repentant people. Commentators unwilling to recognize God's supernatural activity compare this account to ancient Near Eastern magical rites, attested from Assyria and Babylon, in which the deity was believed to act through magical implements to effect healing or deliverance. The Philistines' presentation of five golden mice and five gold disease symbols to appease the wrath of the God of the Israelites (1 Sm 6:1-12) is a parallel to such magical practices.

21:10-20 The Moabite boundaries, like those of the Edomites, were fluid during this period, but their territory was generally located in the arable zone between the Wadi Zered and the Arnon River. In times of expansion the Moabite borders extended north beyond Heshbon and to the northeast corner of the Dead Sea, along the southernmost line of the Jordan River. Critics ascribe this text to the proposed Yahwist-Elohist source, including the two ancient songs from the real source, the Book of the LORD's Wars. This ancient Hebrew source was lost in antiquity, but was one of many sources mentioned in the OT that were incorporated into the Hebrew Bible.

21:21-32 As with Edom, the Israelites' attempt at diplomacy to gain safe passage to the banks of the Jordan River through the Amorite kingdom of Sihon was met with forceful opposition. In the region north of the Arnon River and south of the Jabbok, Israel defeated Sihon and took possession of it. Critics had denied the authenticity of this account since nothing from earlier than the Iron I era was uncovered in the excavation of Tel Hesban. However, as with the city of Arad in southern Judah, city names were considered to designate the capitals of local regions, and several sites such as nearby Tel el-Umeiri and Tel Jalul contain Late Bronze materials that could be associated with the Amorite kingdom of Sihon.

21:27-31 The "Song of Heshbon" contains satirical lyrics about the Amorites' victory over Moab. The Israelites adapted it from the Amorites to express their claim to the land and the superiority of Israel's God to the Moabite patron deity Chemosh. Critics suggest the song was composed by Israel during the battles with Moab in the ninth century B.C. This view must discount or ignore the internal evidence of the song in reference to Sihon, the Amorite king.

21:32-35 To protect their northern flank, Israel moved North to defeat the city of Jazer and then Og of Bashan, as they took control of the territory in the Golan as far north as Mount Hermon (Dt 3:1-11). The Transjordan region was the first to be settled by the Israelites (Nm 32).

22:1–24:25 The Book of Balaam contains the story of the renowned pagan divination expert. Hired to pronounce a curse upon Israel, he pronounced a blessing instead upon God's chosen. As one seeking Israel's demise at the bidding of the Moabite king Balak, Balaam was the very antithesis of Moses; yet God used him in a way similar to Moses to pronounce the future blessing of the Lord upon His people. Moses is curiously absent from the story because of his sin of rebellion and irreverence at Meribah (20:2-13). God demonstrated that He can use whatever means necessary to bring blessing to His people. Even the person most adamantly opposed to His will can become an instrument of His purpose.

According to some scholars these chapters are a later insertion into the book of Nm by a seventh century B.C. Israelite editor. Supposedly this editor combined material from the Yahwist-Elohist traditions with the later eighth century B.C. stories of Balaam, integrating them into the story of Israel's wilderness sojourn in order to justify Israel's claim over the region. This approach ignores the story's structural integrity, evident in the threefold grouping of its elements (e.g., three times the donkey tries to avoid the Angel of the Lord). It also ignores the story's external context; it fits better into the Late Bronze Age period for this region than the late Iron II period. These will be detailed below.

Balaam is from the Mesopotamian town of Pethor of the land of Ammaw. Pethor is identified with Pitru, known from Assyrian records to be about 12 miles south of Carchemish. Scholars identify the land of Ammaw with a region mentioned in a fifteenth century B.C. inscription from Alalakh in northern Syria.

22:1 During the events narrated here, Israel is on the eastern side of the Jordan River opposite the soon-to-be-conquered city of Jericho, in a region generically referred to as the plains of Moab. Israel is a passive participant in the story of three chapters, in which the leading characters are Balak and Balaam. They are situated in the hills of Transjordan, at a distance overlooking the Israelite encampment from the southeast.

22:2-14 King Balak of Moab fears his overthrow by the mighty Israelites, who have just defeated his oppressors the Amorites. He sends a diplomatic envoy to Balaam ben Beor of Pethor in upper Mesopotamia to secure his prophetic services. While some critics would place this story hundreds of years later than its setting in the Pentateuch, textual evidence of prophetic activity in such cities as Mari and Babylon during the Late Bronze Age coincides with what is predicated of Balaam in these chapters. Placing or removing of curses, pronouncing blessings, and providing counsel to individuals were services they customarily offered. Their techniques included divination, incantation, animal sacrifice, and reading of natural omens. These prophets were known as "seers of the gods" and were said to be skilled at manipulating the deities to bring about the results desired by the person who hired them. Balak's men offer the standard fees to procure Balaam's services, but during the night the God of Israel counsels Balaam not to accept their offer.

22:15-21 A second attempt by Balak's emissaries meets with Balaam's guarded response—that he could do only what the Lord tells him. His words indicate that he would now become God's spokesman.

22:22-40 The story takes an ironic turn, as God is displeased with Balaam on the journey to Moab. Critics question why God would be angry with Balaam for listening to Him. This story type fits into the category of faith-challenges similar to Jacob's wrestling with the angel at Peniel on his return to the promised land (Gn 32:24-32) or Moses' encounter with the Lord upon his return to Egypt (Ex 4:24-26). These accounts are reminders that a holy God demands complete obedience of His servants; on the journey to Moab Balaam's female donkey was more sensitive to God's moving than was this renowned prophet.

Critics call the communication by the donkey fanciful story telling. But, as with Balaam himself, God will use whatever means necessary to accomplish His purpose. The donkey could see what the seer could not, and she brayed in such a manner as to convey to Balaam a distinct message of anger and resentment. She communicated in such a way that only her owner could understand the meaning of her intonation. Similarly, in Jn 12:28-30, what some thought was thunder or the voice of an angel was God speaking. When Jesus appeared to Saul on the road to Damascus, only Saul could understand his words, while those around him "stood speechless" (Ac 9:7), i.e. unable to make out the meaning of what they heard.

22:41–23:10 Elaborate ritual precedes the first oracle. The preference for performing seven rituals was widespread in the ancient Near East. The sacrificing of seven bulls and seven rams on seven altars parallels a well-known Babylonian text in which Ea, Shamash, and Marduk are worshiped with the ritual libation of the blood of seven sheep poured out on seven altars which are accompanied by seven incense censers containing cypress wood. Hoping for a favorable location for carrying out his hired duty, Balaam and Balak enacted the ritual on Bamoth-Baal, a worship center dedicated to the patron deity of several northwest Semitic peoples, such as those of Ugarit and Canaan.

Balaam becomes God's prophetic instrument in a manner similar to Moses and reveals to Balak the message of blessing upon Israel. God's hand is upon Israel and she cannot be cursed. To be numbered among her multitude is enviable even to Balaam (23:10).

23:11-13 Balak protests Balaam's proclamation, and in response the prophet reiterates the necessity of speaking exactly what God has spoken.

23:14-26 From another outpost overlooking the northeast corner of the Dead Sea and the plains of Moab where Israel is encamped, Balaam and Balak repeat the ritual sacrifices of the first encounter. In the oracle Balaam reminds Balak that God is unchangeable; if His intent is to bless Israel, His word will be accomplished without fail and without deviation. Nothing Balaam could muster via sorcery or incantation could bring violence or destruction upon God's people.

23:27–24:14 After two failed attempts, Balaam and Balak resort to a third center of religious rites, in the heights above Peor overlooking Jeshimon; from there they can now view the entire Israelite encampment. The sevenfold ritual is again repeated, without resort to divination as previously.

The Spirit of God descends upon Balaam; and in an ecstatic visionary encounter his eyes are fully opened to a vision of God Almighty, his ears are fully open to the revelation, and he falls upon his face in reverent servitude. The utterance forecasts the Lord's blessing upon the land with abundance of water rendering it highly productive, and with a powerful kingship surpassing the might of Agag the Amalekite. But the strength of Israel was in the strength of her God. God's blessing is so powerful and irrevocable that even the most sought-after divination expert of the day could not counter its effectiveness.

24:10-14 Balak is incensed and orders Balaam to return home unrewarded. Balaam retorts that he has only done what he stated was possible from the beginning, that he could only speak what God spoke. He would begin his return, but not before uttering several more oracles about the future of Israel and her enemies.

24:15-19 In a visionary encounter similar to that of the third oracle, Balaam utters predictive prophecy about the more distant future of Israel. The parallel references to "star" and "scepter" are symbols of a glorious and powerful kingship that would subdue Israel's enemies, typified as Moab and Edom. In the early Israelite monarchy David would fulfill this prophecy in defeating and subjugating both Moab and Edom (2 Sm 8:1-12). But when later Israelite kings failed to obey God's instructions, and oppression and exile followed, this passage would be interpreted messianically to refer to a coming glorious King. This is evident in the literature of the Dead Sea Scrolls. This community whose life was dedicated to preparing for the coming messianic kingdom included Nm 24:17 in a collection of verses they considered messianic. The model of the just and righteous king was brought to ultimate fulfillment in Jesus' establishment of the kingdom of God.

24:20-24 Three brief oracles concerning the destiny of other nations conclude the Book of Balaam. Critics ascribe these texts to late authors or sources, based upon their brevity and language difficulties. Yet their collective theme is the same: God will subdue all peoples who, like Moab, oppose His will and His people. The Amalekites would be subdued under Saul, Samuel, and David. The Kenites would be subdued by their neighbors, the Sinai tribe of Asshur (Gn 25:3,18—not to be confused with the later Assyrians). These Asshurites would be conquered in turn by the Kittim, a reference to Mediterranean peoples such as the Philistines. These, too, would see their demise. In the eschatological climax of history, all rebellious nations will bow to the judgment of God.

24:25 Balaam began his trek homeward, but as 31:8 suggests, he was killed in the Midianite campaign, having been instrumental in instigating the idolatrous enticement of Israel related in chapter 25.

25:1-18 Critics have arbitrarily divided the Baal-peor incident of idolatry into two sources: a Yahwist-Elohist source in verses 1-5, rooted in the ideology of defending the faith of Yahweh, and a Priestly source in verses 6-18, based on the involvement of the priest Phinehas, Aaron's grandson. This unnecessary fragmentation destroys the narrative and literary cohesiveness of the material, especially in verses 1-9. Note the following outline revealing its chiastic structure:

A. Setting of Immorality: Worship of Baal of Peor (vv. 1-3)
B. Yahweh Instructs Moses: Execute Offenders and Allay God's Wrath (v. 4)
C. Moses Instructs Leaders to Execute Offenders (v. 5)
C'. Phinehas Follows Moses' Instruction: Kills Offenders (vv. 6-8a)
B'. Yahweh's Wrath is Allayed: Plague Halted(v. 8b)
A'. Result of Immorality: 24,000 Die in Plague (v. 9)

Critics would suggest the punishment was too severe, but see comment at 15:32-36. The nation is about to be reconstituted in preparation for receiving its inheritance in the promised land.

26:1-65 Source critics tend to ascribe genealogical records and census totals to the conjectured Priestly source of the late pre-exilic (621–586 B.C.) or post-exilic period (post-538 B.C.), even though this census is taken to assess the capability of Israel's militia. Though the recitation of one's genealogy was a religious rite in the Ancient Near East, especially at the dedication of a firstborn son, the biblical genealogies preserve early, rather than late, records of how God has blessed His people throughout their generations. Eleazar now assists Moses in taking the military conscription census, as did his father Aaron in the first census (chap. 1). At the end of this census record the reader is reminded that God's judgment upon a rebellious people resulted in the death of all but two of the original conscripts, Caleb and Joshua (26:65).

26:4 Important, in the resumption of the theme of faithfulness in Nm, is the statement that the census was taken as the Lord had commanded when they were first preparing for the victory march to the promised land.

26:5-51 With a new generation about to inherit the Lord's gift of the land, the militia is delineated according to the tribal clans among which the land would be apportioned, according to the instructions in 26:52-56 (reiterated in 33:53-54). Clan names are more important at this stage of the Nm narrative than they would have been in the census of chap. 1, as those counted in that first census would have died in the wilderness and not be inheriting the land.

26:5-11 The enumeration inserts a note about the Reubenites, Dathan, and Abiram, who died in the Korah rebellion. Overall, the Reubenite fighters had decreased by 2770, from 46,500 to 43,730.

26:12-14 The census of the five Simeonite clans reflects the most significant decrease from the first census, a loss of 37,100—more than 60 percent fewer men of military age and capability.

26:15-18 The Gadite militia decreased by 12 percent; their seven clans would be granted a territorial inheritance in Gilead, this side (east) of the Jordan (32:1-38). (Technically, Canaan comprised both sides of the Jordan; the area to the east is known as Transjordan, while that to the west—usually known as Canaan proper, or Palestine—is sometimes called Cisjordan in scholarly literature.)

26:16-19 In the cohesive narrative structure of the book of Nm, these verses forecast the Midianite campaign of chapter 31 which would stand as a model of Israelite holy war in the conquest of Canaan.

26:19-22 The militia from the four Judahite clans experienced a slight increase of 900. The notation regarding the loss of Er and Onan because of their disobedience is a reminder of God's judgment upon the unfaithful.

26:23-25 The four clans of Issachar's militia increased a significant 18 percent during the wilderness sojourn.

26:26-27 Zebulun's three clans increased by about 5 percent from 57,400 to 60,500.

26:28-34 The dramatic increase of 63 percent in the militia of Manasseh and its six clans—from 32,200 to 52,700—would motivate their request for additional territory on the east side of the Jordan River. The Machirite clan followed the lead of the Reubenites and Gadites and requested territory in Gilead for their inheritance, and Moses granted their request once they had pledged their support of the Cisjordan tribes in the conquest of Canaan.

26:35-37 The three Ephraimite clans decreased by 8000 (20 percent) from the original census of 40,500.

26:38-41 The six Benjamite clans showed a significant increase of 28.8 percent from 35,400 to 45,600. Later, the Benjamites would become Israel's smallest tribal group, almost to the point of extinction (Jdg 20–21).

26:42-43 Only the Shuhamite clan of the tribe of Dan is noted, with a slight increase of 1700 (2.7 percent). The text mentions the "clans" (pl.) of the Shuhamites, but they were not listed as were the subclans of Manasseh and Asher. The size of the Danite militia is second only to that of Judah, yet the Danites could not control their territory because of the power of the Philistines; eventually they migrated northward (Jdg 18:1-31).

26:44-47 The Asherites grew significantly during the wilderness period, increasing their military capability by nearly 22 percent to 53,400. The allusion to Asher's daughter Serah remains a mystery, unless she received an allocation in the manner of Zelophehad's daughters. By the time of the Chronicler's work at the end of the kingdom period, the Asherites were calculated to be only 26,000, a number that may reflect upon the size of the army in the reign of King David.

26:48-50 The four clans of Naphtali experience a moderate loss of 15 percent to 45,400. The Greek Septuagint version records an even greater 44 percent loss, down to 30,300.

26:51 The overall figure of 601,730 was witness to the providence of God in preserving the population of the Israelites during the 40 year wilderness sojourn. Though a whole generation of Israelite military would die, except for Joshua and Caleb, God would raise up a complete new generation to inherit the land originally promised. On the size of the population and the view of critics, see the Introduction.

26:52-56 The instructions are to divide the land proportionally and also to distribute it by lot. Critics have viewed these as mutually exclusive and incompatible procedures, yet both are mentioned in several contexts. Numbers 33:53-54 emphasizes the proportional aspect, while Jos 15–19 focuses on the distribution by lot. Eleazar could have used lots, such as the Urim and Thummim, to determine the general region of the allocation and then Moses determined the actual extent of territory with the tribal proportions in view.

26:57-62 As in the first census, the Levites were not numbered among the militia, but were counted in the manner of 3:43 for the purpose of redeeming the firstborn sons of the twelve tribes, beginning at the age of one month (3:40-51). The Levites showed a net increase of about a thousand over the previous count. The genealogy of Aaron's sons always includes Nadab and Abihu, although they died as a result of profaning the sanctuary with an unholy fire offering. This serves as a reminder that God shows no partiality in judgment.

26:63-65 Assisting Moses in recording the census of Israel's army was Aaron's third son Eleazar, who became high priest following the death of his father (20:22-29). The record showed no survivors of the original 603,550 soldiers 20 years of age and older, except the two faithful spies Joshua and Caleb.

27:1-11 The census of the Manassite families (26:29-33) specifically mentions Zelophehad, who had no sons to inherit property. That note sets the stage for this section dealing with the issue of a daughter's right of inheritance, a theme that brackets the entire discussion of land inheritance (chaps. 27–36), returning in the final chapter of the book of Nm. The presentation of a case of women's property rights, an exceptional scenario in a patriarchal culture, would ensure that proper justice be meted out in *all* property inheritance cases in the land. The case did not originate in the post-exilic era, as some critics believe. The names of two of Zelophehad's daughters, Hoglah and Noah, are preserved as the names of districts or towns in the region of Samaria (within the territory of Manasseh) in the Samaria ostraca (inscribed pottery fragments). These come from the eighth century B.C., at least 200 years before the exile of Judah. Commentators who date this material in the time of Ezra associate this case with the potential appropriation of property gained through marriage with foreign women. The legal setting in Ezra, however, differs from the present context and applies only to the geographical setting of post-exilic Judah, not the territory of Manasseh. The decision in the case of Zelophehad's daughters, set forth in the days of Moses in the second millennium B.C. and fulfilled in the land distribution under Joshua (Jos 17:3-6) would still be in force more than 500 years later.

27:12-23 Because the high priest Eleazar is involved in the ceremony transferring leadership from Moses to Joshua, some scholars assign it to the conjectured Priestly source. They assign the parallel passage in Dt 31:1-8,14-29 to the hypothetical Yahwist-Elohist source. But the two passages complement one another. Numbers highlights the formal transfer of leadership, which in the ancient Near Eastern cultural setting would always be overseen by a priest. Religious oversight of political events reflects practices as early as the third millennium B.C. just as it does those of the late first millennium B.C. Deuteronomy emphasizes the commissioning of Joshua to lead a people with a history of rebellion against God; in that context Moses challenges him to keep the commands of the Lord faithfully, and to lead the people with courage and strength from the Lord. Moses follows the Lord's instruction (Nm 27:22-23) and commissions Joshua publicly through the laying on of hands in the solemn assembly.

28:1–29:39 Two chapters are devoted to the prescribed sacrificial elements for the daily, weekly, monthly, and annual memorial and festival offerings. The order closely follows the sequence in Lv 23, which stresses the participation of the worshipers and the offerings particular to a given holy day. Thus Nm supplements material presented in Ex 12:1–13:10; 23:12-19; Lv 23; and Dt 16:1-17. Source critics ascribe Nm 28–29 to a supposed post-exilic Priestly compiler, declining to recognize it as a record of early Israelite practice from the time of Moses. In the larger context of the book of Nm this section complements 15:1-21, which highlights the grace of God in His future blessing of Israel in the land they have just rejected (chaps. 13–14). God promised He would bless the people abundantly so that they might present to Him their offerings from flocks and fields. Now the Lord delineates examples of those offerings in the sacrificial system's memorial calendar.

28:1-8 Daily offerings began early in the day with a whole burnt offering and concluded with the same at twilight. This passage complements the instructions for daily offerings in Ex 29:38-45. The high priest represented the community in the substitutionary identification ritual, placing his hand on the head of the lamb. After slaughtering the animal he extracted its blood, which he poured out to the Lord on the sides of the altar. Then the priest burned the offering completely on the altar, as a consecration ritual on behalf of the entire community (Lv 1:10-13). The animal offering was supplemented by the offering of grain with oil and the libation, or offering of strong drink (*shekar*, "fermented beverage"). Only the highest quality, unblemished animals could be presented to the Lord.

28:9-10 The daily burnt offerings of lamb, grain, and liquid libation were doubled on the Sabbath.

28:11-15 On the first day of the month, the new moon, additional burnt offerings of consecration included two young bulls (for the priests), one ram (for the leaders), seven male lambs (for the people), and their proportional grain-oil and libation offerings, plus a male goat for a sin offering.

28:16-25 The essential Passover elements, according to Ex 12:8, were the Passover lamb, unleavened bread and bitter herbs. Here several elements are added to the celebration: (1) Sabbath designation (hence no work) for the first and final days of the Festival of Unleavened Bread, with a congregational assembly at the sanctuary; (2) additional sacrifices equivalent to those offered on the new moon (two bulls, one ram, seven lambs, plus grain and libation offerings).

28:26-31 The first day of the Festival of Weeks (*Shavuoth*, Pentecost) is deemed a Sabbath, with burnt and sin offerings essentially the same as the new moon sacrifices. The ritual practices for the day included the firstfruit offering of the grain harvest. These offerings were in addition to the prescribed offering of two loaves of leavened bread (Lv 23:17), given in thanksgiving for the abundance of God's blessing.

29:1-6 The seventh month was the commencement of the annual ritual calendar. It began with the holy assembly on the day of jubilation, also referred to as the "day of trumpet blasts" and later as "New Year's Day" (*rosh hashanah*, lit. "head of the year"). Since this day also commemorates the new moon, the normal sacrifices of the day are doubled and offered in addition to the two daily burnt offerings.

29:7-11 These instructions call for a day of "sacred assembly," self-denial, and Sabbath work restriction. The directives correspond to the Day of Atonement prescribed in Lv 16:1-34, though the day is not named here and the instructions of Lv do not mention the assembly. Some critics suggest an alternate Priestly source for Lv 16. However, there the focus is upon the unique

rituals for the purification of the holy place, and upon the Azazel (scapegoat) that symbolically carries the sins of the people from the camp into the wilderness. Verse 11 highlights two sin offerings. One parallels the sin offering at the new moon festival; the other is sacrificed on behalf of the people, and its blood is then used to purify the holy place (Lv 16:15-20). The directives in Nm complement those of Lv.

29:12-39 The longest section of these two chapters is devoted to the delineation of the daily offerings of the Festival of Booths (*Sukkoth*). On successive days of other pilgrimage assemblies the numbers of sacrifices are the same, but in the fall festival of ingathering (Ex 23:16) the number of bulls sacrificed begins with 13, with one fewer per day being offered during the week-long celebration. Seven bulls are offered on the seventh day, and a single bull on the appended eighth day. On each of those days the bull offerings are accompanied by equal numbers of rams (2), male lambs (14), and the usual amount of grain-oil and libation offerings prescribed for the new moon celebration. The first day of the festival (fifteenth of Tishri) and the appended eighth day are deemed Sabbaths for sacred assembly and cessation from work.

29:39 In summary, the offerings outlined in these two chapters were to be presented to the Lord at their appointed times, in addition to those brought by individuals and groups of Israelites in the ordinary course of life. Both Ex and Lv provide instructions for these voluntary and thanksgiving offerings, plus those offered in connection with vows and oaths.

29:40 This verse functions as a hinge (colophon) transitioning between the material in the two chapters it connects. The concluding statement that Moses did as the Lord commanded in instructing the Israelites regarding the festival offerings echoes the theme of faithfulness that is prevalent in chaps. 1–10, 15, 19, and throughout.

30:1-16 This section sets out the legal force of vows and oaths, for both men and women. The force of a younger or married woman's vow is limited only if her male guardian—either her father or her husband—should actively nullify the vow. If the man is passive or assenting, the vow of the woman has the same legal force as that of a man. The vow of a widow or a divorced woman is also binding. The terminology of "binding" the making of an oath or vow often meant to endorse it in written form. In the context of chaps. 26–36, this issue may have been of particular concern with respect to women's property rights, as in the case of Zelophehad's daughters (27:1-11; 36:1-12). This statute would also apply to a woman taking a Nazirite vow (see note on 6:1-2).

31:1-54 Following Israel's attack on the Midianites, Phinehas and his father, the high priest Eleazar, were involved in receiving the spoils of the war and the purification of the returning fighters. For this reason, source critics unnecessarily ascribe this section to the alleged Priestly source. The separation of priestly activity in any event from other forms of leadership—here Moses, Joshua and the leaders of Israel—is an artificial division of society not characteristic of the ancient Near Eastern world. Religion was an integral part of every aspect of life, from warfare to economics to family life. Separation of the religious and the political (as in "church and state") is a modern development. The book of Nm stresses the integral role of the priests and Levites in spheres of activity well beyond their divine service. This section sets out the model for Israelite holy war, in preparation for the conquest of Canaan. With this chapter begins the final cycle of Nm.

31:1-2 The Midianites had instigated the idolatrous activity at Baal-peor (chap. 25) with the council of Balaam who was killed in the campaign. Here, the Lord gives instruction for the subjugation of the Midianites. The sequel repeats the model "refrain" signifying Israelite faithfulness to the Lord, in the fourfold occurrence of the phrase "they did as the Lord commanded" (vv. 7,31,41,47).

31:3-5 Each of the seven cycles of material in the book of Nm begins with a reference to the unity of the 12 tribes (or disunity, in the case of the Korah rebellion, chaps. 16–17). Here a thousand fighting men from each of the tribes are conscripted for battle.

31:6-12 The model for holy war has the priest Phinehas accompanying the army of 12,000 into battle, taking the sanctuary vessels for purification rites and the trumpets for sounding the battle alerts (10:1-10). Centuries later, the Dead Sea scroll document, styled "The War of the Sons of Light and the Sons of Darkness," replicates this model. The passage presents a terse summary of the battle in typical OT narrative fashion with expansion of detail regarding the proper disposition of spoils of war.

The section emphasizes how the purity of the congregation is maintained and how the goods are distributed proportionately among the 12 tribes and the priests and Levites.

31:8 The prophetic soothsayer Balaam had been executed together with certain Midianite kings (presumably of different clans from that of Moses' in-laws Jethro and Hobab). Though God had used the pagan prophet significantly as his spokesman to bless Israel, Balaam continued his original role after the events of chaps. 22–24. Intending to return home to upper Mesopotamia (24:25), he had counseled the Moabites and Midianites to lead Israel into idolatry at Baal-peor; thus he was subject to the judgment of holy war. Note also that the Midianite king Zur was the father of Cozbi, the woman executed by Phinehas along with her paramour Zimri ben Salu (25:14-18).

31:13-24 The purpose of holy war was the eradication of impure elements, whether persons or property, from a given geographic region. This passage harks back to the idolatrous activity of Baal-peor (chap. 25), and sets the stage for the instructions in 33:50-56 for occupying the promised land by dispossessing the Canaanites and eradicating the marks of their false religion. Hence it is integral to the main theme developed in the book of Nm: the dangers of rebellion and idolatry. Critics who suggest this holy-war mentality was a crude feature of ancient cultures and not in keeping with God's purpose for humanity have ignored the fact that these instructions were applicable at this critical point in the formation of the theocracy of Israel. Their very survival as the holy community of faith was at stake. Chapter 31 is consistent with the directives given in other pentateuchal passages, including Dt 7:5,24-25; 12:1-12; and 20:16-20 (purging of idolatry) and Dt 21:10-14 (female captives). However, the law of Christ, the law of love, supersedes the instructions for Israel in the era of Moses and Joshua. While God still abhors every kind of evil in society, and the people of God must diligently oppose its every expression, "holy war" of the kind recorded here is not the proper response.

31:48-53 The gifts of gold offered for the victory over the Midianites far exceeded the minimum of half a shekel per person, indicating that the leaders gave sacrificially in the spirit of thanksgiving to God.

32:1-42 Critics ascribe this chapter to the hypothetical Yahwist-Elohist history upon which the Priestly editor drew in fashioning the narrative. The conjecture is superfluous, for the narrative is an integral part of the development of the theme of the land in chapters 26–36—which source critics tend to assign to the Priestly compilers. The chapter poses several questions about the legitimacy of the Transjordan tribal territories, as the area is outside the boundaries delineated in 34:1-15.

32:1-5 The Reubenites and Gadites bring their request for territorial allocation east of the Jordan River according to protocol, presenting themselves as servants seeking favor before Moses, Eleazar, and the princes of the congregation (cp. 31:13). This chapter has all the hallmarks of ancient treaty negotiations, including a ratification of the stipulations before the high priest (vv. 28-32). The tribes claimed that, since the Lord had given victory over the Amorites and others and the land offered ample pasturage for their animals, they could be allowed to take full possession of it for themselves. Narrative tension is created when they add the stipulation that they not be required to cross the Jordan—they did not want to go to war.

32:6-15 Moses confronts their true reason for wanting to settle the Transjordan highlands: their reluctance to go to war, which is tantamount to rebellion against God's plan for the nation. The promised land was across the Jordan to the west, not on its eastern side. Moses saw that the possible outcome had all the hallmarks of the great rebellion in which Israel rejected God's gift of the land. These hallmarks were disunity among the tribes, discouragement to the others, and the potential destruction of the people in another wilderness experience.

32:16-19 The Reubenites and Gadites pledge their full support for the conquest of the land west of the Jordan, provided that Moses will let them have their inheritance in Transjordan and allow them to leave their families in the safekeeping of the local towns. The issue of disunity remains in their words, "we will not have an inheritance with them across the Jordan."

32:20-24 Moses consents to their request, citing the consequences should these tribes fail to honor their commitment. If they fully support the conquest of the promised land through its completion, they would have their requested inheritance in

Transjordan. But failure to do what they had promised would constitute sin against God, leading to the judgment noted in vv. 13-15.

32:25-27 The Gadites and Reubenites ratified the agreement.

32:28-30 Some interpreters call this a Priestly insertion, since the context mentions Eleazar. But all treaty arrangements in the ancient Near East were ratified in the context of a religious assembly and ratified in rituals overseen by priests. The pledge of the Gadites and Reubenites in vv. 31-32 probably echoes their oath of obedience in that covenant ratification ceremony.

32:33-38 Moses' official grant outlines, in some detail, the lands and towns assigned the Gadites and Reubenites. This region was that formerly controlled by Sihon and the Amorites, defeated by the Israelites in 21:21-32.

32:39-42 The Machirite clan of the tribe of Manasseh apparently joined in the quest for territory in Transjordan, based upon their conquest of it. The language here closely parallels that of 21:32 ("captured . . . and drove out"), the model terminology for the conquest of the land. The Israelites, as directed in 33:50-56, were to take control of the given territory and drive out the inhabitants; further, they were to destroy all centers of the local false religion lest they remain to tempt the Israelites to the idolatry that could lead to their own destruction.

33:1-2 This chapter explicitly attests to its Mosaic authorship; Moses wrote down the starting point for each stage of the journey from Egypt to the plains of Moab (cp. pentateuchal references to written documents in Ex 24:12; 32:15; Dt 4:13; 5:22; 9:10; 10:2-4; 17:18; 27:3 and elsewhere).

33:3-49 The journey stages are listed in a literary composition similar in form to records of victory marches by Egyptian rulers (e.g. Thutmose III, Seti I, Ramses II). Against the view of source critics who claim this text combines four or more strands, the text constitutes a cohesive literary composition organized into six stages of seven locations each. In typical Hebrew style, the account highlights historic events such as the exodus. This text was meant to be recited in the Israelite assembly, as it recalled the stages through which God led the people from Egyptian oppression to the threshold of conquest in Canaan. The list is not, nor does it purport to be, an exhaustive one; it is, rather, a styled literary composition from the hand of Moses. It fails to mention some prominent places, including Mount Sinai, yet it refers to others not cited elsewhere in Nm or in Ex (e.g., Nm 33:18-25). The unwritten seventh cycleof the journey lay ahead in the occupation of Canaan, for which vv. 50-56 establish the challenge.

33:50-56 Commentators who ascribe this section to a Priestly editor, who allegedly combined Deuteronomic material with the Yahwist-Elohist traditions and appended vv. 50-51, have ignored the unified literary structure of this section. This passage sets forth the challenge to the Israelite community to claim its inheritance in the land. Faithfulness to the Lord's intention involves a threefold process: drive out (dispossess) the sinful Canaanites, destroy their centers of idolatry, and divide the land proportionately among their ancestral tribes.

33:55-56 These words evidence the literary and thematic cohesiveness of the Pentateuch. They echo, in summary, the message of judgment in Lv 26:14-33 and Dt 28:45-68. How the story of the victory march from Egypt to the promised land would be completed was in the hands of the people.

34:1-15 After reciting Israel's progress from Egypt to the doorstep of the promised land (chap. 33), Moses receives from the Lord the specific territorial boundaries within the land. The section concludes with the reminder about the territorial inheritance of Gad, Reuben and half-tribe of Manasseh on the east side of the Jordan, notably a region outside the boundaries delineated in 34:3-12.

34:3-12 The borders represent the limits of the land of Canaan during the Late Bronze Age (1550–1200 B.C.), and were the ideal for the national boundaries. Critics suggest these borders represent a later extent of Israel's dominion. Even under David and Solomon, however, these limits were not fully realized, even though such regions as Tyre and Sidon (in Lebanon) were allied with Israel through trade agreements. After the tenth century B.C. the extent of Israelite territory never approached the ideal.

34:16-29 It is typical of source critics to assign lists of names to the conjectured Priestly source from the post-exilic period (538–400 B.C.). In this case, the claim is that the names are based on the later book of Joshua, supposedly compiled at the end of the period of the Israelite kingdoms. Yet most of these names, with the exception of Caleb, never reappear in later Israelite history; they reflect archaic forms from the Late Bronze Age rather than Persian period.

35:1-8 The Levites do not receive a distinct territorial allocation like the other 12 tribes. They are to be dispersed in cities throughout the land to carry out their responsibilities on behalf of the entire nation of Israel. In Jos 21, these 42 cities are listed, with six additional cities of refuge. This allocation provided the Levites with pasturage for the flocks and herds they acquired through the tithes and offerings of local Israelites (Nm 18:21-32). They, and the priests, were available in all parts of the land to teach the laws of God to the people, most of whom did not read (Lv 10:11).

35:4-5 Commentators have noted the seeming incongruity of the dimensions given here, which would require the cities to be of minimal size to meet both distance parameters. The figures delineate a territory extending out 1000 cubits (1500 feet) from the city walls, with a total of 2000 cubits (3000 feet) on a side. Most walled cities were 3–5 acres in size, so the figure of 2000 cubits per side does not allow a distance of 1500 feet from any side of the city. Several writers have suggested that the 3000-foot dimension represents the view from outside the city, making the walled city the epicenter of a 3000 foot square Levitical territory. Others suggest the outer distances are meant to be taken as 3000 feet plus the city area.

35:9-34 The promised land was to be a holy land, free from the heinous impurity of shed blood. The six cities of refuge (Jos 20) established a place where someone who committed accidental manslaughter (unintentional, as in Nm 15:22-29) could find protection from a vengeful member of the slain person's family. In another sense, the city of refuge was a place of banishment for the offender. City elders assessed each case individually to determine the nature and cause of the victim's death. The killer's guilt was atoned only through the death of the high priest, so the killer was obliged to remain inside the city until the high priest died. The law did not apply to willful murders; if the local city congregation determined that the death of the victim had been the result of premeditation or intent to harm, they were to execute the slayer.

35:15 As in other pentateuchal legislation, the same principles of law applied to Israelite and non-Israelites in the land (cp. 9:14; 15:14-16; Ex 12:49).

35:30-31 The death penalty could not be carried out on the basis of a single witness, but only on the basis of multiple attestations. If the case was determined to be murder, the city of refuge offered no protection for the perpetrator.

35:32-24 The promised land was the dual inheritance of the Lord and the people, and thus the Lord could not tolerate pollution from bloodshed. His presence among the people demanded justice. In the case of murder, the purification was the removal of the offending agent from the land.

36:1-2 This section supplies further clarification of property inheritance issues in the case of Zelophehad's daughters (27:1-11), whose husbands had been part of the tribe of Manasseh.

36:3-4 The Machirites feared that the laws for the Year of Jubilee (Lv 25:13-55) might be applied in such a way that property of the tribe of Manasseh would fall to another tribe if Zelophehad's daughters married men from other tribes. Territorial integrity was uppermost in their concern at this pivotal point, when Israel would soon be distributing property proportionately (Nm 26:52-56; 33:54; 34:16).

36:5-12 Some modern critics contend that the resultant law restricted the rights of women. In actuality it provided a balance between two areas of concern: the integrity of tribal territory and a woman's right of marriage. Women could marry whom they pleased and their property rights would be retained, as were the men's, within the boundaries of the tribe so long as they married within the clans of the tribe. They could marry outside the tribe, but in that case they would forfeit their property rights. The conclusion upholds Zelophehad's daughters as examples of faithfulness to the Lord's instruction; when they married they "did as the LORD commanded."

36:13 The concluding verse of this book summarizes its content, and in particular, the last section in which the geographical setting is the plains of Moab on the east side of the Jordan River, opposite Jericho (26:3; 33:50; 35:1; cp.22:1). Moses' role as God's appointed prophetic spokesman is reiterated in the use of the phrase "through Moses" (lit. "which the LORD commanded by the hand of Moses to the children of Israel"). There, on the threshold of the promised land, the nation was positioned both geographically and spiritually—they had recently done as the Lord commanded—to claim their divine inheritance.

Deuteronomy Articles

Has Christianity Had a Bad Influence on History?

by Alvin J. Schmidt

No, Christianity hasn't had a bad influence on history. Christian beliefs and practices—that is, those consistent with Christ's teachings—have produced countless positive by-products in history. This is true even though evil actions of erring Christians, especially prominent leaders (some probably not even truly Christian), are regularly recorded in history books, leading many to believe that Christianity's influence has been mostly harmful. Commonly cited examples are the Crusades, the Spanish Inquisition, the medieval witch persecutions, the executions of Hus and Savonarola, and the Roman Catholic Church's silencing of Galileo. These acts were sinful and morally wrong—highly inconsistent with Christ's teachings.

Christianity has had numerous positive influences on history. Largely unknown in today's world, even to countless Christians, it elevated the sanctity of human life. In ancient Rome and other pagan societies, human life was cheap and expendable. The early Christians, motivated by the gospel, opposed abortion, infanticide, child abandonment, suicide, and gladiatorial contests—all legal and widely practiced in the Roman era. Fifty years after the legalization of Christianity in A.D. 313, the now-Christianized Roman emperors outlawed these inhuman acts. Infanticide and child abandonment are still illegal in most Western countries, and while abortion has unfortunately made a comeback in the West, nobody has yet suggested that gladiators be brought back for popular entertainment.

In the fourth century Christianity introduced hospitals to the world. Greeks and Romans had no such institutions of compassion. Christians, moved by Christ's words "I was sick and you looked after me" (Mt 25:36), built hospices as early as 325 and hospitals in 369—first in the East and then in the West. The names of numerous hospitals still reflect this Christian origin: St. John's Hospital, Lutheran Hospital, Presbyterian Hospital, etc.

Before Christianity appeared, women were practically slaves, having little or no freedom and dignity. Not so in the Christian church! Women were baptized and instructed along with men and took communion along with men. Adultery was no longer defined in terms of a woman's marital status; a married man having sex with a single woman now was also guilty of adultery. Christianity permitted a woman to reject a male suitor and inherit property. She no longer had to worship her husband's pagan gods.

Here are other positive effects:

• Countries where Christianity has had the greatest presence were the first to abolish slavery. By contrast, slavery is still present in many Islamic countries.

• The principle that no man is above the law originated with St. Ambrose. In 390 he demanded that Emperor Theodosius repent for wantonly killing 7,000 people. He told the emperor he wasn't above the law. In 1215 the Magna Carta expanded this Christian concept of liberty and justice.

• Christian teachings resulted in economic, political, and religious freedom.

• Universities grew out of the church's medieval monasteries.

• Christian theology, not pagan pantheism, motivated early scientists to explore God's natural world.

• Christianity inspired the invention of the musical scale and great musical compositions.

Finally, Christianity's influence is present in many of the West's social institutions and in its nomenclature, literature, and education, shaping much in the daily lives of people—both Christians and non-Christians.

Does the Bible Affirm That Animals Have Rights?

by Steve W. Lemke

No, Scripture never specifically grants rights to animals. The Bible doesn't assume that animals have intrinsic rights, even the right to life. Unlike humans, animals were not created in the image of God. God made humans the pinnacle of His creation, with inherent worth and greater capacities than animals. He appointed humans to subdue and rule over all animals (Gn 1:20-31). God specifically approved the use of animals as food for humans (Gn 9:1-3; Lv 11:2-3). Since animals have lesser value than humans, they shouldn't be given the rights accorded to human beings, and human life should never be sacrificed to save animal life.

Yes, the Bible affirms that humans have a moral obligation to treat animals humanely. Although animals are clearly not equal in worth to human beings, they have value since God created them as "good" (Gn 1:20-25). So, as part of our God-given stewardship, we shouldn't abuse or pointlessly harm animals. Scripture uses the same word to describe the animating force that God gave animals (*nephesh*, Gn 1:20-21,24,30) as it does in describing how He breathed a living soul into persons (Gn 2:7). Unlike animals, human souls have unique capacities: self-awareness, abstract reasoning, an orientation toward the future, freedom, moral responsibility, and the capacity to have a relationship with God. Animal sacrifices presuppose that animals have value (Lv 4-6; Heb 9:11-28). Animal pain is a matter for moral concern because God cares for animals (Gn 7:2-4; Ps 104:10-30; 147:7-9; 148:7-10; Mt 6:26; Lk 12:6-7,24).

Although God gave people permission to eat animals after the flood (Gn 9:1-3), this may have been a concession to human sinfulness. Vegetarianism practiced in the Garden of Eden (Gn 1:29-30; 2:16), and the prophecy that natural predators will live together peacefully in the future (Is 11:6-8), suggest that the eating of animal flesh isn't God's ideal.

Scripture calls upon humans to treat animals humanely. The Mosaic law forbade the heartless treatment of birds, promising long life to those who don't abuse animals (Dt 22:6-7). Other regulations were given for the welfare of farm animals (Dt 22:1-4,10; 25:4). Humane treatment of animals is a characteristic of godly living (Pr 12:10).

Introduction to Deuteronomy

AUTHOR

Deuteronomy is the last of the five books of the Pentateuch, a collection known to Jewish tradition as the Torah. Until the rise of eighteenth-century rationalism (or the Enlightenment), the Pentateuch was ascribed to Moses and thus to a period long in advance of the Hebrew monarchy. Over the past 250 years, though, critical scholarship has concluded that Moses had little or nothing to do with the composition of the Pentateuch and that in fact it is a compilation of four major source documents dating from the tenth to the fifth centuries B.C. This is known as the "Documentary" or "JEDP" hypothesis. (See the article titled "Who Wrote the Pentateuch and When Was It Written?" p. 158.) Central to this hypothesis is the assumption that Deuteronomy (a source labeled D) was the document discovered in the course of Josiah's reformation in 622 B.C. (see 2 Kg 22:8), that it had been written only shortly before its discovery, and that it either presupposed certain other sources (J = Yahwist, and E = Elohist) or anticipated the last of the four (P = Priestly).

Ancient Jewish and Christian tradition is unanimous in attributing Deuteronomy to Moses. The book itself makes this claim (Dt 1:1; 4:44; 31:9,22; 33:4), as does the rest of the Old Testament (Jos 1:7,13; 8:31-32; Jdg 3:4; 1 Kg 2:3; 8:56; 2 Kg 14:6; 23:25; 1 Ch 15:15; 22:13; 2 Ch 25:4; Ezr 3:2; 6:18; Neh 1:7; Dn 9:11,13; Mal 4:4), the New Testament (Mt 19:7-8; Mk 7:10; Lk 2:22; 16:29; Jn 1:17; 7:19; Ac 13:39; 15:1,5;
1 Co 9:9; 2 Co 3:15; Heb 10:28), and writings of the Jewish rabbis (e.g., *Baba Bathra* 14b-15a). Careful study of the book against the historical, geographical, and cultural background of the Late Bronze Age (c. 1550–1200 B.C.) shows it to be very much at home in that context. On the other hand, there is little in it that fits comfortably in a seventh century B.C. or later period. In short, there are no objective reasons to deny Moses' authorship. Only the need to serve a hypothesis that itself is without either internal or external proof can justify claims of non-Mosaic authorship.

BACKGROUND AND SETTING

The Old Testament itself provides precise information as to the composition of Deuteronomy provided one accepts two major premises: (1) Mosaic authorship, and (2) an "early" exodus date. The former has just been addressed. As to the latter, the only record of the exodus is in the Bible, and there are only two texts that address its dating. The first is 1 Kings 6:1, which states that the exodus occurred 480 years before Solomon laid the foundations of the temple. That took place in 966 B.C., a date hardly in dispute. The exodus, then, occurred in 1446. The other text is Judges 11:26, where Jephthah, a judge whose tenure commenced around 1100 B.C., states that the Israelites had lived in the Transjordan for three hundred years. This dates their settlement to 1400, or about 40 years after the exodus. This is in line with the fact that Israel wandered in the Sinai for 40 years after the exodus (Dt 1:3; 29:5). A date of around 1400 B.C. for the writing of Deuteronomy is clearly compatible with all this evidence.

The setting of Deuteronomy is the countryside east of the Jordan River opposite Jericho. The riverbank there ascends gradually from the river to the lower foothills and then to the high plateau of the Transjordan. From the Dead Sea to the north is an expanse of 20 miles or more before the river becomes constricted between steep banks on either side. Within the 100 square miles formed by these natural boundaries, the tribes of Israel camped prior to their crossing the Jordan into Canaan. During those months Moses addressed the people, probably on numerous occasions. Those addresses, together with other oral and written materials, came to constitute the Pentateuch. How or in what

order this was done cannot be known, but the fact that Deuteronomy records Moses' death suggests that it was the last part of the Pentateuch to be written (Dt 34:1-8; cp. 31:16; 32:48-52; 33:1).

The book consists of several kinds of literary genres and a great number of individual sections. No doubt at one time these sections existed independently of each other and were at last edited together into the present composition. This in no way undermines against Moses as author, for it could well have been he who was responsible not only for the original parts but also for their assembly into the form as we know it. That is, he was both author and editor.

THE RELIABILITY OF DEUTERONOMY

In addition to issues of authorship, dating, and place of origin for this biblical book, other issues command the attention of scholars. The first of these has to do with the form and structure of Deuteronomy as a covenant document.

Since the 1950s, comparisons have been noted between Deuteronomy and certain treaty texts from ancient Hittite archives. Though they share virtually nothing in terms of content, the structures of these respective documents are remarkably similar. Since the Hittite examples originated in the Late Bronze Age (c. 1400–1200 B.C.), Deuteronomy seems also to have come from this period.

However, other treaty texts have also surfaced, especially from seventh-century B.C. Assyria. These, too, resemble Deuteronomy in form and style except in two major respects. (1) They for the most part lack historical prologues. (2) They contain no blessing section. Both of these sections occur in Deuteronomy as well as in the Hittite models, thus providing further evidence for Deuteronomy's antiquity. The burden of proof for a seventh century B.C. Deuteronomy clearly rests on the adherents to that view and not on those who accept the traditional dating.

The only other important issue of apologetics relative to the book is the alleged anachronisms. For example, in Deuteronomy 1:1 Moses and Israel are said to be "across the Jordan" (*be'er hayyarden*). At first glance this might seem to suggest that the narrator was in Canaan proper, to the west, and was looking toward the Transjordan. This would appear to rule out Moses as the author. However, to this day Transjordan is a term used to describe the land east of the Jordan, even by people who live there.

Another example occurs in Deuteronomy 2:12. There the author says that the descendants of Esau had destroyed the native Horites and settled in their land just as the Israelites had dealt with the peoples they dispossessed. The vantage point seems to be post-conquest and thus long after Moses' time. A careful reading of the narratives of the Transjordanian conquests puts an end to this argument, however, for Moses and his armies did indeed defeat and dispossess the Amorite kings Sihon and Og before this statement was recorded (Dt 2:26–3:11).

The most famous case is the account of Moses' death at the end of the book (Dt 34:5-12). How could Moses write a text that describes the details of his own death and burial? It is possible, of course, that he was prophetically inspired to do so, but ancient Jewish tradition (*Baba Bathra* 14b-15a) and common sense suggest a better alternative—that the book was completed by someone else, most likely Joshua. This slight concession in no way undermines the position that Deuteronomy as a whole is Mosaic and from the late fifteenth century B.C.

Deuteronomy Study Notes

1:1 The location of Moses "beyond the Jordan" does not mean the author's viewpoint was from the region west of the Jordan (Canaan proper, known in scholarship as Cisjordan), and that hence he was not Moses. The term "beyond the Jordan" is equivalent to Transjordan, a name still in use (see Introduction).

1:5 Deuteronomy is in the form of a sermon by Moses, a sort of "farewell address," in which he undertakes to "explain this law" to the people who, under different leadership, will be occupying the promised land. It harks back, of course, to the laws given at Sinai a generation earlier, but differs from them in that—as might be expected when "preaching" the law—Moses frequently inserts a reminder of the proper motivation for keeping the Lord's instructions.

1:6 Horeb, the name of the sacred mountain in Dt, is an alternative designation of Sinai. Moses uses the name Horeb throughout Dt (except in 33:2) and both Sinai and Horeb elsewhere (Ex 16:1; 19:1,11,18,20; and 3:1; 17:6; 33:6 respectively).

1:10 "As the stars of the sky" is not to be taken literally but as hyperbole, an exaggerated comparison. This literary device emphasizes the amazing blessing of God upon the people of Israel. It anticipates the fulfillment of the promise made to Abraham (Gn 15:5; 22:17).

1:28 The description of the Amorites' cities as "fortified to the heavens" is a hyperbole expressing the fear of the ten spies, intended to dissuade Moses from attempting to attack them.

1:30 The idea of God's fighting for Israel has to be understood against the backdrop of the conquest of Canaan, in which the Lord would annihilate the hopelessly unrepentant and irredeemable Canaanite nations so as to open the land to Israelite possession. This language of "holy war" does not contradict the idea that God loves all peoples and desires all to repent. Even the NT speaks of Jesus, God's love incarnate, coming in bloody wrath and judgment in the last days (Rv 19:11-16). God's love and grace never compromise His holiness and justice.

1:37 God's severe treatment of Moses for what seems a minor incident (cp. Nm 20:12) does not expose Him to a charge of unfairness or of capricious administration of His judgment. Moses was the most privileged of men. As such he bore the greatest responsibility for his sin of failed leadership. His punishment was in direct proportion to what God had rightfully expected of him.

2:12 The land the Lord had already given Israel was not the land of Canaan west of the Jordan, but the land of the Amorite kings whom Moses had already defeated and whose territories Israel already occupied (2:26–3:10; cp. Nm 21:21-35). This historical note is not, therefore, from a later hand; it was well within Moses' experience and ability to record.

2:21 God's destruction of various peoples was neither capricious nor without purpose. As an all-knowing One, He knew the various Canaanite and other neighboring peoples to be beyond repentance (2:30).

2:30 King Sihon's hardness of heart (or spirit) was indeed brought about by the Lord, but it must be understood as a divine result of a process already begun by Sihon himself. The pharaoh of the exodus illustrates the same process. He first hardened himself against the Lord (Ex 7:13,22; 8:15,19) then, when all hope of changing his mind was gone, the Lord hardened him for His own purpose (Ex 9:12; 10:1,27; cp. Rm 1:24,26,28).

2:34 The complete destruction of men, women, and children underscores the idea of corporate solidarity. All members of a community, or even of a family, are blessed or judged together (Nm 16:1-35; Jos 7:22-26). Yet, within that framework, each individual is ultimately responsible to God for his or her own destiny (Jr 31:29-30; Ezk 18:2,4). Moreover, were these nations to survive, Israel would be drawn away into idolatry (Dt 7:1-4).

3:11 Og's large bed (approximately 14 feet by 6 feet) was probably a sarcophagus, the outer casing of a casket. Its extra-large size was necessary to accommodate him as a gigantic man but it also testified to his power and greatness as a king.

3:14 The phrase "as it is today" suggests a time somewhat later than the setting of the narrative and therefore an author or editor besides Moses. There are a number of such instances in Dt (34:6) but taken altogether they hardly undermine the case for Mosaic authorship of the book as a whole. Such incidental explanations are the product of divine inspiration.

3:26 The Lord's refusal to permit Moses to enter the land of promise was not pettiness on His part nor had Moses committed an unpardonable sin. Rather, his punishment was severe because he had dishonored the Lord in the presence of the people (Nm 20:12). The principle is that to whom much is given, much is required (Lk 12:48). In any event, Moses did appear in the promised land in the company of the transfigured Jesus (Mt 17:3).

4:2 This statement supports the common biblical idea that all Scripture is inspired by God and none of it is of human origin only (12:32; Jr 36:28,32; 2 Tm 3:16-17; 2 Pt 1:20-21). No one, therefore, can add to or delete from it.

4:11 The burning of the mountain was likely associated with volcanic eruption, or it could be a supernatural manifestation of the presence of the Lord who is often seen in connection with clouds or fire (Ex 3:2; 13:21; 19:18).

4:19 The sun, moon, and stars were not created to be objects of worship. They were set in the heavens to benefit all peoples with their light and heat, and to regulate units of time (Gn 1:14-19).

4:20 The reference to iron is not out of keeping with an early (fifteenth century) date for Dt. Though the Iron Age proper did not begin in the Middle East until 1200 B.C., iron smelting was known much earlier.

4:24 God is jealous in the sense that he tolerates no rival claims to deity and sovereignty. He alone is God, and all else is His creation. To worship the creature, rather than the Creator, is to rob God of His uniqueness and incomparability (vv. 35,39; Ac 17:22-28; Rm 1:25). The Hebrew word translated "jealous" (*qanna')* also means "zealous." God's jealousy is an expression of His intense love and care for His people and His demand that they honor His unique and incomparable nature.

4:26 On heaven and earth as witnesses, see note on 30:19.

4:28 Mention of other gods by no means certifies that they indeed exist; the reference is to idols ("gods of wood and stone"). Yet the worship of idols can open a person to Satan's demonic influence, and the NT takes this possibility seriously (1 Co 10:20; 1 Jn 5:21). Idols represented the supposed qualities of their corresponding deities. Israel would worship these idols when in exile; even though the gods behind them were only figments of a depraved pagan imagination (cp. Is 40:18-20; 44:9-11; Jr 10:14-16).

4:34 God's selection of Israel as a special people to the exclusion of all others can be explained only on the basis of His grace and hidden purposes. There was nothing in Israel, or even the nation's founding ancestor Abraham, that commended them to the Lord.

Merit or deserving qualities have nothing to do with God's sovereign choice of nations and individuals, out of all the options available to Him (7:6-9; cp. Ex 19:5-6). The vessel has no right to ask the potter why he has shaped him thus (Rm 9:14-26).

4:41 "Across the Jordan to the east" is a technical geographical term referring to what is now known as the kingdom of Jordan, or traditionally Transjordan (see 1:1).

5:2 On the name Horeb, see the Introduction and note on 1:6.

5:9 These words reflect the OT concept of the corporate nature of community and family life. All members are implicated in the blessing and judgment of even one member (2:34). It is well known that the sins of one generation have repercussions for generations to come (Ex 20:5). The impact of David's sin on his children is a classic case in point (2 Sm 12:10; 13:28). Also see note on 4:24.

5:14 The male and female servants mentioned here are not slaves in the sense of personal property. They were either hired persons or, more likely, bond-servants who had come under the control of a fellow Israelite to whom they owed a certain amount of service in exchange for a loan that rescued them from financial difficulty (Ex 21:1-6; Dt 15:12-18).

5:22 The subject of this statement is the Lord and not Moses. Elsewhere the OT speaks of God's writing the Ten Commandments with His own finger—an obvious figure of speech—underscoring the fact that God is the ultimate author of Scripture (Ex 32:15-16; 34:1). This wording is unique, however, for ordinarily God is said to write or speak through human beings (2 Pt 1:20-21).

6:4 The claim that the Lord alone is God is sometimes used as evidence for the composition of Dt at a time long after that of Moses. OT monotheism, the argument runs, was a late development in the history of Israel's religion, perhaps as late as Amos (eighth century) and other writing prophets. This claim assumes an evolutionary view of how religions developed. This assumption runs counter to the biblical view that holds that idolatry and polytheism are corruptions of authentic worship of God (Rm 1:18-23). In addition, historical evidence can be brought to bear that runs counter to evolutionary accounts of how religions develop. There is no reason to deny monotheism to the Mosaic period, which was foundational for Israelite faith.

6:7 The expectation here is not that Scripture should be taught to children in every waking moment, to the exclusion of anything else. By means of a figure of speech Moses uses opposites—sitting and walking, lying down and rising up—to suggest that any time is appropriate for instruction in the ways of the Lord.

6:10-11 This information about what lies ahead in Canaan is not at variance with other instruction about destroying the cultures and peoples of that land. Those instructions avoid any reference to material facilities, such as houses and walls (7:1-5). The cities, cisterns and other features could be left standing to facilitate Israel's occupation.

6:15 On God's jealousy, see note on 4:24.

6:16 The words do not mean to test the Lord in the sense of tempting Him to do evil. The Hebrew verb(*na-sâ*) means to put to the test or challenge. This was what the Israelites had done in the desert (Ex 17:7) in their exasperation over lack of food and water. To test God is to manifest a lack of faith.

7:2 This is a directive for so-called "holy war," a conflict led by the Lord against hostile and irredeemable foes who have an implacable resistance to God and His people (1:30).

7:6 God, in His sovereign grace, makes decisions based upon His omniscient wisdom in line with plans and purposes known, and knowable, only to Him. What seems arbitrary and even unfair to us must be understood as the best possible action for God to take. This was true of His election (choice) of Israel, but one people out of the myriads from which He could have chosen. To impose human "standards" of fairness on a righteous and all wise God is the height of arrogance. He is answerable to no man (Rm 9:20; see Ex 19:5-6; Dt 4:34; 14:2; 26:18.)

7:7 In a covenant context such as this, love does not refer to the emotional or providential aspect of God's character. In those senses, He loves all people equally (cp. Mt 5:45; Jn 3:16). Here the term is synonymous with choice. The Lord is saying that He chose Israel simply because He chose her; His "love" is His loyalty to the covenant He has granted. This sheds light on the difficult statement "I loved Jacob, but I hated Esau" (Mal 1:2-3; cp. Rm 9:13). "Love" and "hate" do not signify emotions of attraction or revulsion, but are expressions of the presence or absence of a special bond of loyalty (cp. Lk 14:26).

7:16 In fulfillment of God's directive for holy war (v. 2) the Israelites must destroy the Canaanite peoples. The reason for such severe action is made clear when the command to destroy the wicked is followed immediately by the prohibition from worshiping their gods. To allow the Canaanites to survive would be to leave Israel vulnerable to idolatry (2:34).

7:20 The ability of hornets to drive away whole armies is understandable, given the devastation of Egypt wrought by plagues of gnats, flies, and locusts. On the other hand, hornets (Hb *tsir'a*) might more accurately be translated "panic" as suggested by Ex 23:27-28.

8:3 The assumption that all Israel had to eat for 40 years was manna is unfounded. On special occasions they ate quail (Nm 11:31-34) and since they were a pastoral people they obviously maintained and consumed sheep, cattle and other domesticated animals. We today have no idea of the nourishment value, or even the taste, of manna (but see Nm 11:7), and it may not have been as undesirable as some believe. The real issue, of course, is whether or not God could provide for His people in such a miraculous manner; that question is a matter not of science but of faith (cp. Jn 6:31).

8:15 Though, to this day, springs issuing pure and refreshing water from rocky crevices may be found in Sinai and the Negev, the reference here is clearly to a supernatural supply (cp. Ex 17:6; Nm 20:11). Like the manna (vv. 3,16), the provision of water is declared to be outside the normal course of nature.

8:19 If one worships another "false" god or an imaginary one, the result is the same: a departure from faith in the true and living God (4:28).

9:1 It is possible that the total population of the seven Canaanite nations, plus that of neighboring nations, exceeded that of Israel, despite the fact that Israel counted more than 600,000 men alone (Nm 2:32). On the other hand, the statement that the nations were greater and more numerous (Hb ^{c}*atsum*) than the Israelites could be either a reflection of the misguided perception of the Israelites themselves (Nm 13:28,33), or Moses' use of dramatic exaggeration to emphasize the challenge they faced.

9:8 On the name *Horeb*, see note on 1:6.

9:10 The reference to the finger of God is an obvious anthropomorphism, or use of a human comparison to describe a divine activity. "God is Spirit" (Jn 4:24) and has no bodily parts. The figure is used to make the point that the Ten Commandments, at least, were composed by the Lord Himself and not by Moses (Dt 4:13; 5:22).

9:14 The Lord's threat to destroy wicked Israel appears to contradict His promise to the patriarchs that their descendants would endure forever (Gn 17:19). However, as one of those descendants Moses was qualified to be the Lord's instrument in establishing a new Israel if need be. It is clear from the passage that the Lord is testing Moses and would not, in fact, carry out the threat (Dt 9:25-29).

9:18 Moses' statement that he neither ate nor drank for 40 days presupposes supernatural sustenance, of the kind Jesus received when he, too, fasted 40 days in the Judean desert (Mt 4:1-11; cp. Dt 8:3). Those to whom God is a living reality do not find such claims impossible, but receive them by faith.

10:4 The Lord wrote the same words on the second set of tablets as on the first. This action attests the truth of "verbal plenary inspiration," the understanding that "the Scripture cannot be broken" (Jn 10:35)—its very words are inspired and inviolable in the original. It was not sufficient to replicate the ideas in the first tables of commandments. Their exact words mustbe repeated and faithfully recorded (see Jr 36:28, 32).

10:6 Numbers 20:28 implies that Aaron was buried on Mount Hor, though it does not explicitly say so. This passage locates the burial place at Moserah, but since the modern site has not been identified it is impossible to prove a contradiction. Quite likely Hor was located in a region called Moserah.

10:15 See notes on 4:34 and 7:6.

10:22 To describe Israel as being as numerous as the stars when its population was little more than 2 million is to employ hyperbole, a deliberate exaggeration designed to glorify God and affirm His faithfulness to His promises (Gn 15:5).

11:6 History records many instances of chasms opening up in the surface of the earth as a result of earthquakes, floods or other natural disasters. That such a thing could occur in the Sinai in Moses' time is not beyond belief. But the timing and precise location of the event are what is significant in the biblical record. If one believes in the God of the Bible there is nothing inherently problematic about the incident recorded of Dathan and Abiram (Nm 16:31-33).

11:9 Anyone who has traveled to the Holy Land might take issue with the description of it as "flowing with milk and honey," but that response overlooks the land's complete agricultural history. The term is a stock phrase that combines products derived from agriculture (milk) and those that are natural, that is, obtained apart from human labor (honey). As such, it illustrates the land's fruitfulness. Compared to the arid and bare deserts of the Sinai, Canaan was a virtual Eden. Archaeological research has revealed that the region was more cultivated and forested in ancient times than in recent centuries, due to elaborate systems of water retention and irrigation. Under Turkish occupation the land was stripped for lumber and became more arid, but reforestation by the Israelis has brought back much of the country's original character.

11:19 Taken literally, this passage would suggest that nothing was to occur in family life except the verbal communication of the law. But Moses' intention here is to impress upon parents that their very lifestyle as well as their words is to be instructive for their children (see 6:7).

11:24 To tread the foot on the land symbolized its domination and occupation. The meaning is not that Israelite territory would be limited to those areas in which the people actually walked. Rather, their claim to any part of it was sufficient to assert ownership of the whole (Gn 13:17; Jos 1:3).

11:26 The curse in view here is certainly not the use of profanity or anything of the kind but is the technical language of covenant relationship. Blessing comes by obedience and cursing by disobedience. Disobedience resulted in such things as illness, lack of rain, loss of harvest, deportation, or even death. Curses are not arbitrary and capricious acts of God but the penalty for violating a pledge made by the people themselves (cp. Ex 19:8; 24:3,7; Dt 28:1-68).

11:30 Though the term "across the Jordan" is normally a technical way of referring to the Transjordan (1:1; 4:41), here it refers to Canaan which lies on the other side of the river from the speaker's point of view. The mention of the mountains Gerizim and Ebal makes this clear. The expression also verifies that Moses is in the Transjordan at the time he issues these instructions.

12:2-3 Moses reiterates the Lord's directive to destroy all non-Israelite places of worship. To modern ears such words are neither "politically correct" nor in the spirit of ecumenism. The elimination of pagan sanctuaries, however, was the logical and essential consequence of acknowledging Yahweh as the one and only God—One who spoke of Himself as a "jealous" God who would tolerate no rivals (5:4-5; 6:15).

12:5 The command to worship God in only one place seems to be at variance with Ex 20:24-26, which permits altars at many places, and with later practice in which prophets who were loyal to God offered sacrifice at authorized high places (e.g. 1 Sm 9:11-14; 1 Kg 18:30). What this passage mandates, however, is community worship, especially in connection with the annual festivals. It does not address the matter of local worship in Israel's towns and villages.

12:10 To move across the Jordan suggests a westerly direction from Moses' location, which in turn supports the view that Dt was composed in the Transjordan. This accords with the Mosaic authorship and early date of Dt but would be inconsistent with a late date and Palestinian setting for the book (1:1; 4:41).

12:16 The prohibition against eating blood is not merely a ritual or dietary taboo. Blood stands for life in the OT (cp. Gn 9:4-6; Lv 17:10-16; Dt 12:23), and life, whether animal or human, is sacred. As such, it belongs to the Lord and must be poured out upon the altar or the ground as a sign of its being returned to Him (Lv 3:2; Dt 12:24).

12:29 See Nm 31:13-24; Dt 1:30; 2:21; 7:16.

13:2 False prophets occasionally uttered prophecies that came to pass, as this instruction recognizes. This does not contradict the test of a true prophet propounded in 18:20-22. That test is a negative one; it states that if what a prophet predicts *does not* occur, Israel need not fear him. More importantly, this directive refers to prophets who would entice Israel to the worship of false gods. That, in any case, is the sign of a false prophet regardless of whether or not he is able to predict future events. Often mere common sense allows one accurately to gauge the outcome of current trends; it is no sure sign that a person is an authentic prophet of the Lord. The two passages dealing with criteria concerning false prophets are not inconsistent with one another.

13:5 The death penalty for these false prophets who arise from within Israel seems unduly harsh until we recognize that they are guilty of nothing less than high treason when they encourage the people to defect from the Lord and embrace other gods. Such measures cannot be entertained today, of course, but they were quite appropriate to the OT theocratic community.

13:15 To destroy a whole city because of the idolatry of a few may seem unfair and a miscarriage of justice. However, the modern dichotomy between the individual and his community was unknown in the world of ancient Israel. The sin of the few became the responsibility of all (Gn 18:22-33; Jos 7:10-26). Presumably the citizens of the city in question here had done nothing to expose or punish the sin of the idolatrous offenders.

14:18 Inclusion of the bat in the list of unclean birds, though not technically correct according to modern speciation or taxonomy, is consistent with the intent of the passage: to forbid the eating of large flying creatures. Establishing a second category with only one representative would have been unnecessary and confusing in a culture in which biological distinctions followed rules different from those of the modern world.

14:21 The permission given to foreigners to eat meat prohibited to Israelites was not because of a superior attitude on the part of the Israelites but because they were not allowed to come in contact with a corpse (Nm 9:6; 19:11-22). Foreigners, not governed by such restrictions, were free to eat.

15:3-4 In matters of loans and repayment, Israelites and foreigners were governed by different laws. If an Israelite were in debt to a fellow Israelite, he could work off his debt and at the end of seven years it would be declared paid in full, whether or not the amount of the loan had actually been compensated. A foreigner, however, would receive no such grace and must pay the creditor all that he owed him.

15:4 This is not a prophecy that there would be no poor, for elsewhere it is made very clear that there would always be poor people among them (v. 11; Mk 14:7). The idea is that there need not be any poor if the members of the community practiced the mutual charity that was their obligation under the Lord's covenant.

15:12 The only way a Hebrew was "sold" to another Hebrew was through his or her own volition. This passage has nothing to do with slavery or the ownership by one person of another. The law permitted one who had become financially destitute to work off his indebtedness by placing himself into an indentured position whereby his labor for the creditor paid off his financial obligations.

15:17 This treatment, painful as it must have been, was entirely voluntary on the part of the person submitting to it. Furthermore, it displays a level of commitment to service to the master that would not be undertaken lightly. In any event, the practice does not contradict prohibitions elsewhere regarding mutilation (cp. Lv 19:28; 1 Kg 18:28) since all those instances related to pagan ritual.

16:3,8 The contradiction relative to the number of days on which unleavened bread must be eaten (seven and six respectively) is only apparent. Clearly v. 8 refers to the six days leading up to the solemn assembly on the seventh, when unleavened bread also could not be eaten. This equals the seven days of v. 3.

16:16 The absence of reference to females does not mean they were disqualified from attending the festivals; it only indicates that they were not required to do so. In the patriarchal era of the OT, headship of the family was vested in the father. On festive occasions and other major community assemblies, fathers and other adult males represented their families (vv. 11,14).

16:22 The prohibition against setting up sacred stone pillars has to be understood in its context. Here these objects are associated with the rituals of pagan worship (v. 21). The pentateuchal narrative includes instances when such monuments were erected as memorials, and even as elements in Israel's worship of the Lord (Gn 28:18; 31:13,45; Ex 24:4). As with many apparent contradictions or discrepancies is Scripture, this one ceases to be such when its context is taken into consideration.

17:5 A pluralistic, inclusivist culture finds the religious intolerance exhibited here repulsive. It goes against the idea that each person should be permitted to worship any god he wishes (or none at all), and in any way he wishes. Israel's covenant community, however, recognized only one God and He was jealous (or zealous) about His uniqueness and His claim to exclusive worship (4:24; 5:9). To a holy God, the worship of other "gods" was a defiant act of rebellion that could not be tolerated (13:5).

17:15 Israel was commanded to permit itself no foreign rulers. This is a token of the fact that Israel was a people set apart by the Lord to be—through both declaration and example—His unique representative among the nations. To be ruled by a foreign king would open the door to contamination of Israel's faith through the influence of pagan religion. Ultimately it would lead to the dissipation of God's purpose in bringing salvation to all nations through a pure and separated people.

17:16-17 The command to avoid the amassing of horses and wives was clearly disobeyed by all the kings of Israel, beginning with David and epitomized by Solomon (1 Kg 4:26; 10:26-29; 11:3-4). This is not an example of contradiction in the Bible. It

illustrates the discrepancy between God's ideal standards and the human incapacity or unwillingness to obey them. Scripture upholds no one as a perfect exemplar of obedience to God's command, except Jesus Christ (2 Co 5:21; Heb 4:14; 1 Pt 2:22).

18:2 The lack of inheritance for the Levites might be thought inconsistent with the provision granting them 48 cities throughout the land (Nm 35:1-8). The inheritance in view here, however, is that of territory. The Levites were not allocated a contiguous block of land, as were the other tribes. Their towns included only a limited agricultural perimeter (Nm 35:3-5), so they were almost totally dependent on the gifts of the people.

18:9 It is unfair to characterize Israel as narrow-minded for calling the religious practices of the Canaanites detestable. Both the Bible and archaeological evidence attest to the depravity of Canaanite worship, which incorporated temple prostitution, child sacrifice, mutilation and other inhumane features. But it was detestable chiefly because it pandered to nonexistent gods, in defiance of the one true God who reveals Himself through His word and actions, not through ritualistic practice.

18:15-19 Moses relates the Lord's promise that He would raise up a (true) prophet like him. This is not arrogant self-promotion. One hallmark of the inspiration of Scripture is the fact that authors sometimes speak favorably of themselves, something they would not be likely to do unless compelled by God's Spirit (cp. Nm 12:3,7; Dt 34:10). Considering the hardships and opposition Moses had endured, and his foundational role in establishing Israel's covenantal faith, it is understandable that the Lord would hold him up as a model for future occupants of the prophetic office.

18:20 See note on 13:5.

18:22 The test of fulfilled prophecy must obviously be effective only for a prediction made in the near future, during the lifetime of the prophet himself and those who heard him. Not one long-range OT prophecy has ever been shown not to have been fulfilled, even if the fulfillment took a form that was unexpected (e.g., the prophecies of Messiah that were fulfilled in the crucified, risen and ascended Christ, and not in the appearance of a political or military leader).

19:1 The Lord's destruction of the nations of Canaan and Israel's appropriation of their properties might appear arbitrary and unfair. But these nations were living in the land previously promised to the descendants of Abraham (Gn 12:1; 13:17; 15:18-21), and their possession of it was illegitimate according to the plan of God. Secondly, the Canaanites were a people who had placed themselves beyond redemption through their implacable defiance of God, persisting in their abominable social and religious practices (see notes on Dt 1:30; 2:21,34; 7:2; Rm 1:22-28).

19:6 Under the system of blood vengeance, a family member of a person whose life was taken by another could pursue and execute the murderer. This was not the random act of a vigilante, for the community had procedures by which it regulated the process (vv. 15-20). Underlying this system was the sense of corporate solidarity, in which every member of a family was considered to be part of the body. That which injures one member injures all. In the modern Western world, in which the individual has come to be regarded as sovereign, the concept of community solidarity is not well appreciated.

19:9-10 The addition of three cities of refuge to the original six attests to the mercy and justice of the Lord, Who ensures that an accused felon would have reasonable access to one of them. Again, it must be noted that the avenger had to follow due process. One unable to flee the avenger quickly must not suffer vengeance without an opportunity for a fair hearing before the court (v. 15).

19:13 Lack of pity, in this instruction, does not mean lack of human compassion and sensitivity. The idea is that the criminal should not be allowed to evade justice because of the sympathy of the community. Painful as it may be, the punishment must fit the crime and be fully carried out.

19:21 The measure-for-measure justice this directive advocates, known as *lex talionis*, need not be taken to mean, for example, that if a person should blind another person his or her eye should be blinded in turn. The principle is that a punishment must always be commensurate with a crime. It should neither exceed, nor be less than, the gravity of the offense (Lv 24:19-20). In the context of surrounding cultures where vengeance had no limits, *lex talionis*, was a standard far more just.

20:1 The Lord's presence with his people in their warfare does not mean He sanctions every war or takes an active role in it. The passage is describing "holy war" (sometimes called "Yahweh war"), a conflict initiated by the Lord, empowered by Him, and resulting in His appropriation of its spoils. Such warfare was undertaken to destroy peoples who were irretrievably beyond redemption and who were likely to contaminate Israel's faith with their idolatrous practices (see 1:30; 7:2,16; 19:1).

20:5-8 These various exemptions from military service may seem unfair to other fighters, but they are in the interest of the whole army. Any soldier distracted by thoughts of home, occupation and family is unable to give full attention to his military duties, and can become more of a liability than an asset to the cause. The mention of houses and fields is an indication that the complete conquest of Canaan would not be instantaneous, but would occupy a period of time during which some Israelites would be able to establish themselves in the land; the book of Joshua reveals this to be the case. It is interesting that these exemptions are similar to the excuses offered by those who, in Jesus' parable, did not come to the master's banquet (Lk 14:18-20), with the implication that receiving the kingdom of God was a parallel to the conquest of the promised land.

20:11 Cities outside Canaan were granted a certain leniency because they were not among the nations under God's "ban" (mandate of total destruction). Apparently, unlike the Canaanites proper, they were not considered irredeemably hardened against the Lord and his people. If they surrendered they would not be exterminated but would become vassals (subservient peoples) of Israel. This was a way of asserting the Lord's proper and deserved sovereignty as God of all the earth (cp. Jos 9:22-27).

20:16-17 The destiny of the various Canaanite peoples was complete annihilation. They were to be placed under the ban (Hb *cherem*), the wrath of God enacted against persons beyond redemption (see 1:30; 12:2).

20:19 The anomaly of trees being spared while human beings were slaughtered lies precisely in the fact that human beings sin and therefore are culpable whereas trees, not being sentient, are "innocent." This underscores the awfulness of sin and explains God's abhorrence of it and need to punish it.

21:3-4 This means of addressing the crime of homicide operates on the basis of circumstantial evidence. When a perpetrator is not known, the assumption is that he is from the town nearest to the scene of the crime. The whole town is therefore implicated and its presumed guilt must be atoned for by appropriate sacrifices (v. 6). No sin is guiltless before God, and it must be dealt with even in anonymous cases. Again, the principle of corporate solidarity is at work (see notes on 5:9; 19:6).

21:11-14 In warfare against non-Canaanite nations, the Israelites could take prisoners (cp. 20:11), including young women as wives. This is not a requirement of the Law, or an action the Lord necessarily endorsed; it was a permission granted to make more tolerable a practice common at the time. A captive wife would surely live under conditions more favorable than those for a woman not so chosen. If her captor later rejected her as wife, she could not be made a slave.

21:15 Polygamy, while tolerated by the Law, was certainly never prescribed nor sanctioned. Monogamy is the standard to which God's people were to conform. This is clear in both the OT (Gn 2:24) and NT (Mt 19:4-6). As is often the case, the instruction was designed not to prescribe a cultural norm but to regulate existing practice in a more humane way.

21:16 The wife who is "hated" (Hb text) is not the object of her husband's loathing disdain. The verb expresses the idea of being secondary in his affections. Jacob's preference for Rachel over Leah (Gn 29:18,30) and Elkanah's favor toward Hannah rather than Peninnah(1 Sm 1:5) are examples. (On the meaning of "hate" in this sense, see note on Dt 7:7.)

21:17 The child of the less-loved but first wife must be granted the double portion that fell to the first-born son. This is a prime example of the principle of fair treatment in human relationships that distinguishes Israel's social practice from that of surrounding cultures. Israel's faith raised its family and community life to a higher plane than that of its neighbors.

21:21 The execution of a wayward and incorrigible son is inconceivable in modern secular society, which lacks the standards of a theocratic (ruled by God) community. The possibility described here dramatizes the heavy responsibility borne by Israelite parents to see that their offspring held to the standards demanded of the people of God. Parents were expected to be God's agents of authority and discipline at the family level, ensuring that no dysfunctional and destructive influences entered the community of faith on their account.

21:23 The hanging on a tree here was not crucifixion, nor was it even the cause of death (v. 22). Its purpose was to put to shame a person who had committed a capital offense, both because of the heinousness of his crime and to serve as a deterrent to others. Such an individual was the special object of God's curse, the focus of His wrath that otherwise would be poured out on the community as a whole (cp. 2 Sm 4:12; 21:9; Gl 3:13).

22:1-4 The elevated level of OT law and ethics, as compared to that of the ancient Near East in general, abhors not only aggressive wrongdoing but also passive indifference in the face of opportunities to do good. This is in line with James' injunction that "for the person who knows to do good and doesn't do it, it is a sin" (Jms 4:17).

22:5 Cross dressing, considered by some of little consequence today, was strictly forbidden in Israel because it obliterated the lines of distinction inherent in God's creation of man and woman.

22:9-11 The purpose of this passage as a whole is to establish the principle of separation, in light of the possibility that Israel might permit a mixture of Canaanite religious and cultural practice to assimilate with the faith of Yahweh. Subsequent biblical history records that Israel failed to keep itself from such corruption, and so came under judgment. Paul cites this text in his argument against a Christian's marriage with unbelievers (2 Co 6:14).

22:21 Loss of virginity was tantamount to adultery in the case of betrothal, implied here. It was considered nothing short of harlotry, a sin that brought disrepute upon the whole community. Physical whoredom was analogous to spiritual unfaithfulness to the Lord, and was therefore deemed deserving of death (Hs 4:1-19)—as severe as this sanction may appear by today's "standards."

22:25-27 This situation well illustrates the common-sense approach of biblical law. A woman raped outside a settlement is presumed innocent of consensual sex, as presumably she had protested the assault but was too far away for her cries to be heard. Of course, she could have gone voluntarily to the field to effect a liaison; but in Israelite culture the penalty for such a prearranged encounter, if found out, would normally deter such a plan (v. 21).

22:30 The father's wife, in this case, would be the subject's foster mother and not his own, considering that incest is covered elsewhere in the Law (Lv 18:7). The stated reason for the prohibition is that, in committing this act, the man is "uncovering his father's skirt." That is, he is intruding into an area reserved for his father alone. The law thus protects the authority of the father and teaches filial respect for him.

23:1 This apparent discrimination is based on theprinciple that a physical defect is analogous to spiritual imperfection (cp. Lv 21:16-23). The defect, in this instance, has to do with reproductive capacity, the lack of which was considered to be a curse. Jesus spoke of "eunuchs who have made themselves that way because of the kingdom of heaven" (Mt 19:12), removing the traditional religious stigma from those who lack reproductive capability or who refrain from utilizing it (depending on whether or not one takes His expression in the literal sense). Christianity's first recorded non-Jewish convert was such a person (Ac 8:26-38).

23:2 The exclusion of an illegitimate child from the assembly is related to the previous instructions having to do with irregular sexual matters. The denial of full fellowship has nothing to do with the personal spirituality of the individual; it is the community as a whole that is in view. The prohibition illustrates the uncompromising standards of the Lord affecting how, and under what conditions, persons may enter His presence. Physical traits reflecting what is normal and proper are symbolic of the required spiritual state.

23:3 Ammonites and Moabites were barred from the assembly of the Lord because they had failed to provide Israel needed supplies en route to Canaan, and had also tried to curse Israel. Their refusal was especially odious because Ammon and Moab were related to Abraham through Lot (cp. Gn 19:30-38). Additionally, they were children of incest and so fell into the category of the previous verse. The case of Ruth, a Moabite, raises an issue, especially since she became the great-grandmother of King David and an ancestor of Jesus. God sovereignly allows for exceptions to general principles, much as Rahab was an exception in the destruction of Jericho (Jos 6:25). But the exclusion in Dt 23:3 is from "the LORD'S assembly," not the community in general, and there is no record that Ruth attended any of the annual festival gatherings.

23:7-8 Edomites and Egyptians, because of their brotherhood with Israel and hospitality respectively, could enter the assembly but only after the second generation. The point here and in v. 3 is that, though redemption is at the Lord's initiative and by His grace, privileges such as access to the assembly were determined by how one related to the Lord and to His people.

23:13 The proper disposal of excrement and other impurities (vv. 10-11), especially in the context of holy war (as here), relates to the notion of ritual purity and not hygiene in general. Since God is holy—that is, pure—anyone or anything in His presence, indeed the entire camp, must be rendered holy by following proper procedure. This instruction is a reminder that spiritual "refuse" has no place within the community of faith.

23:15 The OT never explicitly condemns slavery, but neither does it sanction or justify it. Nevertheless, this directive ameliorates the slave's condition in a manner unknown elsewhere in the ancient Near East. He must not be returned to his master but can remain with whoever has found him, and must be treated well.

23:17 This is not a blanket condemnation of prostitution or homosexuality (though such prohibitions are found elsewhere; cp. Lv 18:22; 20:13) but a prohibition of the kinds of perverse sexual activities that were common in Canaanite religious rites.

23:20 The law clearly allows for treating Israelites differently from foreigners in financial matters. Israelites may not exact interest on loans from their fellow Israelites, but may levy it against others. Discrimination of this kind illustrates at least two themes: (1) Members of the covenant community must not profit from one another's distress. (2) Being a member of that community entails certain privileges.

23:24-25 Lack of a governmental welfare system made it necessary for the poor to have access to essentials for survival. Thus, they might help themselves freely to a neighbor's crops as they casually walked through their fields. Here it is clear that being poor was not the only qualification for helping one's self; anyone could pluck grain or grapes as he wished. Under the covenantal principle of corporate solidarity, the community cannot view itself as a mere collection of independent individuals. What one has is, within limits, the property of all.

24:1-4 Divorce is never authorized in the OT, though it is permitted (as here). The ideal was for one man to marry one woman for life (cp. 21:15; Gn 2:24). Moses allowed divorce, Jesus said, because of the hardness of people's hearts (Mt 19:8). As so often in the OT law, the practice of divorce was to be strictly regulated, and remarriage—the real issue here—even more so. To take back a former wife who had married another in the interim would, in effect, make her an adulteress.

24:6 This law manifests a humane quality seldom found in secular law codes of the ancient Near East. To take and keep a millstone as collateral on a loan was todeprive the borrower of what he needed in the preparation of his meals—in other words, for

his day-to-day survival.

24:9 The harsh treatment of Miriam was a reminder to her, and others, that rebellion against divinely authorized spiritual leadership is, in effect, rebellion against God Himself.

24:16 This verse teaches personal responsibility for one's own sin and its consequences. This seems to contradict passages elsewhere that suggest that the sins of parents have repercussions for many generations to come (cp. 2:34; 5:9). There is a difference, however, between the transmission of guilt and accountability on the one hand, and the aftereffects of sin on the other. For example, David's children were not held responsible for his adultery and murder, but they paid the price as members of the dysfunctional family his sin produced (2 Sm 12:10).

24:19-22 These examples of the care and generosity to be extended to the poor illustrate the elevated ethic of the OT as compared to that of surrounding nations. Those who try to make a case for a "sub-Christian" social attitude in the Law are ignoring texts such as these.

25:2 Physical punishment and public humiliation may appear barbaric to the modern "enlightened" mind, but their deterrent effect can hardly be denied. With prisons unavailable, especially for a people on the move, incarceration for crime was virtually non-existent in ancient Israel. This left few options for the application of justice. The criminal who was beaten would not be kept at public expense, and would be able to continue to work to provide for his family.

25:3 The leavening of justice with mercy is witness to an OT concern even for persons deserving of punishment. In the ancient world this attitude is virtually unique to the OT. Later Jewish custom restricted the blows to 39, as insurance against miscounting and accidentally administering more than the permitted 40 (2 Co 11:24).

25:4 The significance of this apparently trivial instruction is not simply to call attention to the need for humane treatment of animals. It is also an analogy to the human scene. If an ox is to be treated with such consideration, allowed to benefit from the results of its labor, how much more should human beings be so treated. That is certainly the way the apostle Paul took this instruction (1 Co 9:9; 1 Tm 5:18).

25:5 The custom described here (the so-called "levirate marriage") must be understood in terms of a number of qualifications. First, the marriage to a widow was expected but not mandatory (v. 7; Ru 4:5-6). Then, since monogamy was the only sanctioned form of marriage, the surviving brothers must not be married in order to fulfill the obligation. Finally, the purpose was to preserve the deceased brother's name and by this means to guarantee his ongoing identity (Dt 25:6) in a culture which had, as yet, no view of the resurrection of the dead. The Sadducees (who also had no such belief) tried to trip Jesus up on this question with a fictitious example of the "levirate marriage," but He saw through their ploy (Mt 22:23-32).

25:9 To spit in the face may strike one as repulsive behavior, yet each society has its gestures that would seem crude to people of other cultures. This act of disdain or refusal was (and is) common in Middle Eastern societies and must be judged, as to its propriety, against that cultural environment. The loosening of the sandal suggests that the reluctant brother is abandoning all claim to the widow's property (cp. Nm 12:14; Ru 4:7-8).

25:12 The woman's harsh punishment is due to the fact that her impetuous act might result in the man's emasculation, depriving him of the ability to procreate. The result would be the same as that envisioned in vv. 5-10—he would die without progeny, and his name would forever be lost in Israel. As is often the case in OT law, the instruction's ramifications extend beyond the surface reading of the text.

25:16 Even modern moral relativism has not erased the public's disgust with duplicity or cheating in business practice (vv. 13-15). Dishonest dealings are an abomination to the Lord, as well. Such behavior is not just an abuse of another individual; it

impacts the ethical equilibrium of the whole community. To rob one's neighbor is, in a sense, to rob God, for He is the One who dispenses economic blessing as He sees fit.

25:17 The injunction to forgive and forget, while clearly a biblical principle, does not apply in cases where God's honor or that of His people has been violated without subsequent remorse and repentance. The attack of the Amalekites against the weakest of the Israelites was an attack on the Lord, who cares for just such people (v. 18). Saul's later failure to carry out the mandate for Amalek's complete annihilation resulted in the termination of his dynasty (1 Sm 15:26).

26:1-11 This section about the presentation of the firstfruits illustrates the biblical pattern of worship, which incorporates the narrative of what God has done for His people. The recitation in Christian worship of the Apostles' Creed, which is at heart the story of God's action in Christ, is based on this OT pattern.

26:5 The father referred to here is not Abraham, a native of Ur, but Jacob. He was an Aramean in the sense that he had lived in Aram (Syria) for 20 years, gained a family there, and left for Egypt shortly after he had returned to Canaan.

26:9 See note on 11:9.

26:12 The law here is not in conflict with the law that asserts that the tithes are to be given to the Lord (cp. Lv 27:30). That was the general principle, but every third year a tithe must also be given to support the Levites and other dependents. When God's people give to others they are thereby giving to the Lord as well, a point Jesus made (Mt 10:42).

26:19 See notes on 4:34; 7:6.

27:2 See note on 1:1.

27:3 The instruction to write upon one monument "all the words of this law" has seemed impossible to many critics. However, the size of the stele (inscribed monument) is not mentioned, nor is "law" clearly defined. It is unlikely that the entire Torah is in view, but perhaps the reference is to more than the Ten Commandments. "This law" refers to Dt, Moses' summary of the Sinai covenant. Though lengthy, it is not much longer than the Code of Hammurabi whose prologue, epilogue, and 282 laws are all inscribed on one stone monument.

27:4 The Samaritan Pentateuch (version of the Torah used by the Samaritan sect) reads Gerizim rather than Ebal, and thereby locates the monument at the place where the Samaritans eventually built a temple. It was there when Jesus spoke to the woman at the well, and it was to Gerizim that the woman pointed when she spoke of her place of worship (Jn 4:20). The Hebrew text preserves the original reading, which the Samaritans altered to justify their practice. Jesus pointed beyond both geographical locations, the Samaritan Gerizim and the Jewish Jerusalem, to the true worship of the Father (Jn 4:21-24).

27:5 The command to build an altar of unhewn stones is not at variance with the instructions Moses received about the altar of the tabernacle fashioned of wood and bronze (Ex 27:1-8). That was the altar of the central sanctuary (cp. Dt 12:5), whereas this is an altar of a local shrine. Contrasting with the masonry of Canaanite altars, local Israelite altars were to be built of field stones which preserved the manner in which the Lord, Himself, had shaped them (Ex 20:25; cp. 1 Kg 18:31-32).

27:9 The assembly became the people of the Lord that very day, in the sense that they had assembled in order to reaffirm their commitment to Him. This was not their initial relationship with Him, for that had taken place at Sinai (Ex 24:3-8). By renewing the covenant they became the Lord's people in a new and fresh way; as though they themselves had been present at the original events.

27:12-13 Though the mountains are large it is doubtful that all the people of Israel could stand on them at one time. Probably tribal leaders did so on their behalf.

27:15-26 The solemn, ceremonial pronouncement of a curse upon those who would disregard the principles of God's Law is part of Israel's covenant structure, and illustrates the power of the spoken word in the biblical world view. The curse will take effect, should the instruction be abrogated through unfaithful behavior. It does not require a special act of God to bring about its effect; the disobedient deeds themselves will incur their consequences. The NT also includes some instances of the pronouncement of curse (1 Co 16:22; Gl 1:8-9; cp. Rv 22:18-19).

27:16 In the Lord's structure of authority the parent stood in God's place; lack of respect for the parent was tantamount to lack of respect for God (see 5:16).

27:17 All properties in the promised land were God's and were allocated to tribes, clans, and families as best suited Him. To encroach on a neighbor's property is to reveal dissatisfaction with one's own share, and thus to question the Lord's wisdom and sovereignty over all of life. It is also comparable to a business deception (25:16). Such self-serving actions violate a person's solidarity with others who share in the Lord's covenant, and thus come under the curse.

27:20 See note on 22:30.

27:21 Besides being intuitively abhorrent, sexual relations with an animal (bestiality) breaks down the division between two of God's creatures, one of which (mankind) was to rule the other (animals). Such an act (*perturbatio naturarum*) upsets the creative order and thus evidences dissatisfaction with, and lack of respect for, God's perfect plan of governance for what He has brought into being.

28:1 This verse appears to suggest that Israel's place of preeminence in God's program depends on obedience to Him, whereas other texts (cp. 4:34; 7:6; 10:15) make it unconditional. The apparent discrepancy disappears when it is recognized that, though the Lord's choice of Israel as His covenant partner was an act of His love and grace alone (7:7-8; cp. Hs 11:1), but her ability to be blessed and to prosper in that relationship depended on loyal obedience.

28:12 The promise that Israel will lend but not borrow is not in the form of a commandment or prohibition; it is a promise of Israel's future prosperity through obedience to God, whose blessing will make Israel the envy of the nations of the world.

28:15-68 Moses returns to the curse element of the covenant declaration, which is considerably longer than the blessing section. Israel's obedience was a critical matter, and the consequences of disloyalty to the Lord needed to be clearly spelled out.

28:19 The coming in and going out is a figure of speech suggesting the fullness of activity and life. The curse for covenant disobedience will be so severe and comprehensive that it will negatively impact all aspects of national life.

28:20 The perishing of Israel must be understood in terms of her removal from the land (as is clear from v. 21), not a final and ultimate annihilation. That would contradict God's covenant promises elsewhere (Gn 17:7, 13; Ps 105:9-10).

28:23 The bronze and iron are metaphors describing the lack of rain and the consequent hardness of the soil respectively. Such figures should not be taken as evidence that the OT as a whole speaks in figurative language. A passage's context always contains clues that make it clear when figures are being employed.

28:26 The curses listed here and in the following verses are stated in graphic and, no doubt, hyperbolic terms to emphasize the enormity of Israel's sin and the punishment that must ensue, should she prove unfaithful. These punishments did not all take place, nor did they occur at all times, though the Bible records many examples of their fulfillment. They are representative of the kinds of judgments Israel could expect if she were to be disobedient to God's covenant.

28:30 These curses are, in part, the reversal of what would befall the corrupt Canaanites in Israel's occupation of the land (30:19). That curses such as these would befall the guilty by no means justifies their propriety, morally or legally. These are not reflections of the character of God, but reveal what can occur when He permits such human actions as instruments of His judgment.

28:36 The reference to a king does not prove that Dt was written in the period of the monarchy, as the critical view holds. It affirms prophetically what God had already promised to the patriarchs, that a line of kings would issue from them (Gn 17:6,16).

28:46 An everlasting curse on Israel would appear contrary to the promise elsewhere that Israel would enjoy unending blessing (cp. Gn 17:7,13; Ps 105:9-10). The Hebrew phrase *A.D. 'olam*, however, need not be understood to mean "forever" in the cosmic sense. It can be understood as a "rhetorical Hebraism," with the sense of "a long period of time."

28:53 The allegation that resorting to cannibalism reflects a primitive ethic not worthy of a "high religion" or a "cultured people" fails to understand that this gruesome practice is hardly being sanctioned here. The point is exactly the opposite; consuming one's offspring is so out of keeping with civilized behavior that it provides a shocking example of the result of covenant disobedience. In the reign of Jehoram, a faithless king of Israel, an incident of this kind did occur during a famine brought about by siege (2 Kg 6:25-29).

28:56 As in the previous examples of horrible cursings, this one is no indicator of ancient Israelite practice. Rather, it underscores the desperation of people when pushed beyond the limits of endurance.

28:62 The threat that disobedient Israel will be left few in number does not contradict verses 61 and 63 which appear to teach that the nation will suffer total destruction. The language is that of hyperbole, intentional overstatement designed to drive home a point. The end of verse 63 makes clear that the destruction is removal from the land into exile.

28:64 "From one end of the earth to the other" must not be understood in modern terms, that is, worldwide. The idea has to be seen in the historical and geographical context of the time of the text when the known world was essentially the eastern Mediterranean, northern Egypt, and Mesopotamia. Moreover, the Hebrew word *'erets* more properly means "land," not the "earth" (the globe). In these terms, the curse was fulfilled in the Assyrian and Babylonian exiles.

28:68 There is no historical record of Israelites going back to Egypt on a mass scale. The passage is referring to the future exiles, a reverse exodus as it were, that would place God's people in bondage once more—this time to the Assyrians and Babylonians.

29:1 This is a clear statement attesting to Moses' authorship of Dt.

29:4 The apparent contradiction between this verse, which says the people could not see, and verse 3, which says they did see is easily resolved by recognizing that v. 3 is speaking of physical sight and verse 4 of spiritual insight. It is possible to look without seeing, to hear without listening (cp. Is 6:10; Jn 9:40-41).

29:7 King Sihon and King Og did not both encounter Israel in the plains of Moab. In fact, Og did battle with them at Edrei, near the Sea of Galilee (Nm 21:33). "This place," then, refers to the Transjordan as a whole, an area embracing the territories of both Sihon and Og.

29:13 To be established as the people of the Lord, on this occasion, does not mean that Moses purports to be presiding over the initial establishment of the covenant. That had been undertaken 40 years earlier at Sinai (Ex 19:4-8). Deuteronomy as a whole is a covenant renewal document, so what is being done here is a reaffirmation of that relationship.

29:15 The ones not there were not absentees from the ceremony but the unborn generations yet to come. The covenant could be made with them, in the sense that Israel as a covenant community consisted of both its ancestors and its descendants. Future generations, as it were, already lived in the loins of Moses' generation (cp. Heb 7:10). The covenant is not with an aggregate of individuals at any given time, but with an ongoing historical community. The Christian concept of the "communion of saints" reflects this idea.

29:20 The reason for the harshness of God's judgment here is to be found in the nature of the offense being punished, idolatry (v. 18). Such an act was not only intrinsically evil because of the depravity of pagan religions. In the context of the covenant with Yahweh it was nothing short of high treason, the worst of all possible offenses. To worship other "gods" is to deny God His very existence and His sovereignty.

29:28 "Where they are today" refers to a future time when Israel would be in exile, not to the time of the speaking or writing of the text. Moses is quoting what people would say later on if Israel abandoned the covenant. These words cannot therefore be used in support of a case for a late date of the book.

30:6 Skeptics sometimes consider such ideas as circumcising the heart absurd, since they fail to understand the use of figurative language in religious or theological contexts. The idea here is that, just as physical circumcision identified one as belonging to the Abrahamic covenant, spiritual circumcision would be the hallmark of membership in the new covenant (Gn 17:13-14; cp. Rm 2:28-29).

30:19 To call heaven and earth as witnesses is not to suggest that they somehow represent living and sentient beings. This is a literary device (an "apostrophe") the purpose of which is to provide an element in covenant making, namely, witnesses to the mutual pledges made by each party. God is here swearing to act upon the decisions Israel is required to make. In treaties outside Israel, the "gods" of the partners are invoked as witnesses. Since there is only one true God, He invokes His creation ("the heavens and the earth," Gn 2:1) as His two witnesses.

31:2 Those who question Moses' life span of 120 years do so on the grounds that such an age is virtually unheard of in modern times. However, one should never gauge the past by the present. God had specially blessed and preserved Moses so that he could accomplish the tasks to which he had been called.

31:2 It appears unfair for the Lord to deny Moses access to the promised land for one intemperate outburst (1:37; cp. Nm 20:12). But Moses, the recipient of special privilege, was also charged with special responsibility. To fail to execute his responsibility completely was to cast both himself and his God in a bad light. For that reason, he could not enter the land with the new generation.

31:9 This verse clearly attests to the Mosaic authorship of at least Dt, if not the entire Pentateuch. Those who argue that late pre-exilic or even exilic editors inserted statements like this, in order to give a late composition Mosaic authority, do so only on the base of a previous assumption that Moses could not have written these texts. Such unwarranted assumptions may arise from a desire to divest the Pentateuch, and the Bible as a whole, of any moral credibility.

31:11 Some have objected that the public reading of the Law would require more time than an assembled crowd could endure. Deuteronomy alone is in view here, and an unhurried reading of this book could be easily done in two and a half hours. Later biblical history records that Ezra "read out of the book of the law of God" to the people in its entirety, over an eight-day period (Neh 8:18). People can do difficult things when they consider them important.

31:15 The fact that the Lord appeared in a pillar of cloud does not contradict the idea that no one has seen God at any time (Jn 1:18). The pillar of cloud represents the presence of God (Ex 13:21-22; 14:19,24; 33:9-10), though His presence is not the "shape" of His person. In that sense whoever saw the cloud saw God Himself. The same is true of the pillar of fire, the burning bush, and other "theophanies" or appearances of the Lord.

31:24 Like v. 9, this provides evidence of the Mosaic authorship of the book of Dt. In fact, the reading literally is, "until their completion," that is, until all the words of the book had been written. There can be no doubt that the intent of the statement is to assert single authorship of the whole.

31:28 See note on 30:19.

32:1 Here begins a poetic passage sometimes called the "Song of Moses." On heaven and earth as witnesses, see note on 30:19.

32:8 Of a variety of readings it seems best to translate "people of Israel" here. Were the passage a human creation by an Israelite writer alone, its tone would indeed be arrogant. However, the centrality of Israel in the God's program of world redemption is part of His own plan; Israel's role is one not of her making but of comes at God's initiative (Ex 19:4-6; Dt 7:6-11).

32:10 This poetic text is not intended to reproduce the actual course of history. God had, in fact, brought His son Israel out of Egypt into the wilderness and had not first found him there (cp. Ex 4:22-23; Hs 11:1). The point is that Israel was helpless in the desert and would surely have perished without divine intervention. The nation was found to be in a needy condition and thus dependent on God's grace.

32:12 The reference to a foreign god is not a tacit admission that such gods exist. Rather, it reflects the pagan viewpoint that their gods had something to do with Israel's safety in the desert, a misapprehension that Moses is quick to correct.

32:13 Neither honey nor oil (olive oil, the kind in view here) comes from rock. Poetry is rich in figures of speech that must be appreciated for what they are. Bees nest in the crevices of cliffs and, as is well known, olive trees grow in stony soils on terraced hillsides. But the figure is not based totally on these facts; it is a symbolic statement of the Lord's provision for His people in a barren area.

32:16 See note on 4:24.

32:22 The description of anger this intense raises questions in the minds of some as to the nature of God. How can He be a God of love, mercy, and grace and yet pour out His wrath in such harsh and devastating ways? The answer lies in a full understanding of the character of God, central to which is His holiness. For God to tolerate wickedness would contradict His separation from all that is profane, degenerate and unjust. It would, therefore, cheapen His other attributes, such as dependability and compassion, that are more palatable to the modern mind.

32:26-27 What appears to be a petty and self-serving reaction by the Lord to the taunts and misunderstandings of His enemies must be seen against a human backdrop in which His people Israel take center stage. For God to destroy His covenant nation would open Him and Israel to the charge that He was unreliable. It was His people, not He, that would suffer the brunt of ridicule should it appear that He had abandoned them. Out of concern for them the Lord must keep His word.

32:30 This is hyperbole, a deliberate exaggeration designed to show that Israel's defeat at the hands of much less powerful foes can be explained only as an act of judgment by the Lord because of Israel's sins. It harks back to the curses of 28:15-68.

32:37 The reference to other "gods" is a piece of sarcasm, not an admission that they are real. They are real only to those who imagine they worship them, even apostate Israel. Verse 39 proclaims the truth: there is only one God, the God of Israel (cp. 6:4-5; 32:16).

32:40 For God to take an oath is a way of declaring, with a human analogy, that Israel could rely on Him to be true to His word. The ancient gesture of oath taking, still in use today, was to lift the hand. The imagery of the Lord's raising His hand to pledge His fidelity would be a powerful expression of His reliability (cp. 31:28; 32:1).

32:44 The reference to Joshua as Hoshea (Hb text) by no means suggests multiple sources in the composition of Dt. Both names derive from a verb meaning "to save" (Hb *yashah*) and are used interchangeably (cp. Nm 13:8,16). Hoshea/Joshua was a common biblical name in is, in fact, equivalent to Jesus in the NT.

32:51 Why did God punish Moses so severely for what seems to be a minor offence, his striking the rock at Meribah (Nm 20:11-12)? That incident can be understood two ways. God told Moses to "speak to the rock" (Nm 20:8); instead, he struck it with Aaron's rod. Alternatively, the words "speak to the rock" can be taken to mean "address the rock," using the rod (the Hb verb *dabar* can have that sense); but instead of beating it vigorously Moses only tapped it twice. In either case, Moses had been given an awesome responsibility as God's chosen leader, and his obedience had to be total. Perhaps this incident is background for Jesus' statement that "much will be required of everyone who has been given much" (Lk 12:48), and James' admonition, "Not many should become teachers, my brothers, knowing that we will receive a stricter judgment" (Jms 3:1).

33:1 The reference to Moses' death has raised questions about his authorship of at least this passage. It is possible that someone else (Joshua has often been suggested) inserted this verse, but this need not imply different authorship for the rest of the chapter. Since Moses had just been told again that he would soon die (32:48-50), it would not be surprising if he made reference to that fact even as he introduced his final address.

33:2 Again Moses speaks poetically in what is sometimes called the "Blessing of Moses," and one need not expect places and events to conform to normal chronological and geographical sequence. Sinai, Seir, and Paran were places where the Lord manifested His power and glory (Nm 10:12; 13:3,26). In this context of holy war what matters is not a strict adherence to an itinerary but attention to God's mighty acts on behalf of His people.

33:6 Historically Reuben disappeared as a tribal entity, though no doubt it was absorbed into other Transjordanian peoples and continued to live through them. On the other hand, these are blessings and not necessarily solid promises. The hope is that Reuben, despite the curse pronounced on him by his father Jacob (Gn 49:2-4), might survive after all even if only few in number.

33:9 What seems like insensitivity toward other Israelites on the part of the tribe of Levi is only so in comparison to the Levites' zeal for the Lord (cp. Ex 32:27-29) and the worship of the sanctuary. Moses' expression has nothing to do with ordinary and expected behavior of an individual toward his or her loved ones. The same thought occurs in Jesus' teaching that unless one leaves his family for the sake of the gospel, he is an unworthy disciple (Mt 10:37-38).

33:16 On how God "appeared" in the bush, see note on 31:15.

33:17 The figures here ("ten thousands" and "thousands") is not a population estimate or a claim that Ephraim was 10 times greater than Manasseh. Hebrew poetry employs parallelism, a device in which the second line of a couplet (as here) matches the

first, or at least approximates it. Since there is no synonym for "ten thousands," the word for "thousands" was chosen to parallel it. The same parallel appears in the victory song of the women of Israel, crediting Saul with thousands and David with tens of thousands (1 Sm 18:7-8), but the jealous Saul chose to take it in the wrong way.

33:19 Critics have noted that the promise that Zebulun and Issachar would offer sacrifices on a certain mountain appears to contradict the clear commandment of 12:5 and elsewhere that worship be carried out in only one place, namely, where the Lord placed His holy name. However, the latter pertains to worship by the nation as a whole. Worship at local shrines by villages and even individuals was allowed (cp. 1 Sm 9:11-14;1 Kg 18:30).

33:21 When the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and part of Manasseh asked Moses for permission to settle in the Transjordan (Nm 32:1-5) they did so because they found the land there to be most suitable to their pastoral lifestyle. That the Gadites wanted the best for themselves is not sanctioned here, but neither is it condemned. The Bible often records events or actions simply because they occurred, even where those things might cast aspersions on the people involved. This realistic recording of events is a token of the Bible's reliability as a historical record.

33:26-27 Jeshurun is a fond name for Israel. God's command to destroy the enemy does not reflect a sub-Christian and primitive ethic, as some assert. In the OT context of holy war, as well as in the NT picture of the vindication of God's people in the final outworking of God's purpose (esp. the Revelation to John), it is essential that God's holiness (and that of His people) be upheld in the face of whatever would detract from it. Those who will not repent and believe in the one true God must expect nothing but certain destruction (cp. Ps 9:16-17).

33:29 To tread on the back of an enemy is figurative language to express his complete and total submission (Hab 3:19). While this is not always to be taken literally, there are examples in the OT of a conqueror placing his foot on the neck of a defeated foe (Jos 10:24).

34:1-2 The reference to the territory of Dan and the other tribes appears to be anachronistic for the time of Moses and therefore indicative of a later time of composition. The place name Dan may be a later editor's substitution for the city's original name (perhaps Laish; cp. Gn 14:14; Jdg 18:29), but this is by no means is evidence that someone other than Moses composed the greater part of this narrative.

34:5-12 The common critical view that Moses could not have written Dt because it records his own death carries no weight, except in the case of the last eight verses of the book. Someone else (Joshua, according to the Talmud) could have appended the account of Moses' death without undermining the tradition of Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch. If one accepts the biblical role of the prophet as including the gift to discern events to come, Moses could even have composed his own obituary.

34:6 The phrase "to this day" suggests a reflection back on an event from a later perspective. As with the account of Moses' death in general, there is good reason to believe that Joshua or someone else wrote these words, perhaps as much as 40 or 50 years later.

34:7 The great age of Moses at his death has been a problem for critics who think in uniformitarian terms; that is that phenomena we observe today are as they have always been. How is it that his lifespan should exceed that of others of his generation (if that is the case), and how likely is it that it was divided into three segments of 40 years each (cp. 31:2; Ac 7:23,30)? Were life and history governed solely by chance or by human machination, such things would be incredible. But if God's activity is brought into the equation, nothing remains beyond belief.

34:10 Like the phrase "to this day" in verse 6, the statement that "no prophet has arisen again in Israel like Moses" suggests, to some, a post-Mosaic source—indeed, one from a considerably later time. Incidental glosses (editorial adjustments and insertions), such as this might be, do not overthrow the ancient tradition of Moses as the inspired composer of the Torah. The phrase in question, in fact, is a biblical idiom for something of great significance; to say that a person or event is unlike anything before or

after it is a way of stressing their gravity (cp. Ex 10:14; Ezk 16:16; Mt 24:21). Use of the expression here need not be an indication of a later perspective. But Moses, indeed, has no equal in later biblical history except for Jesus Christ, who was more than a prophet. Of all figures in Scripture, it is Moses who is mentioned together with Christ in the worship of the Revelation to John, "The song of God's servant Moses, and the song of the Lamb" (Rv 15:3).

4:10 To know God face to face is not in conflict with the idea that no one can look on the Lord's face and live (Ex 33:20). This is an idiomatic expression of intimate relationship, having nothing to do with the physical face (cp. Nm 12:8).

Joshua Articles

What Did Jesus Have to Do with Violence?

by Mark Durie

The conquest of Canaan, as described in the Bible, was a bloody one. Some cities like Jericho were put to the sword. Isn't it dangerous to have such material in the Bible? Might not these stories incite Christians to acts of bloodshed or even genocide against others? The answer to this question is a very emphatic "No!"

There are a number of reasons why the conquest of Canaan and other stories of conflict in the Bible do not incite Christians into violent acts of insurrection, murder and genocide.

One is that the account of the conquest of Canaan was entirely situation-specific. Yes, there is a divine instruction reported in the Bible to take the land by force and occupy it, driving out the inhabitants (Nm 33:52). However, this was not an eternal permission to believers to wage war. It was for a specific time and place. According to the Bible, the Canaanites had come under divine judgment because of their religious practices, above all child sacrifice (Dt 18:10-12; see note on Gn 15:16).

The sacrificing of firstborn children by immolating them before an idol was a persistent trait of Canaanite religion. The Phoenicians were Canaanites, and as late as the second century B.C. the people of Carthage, a Phoenician colony, were sacrificing children to their goddess Tanit. Archeologists have found charred remains of tens of thousands of newborn infants and fetuses buried in Carthage. The practice of child sacrifice made the Romans despise the Carthaginians.

The Bible's stories of the use of force against the Canaanites are more than balanced by the accounts of the destruction of Israel and Judah by foreign armies. These violent invasions are also described as being God's judgment, now turned against the Israelites because they did not distance themselves from Canaanite religious practices. Even the kings of Israel and Judah are charged with practicing child sacrifice (2 Kg 17:17; 21:6, Ezk 16:21).

Although the OT does condone the use of force to purge a land of violence and injustice, the Bible's attitude to such violence is not that it is sacred or holy. On the contrary, King David, who fought many wars with God's active support and guidance, was not allowed to be the one to build God's temple in Jerusalem, because there was so much blood on his hands (1 Ch 28:3).

Violence is regarded by the Bible as an inherently evil symptom of the corruption of the whole earth after the fall: "the earth was filled with violence" (Gn 6:11). In contrast, the prophet Isaiah looked forward to the day when the days of violence would be no more. Isaiah describes the Lord's anointed as unacquainted with violence: "They made His grave with the wicked, and with a rich man at His death, although He had done no violence and had not spoken deceitfully" (Is 53:9).

In this way the OT sets the scene for the revelation of Jesus Christ. The key question for Christians is "What did Jesus have to do with violence?" When we turn to consider Jesus and His followers, we find a systematic rejection of religious violence. Jesus' message was that His kingdom would be spiritual and not political. Jesus explicitly and repeatedly condemns the use of force to achieve His goals: "Put your sword back in place because all who take up a sword will perish by a sword" (Mt 26:52)

As Jesus went to the cross, He renounced force, even at the cost of His own life: "My kingdom is not of this world . . . If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I wouldn't be handed over to the Jews. As it is, My kingdom does not have its origin here" (Jn 18:36).

At one point Christ said, "Don't assume that I came to bring peace on the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword." (Mt 10:34) This is sometimes cited by anti-Christian apologists as evidence for Jesus' militancy, but the statement occurs in an extended passage where Jesus is

advising His disciples on the inevitability of persecution. The sword He refers to is the one which will be raised against them.

Jesus' take on violence was reinforced by the apostles Paul and Peter, who urged Christians to show consideration to their enemies, renounce retaliation, live peaceably, return cursing with blessing, and show humility to others (Rm 12:14-21;
Ti 3:1-2; 1 Pt 2:20-24). They also allowed that the (most likely pagan) civil authorities would need to use force to keep the peace and this role should be respected (Rm 13:1-7; 1 Pt 2:13-17). This was an extension of the earlier Jewish position that Jews should submit to the rule of law in whichever country they find themselves, even if the king was a pagan (Jr 29:4-7).

The NT supports the just use of force as a proper function of the state, whatever its religious identity. Thus it is not a specifically religious or sacred act to go to war or to use force to implement justice. It is just a matter of public duty, one aspect of the ordering of society which God has established for the common good. Fighting may be considered just, not because it is advancing any one faith over another, but because it is warranted and conducted according to principles of justice applicable to all people.

If only Christians had maintained this NT position down the centuries, the world would have been a better place. The invention of "Christendom" in the fourth Christian century, and the later influence of a centuries-long struggle against the Islamic jihad, ultimately led Christians to develop aberrant theologies that regarded warfare against non-Christians as "holy," and soldiers who died fighting in such wars were regarded as "martyrs." Thankfully, this view of warfare has been universally denounced in the modern era as incompatible with the gospel of Christ.

Is the Old Testament Trustworthy?

by Walter C. Kaiser Jr.

What is a modern reader of the Old Testament to do with a book that teaches animal sacrifice, male circumcision, strange dietary codes, and festivals based on an agricultural cycle? Its contents appear to be so ancient and so removed from our day that some dismiss it as "primitive religion."

Contrary to such a premature judgment, seven affirmations show that the OT is at once relevant and altogether trustworthy.

1. In every part of the Old Testament the writers claim the divine origin of their writings. One such inspired utterance comes from the core of the OT: the Ten Commandments. "Stone tablets inscribed by the finger of God" (Ex 31:18; Dt 5:22). More regularly, however, "the Spirit of the LORD spoke through [His prophets], His word was on [their] tongue[s]" (2 Sm 23:2). Indeed, Nathan the prophet knew that he had spoken his own words, which were not the same as the words from divine revelation. When he spoke God's message, he prefaced it, as did the OT prophets repeatedly, with "This is what the LORD says"
(2 Sm 7:5). Even in the wisdom books of the OT, Agur introduced himself as deficient and ignorant. He complained, "I am the least intelligent of men, and I lack man's ability to understand. I have not gained wisdom, and I have no knowledge of the Holy One" (Pr 30:2-3). How, then, would he know how or what to write about God? He asked the same questions in verse 4. But by verses 5-6 he had the answer: "Every word of God is pure . . . Don't add to His words, or He will rebuke you, and you will be proved a liar." The first part of verse 5 is a quote from Psalm 18:30, while verse 6 is a quote from Deuteronomy 4:2.

2. The 39 books of the Old Testament were immediately received as authoritative and canonical (belonging to Scripture). One of the most popular misconceptions is that a group of scholars held a rabbinical council in Jamnia in A.D. 90 to decide which books they would regard as authoritative for composing the OT. But this is incorrect: for (1) the council's decisions had no binding authority; (2) the discussions at that council were merely about the correct interpretations of the Ecclesiastes and Song of Songs; and (3) the list of books they regarded as canonical were already treated as the same 39 books in our current OT. Instead, the books of the OT were progressively recognized by those closest to the writers of the OT as being indeed revelation from God. Daniel, writing about 75 years after the prophet Jeremiah, regarded his prophecy about the 70-year captivity (Jr 25:11-12) as "the word of the LORD" (Dn 9:2). In fact, he placed the book of Jeremiah among "the books," that is, in the group of books called the Scriptures.

3. The text of the Old Testament books was uniquely preserved when compared with other ancient writings. Prior to the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in 1947, we were limited to the Greek text of the Septuagint, the Samaritan Pentateuch, and the Hebrew text of the Nash Papyrus dating from around A.D. 1000 for checking on the accuracy of the preservation of the OT text. That has all changed. In the 800 exemplars of OT biblical texts in the Dead Sea Scrolls, we now possess texts from 250 B.C. to A.D. 50. Moreover, the earliest example of an OT text is Numbers 6:24-26 from the mid-seventh century B.C. in the Ketef Hinnom Plaques. So carefully preserved are these texts that when scholars studied the Dead Sea Scroll of Isaiah, only three minor spelling changes (comparable to the difference between spelling "Saviour" and "Savior") were found in a text that covers about 100 pages in many English translations. That is an outstanding record of preserving the text of the Bible, which represents over a thousand years of copying the text.

4. The historical chronology found in the histories of the kings of Israel and Judah is completely verified and trustworthy. If chronology is the backbone of history, then it was necessary for someone to untangle the dates and systems of correlation between the kings of northern Israel and Judah if any confidence, much less sense, was to come out of these scores of numbers in the books of Kings and Chronicles. But that is what Edwin Thiele did as his doctoral dissertation for the University of Chicago. He first established as an absolute date (on our Julian calendar) June 15, 763 B.C., from the astronomical citations on the Assyrian Eponym, or Man of the Year, lists. These annual lists also made allusions to several of the Hebrew kings, thereby providing excellent synchronisms. From there he was able to show how some 500 numbers (all except one, which was later solved) were easily reconciled and totally trustworthy in every detail.

5. Archaeology has helped to show that the culture, persons, and events of the Old Testament are trustworthy. Archaeology has done much to further the cause of showing the reliability of the OT. Where there were alleged missing persons mentioned in the OT, but not known from external sources, such as King Sargon in Isaiah 20:1, or Governor Sanballat of Samaria (Neh 2:10), or kings David, Ahab, Jehu, and Hezekiah, Menahem, and even a prophet, Balaam, in each case spectacular finds have vindicated the claims of the OT. In like manner, where the OT claimed there were peoples such as the Hittites or the Horites, later finds vindicated the presence of these as well as other allegedly missing peoples. A similar list of allegedly missing places could be gathered, such as the land of Ophir or the sites along the Transjordanian route of the wilderness wanderings. But once again archaeology has given great help. This is not to say that all of those people and places alleged to have been created by the OT have been fully identified. For example, we still cannot find external validation for Darius the Mede (Dn 5:31). But the success of archaeology in the twentieth century alone is startling in its extent and in the depth of its influence.

6. The present literary form of the books comes to us from ancient times and in the final shape in which we presently possess them. No section of the OT has received more critical dissecting than the first five books of Moses, the Pentateuch. It was alleged that the books did not come by divine inspiration to Moses around 1400 B.C. but rather came from the hands of at least four main compilers (called J, E, D, and P) ranging from the eighth century B.C., with the final hand and the final re-editing coming in 400 B.C.! At the heart of this theory was the book of Deuteronomy, which critical scholars claimed was first written in 621 B.C., when King Josiah found the Book of the Law. But Deuteronomy exhibits the literary format that is unique to the middle of the second millennium B.C. Hittite suzerainty treaties (c. 1200–1400 B.C.), the same six sections of those treaties being found in the book of Deuteronomy. Had Deuteronomy been compiled in the first millennium (621 B.C.), as the critics claim, it would resemble instead the Assyrian treaties that had by that time deleted two of the six sections. Thus, according to the literary forms and criteria of the critics themselves, the key book in the disputed first five books must be placed in the days when Moses lived (i.e., around 1400 B.C.).

7. The writers of the Old Testament were aware that they were writing not only for their generation but also for those who would come later. The most convenient way to demonstrate this is to go to 1 Peter 1:12, where Peter stated, "It was revealed to [the prophets of the OT] that they were not serving themselves but you [people of Peter's generation and us]."

Introduction to Joshua

AUTHOR

The book of Joshua immediately follows the Pentateuch (Gn—Dt). In the arrangement of books in the Hebrew Bible, Joshua begins the section known as the Former Prophets. In the English Bible arrangement, it begins the section known as the Historical Books.

The book records the Israelite conquest of the land of Canaan under the leadership of Moses' successor, Joshua son of Nun. The Israelite conquest was the fulfillment of the promise to the patriarch Abraham that his descendants would possess the land of Canaan (Gn 12:6-9). The book of Joshua continues where the Pentateuch leaves off, narrating events and placing them in a theological perspective. The book is named for its principal character, Joshua son of Nun. Joshua's name means "*Yahweh* is salvation." The name "Jesus" is a derivative of Joshua from the Greek OT (LXX). Joshua was first mentioned in Exodus 17:9 where he was commissioned by Moses to lead the battle against the Amalekites. In Exodus 24:13 and Numbers 11:28 he was referred to as Moses' assistant (cp. Dt 1:38). In the list of spies whom Moses sent to survey the land of Canaan, he was identified as Hoshea son of Nun (Nm 13:8) but at some point Moses had renamed him Joshua (Nm 13:16). Joshua became Moses' successor in leading Israel to the land of Canaan (Nm 27:15-23; Dt 3:28; 31:23).

Though the best view of the authorship of the book of Joshua is that it is anonymous in its final form, it is clear from Joshua 24:26 that Joshua wrote certain portions of it. Critical scholars have typically asserted that the book was written later in history during the seventh and sixth centuries B.C. However, the Talmud and some rabbis attributed authorship of the book to Joshua. The book derived its contents from eyewitness accounts of the events that took place during the time of Joshua; therefore, it is reasonable to infer that these events were recorded during the time of Joshua and preserved by subsequent generations (Jos 4:9; 5:9; 6:25; 7:26; 8:28-29; 9:27; 13:13; 14:14; 15:63; 16:10). Precisely when the book of Joshua came to exist in its present form is unknown.

THE CONQUEST

The Israelite conquest of the land is to be understood as a grant from the Lord. It is clear from every story in the book that Yahweh was sovereign and exercised control of all events on behalf of the Israelites. Israel could not take credit for the many victories it won against nations that were larger and stronger. The clear theological message is that Yahweh fought for Israel and that explains the victories. (See the article, "Is the Old Testament Ethical?" page 116.)

These victories were won against nations whom the Lord had already determined to remove from the land of Canaan when their sinfulness would reach its developed and complete degeneracy (Gn 15:16). Though modern readers may question the morality of the Canaanite wars, they were divinely commanded precisely for a moral purpose. The inhabitants of Canaan had defiled the land with a sinfulness against Yahweh that would also contaminate His people (Lv 18:24-25; Dt 20:18), and hence, ultimately His ultimate saving purpose for the world. Archaeology has revealed something of the decadent nature of Canaanite religion. One of its principal goddesses, Anath, was referred to as the "holy one," yet she was a prostitute who savored carnage and sadism. Herein lies the divine justification for the dispossession of the Canaanites from the land.

THE RELIABILITY OF JOSHUA

The events recorded in the book of Joshua took place during the second millennium B.C. in the period immediately following the forty years of Israelite wilderness wanderings and the death of the entire adult generation of the exodus (except Joshua and Caleb). The date of the exodus

has been the subject of much scholarly debate. Joshua apparently supports an early date for the exodus. The book refers to places and peoples best situated in the middle of the second millennium B.C. (e.g., the mention in Jos 13:6 of the Sidonians rather than the later more powerful people of Tyre). If the early date for the exodus (c. mid fifteenth century B.C.) is correct, then the events of Joshua occurred approximately in the late fifteenth century B.C.

Critics often cite the book's three dramatic miracles (the stopping of the Jordan River in 3:15-17; the collapse of Jericho's wall in 6:20; and Joshua's long day 10:12-14) as evidence of its legendary (i.e., fictional) character. But the Bible records miracles in many places, thus Joshua is not unusual in this respect. An anti-supernatural worldview may render miracles untenable to the critic, but anti-supernaturalism is a philosophical assumption, not a demonstrable scientific or historical fact. Most people today and historically have accepted the possibility of the supernatural because they have believed in a reality beyond nature. And this is certainly true of those who have personally come to know the God of the Bible through Jesus Christ.

It is important to note, however, that biblical narratives do not portray an indiscriminately saturated world of miracles. That is, the Bible does not read like the pagan mythologies of antiquity in which gods are constantly interrupting and disrupting ordinary human affairs. Biblical supernaturalism stands out in contrast because its miracles are not commonplace. The relative infrequency of biblical miracles may be seen in the fact that they constitute a small, albeit important, part of the narratives spanning approximately two millennia from the time of Abraham through the apostolic era. Moreover, certain critical turning points in biblical history are marked by more intense spiritual warfare and miracle. The life and ministry of Jesus Christ is the most obvious of these periods, and the exodus of Israel from Egypt with the subsequent conquest of Canaan represents another. The book of Joshua records the events at the close of this strategic era, and its three major miracles reveal Yahweh's sovereign work to install Israel in the land of promise.

In addition, many critical scholars have proposed that the Israelite conquest of Canaan portrayed in Joshua is not factual. The three major critical explanations for how the Israelites came to possess the land are: (1) the conquest model, which views the entrance of Israel into the land of Canaan as a massive hostile invasion resulting in destruction of cities and towns; (2) the peaceful infiltration model, which views the entrance of Israel into the land as a peaceful settlement among the Canaanites; and (3) the peasant revolt model, which views the situation as an internal political upheaval of peasants who revolted and toppled the existing Canaanite political system. The conquest model comes closest to the biblical account by acknowledging the invasion of Canaan by an external Israelite force. But critical assessments of this view typically overemphasize the violent destruction of cities and towns. The biblical account records that the only cities destroyed were Jericho, Ai, and Hazor (6:24; 8:28; 11:11,13). But the peaceful infiltration and peasant revolt models do not reflect the biblical account at all. Both are skeptical of the biblical account, reflecting an anti-supernatural bias in their attempt to offer alternative explanations for Israelite possession of Canaan. Yet neither model accounts for the biblical data. In the Bible, divine sovereignty is demonstrated in the victories of Israel. The Israelites entered the land of Canaan and took possession of it by the divine purpose and power of Yahweh who had already promised to give it to them (1:2-5).

Joshua Study Notes

1:1 The events of the book of Joshua continue the account of the history of Israel after the death of Moses (Dt 34). Joshua was Moses' divinely appointed successor (Nm 27:15-23).

1:2 The Lord instructed Joshua to lead the Israelites across the Jordan River to possess the land of Canaan. The basis for the Israelite conquest of Canaan wasthe Lord's promise to Abraham that He would give the land of Canaan to his descendants (Gn 12:7; 15:7-21; Dt 1:7-8).

1:3-5 The Lord promised Joshua great success; His divine presence would ensure victory. The territorialextent of the conquest was from the desert on the south to Lebanon on the north, and from the River Euphrates on the east to the Mediterranean Sea on the west (cp. Nm 13:17-25; 34:3-12).

1:6-9 The Lord exhorted Joshua to be strong and courageous in his leadership, based on His promise to Abraham and the certainty of victory. The success of Joshua's leadership hinged upon his obedience to the Book of the Law of Moses; he was to meditate upon the words of the Law continually.

1:10-11 Joshua gave orders to the officers to prepare the people to undertake the occupation of Canaan. Joshua's authority to lead came from his commissioning by Moses, at the Lord's direction (Nm 27:20-21).

1:12-18 Joshua ordered the Transjordanian tribes (Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh) to send their best warriors ahead to help with the conquest. This was in accordance with the command Moses had given these tribes in Dt 3:12-20. The theme of "rest" is prominent in the narrative. "Rest" is equivalent to possession of the land; the Transjordanian tribes would not "rest" in their land until the ten tribes possessed the land of Canaan.

2:1 Joshua initiated a reconnaissance mission, secretly dispatching two spies to Jericho. The narrative gives few details about the mission itself; it focuses on how the spies spent the night in the house of a harlot named Rahab. Some commentators read sexual innuendo into the text. The narrative, however, is careful to avoid any suggestion of a sexual encounter between the spies and Rahab by using terminology applicable to lodging rather than sex. The phrase "came to the house" indicates that the spies entered her house, not that they "went to bed with her," the description of sexual relations (e.g. Jdg 16:1). Rahab, in addition to being a prostitute, was probably an innkeeper.

2:2-7 Rahab hid the spies and misled the representatives of the king of Jericho when they came in search of them. She admitted the spies had entered her house but then sent the king's search party on a false pursuit outside the city. In so doing, Rahab assumed great personal risk to herself and her family; if they had discovered her deception the consequences would have been severe.

Scripture does not condone Rahab's lie; the Bible makes it clear that such deception is wrong. Nevertheless the NT celebrates Rahab's action (Heb 11:31) as a demonstration of her faith in the God of Israel and rejection of the Canaanites. Had she told the truth to the king's representatives, the spies would have been executed. The biblical narrator reports what actually happened, and does not speculate about what alternative Rahab might have had in her intent to protect the spies. On the question of lying for a good purpose, see also Ex 1:19.

2:8-14 The main point of this passage is Rahab's confession of faith in the Lord. She acknowledged (1) His divine providence in Israel's possession of Canaan,(2) His presence in Israel's exodus and migration through the wilderness, and (3) the Lord's sovereignty over the universe.

2:15-24 With Rahab's help the spies escaped Jericho and returned to Joshua with a positive report: the Lord had indeed given the land of Canaan to the Israelites.

3:1-6 Joshua instructed the people to follow the priests who would carry the ark of the covenant across the river ahead of them. The ark symbolized the Lord's presence with His people. The time had arrived for the fulfillment of the promise to Abraham (Gn 15:13-21).

3:7-8 The account makes it clear that Lord supervised the entire event through His instructions to Joshua.

3:9-13 The stoppage of the waters of the Jordan River would affirm that the living God was in the midst of Israel, and leading the people forward to dispossess the inhabitants of Canaan.

3:10 Seven people groups are named. Similar lists are found in 9:1; 11:3; 12:8 and 24:11. According to Dt 7:1-11 the Lord would remove the inhabitants of Canaan and settle the Israelites in the land, fulfilling His covenant with Abraham (Gn 15:7-8,18; 17:8). Various peoples, including the seven listed here, had occupied the land for generations. Their idolatrous religious practices and their potential corruption of the Israelites were the principal justifications for their dispossession. Yahweh, the God of Israel and the universe, would not forever tolerate the idolatry of the Canaanite peoples. Through the generations He had given them opportunity to repent, to reject the false gods and place their faith in Him as the living God. Their sin had "reached its full measure" (Gn 15:16), and time had run out.

3:14-17 When the priests carrying the ark of the covenant stepped into the Jordan River the waters "stood still, rising up" and the people crossed over on dry ground. The fact that the Jordan River was at flood stage heightens the wonder of the miracle; even the downstream waters ceased to flow toward the Dead Sea. Not since the exodus (cp. Ex 14:21-22) had Israel experienced such an awe-inspiring event of divine intervention. The similarity between this event and Israel's crossing of the Red Sea could not have been lost upon the people, as a reminder of the Lord's presence with, and purpose for, Israel.

4:4-9 The memorial stones were to commemorate the Lord's miraculous intervention in the crossing of the Jordan River. They would be a testimony to future generations that would ask what they signified.

4:9 "The stones are there to this day" is the first instance of aetiology, or the explanation of origins, in the book of Joshua. Etiologies often contain the phrase "to this day," referring to the time when the biblical writer was composing or compiling the narrative. Many critical scholars reject the authenticity of these etiologies, assuming that later editors inserted them. Recent scholarship, however, has shown that these etiologies should be taken seriously as preserving authentic reasons for the existence of particular situations, customs, place-names, settlement arrangements and the like. The aetiological use of the phrase "to this day" is found elsewhere in the book of Joshua at 5:9; 6:25; 7:26 (twice); 8:28-29; 9:27; 10:27; 13:13; 14:14; 15:63; 16:10. The stones were set up at Gilgal (v. 20), a name derived from the Hebrew word for "roll"; the name may reflect the method by which the large memorial stones taken from the Jordan were put in place.

4:18 Once the priests carrying the ark came up out of the Jordan River the waters resumed their course at flood stage.

5:1 The Bible occasionally employs the terms Amorite and Canaanite as all-inclusive designations for the ethnic groups inhabiting Canaan (see Gn 12:6; 15:16; 50:11; Ex 13:11; Jos 24:15; Jdg 1:1; Neh 9:24).

5:2-12 The Israelites were circumcised because the new generation had not undergone this rite during the 40 years in the wilderness. Circumcision was the sign of the Lord's covenant with Abraham (see Gn 17:10-14) and signified faith in Him. Through the ritual of circumcision the nation renewed its fidelity to the covenant. The celebration of the Passover commemorated the exodus. It marked a new chapter in the history of Israel, for with it the people began to live on the produce of the land of Canaan and no longer on the manna which the Lord provided in the wilderness.

5:13-15 As he approached Jericho, Joshua encountered the "commander of the LORD's army." This must be understood as an appearance of the Lord through His angelic messenger. In such appearances, Scripture usually makes no distinction between the Angel of the Lord and the God Himself (see Gn 16:9-14; 18:1-33). Joshua's act of prostration "in worship" (the Hb word for "worship" means to bow, or lie prostrate) is not reverence for a lesser being than God Himself. The encounter reminded Joshua that it was the Lord who would lead the battle against Jericho and insure victory for the Israelites. The looming battle with Jericho required spiritual, not military, preparation.

6:1 The security measures taken by the Jericho authorities recall 5:1, which recounts that the Amorite and Canaanite monarchs lost courage when news of the miraculous crossing of the Jordan River reached them. The city of Jericho was in a state of high alert.

6:2-15 The Lord's instructions to Joshua and the Israelites had more to do with worship and ceremony than military strategy. The Israelites marched around the city of Jericho once a day for six days. On the seventh day they marched around the city seven times. In the Bible, the number "seven" usually has ceremonial significance, as indicative of the covenant. The Sabbath, or seventh day, was a sign of the covenant, and the Hebrew verb "to swear" (i.e., take an oath of fidelity to a covenant), *nishba'*, is based on the word for "seven."

6:16-19 On the seventh time around Jericho the priests sounded their trumpets. Joshua's orders may be summarized as follows. (1) "Shout! For the LORD has given you the city." (2) Everything and everyone is to be devoted to the Lord for destruction. (3) Only Rahab and her family members with her are to be spared. (4) Do not take for yourself anything that is devoted to the Lord for destruction. (5) All silver, gold, bronze and iron must go into the Lord's treasury.

6:17 The words "set apart" translate the Hebrew *cherem*, which refers to "devoted things" belonging exclusively to the Lord (often called the "ban"). Jericho was the first city the Israelites took in their conquest of Canaan. As such, it and all its inhabitants were *cherem* to the Lord. Everyone except Rahab and her family were to be slain, and everything in the city was to be destroyed except the gold, silver, and articles of bronze and iron.

The concept of *cherem* can be difficult to understand today. How can the destruction of a city and the killing of all its inhabitants be justified, and how can one believe it was the Lord who specifically ordered these things? Part of the answer lies in recognizing the holiness of God and the sinfulness of the Canaanites. God is holy, and He created Israel to be a people totally consecrated to Him (Ex 20:3; Lv 18:1-5; 19:1-2). The persistent sins of the Canaanites, which were an affront to the holiness of God, finally demanded that His judgment be executed through their complete removal from the land (Lv 18:24-28; 20:22-24). God would bless those who loved Him and kept His commands but He would punish those who hated Him (Dt 7:9-10).

The sins of the Canaanites are catalogued in Lv 18:1–20:27, and Dt 9:1-6 gives the theological rationale for their extermination. The Canaanites were arrogant and proud because of their strength, and the Lord had determined to bring about their destruction, driving them out ahead of Israel (Dt 9:2-5). The concept of *cherem* demonstrates the utter seriousness of sin and its consequences —and points to the ultimate need for a Savior to rescue the human race.

6:20-21 When the people followed Joshua's instructions the Lord caused the wall of Jericho to collapse, leaving the city vulnerable to invasion. The city fell through "spiritual warfare"—ceremonial marching, trumpet blasts and the victory shout that was a feature of Israel's celebration of Yahweh's dominion (cp. Ps 47:5)—and not through traditional military maneuvers. The archaeological evidence for Jericho's being inhabited during this period has been difficult to interpret, and some scholars have questioned the veracity of the biblical account of its fall to the Israelites. Archaeologists who have no previous bias against the biblical record, however, have not found sufficient reason to question this account.

6:22-25 Rahab and her family were spared from the *cherem* in keeping with the promise Joshua's spies made to her. Her faith saved her and her family from certain death. The statement at the end of verse 25, "and she lives in Israel to this day," refers to the continuation of her family line. Rahab, the Canaanite prostitute, is included in the genealogy of the Savior, Jesus Christ (Mt 1:5), thereby participating in the Lord's ultimate triumph of grace.

6:26-27 Joshua pronounced a curse upon anyone who would undertake to rebuild the city of Jericho. Jericho was *cherem* to the Lord and would be rebuilt at great cost to the builder. (See 1 Kg 16:34 for the fulfillment of this prophecy). News of the defeat and destruction of Jericho spread throughout the Near East, and Joshua became famous.

7:1 The success of Israel at Jericho was marred by unfaithfulness with respect to the *cherem* on the part of Achan, who took items for himself from the spoils. The Lord held the entire nation responsible for the action of one person who violated His command. This demonstrates the biblical principle of corporate solidarity (cp. Dt 2:34; 5:9; 13:12-18). Sin is not merely an individual matter, but affects the entire community of which the individual is a member.

7:2-5 The spies Joshua sent underestimated the enemy at Ai. As a result of the hidden sin of Achan and the miscalculation of enemy strength, the fighters of Ai routed the Israelite invaders. This surprising defeat, following so closely upon their amazing victory at Jericho, caused panic among the Israelites. It was all the more shocking because Ai was no longer a large, highly fortified city (its name means "ruin").

7:6-9 Joshua and the elders of Israel prostrated themselves before the Lord with traditional gestures of lament over their defeat. Joshua's prayer appealed to the Lord to uphold His own reputation with the pagan nations.

7:10-15 The Lord responded by revealing that sin had been committed regarding the *cherem*. The perpetrator was to be identified and held accountable.

7:16-23 When Joshua began the process of investigation, the Lord identified Achan as the culprit. He brought the stolen items of the *cherem* before Joshua and the Lord.

7:24-26 Achan, his entire family, and all his possessions were destroyed—God's judgment for violating the *cherem*.

8:1-29 The Israelites mounted a second assault against Ai, and this time conquered it. The Israelites executed the king of Ai and all its inhabitants. Israel was permitted to keep the plunder and the livestock.

9:1-2 Upon learning of Israel's victories at Jericho and Ai, a group of Canaanite kings formed a defense alliance against Israel.

9:3-27 The Gibeonites devised a plan to protect themselves from annihilation by pretending to be from outside of Canaan. Joshua made a treaty with them without consulting the Lord. When Joshua and the Israelites found they had been deceived, they could not go back on their oath; the Gibeonites were permitted to live, though relegated to permanent servitude. This incident illustrates the force of the oath, and the spoken word, in Israelite culture. It also illustrates the problems that arise when the Lord's counsel isn't sought.

10:1-11 Five Amorite kings, led by Adoni-zedek of Jerusalem, formed another coalition against Israel. They attacked Gibeon in reprisal for making peace with Israel. Joshua and the Israelite army had to come to Gibeon's aid because of their oath. The Lord reassured Joshua that He would fight on Israel's behalf and gain the victory.

10:10 "The LORD threw them into confusion before Israel." This indicates that God was miraculously fighting on behalf of Israel. This was the only way a small nation of twelve tribes could defeat a coalition of well-established cities and their defenders.

10:11 "The LORD threw large hailstones on them from the sky . . . and they died." This is another instance of God's intervention on behalf of Israel. God slew more of the Amorite fighters than did the Israelites.

10:12-15 In one of the most remarkable occurrences recorded in biblical history, God responded to Joshua's prayer by causing the sun and the moon to stop their movement. Time came to a standstill for nearly an entire day. This text is more than a record of

astronomical events; it also makes a theological point. The supposed gods of the sun and moon were prominent in Canaanite religion; Yahweh's greater power now divests these bodies of their religious significance and puts them to the service of His people. The Genesis account of creation offers a similar perspective; the sun and moon—the "two great lights" (Gn 1:16)—do not appear till the fourth day; they are not identified with the light of God's first creative act (Gn 1:3), but serve as regulators of earthly time.

Interpreters have proposed four major explanations of this passage: (1) the earth stopped its rotation, (2) a solar eclipse occurred, (3) an astrological omen took place, or (4) the passage is figurative, not literal. The second option is not plausible because the text does not state that the sun and moon darkened; they continued to shine but stopped moving (the verbal root *dmm* is best translated "to cease"). The third option suggests that Joshua employed a pagan form of prayer based upon the practice, found in other ancient Near Eastern cultures, of reading omens in the movement of heavenly bodies. This option is inconsistent with Joshua's faithfulness to the Lord. The fourth option is not credible because vv. 13-14 state clearly that the sun and moon stopped their motion. The best way to understand these events is to accept the first option, according to the plain reading of the text. Through alteration of the earth's rotation the apparent movement of the sun and moon across the sky was halted. The urban legend that Princeton scientists or NASA computers have "discovered" Joshua's long day has circulated for more than a half century. Though baseless, this fictitious "scientific" explanation is still widely promoted.

The event was the act of a sovereign and omnipotent God who governs His creation. The emphasis of the passage is how, on that particular day, God listened to the prayer of Joshua in a way that had never been witnessed. The event was clear evidence that the Lord was fighting for Israel. The quote from the Book of Jashar probably encompasses vv. 13b-15, since v. 16 continues the narrative from vv. 10-11.

10:16-27 The five Amorite kings were found hiding at Makkedah. They were brought out to Joshua and executed.

10:28-43 Joshua completed the conquest of southern Canaan. Verse 43 indicates that the Lord was fighting these battles and that He secured the victories. All the inhabitants of these cities were executed. On the justification for their extermination, see note on 6:17.

11:1-15 Jabin, king of Hazor, formed an alliance of northern kings. They assembled a large army with assets that included horses and chariots. The Lord gave Israel a complete victory over this coalition, and its military assets were destroyed. In reprisal for Jabin's instigation of the alliance, Hazor received the most severe punishment. Joshua executed Jabin and all Hazor's inhabitants and burned the city. Verses 12-15 are a summary of the accomplishments of Joshua's northern campaign and restate his obedience in all that the Lord had commanded through Moses.

11:16-23 The conquest of northern Canaan was complete; this passage summarizes Joshua's achievements. Verses 18-20 state the historical and theological justification for the conquest: the Canaanites (with the exception of the Gibeonites) had refused to make peace with Israel, for God had hardened their hearts so that he might destroy them without mercy. (On the justification for their extermination, see note on 6:17.) It is noteworthy that in 11:22 no mention is made of the Philistines, who had not yet migrated to Gaza, Gath and Ashdod. This is an incidental indicator of the age of the narrative, refuting contemporary critical theories that date the book much later.

12:1-6 The list of the conquered kings and territories of Transjordan (the region east of the Jordan River) consists of Sihon king of the Amorites and Og king of Bashan. These victories occurred during the time of Moses, before Joshua became Israel's leader (Nm 21:10-35; Dt 1:4; 2:24–3:11). They are mentioned here to provide a historical survey of all that had been accomplished in the drive toward the occupation of the promised land, through the grace of God toward the nation. Moses had allotted the lands of Transjordan to the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh as their inheritance (Nm 32:1-5). The statement "the land had rest from war" (Jos 11:23) marks the end of the initial narrative of conquest.

12:7-24 The list of the conquered kings and territories of Cisjordan (the region west of the Jordan River) consists of a geographical summary in vv. 7-8 and a list of 31 kings, with the cities they ruled, in vv. 9-24. After the first two cities (Jericho and Ai) the list can be divided into cities in the south and those in the north. This list not only records the conquest of Canaanite cities, but also represents the accomplishment of God's purpose. In giving them into the hands of Israel, He fulfilled His promise to Abraham that his descendants would occupy the land (Gn 12:6-7; 15:18).

13:1-7 This chapter begins a new section in the book of Joshua. Israel is transitioning from conquest to settlement in Canaan. Three major geographical areas remain to be conquered: (1) Philistia, including the five major cities of the Philistines: Gaza, Ashkelon, Ashdod, Gath and Ekron (vv. 2-3); (2) the Phoenician coast (v. 4); and (3) the Lebanon mountain range (v. 5). By this time Joshua has aged and is nearing the end of his life.

13:15-32 This section details the geographical extent of land allocated to the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh (Nm 32:1-5).

14:1-5 This section introduces the allocation of the land to the remaining tribes. It was to be determined by casting lots (perhaps the Urim and Thummim of the high priest, Lv 8:8) for which parcel of land each tribe should inherit. This was according to the Lord's directive for the allotment of the land (Nm 26:55-56; 33:54). Use of the lot by Eleazar, the high priest, was not a matter of chance; it was a matter of obedience to the Lord's instruction (Nm 26:55-56). God was responsible for the outcome of the casting of the lot (cp. Jos 18:6-10; Pr 16:33). Discerning the will of God, is never a matter of chance. The Levites did not receive an inheritance but were given cities in which to live (Nm 35:1-8; Jos 21:1-41).

14:6-15 The tribal allotment to Judah began with Caleb's inheritance. Caleb had been a leader in Israel (Nm 13:6). He was one of two spies who had brought a positive report to Moses at Kadesh-barnea (Nm 13:30). Together with a delegation of the men of Judah, he presented his claim to Joshua, who gave him the hill country of Hebron as an inheritance.

14:6 The first distribution of the land began from Gilgal, Joshua's location at the time. Gilgal, site of the memorial stones from the Jordan, appears to have been the central encampment for Joshua and the priests at this stage.

15:1-62 Judah was the first tribe to receive an inheritance west of the Jordan because of its prominence among the tribes of Israel (see Gn 49:8-12). The description of Judah's allotment (Jos 15:1-12) is more detailed than are those for the other tribes. Verses 13-19 contain an account of Caleb's success in expelling the Canaanites from the region of Hebron, his inheritance. Verses 20-62 detail the allotments to the various clans of Judah.

15:63 The tribe of Judah could not completely remove the Jebusites from Jerusalem. This is the first mention of a tribe's inability to expel the Canaanite inhabitants. Jerusalem remained in Jebusite hands until the time of David (2 Sm 5:6-7).

16:1–17:18 This section details the inheritance of the descendants of Joseph. It includes the boundaries of the allotment to the descendants of Joseph (16:1-4),the inheritances allotted to the tribe of Ephraimand the half-tribe of Manasseh (16:5–17:13), and therequest for additional land from those tribes (17:14-18).

16:10 The Ephraimites were unsuccessful in driving out the Canaanites who lived in Gezer.

17:3-6 The Lord, through Moses, had granted the five daughters of Zelophehad their inheritance (Nm 27:7-8). They approached Joshua and Eleazar the priest to claim their inheritance. The issue of a daughter's right of inheritance had been settled many years earlier (Nm 36:1-10) and Joshua faithfully acted upon their reminder.

17:12-13 The Canaanites of this region were too entrenched to dislodge. The Manassites, however, eventually became strong enough to subject them to forced labor.

18:1–19:48 This section surveys the distribution of land to the remaining tribes of Benjamin, Simeon, Zebulun, Issachar, Asher, Naphtali and Dan. The Levites did not receive an inheritance of land because of their special role as priests.

18:1 The central encampment of Joshua, the priests, and the whole assembly moved from Gilgal to Shiloh. This is the first mention of the tent of meeting (i.e., the tabernacle) in the book of Joshua. It was the place where the presence of the Lord dwelt and where the people came to meet with God. The account of its origins is found in Ex 25–27. The reference to the tent of meeting here and in Jos 19:51 indicates that all was done according to the Lord's directives.

18:2 Although the land had been subdued (18:1) the other seven Cisjordan tribes (after Judah and the Joseph tribes) had not taken possession of it or apportioned their inheritance.

18:3 The men of Judah, including Caleb, had approached Joshua about their allotment of land (14:6). Here Joshua had to confront the remaining seven tribes about completing the allotment of the land.

18:4 Twenty-one surveyors, appointed from among the seven tribes, were to conduct an official survey of the rest of the land so that Joshua could distribute it.

18:6 "I will cast lots for you here in the presence of the LORD our God." Joshua would cast lots before the Lord so the Lord would determine the allotment of each tribe. The casting of lots (see 14:1-5) was the means the Lord had directed for this purpose (Nm 26:55-56). His presence would determine the extent of the tribal allotments.

18:11–19:48 This section lists the remaining tribal allotments. The account of each tribal apportionment includes a description of its boundaries and a catalog of the cities included.

18:11-28 The description of Benjamin's apportionment is the most detailed among those of the remaining tribes. Benjamin's territory, though the smallest in extent, was centrally located and included the site of Jerusalem.

19:1,9 Simeon was allotted territory within the boundaries of Judah because Judah had a surplus of land.

19:47 The tribe of Dan found it difficult to remove the Canaanites from their allotted inheritance, so the tribe migrated to the city of Leshem (Laish), which they renamed Dan, at the northern extremity of Canaan. Further details of the circumstances of Dan's migration are given in Jdg 1:34; 18:1-31.

19:49-50 After the other tribal apportionments were completed, the tribes obeyed the Lord by granting Joshua an inheritance in the hill country of Ephraim.

19:51 This summary verse concludes the account of the division of the land by tribal allotment.

20:1-9 Six cities of refuge were established to provide asylum for people who had committed manslaughter (unintentional killing) (cp. Ex 21:13; Dt 4:41-43). The Lord issued detailed instructions to Moses about how these cities were to function (see Nm 35:9-34). The offender could seek refuge in them from the "avenger of blood" (i.e., the near relative who would take the perpetrator's life in reprisal) until his case could be decided by an equitable trial (Jos 20:6). The system of cities of refuge allowed justice to prevail in the land while preventing blood vengeance of a "vigilante" sort.

20:3,5,9 The "avenger of blood" was, typically, a near relative of the murder victim (or some other designated person) who was responsible for exacting legal vengeance against the murderer (see Gn 9:5-6; Ex 21:23-24). While vengeance was the domain of God alone (Dt 32:35; Ps 94:23; Pr 20:22), He also recognized it as part of ancient Israel's justice system. Vengeance was never to be a private or personal matter, but was strictly regulated by the Law of Moses. For further discussion of the system of blood vengeance and the cities of refuge, see Nm 35:9-34; Dt 19:1-13.

21:1-3 The leaders of the Levites approached Eleazar, Joshua and the tribal heads about fulfilling the Lord's command to Moses to give towns for them to live in and pasturelands for their flocks from within the other tribal allotments (Nm 35:1-8; Lv 25:32).

21:3,8 Verses 3 and 8 form a literary bracket around verses 4-7 showing that the Israelites obeyed the will of the Lord.

21:4-7 Joshua and Eleazar distributed the cities among the Levitical clans by the method of casting lots. Three major clans are listed: the Kohathites, the Gershonites, and the Merarites. The Kohathites were further divided into two groups, those who were descendants of Aaron and those who were not (vv. 4-5).

21:9-42 Although 13:14 notes that the Levites received no inheritance, they were allotted 48 towns, with their pasturelands, within the territories of the other tribes (Nm 35:6-7). This passage catalogs those cities.

21:43-45 With the distribution and settlement of the land of Canaan the Lord's promise to the patriarchs was fulfilled (Gn 12:7; 15:7, 18-21). Although Canaanites continued to reside among the Israelites in some places, the land as a whole was firmly under their control. Several passages assert total triumph over the Canaanites (e.g., Jos 10:40-42; 11:16-23; 12:7-24; 18:1; 23:1), while others note that their removal was incomplete (13:2-6; 15:63; 16:10; 17:12-13,16-18; 23:4-5,7,12-13). These statements are not mutually contradictory; rather, the narrative gives a realistic picture of the conditions of the occupation. The conquest of Canaan did not require that every individual Canaanite be removed or annihilated; displacement of the Canaanites was a process that went on over a period of time (23:4-5). It was still the case that God had faithfully fulfilled His promise to Israel.

22:9-34 While returning to their homes in the Trans-jordan the men of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh provoked a crisis by erecting an altar at Geliloth. Their altar was a replica (v. 28) of the one at the tabernacle, intended as a witness to future generations of the legitimacy of their share in the inheritance. This was an innocent act on their part, as they did not intend the altar to be used for sacrifices. The Cisjordan tribes, however, viewed such an altar as a threat to the unity of Israel as a whole. The western tribes sent a delegation, headed by Phinehas son of Eleazar, to investigate the matter. The eastern tribes explained their purpose in erecting the altar to the satisfaction of the rest (vv. 21-31), and the crisis was resolved.

22:10 "A large, impressive altar" indicates that it would be seen by anyone who passed by.

22:12 The assembly of the Cisjordan tribes at Shiloh was preparing to go to war against the Transjordan tribes in order to correct what they thought was a breach of the covenant with the Lord.

22:16-18 The Phinehas delegation expressed its concern in the strongest terms. The word translated "treachery" is used twice in verse 16 and refers to an act of rebellion; the same word was used with reference to Achan's deed at Jericho (7:1). The delegation recalled the incident at Peor (Nm 25) as an example of the consequences of idolatry. The Phinehas delegation was concerned that an act of spiritual unfaithfulness on the part of the tribes east of the Jordan would endanger all Israel.

22:33-34 The incident ended peaceably. The Transjordan tribes named the altar in accordance with its purpose: it was to be a witness for future generations to the sovereignty of the Lord and the unity of all the tribes of Israel.

23:1-2 Israel had come to a point of "rest" from her enemies. Major conquest operations were completed and Israel controlled the region as a whole. Joshua, now advanced in age, summoned the leaders of Israel and gave his farewell address. The reference to Joshua's old age confirms that the conquest took a long time.

23:3-11 The theological justification for the conquest was the declaration that it was the Lord's doing, not Israel's. The Israelites had not subdued the Canaanites merely to satisfy an agenda of aggression. The Lord had determined to remove them from the land and give it to Israel. Joshua admonished the people to remain faithful to the Mosaic covenant and to avoid committing idolatry with the gods of the Canaanites who remained in the land. Joshua's speech echoes the words of Moses in Dt 7:1-5.

23:14 Joshua acknowledged that his time on earth was about to expire. The Lord had been faithful in fulfilling all His promises to Israel.

23:15-16 Reminiscent of the curse ceremony of Dt 28, Joshua warned the people that disobedience would bring disaster and dispossession for Israel. The Lord was faithful to bless obedience and curse disobedience. If Israel repeated the Canaanites' sins of idolatry, she would experience the same consequence: removal from the land. The entire section of Jos 23:1–24:24 parallels the book of Deuteronomy, Moses' "farewell address," as a ceremony of the renewal of the covenant. It contains the same elements: a rehearsal of the Lord's deeds in delivering His people (24:2-13); the people's pledge of loyalty (24:14-26); the reference to witnesses (24:22, 27); mention of the laws of the covenant, "a statute and ordinance" (24:25); and the sanction of judgment to come if Israel abrogates the covenant (23:12-16). The order differs, but all the components are present.

24:1 Joshua summoned a final assembly of all Israel at Shechem and gave his farewell speech.

24:2-13 Joshua began his farewell speech with a review of the salvation history of Israel from Terah the father of Abraham down to that present time. He recounted the mighty acts of the Lord on behalf of His people in liberating them from Egyptian enslavement, guiding them through the wilderness, and subduing their opponents. Joshua reminded them that it was not by their own power that these great deeds were accomplished. This "historical recital" is one of the elements of covenant renewal, seen in brief form in the introduction to the Ten Commandments (Ex 20:2; Dt 5:6).

24:14 After his the review of salvation history Joshua challenged the people, by means of three imperatives, to be faithful to the Lord. The people were to "fear" and "worship" the Lord and "get rid of" all idols. Worship of Yahweh alone was the fundamental stipulation of His covenant with them (Ex 20:3; Dt 5:7).

24:15 "As for me and my family, we will worship the Lord." Joshua and his family were committed to the Lord regardless of the decision of the people. Joshua spoke as the head of his household and the spiritual leader of his family. His words reflected an undivided devotion to the Lord that served as an example of faithfulness for all the people and an incentive for them to reaffirm their loyalty to the covenant. His undivided devotion is a source of encouragement for Christian believers today.

24:16-18 The response from the people was overwhelmingly in favor of serving the Lord. However their commitment would be short-lived (Jdg 1–2).

24:19-28 Joshua expresses doubt concerning the sincerity of commitment on the part of the people, but the people insist that they will be faithful in worshiping the Lord alone to the exclusion other gods. Whether Joshua really meant to question their sincerity on this occasion, or whether his words demanding recertification of their loyalty were a formal part of the ceremony, is open to interpretation. In either case, halfhearted commitment is worthless.

24:29-33 The book of Joshua ends with the record of the death of Joshua and Eleazar the priest. Israel was faithful to the Lord during Joshua's lifetime and the lives of the leaders of his generation (24:31). However, after the passing of that generation—the group that had known Moses' leadership in the wilderness and had followed Joshua in the conquest of Canaan—fell once again into idolatry.

Judges Articles

How Should We Handle Unresolved Questions About the Bible?

by Paul Copan

Because God is truthful, we can expect His written self-revelation (in the original manuscripts) to be truthful in what it affirms. But not everything in Scripture is perfectly clear. The Apostle Peter admitted that Paul's writings are hard to understand in places (2 Pt 3:15-16). Besides sophisticated theological material, historical distance and cultural differences exist between the biblical world and our own. What was apparent to Israel and the early church may appear less clear to us today. Yet lack of clarity doesn't equal discrepancy.

Some critics cite numerous "contradictions" that actually turn out to be resolvable upon examination. Because the Bible is both divinely inspired and a human work, we can expect (1) differing writing styles and personalities to be expressed in it, and (2) the use of earlier records or documents and material from writers outside the Bible (cp. Jos 10:13; 1 and 2 Ch; Lk 1:1-4). We shouldn't require that biblical writers cite OT passages verbatim; they could generalize or summarize without being exact (e.g., what was said at Jesus' baptism, Peter's confession of Jesus, the placard on Jesus' cross). And we don't have the exact words Jesus spoke (which were mainly Aramaic, not Greek), though His voice does come through. These aren't truly unresolved questions.

When discovering more challenging passages, though, how should we proceed?

• **Clarify a passage by examining its context or by using clear passages to examine the unclear.** Context reveals that "justify" and "works" in James 2 mean something different than they do in Romans 3. Also, the teaching of the NT letters can help us distinguish between historical descriptions in Acts and what's normative for church life.

• **Absence of evidence isn't evidence of absence.** Skeptics may mention biblical cities that haven't been discovered (though lots have been!), concluding that Scripture is unreliable. But earlier absence-of-evidence accusations regarding Abraham's camels, the Hittite people, or the Davidic dynasty have been overturned by later archaeological discoveries, confirming Scripture.

• **Be charitable toward the author.** Let's take an example here. Proverbs 26:4-5 advises (1) not to answer a fool according to his folly and then (2) to answer him! The skeptic's charge of "stupidity" or "contradiction" is unrealistic. Surely we should give the benefit of the doubt to the wise compiler of Proverbs: he recognized that sometimes answering a fool is appropriate and that at other times silence is the best choice.

• **What the Bible describes is often different from what it prescribes.** Another example: while Scripture mentions Jephthah's rash vow (Jdg 11), such a vow is not endorsed by God.

• **The author may be using a literary strategy, making a particular theological point, or just observing; journalistic precision isn't always his concern.** Matthew 8 and 9 intentionally cluster miracles together; it's not chronological. Matthew highlights Peter's importance, thus downplaying his blunders included in other Gospels. The two "great lights" of Genesis 1, namely the sun and moon, are relatively small luminaries compared to other bodies we now know about in the universe, but the Bible's reference is observational, not scientific (cp. "sunset," not "earthturn").

• **We'll have to be content to live with unanswered questions.** Although there are many fine evangelical commentaries and scholars dealing with questions we may have, much will be hazy. We see through a glass darkly.

Why Does God Hide Himself?

by Kenneth T. Magnuson

The question "Why does God hide Himself?" is asked at times, not only by the atheist or agnostic seeking to cast doubt on God's existence, but also by believers seeking a personal experience of God. It is therefore related to further questions. The doubter or skeptic may ask, "Is there a God?" or "If God exists, how can we know that He exists, and why doesn't He reveal Himself more clearly?" The anxious seeker may ask, "Is God in control of the universe?" and "Is God concerned about my life and problems?" In times of trouble many wonder if God is there and if He cares. And finally the doubter, seeker, and follower alike may ask, "How can I know God?"

A biblical perspective on God's hiddenness encourages us not to become overly anxious. God does, in fact, reveal Himself but perhaps not in the way some demand. In one sense God is indeed hidden because He is Spirit and cannot be seen physically (Jn 4:24). The demand for certain types of physical evidence of God will leave us wanting, and may be misplaced, as it diminishes the need for faith. Further, God may deliberately hide Himself in order to expose people's hearts, drawing closer those who believe, while turning away from those who turn from Him (Dt 31:17; Is 59:2).

Yet the Bible encourages us with the promise that if we seek God faithfully, we will find Him (Jr 29:13). While God is hidden in some sense, yet He is knowable, so we may ask God to show Himself to us (Pr 8:17; Jr 29:13; Mt 7:7-8). We may also look for and acknowledge the ways that God has already chosen to reveal Himself. First, God has revealed Himself to us in His Word (Ex 3:14; Heb 1:1; cp. Lk 24:27). Second, God has revealed Himself decisively in His Son, Jesus Christ (Jn 1:1,14; 14:8-9; Col 2:9; Heb 1:1-3). Third, God has revealed Himself and His power through creation (Ps 19:1-2; Rm 1:20). Fourth, God reveals Himself through the power and the indwelling of His Spirit (Jn 14:16-17; 1 Jn 5:6-12). Finally, God reveals Himself through the witness of believers (Ac 1:8; 2:1-4; 1 Jn 1:1-4).

Introduction to Judges

AUTHOR

The books of Judges and Ruth are treated together because the events of the book of Ruth took place during the time of the judges (Ru 1:1). Both books face challenges to their authenticity regarding matters of authorship, the dating of their writings, the possible addition of non-original material by later authors, and the purposes for their having been written.

Although neither book identifies its author, Jewish tradition (*Baba Bathra* 14b-15a) declares the prophet Samuel to have authored both books. Challenges to this view are at least threefold. (1) The books refer to the times of the judges as having taken place in distant memory (Jdg 17:6; 18:1; 19:1; 21:25; Ru 1:1; 4:17,22). (2) The books take the time to explain past customs or events (Jdg 11:39; 14:10; 20:27-28; Ru 4:7). (3) The text says, "In those days there was no king in Israel," seemingly writing from the perspective of a time when Israel had a king, and Samuel died before David reigned as king (Jdg 21:25; 1 Sm 25:1). Those who reject the traditional view of Samuel as author typically favor as the author either King Solomon or an anonymous person who wrote the books during David's reign.

Counterarguments to the three above, supporting Samuel as the author, include the following: (1) The time of the judges technically ceased with the ascension to the throne of Saul, who was anointed king by Samuel (1 Sm 10:1; 11:14-15). Thus Samuel could easily have written these books after the time of the judges. (2) Sufficient time had passed between the actual events or customs and the recording of those events or customs for memories to have faded and certain customs to have fallen out of vogue; hence, the need for explanations for later generations of readers. (3) The references to a king in general in the book of Judges (17:6; 18:1; 19:1; 21:25), and the references to David in particular in the book of Ruth (Ru 4:17,22), fit acceptably within Samuel's life span since he saw the coronation of Saul and later anointed David as king.

Whichever view of authorship is correct (i.e., Samuel, Solomon, or an anonymous author), each easily accounts for any concern regarding the possible addition of materials at the end of either book.

THE RELIABILITY OF JUDGES AND RUTH

Controversy surrounds the books of Judges and Ruth. Even a cursory reading of these books causes many to question the validity of their inclusion in the Scripture, the content being deemed by some as unworthy of God or of little or no value to twenty-first-century readers. These books include: (1) graphic depictions of violence (such as the slaughter of seemingly innocent people by the command of God, maiming, human sacrifice, and gloating over the deaths of one's enemies);

(2) heroes who are anything but role models (while seemingly under the control of the Holy Spirit, they engage in deceit, lies, mockery, and self-centered behavior);

(3) illicit sex and sexual innuendo; (4) a degrading depiction of women; and (5) a writing style that seemingly includes exaggeration or fabrication.

The inclusion of certain statements at the end of each of the books dramatically alters how we are to understand the purpose of each book. In Judges the author declared that in the times about which he was writing "there was no king in Israel" (17:6; 18:1; 19:1; 21:25). In Ruth, the author presented genealogical records that include the name of King David, a king who lived during the post-judges era (Ru 4:17,22). Thus, rather than being merely guidelines for how to live during difficult times, both books appear to be defending one of two views: (1) living during the present age of the kings

was better than living in the previous age of the judges (cp. the book of Judges); or (2) despite coming from an insignificant, non-royal family (cp. 1 Sm 16:1,13; 18:18), David had an excellent heritage, arising from godly grandparents of a family in the messianic line.

Regarding the controversial matters of the content, a closer reading of the text reveals that, by being written as straightforward accounts, the books display a higher degree of credibility than if they presented sanitized histories. Neither book attempts to gloss over any of the sins, foolishness, or errors of the people described in them. Despite conclusions skeptics might draw from a cursory assessment of the texts, the books themselves never place blame for sin, foolishness, or error on God. God was not guilty and the so-called innocent were, in fact, not innocent at all. Instead they deserved judgment.

The events and customs fit precisely into the story lines of their respective books and align well with what is known from ancient sources of information outside the Bible. The stories may not make us feel comfortable, but these books were not designed to comfort. These two books together present hard-hitting truth designed to disturb, to inform, and to challenge.

Judges Study Notes

1:1-4 How could a loving and merciful God condone, encourage, and even participate in war? God is not only loving, but also a holy and just God who brings wise judgment upon the guilty. Although Canaanites had been increasing in wickedness for more than 400 years, God exhibited His grace to them during that time (Gn 15:16). The time for judgment, however, had now come. God used this war both to punish the guilty and to protect His people from the corrupting influences of idolatry and moral depravity as practiced by the people of the land (Nm 33:55).

1:2-3 Although Judah and Simeon, the sons of Jacob, were long dead, the author used the device of personification to refer to their respective tribes. Since God had not yet revealed personal resurrection from the dead, a man was considered to live on through his name, borne by his descendants.

1:7 Assuming that Adoni-bezek was not exaggerating his military prowess, he would most likely have defeated those kings over a period of time. Thus 70 different kingdoms need not have existed in Palestine at the same time. Furthermore, the term translated "king" (*melek*) could refer to local rulers who, today, might be styled princes, governors or mayors.

1:11-15 In ancient cultures, marriages were often arranged by parents to achieve certain purposes. Caleb was simply exercising his prerogative as father. His method of finding a worthy son for his daughter was, to say the least, imaginative. By establishing this criterion Caleb guaranteed his daughter would marry a courageous man who trusted the Lord and truly desired her as his wife. The Bible depicts women in a variety of situations, sometimes in charge of their own lives and sometimes not. The authors of Scripture, however, did not advocate that women be degraded or treated as of lesser importance than men (13:2-24).

1:19 Judah's defeat by a nation that possessed iron chariots (when "[t]he LORD was with Judah") did not mean that God was not all-powerful. God was capable of defeating iron chariots when He chose to do so (4:13-15). Chapter 2, furthermore, reveals that disobedience to God was the true reason the tribes lost their battles (2:1-3,18-22).

1:21,27-30 God did not deliver all parts of Canaan to the Israelites, but left some of the previous inhabitants in place. There are two reasons for this. (1) Leaving the land occupied, even by Canaanites, kept it from being overrun by wild animals before Israel could settle in it (Ex 23:30; Dt 7:22). (2) Israel's enemies would be the instruments of God's judgment if Israel proved unfaithful to Him and adopted their idolatrous worship (Nm 33:55-56; Jos 23:12-13).

2:1 Who brought the Israelites out of Egypt: the Lord (Ex 13:9; Dt 16:1) or the Angel of the Lord? Scripture sometimes uses the terms interchangeably (cp. Jos 5:13-15), although the phrase "an Angel of the LORD" suggests a created being, rather than God Himself. Some have identified the "angel" as (1) an angelic being who uniquely represented God with a special commission (e.g., Gn 16:7; Dn 6:22; Lk 1:26); (2) God the Father manifesting Himself in a humanlike form (Gn 18; 22:24-25, though the term "angel" is not used in these instances); or (3) God the Son who, before becoming incarnate as Jesus Christ, was made visible for a temporary purpose. The context here, with its reference to God's covenant with His people, would indicate that the one who led Israel out of Egypt was either God the Father or the preincarnate God the Son. But sometimes it is wise not to press such distinctions too far, as this can be intruding into "hidden things" that are beyond human comprehension (Dt 29:29).

2:6-9 How could Joshua be dead in 1:1, alive in 2:6, then die and be buried in verses 8-9? Writing to make their theological point, the authors of Scripture did not always compose their historical accounts in chronological order. The author of the book of Judges used the flashback technique here, repeating Jos 24:28-31 (cp. Jdg 17–21). This technique occurs elsewhere in Scripture (e.g., Is 36:1–38:8 repeats 2 Kg 18:13–20:11; Ezr 1:1-3 repeats 2 Ch 36:22-23).

2:11-23 This passage presents the scheme, or "philosophy," of the narrative of the book of Judges and, to a degree, that of OT history in general. Events unfold in a pattern of oscillation between times when Israel is faithful to the Lord, receiving His blessing, and then turns away from Him and must undergo His judgments. Only the total obedience of Jesus Christ (2 Co 5:21; Heb 4:15; 1 Pt 2:22; 1 Jn 3:5) breaks that pattern for Israel.

2:14 Did God encourage, even practice, slavery, when He "sold" His people into the hands of their enemies? The word translated "sold" conveyed either a literal or figurative sense. It could mean to engage in the sale of something, either a product or service, with an exchange of money of payment in kind (cp. Gn 25:31; 37:28; Lv 25:29), or it could be figurative, to give something entirely into the power of someone else (cp. Jdg 3:8; 4:2; 10:7). The latter is the case here.

2:17 God considered Israel's defection to other gods the equivalent of spiritual prostitution (cp. 8:27).

2:22 That God tested the Israelites "to see whether they would keep the LORD's way" did not mean He did not know the future. The test was for Israel's benefit, not God's, because their obedience would strengthen their faith.

3:1-5 The fact that God did not drive out the enemies of His people did not indicate that He was incapable of doing so, or that He had broken his promises to His people. God's promises to Israel were, at times, unconditional; that is, He would act in certain ways no matter what His people did. At other times they were conditional; that is, He would act in a specific way if they first acted in a given way (cp. Mt 13:58 with Mk 6:5).

3:5-7 The issue here was not interracial marriage but interfaith marriage. God did not want His people to marry unbelievers (Dt 7:1-5). Nowhere in Scripture does God issue an outright condemnation of, or even express reservation about, either interracial or international marriages. He said nothing against Moses' marriage to a Cushite woman and, in fact, defended it against the protest of religious leaders in Israel (Nm 12:1-9). In Jesus' lineage there were several international and perhaps interracial marriages, e.g., Salmon's marriage to Rahab (a Canaanite), Boaz's marriage to Ruth (a Moabitess), and David's marriage to Bathsheba (quite probably a Hittite; cp. Mt 1:4-6).

3:8 Anger is acceptable to God when people appropriately direct it against sin or injustice (cp. Jos 23:16; Ps 106:32-40; Ezk 22:23-31; Am 5:11-15). Anger that displeases God is the expression of rage that seeks to benefit self, rather than another, or that extends beyond its appropriate time. Both types of anger ultimately work against the individual who expresses that emotion (cp. Eph 4:26; Jms 1:19-20).

3:10 To have the Spirit come upon one, or to be filled by the Spirit, meant that, the individual was guided or empowered by God to perform His will in a special way. In ancient Israel, the Spirit of the Lord came upon certain individuals (cp. 6:34; 11:29; 14:6,19; 15:14; 1 Sm 10:10; 11:6; 19:20,23; 1 Ch 12:18; 2 Ch 20:14), or filled them (cp. Ex 31:3; 35:31; Dt 34:9; Mc 3:8), to perform specific tasks—such as designing the temple, prophesying, leading Israel to victory in battle.

3:12-22 Why did God destroy Eglon, whom He originally commissioned to bring judgment against His own people (vv. 12-13,20-21)? As the "carved images" in his territory (v. 26) indicated, Eglon did not acknowledge God's role in empowering him to defeat and rule Israel, but still worshiped idols. Moreover, Eglon's rule was not benevolent but harsh, as the cry of God's people for deliverance suggests (v. 15).

3:20 Ehud was not being deceptive when he declared he had "a word from God" for Eglon and then killed him. God's messages were not always messages of well being or hope; they were, at times, messages of judgment and death. Nor were they always verbal; the Hebrew term for "word" (*dabar*) can mean "matter" or "thing."

3:29-31 How accurate are biblical numbers, such as the 10,000 Moabites killed by the Israelites (v. 29), the 80 years of peace, (v. 30), or the 600 Philistines killed by Shamgar (v. 31)? Numbers in Scripture function in various ways. Some are intended to be precise and are recorded as such (see Ezr 2). Other figures that may appear to be precise are to be understood as approximations, and are often designated as such by the use of the modifier "about"; an example is the number of Israelites killed at the battle of Ai: "about 36" (Jos 7:5). Some figures, intended as approximations, lack the modifier "about." The 600 Philistines killed by Shamgar (Jdg 3:31) may be such an approximation since it is unlikely that someone counted each person he killed. Some numbers may not be numbers at all, but have another meaning. The number "thousand" can mean a military unit (Nm 31:5; 1 Sm 10:19). Other numbers, whether exact or not, are theologically significant; the number "seven" (related to the Hb word for swearing an oath, *ša-ba'*) can be an indicator that the Lord's covenant is what is in view in a passage (Jos 6:2-15; Rv 15:6–16:1).

4:2 On God's selling the Israelites to another nation, see note on 2:14.

4:3 Although God allowed His people to suffer severely for long periods of time (cp. 3:8,14; 6:1; 10:8; 13:1), He was not unaware of their need, uncaring about their suffering, or incapable of helping them. Scripture teaches that God knows all things (Jb 34:21; Lk 12:30; 1 Jn 3:20), that He is all-powerful (Ps 115:3; Heb 1:3; Rv 4:11), and that He is compassionate (Dt 4:25-31; Is 30:18-22). He allowed His people to suffer because He desired them to repent of their evil ways and to turn back to Him (Lv 26:14-45).

4:6-9 Deborah declared, at first, that the Lord said He would give Sisera into Barak's hands (v. 7), but later stated that the Lord would give him into the hands of a woman (v. 9). This is not a discrepancy. As a prophetess Deborah spoke for the Lord; if her prophecy did not come true, she would not have been considered a true prophet (Dt 18:18-22). Second, the circumstances changed. Barak did not immediately respond to God's call. Had he acted in faith he would have received the honor of defeating Sisera; because of hesitancy, which manifested his doubt, God gave the honor to a woman.

4:11 On the name of Moses' father-in-law, see note on Ex 3:1. Hobab means "loving, embracing one" and may have been a name of endearment given him by the Israelites.

4:15-16 If every man in the Sisera's army died in battle, how was Sisera still alive afterward (vv. 17-21)? All of his men (that is, the foot soldiers as distinguished from generals) could have been slain. Or "not a single man was left" who remained on the battlefield because some fled the battle and escaped—a not uncommon occurrence in modern, as well as ancient, warfare. (Compare Saul's statement to Samuel, 1 Sm 15:20, in which he claimed to have utterly destroyed the Amalekites; yet David later had to fight the same Amalekites—1 Sm 27; 30; 2 Sm 1.) Finally, the author of Judges did not mean to assert that every soldier in the Canaanite army died. He states that Jabin ruled from Hazor, but Sisera was from another town (Jdg 4:2,13) and organized his army from there. Some of the Canaanite forces would have remained at Hazor as Jabin's personal guard.

5:1 Deborah's and Barak's song of delight over the destruction of their enemies may strike one as a perversion of God's love for all people. Such a reaction would be superficial. God had directed that the Canaanites be exterminated because of their perversion. Their slaughter was both justified, because God had sentenced them to death, and praiseworthy, because Israel had fought the battle in obedience to God's command. Furthermore, Deborah and Barak gave credit to the Lord for the victory.

5:8 By choosing "new gods," Israel had rejected the one true God and thus deserved His judgment. The consequence was 20 years of oppression (4:1-3).

5:8 If there were no shields or spears among 40,000 in Israel, how could Israel have defeated a trained army mounting 900 iron chariots (4:12)? It was the Lord who fought for Israel and overcame the Canaanite weaponry. The narrative notes that God brought confusion among the ranks of the Canaanite army (4:15), which forgot its training and discipline and fled in the face of an enemy it did not understand. Furthermore, once the first group of Canaanites had been defeated their weapons were available for Israel's use (4:16).

5:20 Scripture clearly condemns all forms of astrology, divination, sorcery, and witchcraft (Lv 19:26; Dt 18:9-12,14; Is 47:12-15; Jr 27:9-10). Yet Deborah and Barak sing that "the stars fought from the heavens" against Sisera. Their words may be taken in several ways. First, they are a metaphorical reference to either angelic involvement, under God's guidance, or God's direct involvement in the battle (Rv 1:20; 22:16). Second they may allude to some natural or supernatural event in the skies such as the falling of a meteorite, an eclipse or some other phenomenon (Jos 10:11-13). Or the expression may hark back to the renewal of the covenant under Moses, in which "heaven and earth" are invoked as witnesses to the alliance between the Lord and His people (Dt 4:26; 30:19).

6:5 How could there have been Midianites "without number" when, according to Nm 31:7, Moses had killed every Midianite male? First, Midian was not a nation under God's full edict of destruction, whereby every person was to have been destroyed (Dt 20:16-18). When Moses "killed every male" he would have killed only those who had fought in battle against Israel. Sufficient time had passed since Moses' day for the people of Midian to repopulate their army. Second, in the heat of battle there was no way to record of the exact size of the invading army, so they, with their assets, were "without number." Third, the phrase may be a conventional literary expression indicating a large force of enemy soldiers and camels; it does not mean that it was literally impossible to count them.

6:8-9 Ancient Israelite thinking linked individuals with all of their ancestors and descendants. Thus, in the mind of the Israelites of Gideon's day, because their ancestors had been rescued from the hand of Pharaoh in Egypt they themselves had, in effect, also been delivered "from the power of Egypt."

6:12 God called Gideon a "mighty warrior" not because of his experience, but because of his potential—and, undoubtedly, because of what God planned to accomplish through him.

6:17 God uses signs in Scripture for many purposes: to declare His faithfulness (Ex 31:13); to confirm His will (Is 38:7); to encourage a person weak in faith (Jdg 6:36-40); to test His people's readiness to follow Him rather than false prophets (Dt 13:1-5; 2 Th 2:8-12); to confirm a person as his spokesperson (Ex 4:8-9); to announce His own coming or presence (Mt 24:30); and to confirm that God is, in fact, the speaker of a message or the source behind it (Ex 10:2; Jr 44:29). That signs sometimes occurred, however, did not mean that God expected people to ask for them. To seek a sign was no guarantee that God would provide one (Mt 12:38-39), and receiving one was no assurance that it came from God (Mt 24:24). Moreover, there was no guarantee that the individual receiving a sign would believe it or act in accordance with it (cp. Ex 10:1-2; Neh 9:10). God was not always pleased with those who asked for signs (Mt 12:38; 16:1,4; Lk 11:16; 1 Co 1:22-23).

6:22-23 According to Ex 33:20, anyone who sees God will die; this was Gideon's fear, though he was not struck dead. But the Angel of the Lord, while truly a manifestation of God (Jdg 6:23; cp. 2:1), was not a revelation of His fullness (Ex 33:18-20). Or perhaps God displayed His mercy toward Gideon by choosing not to kill him (13:22-23). On the Angel of the Lord, see notes on Jos 5:13-15; Jdg 2:1.

6:25 "Asherah" (singular form of *'asheroth*, 3:7) was a Canaanite name for one of their female deities, the goddess of happiness and fortune. The Phoenicians called a similar female deity "Ashtaroth" (2:13).

6:36-40 Gideon's desire for a second fleece sign evidenced his less than complete trust in God (cp. "Don't be angry with me"; v. 39). He wanted to make certain that the first fleece sign was not merely a coincidence or the result of the natural absorption properties of a fleece.

7:5 God chose those who lapped like a dog, not those who knelt to drink. Some have suggested that those who lapped maintained a state of alertness; whereas those who knelt had to use their cupped hands to bring up the water, thereby letting down their guard. Whatever the case, the story makes it clear that God wanted only a small band of soldiers in Gideon's army so that when they were victorious none could say, "I did it myself" (v. 2). The victory would be perceived as the Lord's doing alone.

7:9 God's statement that He had given the camp of the Midianites into Gideon's hand was a declaration both of what God had done and of what He expected of Gideon. While God had guaranteed victory, Gideon still had to trust Him for what had not yet happened. He needed to demonstrate his faith in God by actually going to war and securing the outcome God had promised.

7:10 The clause "if you are afraid to go to the camp" did not mean that God was ignorant of Gideon's thoughts (cp. 2:22; 4:3). Scripture clearly declares that God knows all things, even the hearts of humans (1 Kg 8:39; 2 Ch 6:30; Ps 44:21; Lk 9:47; Ac 15:8; 1 Jn 3:20). The statement was made for Gideon's benefit. Knowing that Gideon was afraid, God had already given one of the Midianites a dream that would be the means to encourage him (Jdg 7:13-15).

7:12 The phrase "as innumerable as the sand on the seashore" was a hyperbole (exaggeration), and was not intended to indicate the exact number of camels (cp. 3:29-31; 6:5).

7:21-22 The narrative relates that an experienced army of over 120,000 men panicked at the sight of Gideon's 300 men. Several points make clear that this was no exaggeration. The Midianite soldier's interpretation of the dream revealed that the enemy army was already experiencing a heightened level of fear (vv. 13-14). The attack took place "at the beginning of the middle watch" (midnight, v. 19), a time when the soldiers would have been asleep; upon being awakened abruptly they would have felt confused or vulnerable. Furthermore, the feeling of being surrounded in a life and death situation—not really knowing the size of the army that surrounded them—would account for much of the panic that ensued and for their lashing out in the dark at anybody who blocked their escape. The massive number of men in a confined area would have added to the level of panic. Finally, God was active in ensuring both the confused frenzy of the soldiers and their ultimate destruction.

8:1-3 God did not judge Gideon for his exaggerated praise of the Ephraimites' role in the battle, but this does not imply that he approved of such flattery. Scripture, when describing events and conversations, records lies or exaggerations when they occur without suggesting that God condones or encourages such speech. Contrast Jephthah's actions toward Ephraim in a similar situation (12:1-4).

8:5-9 Since God said: "Vengeance belongs to Me; I will repay" (Dt 32:35; Rm 12:19; Heb 10:30), shouldn't Gideon have just "forgiven and forgotten" the slights by the men of Succoth and Penuel? Gideon may have been out of God's will in threatening the people; the narrative simply records his words, faulty though his motives might be, without passing judgment on them. Or, since Gideon was God's duly appointed leader, the men deserved Gideon's retribution as the instrument of divine vengeance against the rebellious (Jdg 8:13-17).

8:10 On how Gideon, with only 300 men, could defeat an army of 15,000, see note on 7:21-22.

8:26 Apparently both the kings of Midian and their camels (v. 21) wore the crescent ornaments that were symbols of the goddess Astarte. The kings' horses, also, would have been decorated with ornamentation. Religious ornamentation was often worn as a supposedly protective talisman, and these Midianites made extensive use of it.

8:27 What did the author mean when he wrote that "all Israel prostituted themselves with it [the ephod]"? The Bible speaks of prostitutes (Jos 2:1; 6:17,25; Heb 11:31; Jms 2:25) and of people acting as literal prostitutes (Gn 38:13-19; Jdg 19:22), but when Scripture declares that the people of Israel "prostituted themselves," the reference is to forsaking its loyalty to the one true God. Veneration of religious objects such as this "ephod," worship of false gods (i.e., idols), occult practices, or spiritism (Lv 20:1-6) are forms of spiritual adultery. Within the framework of His covenant with Israel, the Lord places Himself, in effect, in the position of a husband (Jr 31:32).

8:30-31 Was Gideon sinning in having more than one wife (v. 30) and a concubine (v. 31)? Even though scripture nowhere directly forbids polygamy, i.e., there are no "Do not" statements against it, it is clear that monogamy is the preferred, or God's ideal, for marriage. Having more than one spouse simultaneously would complicate the "one flesh" understanding of marriage

expressed in several passages (Gn 2:24; Mt 19:5-6; Mk 10:7-8; 1 Co 7:2; Eph 5:31). Usually, when Scripture describes a polygamous situation, either the husband is having problems with, or because of, his wives (Gn 30:1; 1 Kg 11:4) or the wives are creating problems between themselves (Gn 30:14-16; 1 Sm 1:1-6). Additionally, believers today would not consider a multiple marriage because it would be in violation of the laws of the government under which they live (Ti 3:1). A man with more than one wife would be barred from serving as an elder or deacon (1 Tm 3:2,12; Ti 1:6).

9:5 Did Gideon (Jerubbaal) have 70 sons (8:30) or 71—70 killed and one left alive? Here the author used a common literary device of his day, the one-number-more or one-number-less style, or exception clause. This is similar to "everybody had a good time at the party, except so and so" (cp. Nm 26:64-65; 1 Sm 30:17; Pr 30:15,18). This device emphasizes the completeness of the destruction while recording what, in fact, occurred: all 70 were killed except Jotham, who escaped death.

9:13 Scripture, in several instances, issues a warning about the consumption of wine or describes the unhappy results of its use (e.g., Pr 20:1; 23:31-35; Is 28:7). In Jotham's tale the vine claims that its product cheers "both God and man." This is part of an allegorical story Jotham tells to mock Abimelech's false kingship; it is not intended as a prescription for human conduct. The Bible does not issue a general condemnation of the drinking of wine (cp. Jn 2:1-11; 1 Tm 5:23), but only of the excessive use of alcoholic beverages (Eph 5:18;1 Pet 4:3).

9:23 What is this evil spirit that God sends? The Hebrew word translated "evil" has a range of meanings, including the concepts of moral or ethical wickedness, misery, distress, trouble, and injury. God indeed oversees the actions of all beings and can control the activities of evil spirits (i.e., fallen angels). But in this instance He caused a hostile attitude to develop between Abimelech and the men of Shechem so that they would turn against each other.

9:35-41 The author did not directly indicate God's reaction (approval or disapproval) to Zebul's lie. The Scripture elsewhere, however, indicates God Himself does not lie (Nm 23:19) and that He disapproves of lying (Ex 20:16; Lv 19:11; Pr 6:16-19; Rm 3:7-8; Col 3:9). Merely because a venture turns out successfully does not guarantee that God approved of either the means or the ends.

9:56-57 Scripture has much to say about "cursing." (1) Curses generally appear to be uttered in the expectation that they will be fulfilled, yet not all curses come to pass (Pr 26:2). (2) God sometimes placed a curse (judgment) upon people and identified situations in which people could expect to experience His curse (Lv 26:14-39; Dt 11:26-28; 27:15-26; 28:15-68; Pr 28:27; Jr 11:3; 48:10). This is especially true of the curses that were pronounced in the renewal of the Lord's covenant with Israel; the declaration of these sanctions was a normal part of such ceremonies (Dt 30:19). (3) At times, curses were placed on embodiments of evil (Gn 3:14), inanimate objects (Gn 3:17), or concepts (Jb 3:1; Jr 20:14). (4) God established guidelines for what He allowed to be cursed (2 Sm 16:10; 2 Kg 2:24) and what He prohibited from being cursed (Ex 21:17; Lv 19:14; 24:15; Nm 22:12; Rm 12:14). (5) Some curses revealed thefoolishness of the one cursing (1 Sm 14:24-30); other curses revealed that the one who employed a curse had not considered all its implications (Jdg 21:16-18; Ec 10:20). (6) Scripture provides guidelines for how people are to respond to those who curse them (Lk 6:28). (7) The NT also declares that through the work of Christ on the cross, who took upon Himself the curse inherent in the covenant law (Gl 3:10), believers have been freed from its curse pronouncements (3:13). God's people will not be eternally under its curse (Rv 22:3). The curse is the opposite of the blessing, and the effect of each depends on the authority of the person uttering them. The functioning of both blessing and curse in biblical cultures illustrates the power of the spoken word, and how seriously God takes the use of speech (Mt 12:37; Jms 3:5-10).

10:7 To ascribe anger to the Lord, as the OT often does, is not to compare His attitude with sinful human passions. The Bible identifies at least two kinds of anger: that which is sinful and that which is righteous (Pr 14:29; 16:32; Eph 4:26; Jms 1:19). The former may be self-serving (Gn 4:5; Nm 24:10; 2 Sm 6:8) or that which lashes out at others (2 Ch 16:10). The latter is that which seeks either God's good (e.g., an outrage against sin) or God's will (Dt 4:21). The anger of the Lord, at times, remains within the Lord, i.e., does not initiate action (Ps 86:15). In Scripture, "slow to anger" means keeping one's anger in check for a long period of time, allowing it to subside or to be expressed, as appropriate. At other times, God's anger is expressed by His words (Hs 8:5) or by His judgment, a judgment that may withhold privileges (Ps 95:11) or invoke punitive measures (Nm 12:9-10; Dt 11:17; Jdg 2:14) that can even lead to the death of the guilty (Dt 6:15; 2 Sm 6:7).

10:7 On God's selling the Israelites to another nation, see note on 2:14.

10:10-16 Scripture declares that God does not change (1 Sm 15:29; Ps 15:4; Mal 3:6; Jms 1:17). Here the Lord declares that He will not deliver His people again. Yet, in Jdg 10:16, He is moved by the suffering of His people, and 11:32 records that He delivered them once again. God has established general principles by which He operates, one being that He judges those who sin but reconciles sinners to Himself upon their sincere repentance (Dt 29:17–30:10; 2 Ch 7:13-14). God had graciously delivered Israel (Jdg 10:1-5), but Israel turned away from the Lord to serve other gods (v. 6), incurring His judgment (vv. 7-9). When they then cried out to the Lord, expecting Him to deliver them on the basis of their acknowledgment of disloyalty (v. 10), He declined (v. 13). In this He appears to have violated His principle of reconciliation in response to repentance, but vv. 14-16 reveals that the Israelites' repentance was not sincere, for idols remained in their midst. When they finally removed their foreign "gods" to worship the Lord alone, He responded by reconciling them to Himself and delivering them from their enemies (v. 16; 11:32). God changed neither His mind nor His forgiving character (e.g., Ex 34:6-7; Ps 51:1), but operated in accordance with His character (Jdg 2:11-23).

11:1-6 Scripture condemns prostitution as displeasing to God (Lv 21:9); the law decreed that offspring of an illegitimate relationship were to be barred from entering the assembly of the Lord to the tenth generation (Dt 23:2). Nevertheless Jephthah, born illegitimately of a prostitute, was asked by the elders of Gilead to be their leader. Three considerations apply here. First, the irregular circumstances of one's birth, or having been driven from one's home, did not render a person unable to serve the Lord (Jdg 11:11) or to be guided by God in accomplishing great things (v. 29). Second, the messianic line (i.e., the line of Jesus) includes at least three people who had been born under questionable conditions. Perez was born of an illegitimate relationship (Gn 38; Mt 1:3); Boaz's mother had previously been a prostitute (Mt 1:5; Heb 11:31); and Solomon was born to parents who had committed adultery—his father having even arranged for the murder of his wife's first husband (2 Sm 11:1–12:25; Mt 1:6). Third, during the time of the judges, "everyone did whatever he wanted" (Jdg 17:6; 21:25); the Gileadite's choice of Jephthah was not necessarily God's idea. Still, God did not reject Jephthah but worked with him to accomplish His purpose (11:29-32).

11:24 Jephthah's appeal to the Ammonites' belief in Chemosh does not indicate that he believed their deity was a real god on a level with the Lord God of Israel. It was, if not a sarcastic reference (see Dt 32:37), a use of their beliefs to argue his point—the Israelites owned the land because the God of Israel was stronger than the god of Ammon, as shown by His previous defeat of that god (11:13-23). In biblical times, people considered battles to be fought primarily between gods; the nation winning in battle was thought to have the stronger god. Jephthah was laying out the issue in terms the Ammonites could understand. The authors of Scripture clearly taught that there was, and is, only one true God (2 Ch 15:3; Jr 10:10; Jn 17:3; 1 Th 1:9).

11:29-31 How could Jephthah make such a rash vow if the Spirit of the Lord had come upon him? Even though the Holy Spirit may guide an individual, that person retains the freedom to follow or reject the Spirit's leading. Jephthah apparently chose to act on his own in this case and, in his exuberance, uttered an unwise vow (Pr 20:25; Ec 5:2-4). The Spirit's guidance may have related solely to Jephthah's activities as a judge (e.g., leading God's people into battle; Jdg 11:29-33) and not to his private life (vv. 30-31). Other Israelites (e.g., Samson, Saul, and David) experienced the anointing of the Holy Spirit to be leaders of God's people (13:25; 14:6,19; 15:14; 1 Sam 10:10; 11:6; 16:13), but failed in various aspects of their personal lives (Jdg 14:1-3; 16:1; 1 Sm 13:9-13; 2 Sm 11:2-4).

11:34-39 According to vv. 30-31, Jephthah paid his vow to the Lord. He offered Him the first thing that came out of his house to greet him after the battle—his beloved daughter. Did Jephthah literally sacrifice his daughter as a burnt offering to the Lord, or did he dedicate her to temple service? Until the Middle Ages, interpreters generally held to the first possibility. Subsequently both views have had their advocates. A difficulty with the former view is that God abhors human sacrifice (Jr 32:35); as for the latter view, there is no direct biblical evidence of a group committed to lifelong virginity serving the Lord at the temple in Shiloh. The plain reading of the text supports the conclusion that Jephthah did, in fact, offer his daughter as a burnt offering to the Lord, as great an abomination as that would have been. This did not mean that the Lord accepted or approved of that offering (Is 1:10-15; Am 5:22).

12:6 Since the Ephraimites and the Gileadites were similar in their ethnic backgrounds, the Gileadites devised a pronunciation test whereby they could identify their enemies. Once the identification was made, the Gileadites killed the Ephraimites not because of their speech but because the Ephraimites had made themselves enemies of the Gileadites (v. 1). Considering that the Ephraimites were panicked with no easy escape routes, and considering that huge lopsided losses were not unheard of in biblical times, the figure of 42,000 is not an implausible number of deaths. The author did not state specifically, however, that the Gileadites administered the pronunciation test to all 42,000 people. The word "shibboleth" became proverbial, in English as a term referring to a test of acceptable practice and belief, much as the term "litmus test" has come to be used.

13:1 The author linked the concept of doing evil to both the rejection of the true God and the worship of false gods (2:11; 3:17; 10:6; cp. Dt 12:29-31).

13:2-5 The fact the author mentions Samson's father's name (Manoah) 18 times but does not mention his mother's name even once is no indication that the Bible considers women to be less important than men (cp. 1:11-15). Lineage in ancient Israel was established through the male side of the family, not the female side. The mention of Samson's mother in these verses, however, is not a detail incidental to the story but integral to it; her role is as significant as that of her husband. The Angel of the Lord appeared to her twice (13:3,9) before encountering her husband for the first time (v. 11), and performed the same number of miracles for both of them (13:19-20). The author, moreover, depicts Samson's mother as demonstrating better reasoning skills than her husband (vv. 22-23). This theme—the barren wife who, through the Lord's intervention, bears a son who plays a significant role in the history of the people of God—occurs several times in Scripture; Sarah (Gn 17:19), Hannah (1 Sm 1:19-20) and Elizabeth (Lk 1:13) are notable.

13:4 Manoah's wife was told that her son must not use wine or other alcoholic beverages. The Lord is not condemning the drinking of wine altogether (cp. 9:13); the prohibition was part of the Nazirite vow (Nm 6:1-20). This instance of the Nazirite vow is unique, in that the Lord established it for a human being before that person was born (Jdg 13:5), and required the mother to participate in certain aspects of the injunctions of that vow while the child was in her womb.

13:5 The Apostle Paul (1 Co 11:14) established the general principle that men's hair was to be kept shorter than women's. The Nazirite vow prohibited the cutting of hair, but this was a temporary practice for the purpose of exhibiting a certain devotion to the Lord. The varying directives are no indication that God was contradicting Himself.

13:22 Despite seeing God ("the Angel of the LORD"), Samson's parents did not die; God allowed them to live in order to produce and raise a special child who would "begin to save Israel from the power of the Philistines" (v. 5). On the Angel of the Lord, see notes on Jos 5:13-15; Jdg 2:1; 6:22-23.

13:24 God blessed the young Samson, though when grown he failed to live a righteous life. God's blessing of an individual is based on His grace, as suits His purposes, and is not a direct consequence of the individual's behavior. He can bless anyone at any time, irrespective of a person's actions. However, God's blessing of Samson appears to be limited to his earlier years; it is not mentioned as being extended to him later on, when he committed the various sins ascribed to him.

14:1-4 Did the Lord approve of Samson's marriage to the Philistine woman of Timnah? Samson's desire to marry "was from the LORD," the text indicates, despite the fact that He had expressly forbidden His people to intermarry with the other inhabitants of Canaan because of their false religions (Ex 34:12-16; Dt 7:1-5). Scripture suggests that God can turn human wrongdoing to his praise (Ps 76:10), and to a degree Samson's career illustrates of this truth. To the very end of his life (Jdg 16:28), he consistently acted on the basis his own physical desires, with little regard for what the Lord wanted. Scripture does not condemn attraction to a beautiful person of the opposite sex under normal conditions (Gn 12:11,14; 26:7; 29:17-18; Dt 21:10-13). But if that person is already married (2 Sm 11:2) or, as with the Philistine woman, that person does not serve the one true God(2 Co 6:14), such attraction must be resisted.

14:5-6 Under conditions of extreme anxiety or terror, people have been known to exhibit what might be called superhuman strength (e.g., being able to lift an automobile off an injured person). Samson may have been terrified by the lion, but the passage implies he experienced more than a rush of adrenaline; the Lord empowered him to overcome the attacking animal.

14:12-13 Just because God used Samson's desires and actions to accomplish His ends did not mean He approved of all Samson's actions, including his "gambling" over the Philistine garments. The casting of lots to determine the will of God in a given matter (Jos 18:6-10; Pr 16:33) is not gambling in the usual sense; no exchange of money or items of value is involved. The lot was cast "before the Lord" to determine the right course of action in situations not covered by scriptural guidelines or where human wisdom lacked sufficient insight. There is no record of the casting of lots for such a purpose after Pentecost, when the Holy

Spirit came to indwell the people of God. Biblical references to the casting of lots for one's personal gain (Jb 6:27; Ps 22:18; Jl 3:3; Nah 3:10; Mt 27:35) present the practice in a less than positive light.

14:19 The Philistines Samson slew in a seemingly wanton slaughter had already been condemned to death by God (Ex 23:31-32; Dt 7:1-2). Samson was simply God's enforcer of justice, apparently without his even realizing it (Jdg 15:3; see note on 5:1).

15:1-2 That a father would give away and take back his daughters at whim (14:20) does not align itself with today's widely accepted sense of justice. Samson's reactions reveal he, too, regarded his father-in-law's actions as unjust. The narrator records the father's actions without approving them. But the father's responsibility for arranging his daughter's marriage did not, from the biblical viewpoint, imply a degradation of the status of women (1:11-15).

15:3-8 Whatever Samson did, he did it in a big way. He killed 30 men to get their clothes, traveling 50 miles round trip to do so (14:19). He used 300 foxes to burn the Philistine fields and vineyards (15:4-5). He overwhelmed the Philistines with a great slaughter (v. 8). He killed a thousand Philistines with the jawbone of a donkey (v. 15). But his career is, in general, an example of the squandering of God's endowment of strength on self-centered pursuits.

15:10 On the coming of the Spirit of the Lord upon a person, see note on 3:10.

15:19 God may have miraculously created water here, or He may have used a naturally occurring water source to provide for Samson.

16:1 The narrative does not imply that Samson was moved by the Spirit of the Lord in the action recorded here. Clearly he was not, for God expressly condemns prostitution (Pr 7:24-27; 1 Co 6:15-20; cp. Jdg 3:10; 11:29-31).

16:3 The author did not record Samson's motivation for ripping out the gates of the city and carrying them 40 miles from Gaza to Hebron. Neither did he mention the Lord in connection with this incident, suggesting that Samson acted on his own initiative.

16:6-20 Samson had numerous failed interpersonal relationships because he paid no attention to God's guidelines, especially those involving the opposite sex. Samson chose intimate relations with unbelievers (14:3) or with those to whom he was not married (16:1). He also lied and deceived (16:7,11,13).

16:17-20 Samson's strength came from the Lord, not from his hair. He was in a covenant relationship with the Lord based on his Nazirite vow (13:7). Despite his sins he, up to this point, had apparently not broken the requirements of that vow (Nm 6:1-21). By allowing his hair to be cut Samson disregarded his vow and thus severed his covenant with God. As a consequence, God finally withdrew his superhuman strength.

16:27-30 Ancient Philistine temples were of two types. One was a closed building which only a select few were permitted to enter. The other was a significantly larger building with an open center courtyard; people gathered on the roof could observe the worship practices being conducted. An example of such an open-style temple was excavated at Tel Beth Shean (similar temples were found at Tel Qasile and Tel Migne). Approximately one-third of the courtyard was covered by a ceiling supported by two wooden pillars set on stone bases. Pulling down those pillars would have greatly damaged the entire temple, killing or injuring anyone who happened to be on the roof at the time. Samson's feat is entirely in accord with archaeological evidence, but betrays the fact that he already knew (since he had been blinded) about the structure of a pagan place of worship.

17:2 In ancient times, people considered curses to be inviolable and unalterable. Micah's mother must have been terrified to find that she had unknowingly placed a curse on her own son. Her only recourse was to pronounce an equally binding blessing on him to counteract the curse. Clearly, neither Micah nor his mother was acting in accordance with God's law. Regarding curses, see note on 9:56-57.

17:3 Despite dedicating the silver to the Lord (17:3), Micah sinned in fashioning an idol to Him, since God strictly forbade the making or worshiping of such images (Ex 20:4; Lv 19:4; 26:1; Dt 5:8; 27:15; 32:21). Micah and his mother discovered that their sincerity was no guarantee that God was pleased with their supposed acts of worship. God had established His guidelines for worship, and expected Israel to follow those guidelines wholeheartedly (Is 29:13-14).

17:6 This statement, repeated at the end of the book, is the "motto" of the book of Judges. The absence of recognized spiritual authority leads to social chaos; the narrative of Judges lays out the consequence when a people ignores its responsibility to honor, and observe, the Lord's directives for the conduct of human life.

18:1 The first 16 chapters of the book of Judges generally follow a chronological order. Chapters 17–21, however, present events that occurred during the early part of the time of the judges. These concluding chapters appear to have been intentionally placed out of chronological sequence to reveal the extent of Israel's degradation and to emphasize the justification for a monarchy to rule God's people (17:6; 18:1; 19:1; 21:25). Thus, 18:1 does not contradict 2:6 in declaring that the Danites had not been allotted an inheritance among the tribes of Israel.

18:5-6 Despite what the priest had concluded, there was no certainty he had truly ascertained the Lord's will. This priest had been functioning outside of the Lord's revealed will. His quick response to the Danites suggests he had not even thought to consult the Lord (cp. 2 Sm 7:1-7).

18:30 Some translations identify the priest as Jonathan, the son of Gershom, the son of Manasseh. Other translations, however, indicate that the priest was Jonathan, the son of Gershom, the son of Moses; thus, the idolatrous priest was none other than the grandson of Moses. Some scholars believe that the original Hebrew was altered by later scribes to protect Moses' reputation so that his name would not be linked in any way with the idolatry of the tribe of Dan. According to those scholars, the Hebrew text was changed from "Moses" to "Manasseh" (the name of an apostate king of Judah) by the insertion of the Hebrew letter "nun" ("n," in English) as a superscription above the other consonants.

19:1 Scripture offers certain guidelines regarding whom priests were allowed to marry (Lv 21:14-15), but says nothing about priests having concubines. On concubines, see note on Jdg 8:30-31.

19:2-30 This passage, with its gory outcome, reveals the degraded condition into which Israelite life had fallen during this period. The Levite's speaking tenderly to his concubine might suggest that he truly cared for her, but his actions belied his words. First, he waited four months after her abrupt departure before he sought to bring her home (vv. 2-3). Second, he delivered her to the sexual ravages of a mob to protect himself and others (v. 25). Third, the morning after the rape when he found her lying at the doorstep of the house, he treated her without compassion, demanding she rise and leave with him. The narrator does not gloss over the horror of these events, but records them as they happened and does not try to reconcile the attitudes and actions of the people about whom he wrote. The inspiration of Scripture does not require that only comforting and edifying material be presented in historical narrative; inspiration requires that the true picture be laid out, even when events are disgusting.

20:16 In biblical times, slings for hurling stones were not the Y-shaped slingshots typically used today, which usually depend on some elastic material. The sling was a patch of leather to which strings were attached; by twirling the sling and skillfully releasing a string, a warrior could hurl the stone with great speed and accuracy. A practiced warrior could sling a stone at upwards of 150 miles per hour. The stones that were used were approximately the size of a small fist, so the degree of accuracy did not need to be as great as it would have been had the stone been merely the size of a small pebble. The significance of Benjamin's left-handed slingers lies in the fact the ramp up to a city gate typically sloped to the right, as one faces the gate from outside. A left-handed

warrior could hurl his shot while advancing up the ramp close to the wall, risking less exposure to the defenders on the ramparts above him.

20:21,25,39 At least three reasons may be advanced for God's allowing more than 40,000 of the nation's forces to be killed (vv. 21,25,39). First, the nation as a whole, and not merely the tribe of Benjamin, had to be judged for its sins (21:25; "everyone did whatever he wanted"). Second, the nation as a whole needed to learn to trust God fully, even in the midst of defeat, so they would learn not to trust in superiority of numbers or of battle skills (20:2,10,15-17). Third, God did not promise victory to the nation of Israel before either of the first two battles. Only before the third battle did He actually guarantee success (v. 28).

20:46-48 Initially, only a few Benjaminites deserved to be punished for the despicable gang rape and murder of the Levite's concubine (19:22-28). The entire tribe of Benjamin became guilty of complicity, however, when they refused to hand over the perpetrators to the rest of the Israelites (20:13).

21:1-24 Having decimated the tribe of Benjamin because of its immoral behavior, the Israelites realized that one of the 12 tribes was in danger of extinction (v. 3). Only 600 warriors remained; all other men, women and children had been lost in the destruction of the Benjaminite towns. The number 12 needed to be preserved because it represented the fullness of the covenant with the Lord (hence Jesus chose 12 apostles, emblematic of the renewal of Israel). In their anger, however, the other tribes vowed not to permit their daughters to marry into the tribe of Benjamin (vv. 1,7). The "solution" was to let the Benjaminites seize wives from Jabesh-gilead, which had not participated in the battle against them. All the people of Jabesh-gilead were slain except the 400 virgins allocated to the men of Benjamin. Israel justified the slaughter on the grounds that Jabesh-gilead had tacitly agreed with the Benjaminites' sinful actions (vv. 8-12). It was the worst of times in Israel (17:6; 21:25).

Introduction to Ruth

AUTHOR

The books of Judges and Ruth are treated together because the events of the book of Ruth took place during the time of the judges (Ru 1:1). Both books face challenges to their authenticity regarding matters of authorship, the dating of their writings, the possible addition of non-original material by later authors, and the purposes for their having been written.

Although neither book identifies its author, Jewish tradition (*Baba Bathra* 14b-15a) declares the prophet Samuel to have authored both books. Challenges to this view are at least threefold. (1) The books refer to the times of the judges as having taken place in distant memory (Jdg 17:6; 18:1; 19:1; 21:25; Ru 1:1; 4:17,22). (2) The books take the time to explain past customs or events (Jdg 11:39; 14:10; 20:27-28; Ru 4:7). (3) The text says, "In those days there was no king in Israel," seemingly writing from the perspective of a time when Israel had a king, and Samuel died before David reigned as king (Jdg 21:25; 1 Sm 25:1). Those who reject the traditional view of Samuel as author typically favor as the author either King Solomon or an anonymous person who wrote the books during David's reign.

Counterarguments to the three above, supporting Samuel as the author, include the following: (1) The time of the judges technically ceased with the ascension to the throne of Saul, who was anointed king by Samuel (1 Sm 10:1; 11:14-15). Thus Samuel could easily have written these books after the time of the judges. (2) Sufficient time had passed between the actual events or customs and the recording of those events or customs for memories to have faded and certain customs to have fallen out of vogue; hence, the need for explanations for later generations of readers. (3) The references to a king in general in the book of Judges (17:6; 18:1; 19:1; 21:25), and the references to David in particular in the book of Ruth (Ru 4:17,22), fit acceptably within Samuel's life span since he saw the coronation of Saul and later anointed David as king.

Whichever view of authorship is correct (i.e., Samuel, Solomon, or an anonymous author), each easily accounts for any concern regarding the possible addition of materials at the end of either book.

THE RELIABILITY OF JUDGES AND RUTH

Controversy surrounds the books of Judges and Ruth. Even a cursory reading of these books causes many to question the validity of their inclusion in the Scripture, the content being deemed by some as unworthy of God or of little or no value to twenty-first-century readers. These books include: (1) graphic depictions of violence (such as the slaughter of seemingly innocent people by the command of God, maiming, human sacrifice, and gloating over the deaths of one's enemies);

(2) heroes who are anything but role models (while seemingly under the control of the Holy Spirit, they engage in deceit, lies, mockery, and self-centered behavior);

(3) illicit sex and sexual innuendo; (4) a degrading depiction of women; and (5) a writing style that seemingly includes exaggeration or fabrication.

The inclusion of certain statements at the end of each of the books dramatically alters how we are to understand the purpose of each book. In Judges the author declared that in the times about which he was writing "there was no king in Israel" (17:6; 18:1; 19:1; 21:25). In Ruth, the author presented genealogical records that include the name of King David, a king who lived during the post-judges era (Ru 4:17,22). Thus, rather than being merely guidelines for how to live during difficult times, both books appear to be defending one of two views: (1) living during the present age of the kings

was better than living in the previous age of the judges (cp. the book of Judges); or (2) despite coming from an insignificant, non-royal family (cp. 1 Sm 16:1,13; 18:18), David had an excellent heritage, arising from godly grandparents of a family in the messianic line.

Regarding the controversial matters of the content, a closer reading of the text reveals that, by being written as straightforward accounts, the books display a higher degree of credibility than if they presented sanitized histories. Neither book attempts to gloss over any of the sins, foolishness, or errors of the people described in them. Despite conclusions skeptics might draw from a cursory assessment of the texts, the books themselves never place blame for sin, foolishness, or error on God. God was not guilty and the so-called innocent were, in fact, not innocent at all. Instead they deserved judgment.

The events and customs fit precisely into the story lines of their respective books and align well with what is known from ancient sources of information outside the Bible. The stories may not make us feel comfortable, but these books were not designed to comfort. These two books together present hard-hitting truth designed to disturb, to inform, and to challenge.

Ruth Study Notes

1:1-2 Moses decreed that Moabites were not permitted, for a period of ten generations, even to enter the Lord's assembly (Dt 23:3-6), yet Mahlon and Chilion married Moabite women. Naomi's comment (Ru 1:15) suggests that Ruth and Orpah had been participants in the idol worship of their people. The author merely recorded the fact of the marriages, without indicating that Mahlon and Chilion had acted wisely. Two factors, however, mitigate what appears to be their disregard for Moses' ordinance. First, a "generation" need not be 100 years (Gn 15:13,16), requiring a 1000-year period before the expiration of Moses' prohibition, which had been uttered only some 300 years previously. A generation could refer simply to the time between a person's birth and the birth of that person's child. Second, Moses' prohibition applies to Moabites' entering the Lord's assembly (the worship gathering); it did not specifically prohibit marriage with a Moabite woman, since the assembly was predominantly made up of men (cp. Dt 16:16). Moses provided for the possibility that an Israelite might take a woman from another ethnic group as a wife (Dt 21:10-13).

1:20-21 Naomi correctly recognized that God did not necessarily bring only good situations into one's life but that He, at times, brought difficulties (cp. Jb 1:21; 2:10). Elsewhere in Scripture such difficulties areunderstood to be for the purpose of testing or discipline (e.g., Pr 3:11-12; Heb 12:7-11), but Naomi has not attained that insight at this stage.

2:10 Ruth was not wrong in bowing down before Boaz. Falling down or bowing before another person was a common ancient gesture of honor, respect, gratitude or submission. The Bible condemns the offering of worship to any being (whether human or angelic) other than God (Lv 26:1; Dt 6:13-15; Jos 23:7; 2 Kg 17:35-36; Rv 19:10; 22:8-9; cp. Ac 14:11-15), but gestures of respect in normal interpersonal relations are not "worship" in the usual sense.

3:1-4 It is not clear whether Naomi was following a marriage custom of her time when she told Ruth to lie down secretly at Boaz's feet in the middle of the night. She does, however, appear to be applying a variation of the law by which a surviving brother was to marry his deceased brother's wife who had no children, in order to beget a son to continue his deceased brother's family's line (Dt 25:5-10). Naomi's tactics were morally questionable, since the term "his feet" could have been understood as a euphemism for Boaz's private parts (cp. 1 Sm 24:3, where the Hb is lit. "cover his feet"; also Is 6:2). Despite the risky situation, Ruth and Boaz acted in an upright manner.

3:9 When Ruth told Boaz to spread his cloak (lit. "wings") over her, she was not asking him to have sexual relations with her, since nowhere in Scripture do those words indicate sexual intercourse (Ezk 16:8, in fact, would suggest the opposite).

3:13 Why did Boaz tell Ruth to remain with him that night, potentially compromising her virtue, rather than sending her home immediately? In view of the general lawlessness and social disruption that characterized the period of the judges (cp. Jdg 21:25), sending Ruth home alone late at night would have placed her life in danger. The term translated "stay [here]" is never used in Scripture in the context of a sexual situation.

4:10 Boaz's giving of money to Naomi to "acquire" Ruth was not the purchase of a slave but the payment of a bride price. Such a payment was a protection for the bride; the bride's family held the money, which would be given to her in the event of her being divorced or widowed.

4:13 Regarding an Israelite marrying a Moabite, see Jdg 3:5-7 and Ru 1:1-4. Ruth had become a believer in the true God (1:16-17), so Boaz was not marrying the adherent of a false religion, which would have been prohibited (cp. Jdg 14:1-4).

4:17-22 This passage is significant in the larger scope of the biblical narrative; it presents the ancestry of David, which became also the earthly ancestry of Jesus Christ (Mt 1:5-6; Lk 3:31-32; cp. Rm 1:3; Rv 22:16).

1 Samuel Articles

Is Psychology Biblical?

by John Coe

The answer is yes and no, depending upon four different ways we can interpret this controversial question. But before we get to those four ways, let's consider definitions of the term *psychology*.

Definitions: (1) As a *task,* psychology has to do with observing and reflecting on persons and their complex situations with the goal of understanding human nature and its components, growth, dysfunction, and wisdom for living. (2) As a *product*, psychology is the more or less systematic body of information resulting from a mind engaged in understanding human nature, change, etc. (e.g., Freud's psychology). (3) As an *intervention*, psychology or psychotherapy is a relationship between therapist and persons that consists of empathic listening, understanding, loving care, and, when appropriate, verbal interpretations of dysfunction in order to facilitate healthy relationships, awareness, wisdom, and growth.

(1) Is there a psychology contained in the Bible? Understanding our original question in this sense, the answer is clearly yes. Theologians for centuries have talked about OT anthropology or psychology, NT psychology, Pauline psychology, etc. The biblical authors, under inspiration of the Holy Spirit, provided numerous observations and reflections on the nature of the human soul (Gn 2:7; Lv 24:17), spirit (Is 29:24), body (Is 31:3), mind (Php 2:3), heart (Ps 90:12), dysfunction (Jms 1:8), flourishing (Eph 3:16-19), process of change (Rm 12:1-2), and wisdom for living (Pr). Clearly God, as Creator of mankind, has an exhaustive and systematic psychology of persons and has communicated many of these crucial insights through the reflections of the inspired biblical authors.

(2) Are psychologies formed apart from the Bible biblical? Obviously the psychological reflections of Sigmund Freud and Carl Rogers are unbiblical in the sense that their musings are not included in the Bible. However, whether their views are biblical in the sense of being consistent with or reflected in the Bible is a more complex matter. For example, we can find correlation between Freud's view of the "unconscious" and "repression" and the biblical understanding of the "hidden heart" that insists there is always more going on deep within a person than on the surface (Pr 14:13), often due to the heart's deceptive nature (Jr 17:9; Rm 1:18). Though Freud had some true and wise things to say about the nature of the hidden motives of the heart, his worldly view of the "unconscious" and his causally deterministic explanation of mental functioning are clearly unbiblical. Thus psychologies based on observations and reflections from outside the Bible are a mixed bag that must be critiqued idea by idea.

The benefit of investigating these extrabiblical psychologies is twofold: (1) They may provide concrete examples that exemplify biblical truths. (2) They may further elucidate elements that the biblical writers only touch upon (e.g., addictions and anger).

(3) Is it biblical to engage in the task of psychology that involves not only the Bible but also extrabiblical observation and reflection? Contemporary Christians disagree on this point. Some adherents of the biblical counseling position deny any biblical warrant for this, while some integrationists maintain that there is biblical precedent for this task of doing psychology.

The writers of Proverbs were OT wise men who had the unique role of instructing Israel to live well in all areas of life under God on the basis of their wisdom and experience (Pr 1:1-6,8-9; 4:1; 6:20). The essence of this wisdom involves having a right relationship with God (Pr 1:7), who is the ultimate source of all wisdom (Pr 2:6) and revelation, which is central to the mental health of a people (Pr 29:18). However, the wise men also insisted that there is an important extrabiblical source of wisdom for living, discernible by observing and reflecting upon the natural world (Pr 6:6, 30:24-28) and especially persons and their complex situations (Pr 24:30-34). God created the world by wisdom (Pr 3:19-20) such that His wisdom is imprinted onto creation as the natural order of things (Pr 8:22-31). By observing these wisdom laws in nature and human life, one can discover a set of wise principles of sowing and reaping to avoid folly and live a good life under God in accordance with the created way of human nature (Pr 8:32-36).

Consequently, the OT wise men provide biblical precedent and justification for the science of psychology. In the case of biblical proverbs, God worked through the wise men's experiences to produce inspired observations and principles for living. While the wisdom collected in Scripture has a divine sanction and authority, the church's ongoing work in psychology is subject to scrutiny from the Scriptures, reason, and observation. Though unbelievers can discover wisdom for living through psychology, only the believer can know and live out these principles as one ought in relation to God.

(4) Is psychotherapy biblical? Certainly the intervention of psychotherapy is biblical in the sense that Scripture encourages empathy, truthful understanding, and caring relationships between persons. This is evident in the admonition regarding "speaking the truth in love" (Eph 4:15), in the "one another" injunctions (Eph 4:32; Col 3:12-14; 1 Th 5:11,14), in the gifts of the church (Rm 12:4-8), and in the reflections and counsel for wise living found in Proverbs (4:1-5). However, the content of what psychotherapy passes on as wisdom is to be judged by Scripture (Pr 21:30), truth (Pr 8:7), and its appropriateness to the situation (Pr 25:11).

What Is the Occult?

by Leonard G. Goss

The English word "occult" comes from the Latin "occultus," which means things that are hidden, esoteric, concealed, or mysterious. For occult practitioners, the occult represents interference with physical nature by using hidden knowledge (gnosis), such as non-conventional practices including reciting formulas, making gestures, mixing incompatible elements, performing healing spells, or performing secret ceremonies attempting to alter physical nature. What is the hidden knowledge? According to occultists, it is the force at the base of the universe, and it is obtained only through secret communication with that force. Is this hidden force God? Or the devil? Or the soul of the universe? That depends a good deal on what particular source their gnosis has tapped into, but one thing the force is not: It is not the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

For those dabbling in the occult, such activities are considered harmless and fascinating—a real source of spiritual knowledge. For Christians, however, the wide range of practices making up the occult is destructive and spirit-threatening. Christians view as deeply evil things like alchemy, astrology, casting runes, crystals and crystal balls, divination, dowsing, ESP, fortune-telling, horoscopes, the I Ching, levitation, Ouija boards, paganism, palm reading, the paranormal, pendulum divination, psychic phenomena, reading Tarot Cards, ritual abuse, satanism, seances, secret societies, sorcery, spiritualism, talking to dead spirits, Wicca (so-called White Witchcraft) and Witchcraft (Black Magic). The extent of occult involvement is universal. Spiritual warfare is all around us, and if Satan cannot keep us from knowing Christ he will try containing us by drawing us into deception. The Enemy is a deceiver, liar, tempter, and devourer of human souls.

Why the interest in the occult? First, many churches have "watered down" the gospel of Christ, rejecting the church's central teaching of Christ's divinity and other essential truths. When this happens, a spiritual vacuum invites people to go to the occult to be satisfied, swinging the door to occultist practices wide open. Second, there is a certain mystery about the occult which appeals to our curiosity. Many, thinking the occult is harmless, go deeper and deeper until they can't get out without any bad effects. Third, we all want ultimate answers to life's basic questions, and the occult offers a sort of "reality" by providing these answers. Actually, occultist practices are a counterfeit of God's power, and as such they do reveal some amazing things—but these things are not the ultimate truth. Fourth, an increase in demonic activity is to be expected as a sign of the end times (see Mk 13:22; 1 Tm 4:1).

Often, there is deliberate faking in the lucrative field of the occult. There is money to be made. There is also inaccurate reporting. When some people find a theory fascinating, they often care less about the facts. In addition, there is self manipulation. When it suits their wishes, some believe anything they want. There is, however, true demonic deception. The Bible teaches that there is a deceptive, dangerous spirit world which distorts reality and ruins human lives. Despite outright fraud, all Christians need to know that the occult or paranormal is real. The Bible is clear it is real, as Saul discovered upon meeting the medium of Endor (1 Sm 28), and we must not dismiss it. If God is real, his chief adversary is also real.

First John 3:8 says, "The one who commits sin is of the Devil, for the Devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God was revealed for this purpose: to destroy the Devil's works." Involvement in the occult is involvement in the devil's works, and as it can lead to very serious outcomes spiritually and psychologically, we must remember that the Bible denounces all occultic practices (see Dt 18:9-14; Ac 13:6-12).

The road to the occult is broad and always destructive. The way of Christ is narrow but always leads to eternal life.

Introduction to 1 Samuel

AUTHOR

The Bible does not say who wrote 1 and 2 Samuel. Many Bible students think Samuel along with Nathan and Gad had major input, pointing to 1 Ch 29:29 as evidence. Others think the books had a long history of composition with various narratives or narrative sources being composed from the time of the events until the time of the exile, when the "Former Prophets" were gathered into one collection. Such individual narratives would include: Shiloh (1 Sm 1–3), the ark (1 Sm 4:1–7:1), the rise of kingship (1 Sm 9:1–11:15), battles of Saul (1 Sm 13–15), the history of David's rise to power (1 Sm 16:14—2 Sm 5:25), David's reign (2 Sm 9–20), and the succession to the throne of David (1 Kg 1–2). An early scroll of 1 and 2 Samuel may well have been part of the book depository in Solomon's temple when it was completed.

A PIVOTAL PERIOD IN ISRAEL'S HISTORY

First and 2 Samuel play a pivotal role in the Bible for both historical and theological reasons. Historically, these books document the monumental transition that occurred in OT Israel as it moved from being a collection of 12 tribes with no national government to being a unified nation with a centralized government under the control of a king. Furthermore, these books provide a detailed description of the last leaders during the period of the judges, the career of Israel's first king, and the exploits and accomplishments of Israel's most famous king, David.

The books also document the historical fulfillment of promises made by God in the Torah. The law of Moses had predicted the rise of kingship as an institution in Israel (Gn 17:16; 35:11; 36:31; Dt 17:15); the events recorded in the books of Samuel show that the kingship became a historical reality. The Torah predicted that a member of the tribe of Judah would rule over Israel (Gn 49:10); this was borne out by the narratives in 1 and 2 Samuel with the ascent of David, of the tribe of Judah, to the throne. Furthermore, the promises that Israel would defeat Moab, Edom, and the Amalekites (Nm 24:17-20) were also shown to have been carried out. Finally, prophecies regarding the establishment of "a covenant of perpetual priesthood" for the family line of Eleazar the priest (Nm 25:13) were also moved toward fulfillment with the judgment enacted against the family line of Eli.

The books of Samuel also provide concrete historical examples that confirm the theological teachings of the Torah. One of the primary precepts of the Torah is that obedience to God brings blessings, while disobedience brings divine judgment. The contrasts between Eli and Samuel, as well as Saul and David, certainly bear this out. Disaster came to Eli and Saul as a result of their sins, but blessings came to Samuel and David as they followed the Lord. The life of David further demonstrates the sobering truth that God will bring judgment. Illustrations of the disastrous consequences that can result from failing to honor one's father (as Absalom did with his father David), as well as committing acts of murder and adultery (as David did with Uriah and Bathsheba) are all provided in vivid detail.

RELIABILITY OF 1 AND 2 SAMUEL

Perhaps the most serious question raised by recent skeptics regarding 1 and 2 Samuel relates to the historical trustworthiness of the narratives contained in these books. Some scholars dismiss the accounts as fanciful tales with no more historical value than the legends of King Arthur. This highly negative view of the historical reliability of these books is unjustified, however.

Though it is impossible to "prove" many of the details found in 1 and 2 Samuel (e.g., the exact words spoken in conversations, the daily whereabouts and activities of the participants in the

narratives, the outcome of a minor military skirmish), it is possible to provide scientific confirmation of the general claims of the biblical texts. Archaeological investigation has confirmed, for example, that Philistines lived in the regions and at the times when the books of Samuel indicated they did. It has also proven that the family line of David (lit., the "house of David") served as kings over Israel; evidence for this is found in the form of two inscriptions coming from the ninth century B.C., the Tell Dan inscription and the Mesha Stele. The existence of a strong centralized government that developed following a period of destruction has been confirmed in such cities as Hazor, Megiddo, and Gezer; this agrees well with the Bible's claims regarding the Israelite conquest of Canaan and the development of a national government during the kingship period.

The books of Samuel are especially valuable for Christians because they lay the foundation for the all-important doctrine of the Messiah, the ultimate descendant of David who would sit on an everlasting throne ruling over God's people and bring deliverance and justice. The promises God made to David in 2 Samuel 7 created hopes and expectations that the NT writers understood to have been fulfilled by
Jesus. The Lord promised David that He would establish the kingdom of one of David's descendants (2 Sm 7:12); in the NT Jesus was identified as that descendant of David (Mt 1:20; 21:9) who brought the kingdom of God to humanity (Mt 12:28; Lk 11:20). God said David's descendant would build a house for God's name (2 Sm 7:13); the NT writers portrayed Jesus as one who built the ultimate temple of God in three days (Mt 26:61; Jn 2:19). God promised David that one of his descendants would have a throne that would last forever (2 Sm 7:13); the NT declares that Jesus had just that (Heb 1:8). God said that one of David's descendants would be a "son to Me" (2 Sm 7:14); Jesus came as the ultimate Son of God (Mt 16:16; Mk 1:1; Lk 1:35).

1 Samuel Study Notes

1:1 Was Elkanah an Ephraimite or a Levite? Genealogically he was a Levite, a descendant of Jacob's son Levi (1 Ch 6:33-38), coming from the family line passing through Kohath and Izhar. The names of Elkanah's forebears in the Chronicles genealogy agree with those found in this verse, despite differences in spelling (Elihu vs. Eliel, Tohu vs. Toah) that may be dialectic in origin. Elkanah's status as a member of the priestly tribe helps to explain why his son Samuel wore an Ephod (1 Sm 2:18), was permitted to sleep in the temple compound at Shiloh (3:1-15), and was authorized, later on, to perform ritual sacrifices before the Lord (7:9; 10:8).

Geographically Elkanah was an Ephraimite. The Lord did not allot regional territory to the Levites in the division of the promised land, but assigned them cities throughout the other tribes' regions (Nm 35:2-8). Even though Ramathaim-zophim was not listed among the 4 cities set aside within Ephraim for the Levites (Jos 21:20-22), it seems reasonable to assume that Levites settled there over time, or that it was a local name for one of the assigned cities.

Taken in combination with the Chronicles genealogy, this opening verse of 1 Sm creates another interpretive option. Elkanah's ancestor Zuph may have been an Ephraimite adopted into the family line of Levi. In this case, Elkanah would have genealogical links to both Levi and Ephraim.

1:2 Having more than one wife is permitted in the Bible (Ex 21:10), but represents a concession that departs from the divine ideal. God's original plan for the family—still His ideal—is to have one man married to one woman. Biblical evidence for this is found in the fact that God created one woman, Eve, as a uniquely suitable helper for one man, Adam (Gn 2:18-24; Mt 19:4-6). He did this before sin had entered the world and corrupted the divine plan, and this ideal has never changed. With Adam and Eve's sin, however, came death, disease and other distortions of God's original plan. Sometimes women, who through childbirth were supposed to enable a couple to be fruitful and multiply, were barren. In such cases, ancient western Asian custom permitted men to take a second wife for the purpose of producing an heir (Gn 16:1-3; 30:1-4).

Elkanah, like Abraham and Jacob, was a good man who made a troublesome choice to solve his family problem. By taking a second wife he introduced much unneeded conflict into the home (1 Sm 1:6). In the end his efforts made little difference, since God gave him many children through his once-barren wife Hannah (1:20; 2:21).

1:5 Did Elkanah give Hannah two portions of meat or only one? The Hebrew phrase translated "double portion" literally means "a portion of two nostrils," an obscure expression that forces translators to derive its meaning from the context. While most translators emphasize Elkanah's kindness—and therefore opt for "double portion"—others focus on the stigma of Hannah's childlessness and render the phrase "only one portion."

1:9 On whether Israel's worship center was located at Shiloh or Shechem, see note on 3:21.

1:11 Hannah's vow appears to be bargaining with God; was this appropriate? It is clear throughout Scripture that God wants people to have an authentic, personal relationship with Him—one that involves the expression of true feelings in a spirit of "give and take." If one can ask certain things of the Lord in faith (Mt 21:22) one can also promise Him something. Hannah was a pious woman who profoundly believed that God was powerful and good. She had suffered humiliation and insult for years due to her childlessness, and waspleading desperately with God to give her a child. Her offer was far superior to that of pagans in the region, who might offer to sacrifice a child as a macabre gift to their deity (2 Kg 17:17). Hannah offered to give the son she requested as a living sacrifice, dedicating his lifelong services to the Lord. The Lord was not obligated to respond to her vow, but He had the right to accept her offer. And accept it He did.

1:24 Two ancient textual traditions exist regarding the number of sacrificial bulls that Hannah brought to Shiloh as a gift to the Lord. The Hebrew text reads "three," while the Septuagint and Syriac (followed by HCSB) read "son of three," i.e. one bull three years old. (Age, in Hebrew, is expressed by the idiom "son [or daughter] of" whichever number.) The Hebrew reading may be preferable, since the accompanying gift of flour is the proper amount for three bull sacrifices (Nm 15:9). Though the leather bag (HCSB "jar") of wine contained an indeterminate amount of liquid, it was probably much more than the half gallon required for a single bull sacrifice (Nm 15:10).

2:1-10 How could Hannah speak of a king and messiah ("anointed," 2:10) before the days when Israel had a king? She could have been referring to the office of kingship mentioned in the law of Moses (see Gn 17:16; 35:11; 36:31; Dt 17:15) or local Israelite rulers (Jdg 9:6). In the larger scope of biblical history, however, one can see that Hannah was speaking prophetically of the day when Israel would have anointed kings—the first two, in fact, would be anointed as such by her son Samuel. Or her words can even extend to the coming of Jesus Christ. Hannah's prayer is a model for the Virgin Mary's expression of praise (Lk 1:46-55) after learning that both she and her formerly childless relative Elizabeth would bear a child. The circumstances were similar; it was the Lord, in each case, who had enabled the pregnancy despite unlikely human situations. If Hannah was speaking as a prophetess, she would join the ranks of other OT prophetesses, including Miriam (Ex 15:20), Deborah (Jdg 4:4), Huldah (2 Kg 22:14), and Isaiah's wife (Is 8:3).

2:23-24 Did Eli correct his sons or didn't he (3:13)? Although Eli did criticize his sons for their outrageous conduct while serving as priests (vv. 12-17, 22), 3:13 states that he made no serious efforts to put an end to their misbehavior. These two passages are complementary, not contradictory. A possible explanation for Eli's unwillingness to restrain his sons from taking unauthorized portions from the people's sacrifices is seen in 2:29 and 4:18. These verses suggest that Eli was benefiting from his sons offenses against the Lord: they took the meat and he ate it.

2:25 Did God prevent Hophni and Phinehas from repenting in order to do away with them? It was the wickedinclinations of these two sons of Eli that kept them from repenting. Their obstinacy required that the Lord, who hates and punishes sin, would bring fatal retribution upon them. The Hebrew phrase translated as "the LORD intended" literally means "the LORD was pleased." While the Lord takes no pleasure in the death of those who sin (see Ezk 18:32; 33:11; 2 Pt 3:9), at the same time He delights in bringing justice to the order of human society. Justice is a central trait in God's character (Ex 34:7; Ps 33:5), and its implementation brings satisfaction to him. Some of the same considerations that apply to the Lord's hardening of Pharaoh's heart (Ex 4:21) apply here.

3:21 Was Israel's worship center located at Shiloh or Shechem? The Bible indicates that both Shechem and Shiloh were used as places to worship the Lord in early Israelite history. In the days of Joshua a sanctuary had been built at Shechem (Jos 24:1,25). But Shiloh was considered an even more sacred site, since it was there the Israelites set up the tabernacle (see Jos 18:1). Only later, when the Lord chose Jerusalem as the only authorized worship center (see Dt 12:5-14; 1 Kg 8:29), would Israel be limited to one authorized place for worship.

4:1 The use of the name Ebenezer here is an anachronism, since it is only in 7:12 that Samuel gives a name to this location. But this should not be seen as a problem. Samuel, who is considered the author of this section of the Bible, simply used the site name which was most familiar to his audience when he recorded this event for his and future generations. The use of updated names is not an error, but an aid to communication.

4:3 On the location of Israel's worship center during this period, see note on 3:21.

4:8 The Philistines, ignorant of the true details of Israel's history, spoke of "gods that slaughtered the Egyptians with all kinds of plagues in the wilderness." The biblical narrator simply quotes their error without affirming the accuracy of their words; the Philistines were far from divine truth.

5:6 How could the ark of the covenant's presence in a city cause an outbreak of tumors? The Bible does not tell us *how* God did this miracle, only *that* He did it. The Philistine diviners' mention of mice in 6:4-5, as well as the Septuagint's reading for this verse, implies that God may have brought this about by working through nature, using mice to spread a devastating plague at just the right time and location. Through the centuries rodents have often been responsible for the spread of disease among humans. The incident demonstrated the Lord's superiority over both the Philistines and their "god," and revealed that the Philistines' victory on the battlefield was not the result of the Lord's weakness. Instead, it was a judgment against Israel's disobedience to God. Ultimately it would result in His further glorification.

6:6 On God's hardening of Pharaoh's heart, see note on Ex 4:21.

6:19 Why should people have to die for just looking into the ark? The people died because they disobeyed a solemn command of the Lord that promised death to anyone who violated it (see Nm 4:15). Since most of the people who died were from Beth-shemesh, many of those who died were probably descendants of Israel's first high priest Aaron (see Jos 21:13-16), a family group in the priestly tribe of Levi responsible for overseeing all aspects of the Israelite religion (Nm 4:16). Very specific instructions had been given to the priests regarding the proper handling of the ark of the covenant; whenever it was outside of the tabernacle it was to be covered with three layers of cloth and leather; it was never to be seen or touched by anyone (Nm 4:5-6,15). For the priests, God's primary representatives on earth, to leave it uncovered and then permit the Israelites to look inside it represented a flagrant disregard for God's holiness which demanded immediate punishment. The sanctity of God's holy throne (see 2 Sm 6:2) must never be violated.

6:19 Did 70 men or 50,070 men die? English versions reflect a scholarly uncertainty regarding the correct number in this verse; KJV, NKJV and NASB use the larger number; many other versions accept the smaller one. The Masoretic (Hb) Text and Septuagint (Gk) both give the larger number; Josephus, a first-century Jewish historian, quoted the smaller number.

The fact that the biblical writer characterizes the deaths as "a great slaughter" suggests that the larger number is the one originally supplied. However, most modern versions prefer the smaller total and, in many cases, deal creatively with the Hebrew text at this point. Translations that opt for the smaller number probably do so because the larger one does not seem credible; archaeological evidence available at the present time suggests that nowhere near 50,000 men lived in the region of Beth-shemesh during the period of this narrative, some 3,000 years ago.

7:10 How could thunder confuse the Philistines and cause them to run away from Israel? When the Philistines heard the thunder, they interpreted it to mean that Israel's God was riding into battle on a storm cloud (see Ps 18:10-14), sending thunderbolts against them and their gods. They believed their army could not prevail against the Israelites unless their gods prevailed against the Israelites' God. When it became apparent that the Lord was aggressively advancing against their forces, and their gods as well, their only option was flight from the battlefield.

7:12 On the name Ebenezer, which means "stone of help," see note on 4:1.

7:13 During the period of Samuel's active tenure as a judge of Israel there are no more recorded conflicts between Israel and the Philistines. That is the context for this statement, although the Philistines and Israelites fought against each other many times after the days of Samuel (13:5; 14:11-14; 17:1; 23:1,27; 28:1; 31:1; 2 Sm 5:17-20; 2 Kg 18:8). There is no contradiction in the record on this point.

7:15 The phrase "throughout his life" (lit. "all the days of his life") means that Samuel served as Israel's judge during the rest of his career—that is, from this time in his life until his retirement in old age. He is not called a judge up to this point in the narrative; when he grew old he appointed his sons as judges (8:1), effectively transferring his responsibilities to the next generation. When the nation rejected Joel and Abijah as judges, the elderly statesmen helped Israel to eliminate the role of "judge" altogether, installing a king to lead Israel instead (12:2). It is worth noting that the term "judge" in the Bible carries a broad range of meanings. The earlier judges operated more as local military leaders or heroes; Samuel, on the other hand, functioned in a more magisterial capacity for Israel as a whole.

8:2 Was Samuel's firstborn son Joel or Vashni? According to the Hebrew text of 1 Ch 6:28 (KJV), Samuel's oldest son was named Vashni. Both names probably refer to the same person, since 1 Ch 6:33 states that Joel was Samuel's son. That second reference in 1 Ch 6 agrees with the current verse in 1 Sm. Calling a person by more than one name was common in the ancient Near East, corresponding somewhat to our culture's tendency to give people nicknames. (On individuals and places in the Bible having more than one name, see note on Ex 3:1; 19:11.) It is also possible that the Hebrew text in 1 Ch 6:28 has been damaged, and the original reading lost.

8:5-7 In the law of Moses, God had spoken of a time when the Israelites would have an earthly king (Dt 17:14-20), even though the Lord was already their King (Nm 23:21; Dt 33:5; Jdg 8:23) and would remain so in Israel's worship (e.g., Ps 47:2; 89:18; 95:3; 99:4; Is 33:22). The structure of Israel's covenant was that of a king making a treaty with subordinates. The Lord made provision for the earthly office of king in Israel, but this was a concession to human weakness and not His ideal for the nation. The instructions of Dt 17 set limits on Israel's kingship, and did not give it a blanket endorsement.

In this section of 1 Sm, the people were asking for the right to be "the same as all the other nations"—that is, like the pagans, who did not have the Lord as their King. They wanted to rely upon a strong military leader, and not on God and His leadership alone, for help in dealing with enemies. What was offensive to God, and to Samuel His spokesman, was the people's yearning to look for help in another direction.

8:21 God knows and hears everything, yet Samuel took pains to tell God what he had heard the people saying. The Bible makes it clear that God is all-knowing(1 Kg 8:39; 1 Ch 28:9; Jb 34:21; 36:4; 42:2; Ps 33:13-15; 139:1-24; 147:5; Pr 5:21; 15:3; 24:12; Is 46:10; 48:5; Ezk 11:5; Dn 2:22; Mt 6:8; 10:29; Ac 15:18; Heb 4:13; 1 Jn 3:20) and has no need that we tell Him anything. But He *wants* His people to communicate with Him about whatever is on our hearts (Ps 55:22; Php 4:6), as a loving parent enjoys talking with his child although he already knows what the child is telling him. Samuel was making use of the privilege of communicating in a natural way with his heavenly Father. It was a way in which Samuel could honor the Lord and express his loyalty to Him.

9:1 Was Kish the son of Abiel, or of Ner? This verse (see 14:51) appears to be contradicted by 1 Ch 8:33 and 9:39 where Ner is Kish's father. Abiel and Ner may simply be two names for the same person (see note on 8:2). Another possibility is that, since biblical genealogies sometimes skip over generations, either Abiel or Ner was not Kish's father but a grandfather or another ancestor. A third possibility is that a copying error by an ancient scribe is responsible for the discrepancy.

9:15-17 Why did the Lord choose Saul in the first place, if he would later regret the choice (15:11,35)? Matters of both divine will and human freedom need to be considered in addressing this question. God's intention, in making Saul king, was to use him to lead Israel to victory against the Philistines (10:1,24), which he did (14:31,47). But when it came to submitting his life wholeheartedly to the Lord's will, Saul was still free to make a choice. Sadly, in two key matters he gravely disappointed God by going his own way: he disobeyed direct military orders (15:18-24) and consulted a medium for guidance (1 Ch 10:13).

God knows the end from the beginning (Is 46:10), and was not surprised at Saul's actions. For reasons known only to God, He has chosen to work His divine will through sinful human beings. While the Lord's purposes can never be broken, His heart can be.

9:17–10:8 The narrative of 1 Sm includes three complementary accounts of Saul's being chosen first king of Israel. The first (9:17–10:8) describes a private meeting between Saul and the prophet Samuel on the outskirts of the village of Ramah. There Samuel first informed Saul of God's decision to make him Israel's leader, ceremonially anointing him and confirming his action with prophetic signs. This first meeting was preparatory, helping to ready Saul both psychologically and spiritually for the public event that would soon change his life so radically.

The second account (10:17-25) focuses on the public identification of Saul as the Lord's chosen. This event was primarily for the benefit of the people of Israel, confirming that God had fulfilled their request (8:5) for a king. The final account (11:14-15) describes Saul's formal public installation as king over the land, at Gilgal. These two public occasions are roughly equivalent to American political events: an election-night victory celebration followed by the official inauguration of a person into the office to which they have been elected. Gilgal, with Joshua's memorial stones, was the site where the Israelites had first encamped in their occupation of Canaan (Jos 4:19-20) and was a fitting backdrop for Saul's formal installation.

10:5 Was Saul supposed to go to Gibeath-elohim or the Hill of God? According to one version of the Bible, Saul was told to go to a village named Gibeath-elohim, yet other versions state that he was told to go to a hill. Isn't this a contradiction? No. "Gibeath-elohim" is actually the Hebrew phrase which means "Hill of God." Some scholars believe that Samuel was referring to an otherwise unknown village by that name, while others think he was merely referring to a geographical feature.

10:8 After anointing Saul, Samuel told him to wait seven days at Gilgal until the prophet would come to him. Their later meeting at Gilgal is recorded in 13:8-10.But the events recorded in 10:9–13:7 could not have occurred within a week's time. In that section Saul was publicly recognized as Israel's first king, mustered a fighting force of 330,000 men, led them to Jabesh-gilead, fought and defeated the Ammonites, returned to Gilgal to be publicly inaugurated as king, and prepared to fight the Philistines at Michmash. Based on the wording of 13:1, some interpreters posit a two-year gap between 10:8 and 13:1.

Perhaps the best explanation is to be found in the wording of verses 7-8: Saul was to do whatever was required to bring deliverance for Israel from the Ammonites. Then when that task was done—and it would probably take a long time—he was to go to Gilgal. The seven-day waiting period for Samuel would not begin until Saul arrived at Gilgal.

10:11 The narrative of 1 Sm relates two incidents that explain the origin of the saying, "Is Saul also among the prophets?" In the first incident, recorded here, Saul fell in with a group of prophets coming down from Gibeah and began to prophesy among them. This was the initial occasion for the popular saying. The second incident (19:23-24) recounts another surprising instance when Saul again prophesied among prophets, in this case "before Samuel." The second incident reinforced the old saying, and it passed into the Israelites' proverbial memory of their first king. The two accounts are complementary.

10:17-25 On why there are three accounts of Saul's being chosen king, see note on 9:17–10:8.

10:19 On why the Israelites were accused of rejecting the Lord by requesting a king, whereas God had already given instructions about the kingship, see note on8:5-7.

10:25 Did Samuel write on a scroll or in a book? Many versions of the Bible state that Samuel wrote words in a book, but others say he wrote on a scroll. This difference arises from word selection by translators. What we know as "books" were written on scrolls during the OT period; the codex, more like the modern book, was not yet in use. Therefore "scroll" is the most accurate rendering of the Hebrew *sepher*.

10:27 Some versions add an extra paragraph to the Bible at this point. An ancient partial manuscript of 1 Sm found at Qumran (4QSam[a]), as well as the first-century historian Josephus (*Antiquities* 6.5.1), include this information in their accounts of Saul's war with the Ammonites. Some translators have chosen to place this material in the text in the belief that it was wrongly omitted from the MT and Septuagint. Since those standard texts omit it, this paragraph is most likely an explanatory note inserted by an ancient scribe. The material is irrelevant to the central purpose of the account, and may introduce a chronological problem into the narrative flow (see note on 10:8; 13:8-14).

11:8 Did Saul's fighting force in the battle against Nahash the Ammonite number a few thousand men, 330,000, or 670,000? Many recent scholars argue that Israel's population at the time was too small to support an army of more than a few thousand men. The Septuagint, the Greek version of the OT that dates to the pre-Christian era, states that a total of 670,000 men were mustered for the conflict. The Hebrew text provides the number 330,000. This is about half the total of men counted in the military census Moses had taken 400 years earlier (see Nm 1:46), and probably represents the one supplied by the original writer.

11:14 On why there are three accounts of Saul's being chosen king, see note on 9:17–10:8.

12:2 On the length of Samuel's tenure as judge, see note on 7:15.

12:11 Did the Lord send Barak or Bedan to deliver the Israelites from their enemies? The MT and many English versions have the name Bedan, mentioned nowhere else in the Bible although this name is included in a list of well-known leaders from the period of the judges. The Septuagint reads Barak (see Jdg 4:6-16) for Bedan, and most recent versions have followed its lead. Bedan could be a secondary name for Barak; alternatively, Bedan was an otherwise unknown ancient Israelite leader. The most likely explanation is a scribal error, substituting incorrect Hebrew letters; in the more usual Hebrew script "d" (*daleth*) resembles "r" (*resh*) and final "n" (*nun*) resembles final "k" (*kaph*). (The vowels involved are not written as letters in Hebrew.) The Masoretic scribes of the earlier centuries A.D. were strict about preserving the text as they found it, even where they may have suspected an errant reading.

12:17-18 How could a harvest-time thunderstorm convince the Israelites that they had done a great evil? The land of Israel has two seasons in its year, the rainyseason (October–March) and the dry season (April–September). Wheat harvest occurred during the dry season at a time when clouds, to say nothing of rain, were absent from the sky. Interruptions in the normal weather pattern, especially those that could seriously damage the nation's food supply, were taken as signs of divine anger (see Lv 26:20; Dt 28:18).

13:1 How old was Saul when he became king? The Hebrew text indicates that Saul was "one year old when he became king," clearly evidence of a damaged text. A few copies of the Septuagint supply the figure 30, while some copies omit the verse altogether. Since no other passages in the Bible provide definitive information on Saul's age at the time he assumed the kingship, it seems best to recognize that the original number dropped out of the text in the process of transmission, perhaps even before the Greek version was produced around 300 B.C.

13:1 How long did Saul serve as Israel's king? According to the MT he reigned for two years (lit. "and two years"). In Ac 13:21, however, the Apostle Paul states that Saul ruled for 40 years. In view of Saul's achievements in battling Israel's enemies, the number in Ac is either the correct one or a rounding from 42. Apparently a copyist's error caused the original figure to drop out of this verse.

13:5 Ancient manuscripts provide different figures as to the number of chariots the Philistines brought to the battlefield. Most translations follow the Hebrew text and the majority of Septuagint (Gk) texts, which give the number as 30,000. The Syriac (Aramaic) version and one Greek tradition read 3,000, a figure accepted by some recent translations because it seems more credible. Elsewhere in Scripture the largest number of chariots used in a war was 1,700 (see 2 Sm 8:4), and even Solomon possessed only 1,400 (1 Kg 10:26). An ancient copyist error may be responsible for the confusion. Another way to approach the issue is to take "thousand" as a term for a military unit; in that case, the Philistines brought 30 chariot units, of indeterminate strength, to the battlefield.

13:8-14 Why was Samuel angry with Saul, since it was Samuel who missed the appointment? Samuel did not miss his appointment; he was supposed to arrive on the seventh day, and he did. Saul apparently panicked because Samuel did not appear at sunrise, when the morning sacrifice could be offered, but a short time later. By this time the impatient king had offered the sacrifices on his own, doing the work reserved for priests. Samuel, a priest as well as a prophet, was understandably angry about this. Saul's impetuous behavior, and his reckless disregard for God's order that separated kingship (military leadership) from priesthood (service at the altar), were among the reasons why the rule of Israel passed into the hands of another family, that of David.

13:13-14 In Gn 49:10, Jacob prophesied that a member of the tribe of Judah would rule over Israel; yet Samuel suggests that Saul —a member of the tribe of Benjamin—might have seen his family "permanently established" in the monarchy had he not been disobedient. Some have suggested that Samuel was lying to Saul, but this need not be the case. The territories of Judah and Benjamin were sometimes treated as the land of one tribe (1 Kg 11:36), so that promises made to Judah were applicable to Benjamin as well. Alternatively, God foresaw that in a later era Israel would have two kings, one in the north (Israel proper) and one in the south (Judah). During that time both the house of David and the house of Saul could have had enduring dynasties. In either case, Samuel was truthful with Saul, especially in confronting his foolishness.

14:3 On who was high priest at this time, see note on 21:1.

14:15 English versions of the Bible differ on the translation of this verse; did a terror from God spread, or was there a very great trembling of the earth? The issue is how to fit an ambiguous Hebrew sentence—"And she/it was to fear/trembling of God"—into the narrative flow. Some translators connect it with the Philistines' terror mentioned at the beginning of the verse, while others associate it with the shaking of the earth mentioned in the previous sentence. Both are reasonable possibilities. The Hebrew word *elohim* is usually translated "god," but has the basic meaning of "strength, might"; the phrase "quaking of god" could be translated "a powerful trembling."

14:49 How many sons did Saul have, and who were they? The three sons listed in this verse are not the same as those in 31:2, which omits Ishvi but adds Abinadab. Also, there is the question of Ish-bosheth (2 Sm 2:8,10,12)—was he a fifth son? The genealogical information in1 Ch 8:33 and 9:39 does much to clear up these matters. The writer indicates that Saul had four sons, but substitutes the name Esh-baal for Ishvi. Scholars understand Ish-bosheth to be an alternate form of Esh-baal, substituted in order to avoid pronouncing the title of a pagan god as part of the name. Thus Ishvi was known by two other names in the OT, Esh-baal and Ish-bosheth.

14:51 On the ancestry of Kish, see note on 9:1.

15:3 Why were the Israelites supposed to kill the Amalekites' women, children, and infants? This passage is one of a handful in the OT where God explicitly ordered the Israelites to eliminate an entire population (see also Dt 7:2; 13:15; 20:16-17; 25:19). For many people today these passages are the most troubling ones in the Bible. How could a loving God order His people to slaughter women and babies? The answer lies in the nature of God and His plans to rescue humanity. Being a perfectly just God, the Lord cannot let sin go unpunished. Individuals who sin will die for their sins (see Ezk 18:4; Rm 6:23), though that death need not come about immediately following a sinful act, and may be averted altogether if the sinner turn from sin in time (Ezk 18:20-21). What is true of individuals is also true of groups that commit sinful acts (see Jnh 3:9-10; Jl 2:13-14). The problem with the few groups of individuals whom God ordered to be completely destroyed was that they had incorporated grave sins into the very fabric of their society and continued in their sins over a considerable period of time. The Amalekites, for example, had created a culture that had no qualms about killing frail Israelites and kidnapping children for the sake of material gain (Dt 25:17-18; see also Jdg 6:3-6; 1 Sm 14:48; 30:1-3). Likewise, to be a Canaanite entailed being a supporter of a polytheistic religion that practiced child sacrifice, prostitution, bestiality, and homosexuality. These cultures had become spiritually gangrenous and had been that way for hundreds

of years (see Gn 15:16; Dt 25:17-18). Since they refused to change, the only way to keep their deadly influences from spreading to other societies was through the complete elimination of every object (Ex 23:24; 34:13; Dt 7:5; 12:3; Jdg 2:2) and person (Dt 7:2; Dt 13:15; 20:16-17) associated with them.

In summary, God ordered the violent elimination of the Amalekites and certain other social groups for two main reasons: as punishment for the accumulated sins of those societies (see Gn 15:16; Lv 18:24-25; Dt 9:5; 12:31) and the elimination of their influence on other societies (Ex 23:33; Dt 7:4; 12:30-31; 20:17-18).

For a discussion of God ordering the Israelites to go to war see the article, "Does the Bible Support a Just War?" (p. 995).

15:3 Why were the Israelites to kill the Amalekites' animals? In a land without money or banks (these did not exist during the days of Saul), livestock—oxen, sheep, goats, camels, and donkeys—was a major form of wealth. But God did not want the Israelites to go to war in order to enrich themselves at their enemies' expense. This solemn task was to be done to carry out a divine death sentence, not for personal gain.

15:7-8 If Saul destroyed all of the Amalekites (except Agag), why did Israel have to fight them later on (see 27:8; 30:1,16-17; 2 Sm 1:8,13; 1 Ch 4:43)? In the context of Israelite history as a whole, it is clear that Saul killed all the Amalekites he found, not all those that existed. Many Amalekites would have abandoned their homes and become temporary war refugees in surrounding regions. Those who escaped prior to the battle lived to fight another day. David later did the same thing, going into temporary exile (1 Sm 21:10) to avoid Saul's army.

15:8 An oracle uttered by Balaam in Nm 24:7 indicated that Israel's king would be "greater than Agag"; in the present passage Saul captured Agag, apparently fulfilling this prophecy. The term Agag could either be a personal name or a title (compare with the Bible's use of "Pharaoh"). If Agag is a person, Balaam foresaw his defeat at the hands of Saul; Agag did not live during the time of Moses. If Agag is a title, Balaam spoke of the superiority of Israel's kings to Amalekite kings.

15:11 God chose Saul to be Israel's king (9:15-16), then according to this verse regretted His action, and afterward chose David in his place (15:28; 16:12). Yet the prophet Samuel told Saul that God does not change His mind (15:29). While this may appear contradictory, Scripture elsewhere supports Samuel's statement (Ps 15:4; Mal 3:6; Jms 1:17). God's will and purpose remain the same, but the free response of people to His commands may lead to a modification of His actions on the human scene (see Jr 18:8; Ezk 18:24; Jnh 3:10). At least from the human perspective, His relationships with people are authentic and personal, not pre-programmed.

15:18 On why God would order the killing of women, children, and infants, see first note on 15:3.

15:22 God gladly accepted the sacrifices of His worshipers during the OT era, as long as their gifts were accompanied by a proper attitude of the heart. People had offered sacrifices since the days of Cain and Abel, and God received them (Gn 4:3-4). In the law given at Mount Sinai, the Lord required the Israelites to bring burnt offerings and a variety of sacrifices to Him as part of their regular worship. But, as Cain learned (Gn 4:5-6), a sacrifice that was not matched with a life in submission to God was not acceptable (see Is 1:11-17; Ps 51:16-17; Pr 21:27; Jr 6:19-20; Am 5:21-24; Mc 6:6-8). Samuel, in the present verse, gives voice to that truth.

15:29 Does God lie, or not? Samuel's statement that God does not lie seems to contradict the account in 1 Kg 22:19-23, where God put a lying spirit in the mouths of Ahab's false prophets (see also Jr 4:10; Ezk 14:2-11; 2 Th 2:11). The Bible teaches that God is the ultimate truth and speaks only the truth (Ps 119:160; Jn 1:14; 17:17). Jesus, the incarnate second person of the trinity, spoke the truth even when it produced personal pain and suffering (Mt 26:63-66; Jn 8:40-59). On three occasions in Scripture the Holy Spirit is called the Spirit of truth (Jn 14:17; 15:26; 16:13). King Ahab had hired so-called prophets to spread lies that supported his personal ambitions; these men creatively proclaimed messages in the Lord's name that agreed with the king's hopes. The Lord put a lying spirit in the mouths of Ahab's prophets in the sense that He gave these professional liars the energy and opportunity to do what they were determined to do, to provide the king with the lie he wanted to hear.

15:35 Didn't Samuel see Saul again before he died? In the Hebrew text and some English versions of the Bible an apparent contradiction exists between this verse and 19:24, where Saul went to Samuel and spent the day prophesying before him. The

HCSB translation, however, preserves the intent of the Hebrew phrase, which states literally "Samuel did not again to see." Samuel never again sought out Saul, though Saul would go to see him.

16:2 If God hates lying, why did He tell Samuel to lie? God is truthful (15:29), hates lying (Pr 6:16-17; Zch 8:16-17), and expects people to tell the truth (Ex 20:16; Lv 19:11; Eph 4:25; Col 3:9; Rv 22:15). He commanded Samuel to offer a sacrifice, and the prophet was to tell that to anyone who asked without revealing the Lord's fuller intentions. To disclose them would only help Saul and his supporters carry out their murderous plans against an innocent man. They were not owed the full truth, and they did not get it.

16:6-11 How many sons did Jesse have? In 1 Sm, Jesse had eight sons (see also 17:12); however, in 1 Ch 2:13-15 only seven are mentioned. It is possible that one of David's older brothers died early in life and was therefore not counted in the writer's reckoning. Differences in the Bible regarding the names of Jesse's sons amount to normal variations, roughly equivalent to nicknames today—Eliab = Elihu (1 Ch 27:18); Shammah = Shimea (1 Ch 2:13). These could be dialectical variants, as well.

16:14 Scripture passages such as this seem to indicate that God sometimes behaves in demonic or evil ways (Jdg 9:23; 1 Kg 22:23; Jb 12:16; Ps 18:26; Is 45:7; Ezk 14:9; Mt 6:13; Lk 11:4; 2 Th 2:11). Such passages must be understood within the overall framework of the Bible's teachings about God. Scripture affirms that God is completely righteous (Jdg 5:11; Ezr 9:15; Ps 7:9; 48:10; 71:19; 111:3; 112:4; 116:5; 119:137,142; 145:17; Is 51:8; Jr 9:24; Dn 9:7; Hs 14:9; Jn 17:25; Rm 1:17; Rv 16:5), hates evil (Zch 8:17), and never does anything unjust (Rm 9:14). At the same time, God created a universe with built-in rewards and punishments that reinforce divine moral law. For example, when people disregard His moral order and abuse theirbodies through the misuse of food, alcohol or sex, they will predictably experience health problems. Such problems can be interpreted as warning signs motivating us to give up bad behavior and do what is right.

Saul had lived a life of chronic disobedience to God, and therefore had opened himself to demonic oppression. While it was a form of punishment, because of Saul's disregard for God's moral order, it was also intended to drive him to repent and turn back to the Lord. God, Who is Master of all the created order, will use even demons, against their will, for redemptive purposes.

16:21-23 On whether Saul knew David well before David killed Goliath, see note on 17:55-58.

16:23 How could David's harp playing drive away an evil spirit from Saul? The Bible does not indicate how it happened, although the general effect of music on the emotions is well known. David was considered Israel's favorite singer (2 Sm 23:1) and in the OT was credited with writing 73 psalms. David's music combined with the Word of God in the presence of the demon drove it away (see Ps 119:50; Heb 4:12).

17:4 How tall was Goliath? The ancient texts disagree on this matter: the Hebrew text states that Goliath was "six cubits and a span" (= 9 ft. 9 in.) in height, while the Septuagint, a Qumran manuscript, and Josephus indicate he was "four cubits and a span" (= 6 ft. 9 in.). The tallest known human being in modern times was Robert Wadlow, who attained a height of 8 feet, 11.1 inches before his death in 1940. In view of the excessive weight of Goliath's armor and weapons, the biblical author evidently understood the Philistine to be awesome in size; the MT's figure is therefore probably the original. The Bible does not state whether Goliath's height included his shoes and helmet, though it would not be improper to have included these in the overall figure.

17:12 On how many sons Jesse had, see note on 16:6-11.

17:50 Who killed Goliath, David or Elhanan? This dramatic account of David's killing of Goliath seems to be contradicted by 2 Sm 21:19, where Elhanan is said to have performed the deed. The issue is complicated by the fact that 1 Ch 20:5 mentions that Elhanan killed Lahmi, the brother of Goliath—not Goliath himself.

Attempting to resolve these discrepancies, some scholars suggest that a pre-Christian-era copyist introduced an error into 2 Sm 21:19 that created the mistaken impression that Elhanan killed Goliath; the correct reading of the original, in this case, would be preserved in 1 Ch 20:5. Another approach suggests that the contradiction between 1 Sm 17:50 and 2 Sm 21:19 is only apparent. Ancient rabbis suggested that Elhanan is another name for David (which in Hb means "beloved one" and could be a nickname). "Goliath" could be a title and not a name, so there may have been two fighters from Gath named Goliath.

17:54 Jerusalem was not under Israelite control at the time of this incident, but it was a city of great military interest to David's tribe of Judah. The tribe had fought against the city (Jos 15:63) and had taken a war trophy there previously after temporarily conquering it (Jdg 1:8). Jerusalem was a city of great interest to David as well, the first city he set out to conquer when he became king of all Israel (2 Sm 5:6-9). Perhaps David took Goliath's head there to intimidate Jerusalem's Jebusite residents, letting them know that Israel was a nation to be feared. Alternatively, this verse may refer to an event that took place a few years later, after David had conquered the city.

17:55-58 This passage seems to contradict 16:19-23, which shows Saul not only inviting David to come and work for him (16:19), but declares that he loved him greatly. However, this text does not indicate that Saul did not know who David was, only that he did not know the name of his father (see vv. 55-58). Saul's was seeking the information he needed to issue the decree of tax exemption promised for David's family (see v. 25).

18:1-4 The Bible indicates that Jonathan and David loved each other deeply (19:1; 20:17; 2 Sm 1:26) and made a covenant with each other (1 Sm 20:8,16; 22:8; 23:18), but there is no indication of their having a homosexual relationship. Scripture teaches that God disapproves of homosexual activity (Lv 18:22; 20:13; Rm 1:24-27; Jd 7; see also the article "What Does the Bible Teach about Homosexuality?" p. 1716). Jonathan and David were men who were careful to obey God in all matters (1 Sm 23:16; 1 Kg 11:4), with the notable exception of David's sin with Bathsheba. It is reasonable to conclude that these two men obeyed God in this matter as well.

In the ancient Near East, as in conservative Islamic societies today, adult men and women were not permitted to have friendships, casual or otherwise, with one another. Because social roles assigned to males and females differed greatly, men could not usually have close friendships, based on mutual interests, even with their wives. Women were excluded from many activities common to men; they could not take part in military affairs, and were generally excluded from religious rites as well. Men, in like fashion, were not expected to engage in most activities associated with women. Men had to cultivate their friendships with other men, while reserving sexual activity for their wives (or prostitutes). Sometimes such friendships could be intense, but they did not have a sexual component. Jonathan and David were great friends, fellow soldiers, brothers-in-law, and brothers in the faith, but they were not homosexual "lovers."

18:10 On God's sending an evil spirit to torment Saul, see note on 16:14.

18:10 Did Saul prophesy, or rave like a madman? Some English versions of the Bible state that Saul was prophesying here, but others say that he was raving. The difference arises from how translators choose to render the same Hebrew word. What was regarded as "prophesying," in the ancient Near East, could take the form of frenzied and even self-destructive activity (cp the prophets of Baal, 1 Kg 18:28-29). Pagan cultures often regarded such bizarre behavior as proof that a god had come upon someone, and even associated prophetic activity with altered states of consciousness, insanity, or even epilepsy. This differed from the usual Israelite expression of prophetic activity, which involved a prophet's speaking or chanting (1 Ch 25:1-3) coherently to an individual or group in the name of the Lord.

Because Saul's act of "prophesying" was connected with an irrational attempt to murder David, his most valuable soldier and assistant, he was behaving more like a pagan prophet than an Israelite prophet. Accordingly, many Bible versions translate Saul's activity as "raving."

18:12 Once God the Father gives the Holy Spirit to a person, does the Spirit remain with that person or can He depart? At least three other OT passages in addition to the present verse suggest that the Holy Spirit could be taken away from people who persisted in living in disobedience toward God (Jdg 16:20; 1 Sm 28:15; Ps 51:11). On the other hand, Jn 14:16 indicates the Holy Spirit will abide forever with people who receive Him.

The NT teaches that the death and resurrection of Jesus fundamentally changed certain aspects of humanity's relationship with God. The old covenant at Sinai was replaced with the covenant of Christ's body and blood (1 Co 11:25; Heb 8:13), and with this change the Holy Spirit began operating differently in the lives of God's people. The NT speaks of the Holy Spirit as a gift to believers in Jesus Christ (Ac 2:38; 10:45) and a seal on their hearts, a guarantee of eternal life (2 Co 1:22; Eph 1:13). Besides being given to women and Gentiles (there are no examples of either of these receiving the Spirit in the OT), the Holy Spirit is a permanently indwelling presence in the lives of all Christians. The NT provides no instance of the Holy Spirit departing from a Christian; this suggests that what happened to Saul cannot happen to a believer in Christ.

18:19 On who was married to Adriel the Meholathite, see note on 25:44.

18:27 How many Philistines did David kill to gain the right to marry Saul's daughter Michal? The ancient texts disagree: the Hebrew text gives 200 but the Septuagint only 100. Even though Saul had only required David to kill 100, the larger number is probably correct. David was a zealous fighter for the Lord (v. 17) and his king (vv. 25-26), and this figure convincingly reflects David's high level of commitment to both.

19:1 On whether Jonathan and David had a homosexual relationship, see note on 18:1-4.

19:9 On God's sending an evil spirit to torment Saul, see note on 16:14.

19:13-17 Was Michal right to deceive and lie? God hates lying (Pr 6:16-17; Zch 8:16-17) and expects people to tell the truth (Ex 20:16; Lv 19:11; Eph 4:25; Col 3:9; Rv 22:15). On the other hand, Saul's intentions were to kill an innocent man; Michal was not obligated to give him information that would help him carry out this wicked act. If Michal did not hide David's escape and then lie about her cover-up, both she and David would probably have died.

Michal's example does not give Christians, or anyone else, permission to lie for the sake of personal convenience, or to hide wrongdoing. But Michal's actions demonstrate that, within an environment where human sin abounds, it is not always possible to choose between pure good and pure evil (see note on Ex 1:19).

19:19-24 On Saul's prophetic activity, see note on 18:10.

19:23-24 On why there are two different accounts of the origin of this saying, see note on 10:11.

19:24 On whether this contradicts Samuel's previous statement that he would never again see Saul, see note on 15:35.

20:6 David's actions—skipping a required engagement and asking Jonathan to lie about the reason—seem to have violated God's command to tell the truth (see Ex 20:16; Eph 4:25), as well as his duty to the king. Normally his actions would have been wrong, but in these circumstances they were justifiable. David had good reason to believe that Saul intended to kill him, though he had done nothing worthy of death (see 1 Sm 18:11,17,25; 19:1,10-11,15,20-21,23-24). David had the right to protect himself. His plan prevented the king from committing a crime, and preserved an innocent human life. Furthermore, it did not involve the use of physical force against someone, or the destruction of property, see 19:13-17.

20:17 On whether Jonathan and David had a homosexual relationship, see note on 18:1-4.

20:28-29 For a discussion of whether it was right for Jonathan to lie to his father, see note on 20:6.

21:1 Who was the high priest at this time—Ahimelech, Ahijah, Abiathar, or Abimelech? In the present verse Ahimelech is seemingly the highest-ranking priest, since he had the authority to give David access to Goliath's sword and to give him some of the food normally reserved for priests. Interestingly, when Jesus referred to this same event during a discussion with some Pharisees (Mk 2:26), He declared that Abiathar, not Ahimelech, was the high priest who supplied David with food.

The situation becomes even more complicated when one considers 1 Sm 14:3. There Ahijah was the priest who wore an ephod, a linen garment reserved for officiating priests (see Ex 29:5; Lv 8:7). Being with the king at that time, he was presumably the highest-ranking priest. Furthermore, 1 Ch 18:16 lists Abimelech as the son of Abiathar as priest, though its parallel passage in 2 Sm 8:17 gives his name as Ahimelech.

In attempting to harmonize these passages, it is worth noting that there is no evidence that the Pharisees accused Jesus of error when he named Abiathar as the high priest that helped David, a circumstance lending tacit support to the identification. Further, Abiathar was the name of both Ahimelech's father(2 Sm 8:17; 1 Ch 24:6), though Abiathar was also known as Ahitub (1 Sm 22:20), and his son (1 Sm 22:20; 23:6). The Abiathar to whom Jesus referred could have been Ahimelech's still-living father, who because of his seniority would have been considered the high priest (cp. the joint priestly roles of Caiaphas and his father-in-law Annas during the arrest and trial of Jesus, e.g., Jn 18:13). Alternatively, Jesus could have referred to Ahimelech's son Abiathar, who became high priest after the death of 85 priests at Nob (1 Sm 22:18).

Another possibility is that Ahijah, Ahimelech, Abiathar and Abimelech are different names for the same person. Finally, though textual evidence is lacking, a careless copyist might have substituted the name Abiathar for Ahimelech in the Mark manuscript, creating a conflict that did not exist in the original text. Or the name Abimelech for Ahimelech in 1 Ch 18:16 could be a pre-Christian scribal error; both *'ahi*- and *'abi*- were common elements in Hebrew names.

21:2 Did David lie to Ahimelech in order to obtain food? David stated that "the king" had given him a mission that required secrecy. Ahimelech did not ask the identity of the king, and David did not clarify to whom he was referring (see also v. 8). Since God is King (Nm 23:21; Ps 10:16; 47:2; 98:6; 1 Tm 1:17) and David was arguably following God's orders in this matter, he was telling the truth.

If David's words to Ahimelech still seem misleading, it should be borne in mind that he was attempting to defend himself against a man who would wrongly take his life. He told the truth in a guarded fashion; to have told Ahimelech more would have brought the priest into the deadly struggle between David and the king. Sadly, David's best efforts failed (1 Sm 22:17) and this occurred anyway, due to the presence of a treacherous observer (1 Sm 21:7).

21:12-15 The narrative of 1 Sm presents two differing pictures of Achish's relationship with David (cp. 29:6-9).Here David is afraid of Achish, who considers him a madman. In the later passage, David is Achish's trusted ally and bodyguard (27:12; 28:2; 29:6-9).

These accounts are not at odds with one another; evidently Achish changed his opinion of David over time. During David's earlier career, Achish knew him only as a dangerous enemy of the Philistines and loyal servant of Saul. Later he learned that David had become Saul's most feared enemy, which made him potentially a valued partner with the Philistines. Achish gladly modified his stance toward David, and accepted him as a comrade-in-arms.

22:18 How many priests did Doeg kill? Ancient authorities provide three figures for the death toll in the slaughter at Nob: the Hebrew text gives 85, the Septuagint 305, and Josephus 385. The differences suggest that a scribal error affected one or more ancient textual traditions. The weight of tradition stands in favor of the Hebrew reading in the MTs.

22:20 Was Abiathar the son of Ahimelech, or Ahimelech the son of Abiathar (see 2 Sm 8:17)? Both are true: Ahimelech's father was named Abiathar, and Ahimelech named his son Abiathar. As in many American families today, families in Bible cultures sometimes reused the names of respected elders from previous generations (see Jesus' genealogy, Mt 1:1-16).

23:1 On whether this verse contradicts an earlier statement regarding the Philistines fighting against Israel, see note on 7:13.

23:13 According to 22:2, David had 400 men in his militia, but this verse states he had 600. These numbers reflect changing circumstances in the nation of Israel; no contradiction is involved. Saul's unpopular actions in slaying the priestly families at Nob (22:18-19), combined with David's military success at Keilah (23:5), had brought hundreds of men over to David's side in hopes of bringing about a change in Israel's leadership.

24:5 David was upset after he cut the corner off of Saul's robe. Though he had not physically injured the king, he had sinned. Saul was still God's chosen and anointed leader for Israel, and the king's robe was a symbol of his divinely appointed office. David's act could be taken as rebellion against God Himself. Furthermore, the law of Moses required all robes to have tassels at their corners to remind people of God's laws (Nm 15:37-40). For David to remove this reminder from Saul's clothing was to hinder the king's relationship with the Lord. Any act that makes it harder for another to serve God is sinful (cp. Lk 17:1-2).

24:21-22 If David took an oath not to cut off Saul's descendants, why did he later allow the Gibeonites to kill seven of them? David's agreement was that he would not wipe out Saul's descendants as a way of "cleaning house" when he took over the kingship of Israel. That was the normal practice in the ancient Near East when a ruler established a new dynasty (that is, a ruler of a different family line from the previous king); it was done to eliminate other potential claimants to the throne (see 1 Kg 15:29; 16:11; 2 Kg 11:1; 25:7). David not only kept his agreement, he invited a member of Saul's family line to eat at the royal table and restored a generous inheritance to him (2 Sm 9:1-13).

Saul, in attempting to exterminate the Gibeonites, had brought great guilt on himself by violating the centuries-old agreement in which the Israelites had allowed them to live in the land (Jos 9:3-15; 2 Sm 21:2). Because Saul, as leader, represented all Israel (for discussions on corporate solidarity, see notes on Dt 2:30; 5:9; 19:6), his guilt led to the spread of famine (2 Sm 21:1). To bring

an end to God's judgment, David agreed to let the Gibeonites take limited revenge on the house of Saul. As a remedy for Saul's homicidal actions, this "life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth" principle (Dt 19:21; cp. Ex 21:24; Lv 24:20) was effective; God lifted His punishment from Israel (2 Sm 21:14).

25:1 Did David go to the Wilderness of Paran or the Wilderness of Maon to avoid Saul? Modern Bible translations disagree, reflecting variant readings in ancient manuscripts. The NIV and NLT follow the Greek tradition, while the HCSB and other versions accept the Hebrew text. There is no compelling reason to depart from the Hebrew tradition, as the Greek reading may be due to a copyist's error.

25:37-38 How did Nabal die? English Bible versions differ based on the translators' decisions about how far to pursue a medical diagnosis based on the Hebrew description. The MT in verse 37 reads, lit., "His heart died in his midst, and he became stone." This could be taken to mean that Nabal experienced a heart attack, became dispirited, had a seizure, or suffered a stroke. Temporary loss of consciousness, paralysis or coma could have followed. Since the Hebrew provides only a description of symptoms, not a diagnosis, most modern versions opt for a reading that closely follows the Masoretic Text.

25:43 Throughout his lifetime David acquired at least eight wives (2 Sm 3:2-5,14-16; 1 Ch 3:1-5) and 10 concubines (2 Sm 15:16), in addition to Saul's harem (2 Sm 12:8). The Lord did not approve of David's departure from His plan for marriage. It would have destructive consequences later, when deadly rivalries developed between the women (see 1 Kg 1:1-4; 2:17-25) and families (2 Sm 13:1-32; 1 Kg 2:24-25) within David's harem. God's ideal plan for people from the beginning was for one man to marry one woman, and for the couple to remain in an exclusive sexual relationship for as long as both partners were alive. (On the Bible's view of polygamy, see notes on Ex 21:10; Jdg 8:30-31.)

25:44 Who became Michal's next husband after David? The text here states that Saul gave Michal to Palti (also known as Paltiel, 2 Sm 3:15); however, in 2 Sm 21:8 many English versions state that Michal's husband was Adriel. This textual tension apparently arises from an ancient scribal error in 2 Sm 21:8, where the MT links Michal with Adriel. On the other hand, the Septuagint, Syriac, and even some Hebrew manuscripts state in that same verse that Merab, not Michal, was Adriel's wife. Especially in the light of 1 Sm 18:19 and 2 Sm 6:23, it seems the Septuagint and Syriac preserve the correct reading.

27:7 Ancient manuscripts disagree as to how long Da-vid was in Philistine territory. The MT states that David was among the Philistines a year and four months, while the Septuagint indicates that the time was only four months. Especially in light of Achish's statement in 1 Sm 29:3, the Hebrew reading should be accepted.

27:8 On whether this reference to the Amalekites contradicts an earlier passage in 1 Sm, see note on 15:7-8.

27:9 David took even the women's lives when he attacked the Geshurites, Girzites, and Amalekites. David's actions described here were aimed at finishing the work that Joshua and later generations of Israelites had left undone, that of ridding Canaan of its pagan cultures. (For further discussion of this question, see notes on Nm 31:13-24; Dt 1:30; 2:21; 7:16; 1 Sm 15:3.) The people groups against which David fought were residual populations that had not yet been dealt with.

27:10 Was it right for David to deceive Achish? In response to the pagan king's inquiry David gave a direct and geographically accurate answer, though not the entire truth. He did not tell which people groups he had been fighting, for to do so was to risk forcing more than 1,000 Israelites—David, his men, and their families—back into a deadly confrontation with Saul. Needless bloodshed would have ensued. (For further discussion of lying, see notes on Ex 1:19; 1 Sm 19:13-17.)

27:12 On whether Achish's relationship with David in this passage contradicts the earlier description of their relationship in 1 Sm, see note on 21:12-15.

28:1 On whether this verse contradicts an earlier statement regarding the Philistines fighting against Israel, see note on 7:13.

28:6 Why didn't the Lord answer Saul's plea for help? The Bible teaches that people who consistently reject God's leadership in their lives, and refuse to follow the guidance He has already provided, should not expect Him to deliver them from trouble resulting from their poor choices (Jb 27:9; 35:12; Pr 1:23-28; Is 1:15; Jr 11:11; 14:12; Ezk 8:18; Mc 3:4; Zch 7:13; Jms 4:3). Saul had consistently disobeyed God (1 Sm 13:13-14; 15:11-23),even going so far as to kill the Lord's priests (22:17-19).He had created vast problems for himself and his nation. The Lord was not going to promise the king supernatural deliverance from those problems, even though Saul earnestly sought His help. Instead, God would use the Philistines as the instrument of judgment against Saul.

28:6 This passage says that Saul inquired of the Lord, while 1 Ch 10:14 says he did not. The contradiction is apparent only in English translations. In this verse Saul "asked" (Hb *da-raš*; "inquired of") the Lord to provide guidance, but the Lord did not answer him. In1 Ch 10:13-14 Saul "asked" (Hb *da-raš*; "consulted") a medium for guidance but did not "seek" (Hb *darash*; "inquire of") the Lord. The point is that Saul died because he committed a capital offense in consulting a medium (see Lv 20:27) rather than seeking to obey God.

28:8-22 Did the medium of Endor really conjure up the dead prophet Samuel? Though scholars disagree on this question, the Bible suggests that she did. The law of Moses sternly forbids consultation of mediums (Lv 20:27; Dt 18:10-12) but never says that communicating with dead people is impossible. Saul was seemingly able to speak with a figure that not only accurately repeated key themes from Samuel's previous private conversations with Saul, but also correctly predicted the deaths of Saul and his sons. This suggests that the king was indeed speaking with Samuel.

28:19 Does this passage suggest that all people go to the same place at death, whereas Lk 16:23 and Ac 1:25 indicate that they go to different places? Along with other passages (see Ec 3:20-21; Dn 12:2,13), this verse refers to an intermediate state between physical death and one's final destiny (Samuel had died only recently, 25:1). Samuel's words to Saul here merely indicate that within a day's time Saul and three of his sons would be dead.

29:6-9 On whether Achish's relationship with David in this passage contradicts the earlier description of their relationship in 1 Sm, see note on 21:12-15.

31:3-5 The Bible provides three complementary accounts of Saul's receiving mortal wounds leading to his death. According to verse 3, Saul was severely wounded by a Philistine arrow. Then, to avoid being sadistically executed by the vengeance-seeking Philistines (17:51; 18:27), Saul fell on his own sword (v. 4), receiving a second grave wound that in time would have killed him (2 Sm 1:9). His armor-bearer, seeing that the king was now dead, then fell upon his sword and perished, as well (1 Sm 31:5). Later, an Amalekite—probably on the battlefield to steal personal possessions from the corpses—tried to take credit for dealing Saul's final death blow (2 Sam 1:6-10); whether or not he was telling the truth, it was a foolish move on his part. Though this sequence of events as the Bible relates it is complicated, it is certainly plausible.

31:4-5 Suicide involves the unauthorized taking of a human life, and as such violates the sixth commandment (Ex 20:13); God does not sanction it. The Apostle Paul prevented the Philippian jailer from taking his own life (Ac 16:27-28). But, as with all other sins (with the exception of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, Mt 12:31), suicide is not a sin that automatically excludes a person from heaven.

The biblical narrative records examples of several individuals who took their own lives. In each case the circumstances of the suicide were inglorious and regrettable. Samson, tortured and humiliated by the Philistines, took his own life with theirs after a ruinous career of disregard for the Lord (Jdg 16:30). Ahithophel committed suicide after being publicly humiliated by having his advice rejected, and in order to avoid being executed for treason (2 Sm 17:23). Zimri, after murdering an Israelite king, ended his life to avoid being killed by his pursuers (1 Kg 16:18). Judas committed suicide after his betrayal of Jesus (Mt 27:5). Saul's attempted suicide was carried out to avoid the humiliation and torture the approaching Philistines would certainly have inflicted on him. There are no biblical examples of honorable suicide. An examination of the Bible's accounts of these lives and deaths suggest two primary scriptural observations about suicide: first, it is an option that some deeply troubled people will choose when facing desperate circumstances; and second, it is a pathetic and tragic end to a human life.

2 Samuel Articles

Has the Bible Been Accurately Copied Down Through the Centuries?

by Norman L. Geisler

The Bible is the most accurately transmitted book from the ancient world. No other ancient book has as many, as early, or more accurately copied manuscripts.

Old Testament

Old Testament manuscript reliability is based on three factors: their abundance, dating, and accuracy. Most works from antiquity survive on only a handful of manuscripts: only 7 for Plato, 8 for Thucydides, 8 for Herodotus, 10 for Caesar's Gallic Wars, and 20 for Tacitus. Only the works of Demosthenes and Homer number into the hundreds. Yet even before 1890 a scholar named Giovanni de Rossi published 731 OT manuscripts. Since that time some 10,000 OT manuscripts were found in the Cairo Geniza, and in 1947 the Dead Sea caves at Qumran produced over 600 OT manuscripts.

Further, the Dead Sea Scrolls, containing at least fragments of all OT books except Esther, all date from before the end of the first century A.D. and some to the third century B.C. The Nash Papyrus is dated between the second century B.C. and the first century A.D.

The manuscripts' accuracy is known from internal and external evidence. (1) It is well known that Jewish scribal reverence for Scripture led to its careful transmission. (2) Examination of duplicate passages (e.g., Pss 14 and 53) show parallel transmission. (3) The early Greek translation of the OT, the Septuagint, substantially agrees with the Hebrew manuscripts. (4) Comparison of the Samaritan Pentateuch with the same biblical books preserved within the Jewish tradition shows close similarity. (5) The Dead Sea Scrolls provide manuscripts dating a thousand years earlier than most used to establish the Hebrew text.

Comparative studies reveal word-for-word identity in 95 percent of the text. Minor variants consist mostly of slips of the pen or spelling. Only 13 small changes were discovered in the entire Dead Sea Scrolls copy of Isaiah, eight of which were known from other ancient sources. After 1,000 years of copying, there were no changes in meaning and almost no changes in wording!

New Testament

The reliability of the NT is established because the number, date, and accuracy of its manuscripts enable reconstruction of the original text with more precision than any other ancient text. The number of NT manuscripts is overwhelming (almost 5,700 Greek manuscripts) compared with the typical book from antiquity (about 7 to 10 manuscripts; Homer's Iliad has the most at 643 manuscripts). The NT is simply the best textually supported book from the ancient world.

The earliest undisputed NT manuscript is the John Rylands Papyrus, dated between A.D. 117 and 138. Whole books (e.g., those contained in the Bodmer Papyri) are available from around the year 200. And most of the NT, including all the Gospels, is available in the Chester Beatty Papyri manuscripts, dating to about 250. Noted British manuscript scholar Sir Frederick Kenyon wrote, "The interval then between the dates or original composition and the earliest extant evidence becomes so small as to be in fact negligible, and the last foundation for any doubt that the Scriptures have come down to us substantially as they were written has now been removed." Thus both "the authenticity and the general integrity of the books of the [NT] may be regarded as firmly

established.” No other ancient book has as small a time gap between composition and earliest manuscript copies as the NT.

Not only are there more and earlier NT manuscripts, but also they were more accurately copied than other ancient texts. The NT scholar and Princeton professor Bruce Metzger made a comparison of the NT with the Iliad of Homer and the Mahabharata of Hinduism. He found the text of the latter to represent only 90 percent of the original (with 10 percent textual corruption), the Iliad to be 95 percent pure, and only half of 1 percent of the NT text to remain in doubt. The Greek scholar A. T. Robertson estimated that NT textual concerns have to do with only a “thousandth part of the entire text,” placing the accuracy of the NT text at 99.9 percent—the best known for any book from the ancient world. Sir Frederick Kenyon noted that “the number of [manuscripts] of the NT, of early translations from it, and of quotations from it in the older writers of the Church, is so large that it is practically certain that the true reading of every doubtful passage is preserved in some one or the other of these ancient authorities. This can be said of no other ancient book in the world.”

In summary, the vast number, early dates, and unmatched accuracy of the OT and NT manuscript copies establish the Bible’s reliability well beyond that of any other ancient book. Its substantial message has been undiminished through the centuries, and its accuracy on even minor details has been confirmed. Thus the Bible we hold in our hands today is a highly trustworthy copy of the original that came from the pens of the prophets and apostles.

Introduction to 1 Samuel

AUTHOR

The Bible does not say who wrote 1 and 2 Samuel. Many Bible students think Samuel along with Nathan and Gad had major input, pointing to 1 Ch 29:29 as evidence. Others think the books had a long history of composition with various narratives or narrative sources being composed from the time of the events until the time of the exile, when the "Former Prophets" were gathered into one collection. Such individual narratives would include: Shiloh (1 Sm 1–3), the ark (1 Sm 4:1–7:1), the rise of kingship (1 Sm 9:1–11:15), battles of Saul (1 Sm 13–15), the history of David's rise to power (1 Sm 16:14—2 Sm 5:25), David's reign (2 Sm 9–20), and the succession to the throne of David (1 Kg 1–2). An early scroll of 1 and 2 Samuel may well have been part of the book depository in Solomon's temple when it was completed.

A PIVOTAL PERIOD IN ISRAEL'S HISTORY

First and 2 Samuel play a pivotal role in the Bible for both historical and theological reasons. Historically, these books document the monumental transition that occurred in OT Israel as it moved from being a collection of 12 tribes with no national government to being a unified nation with a centralized government under the control of a king. Furthermore, these books provide a detailed description of the last leaders during the period of the judges, the career of Israel's first king, and the exploits and accomplishments of Israel's most famous king, David.

The books also document the historical fulfillment of promises made by God in the Torah. The law of Moses had predicted the rise of kingship as an institution in Israel (Gn 17:16; 35:11; 36:31; Dt 17:15); the events recorded in the books of Samuel show that the kingship became a historical reality. The Torah predicted that a member of the tribe of Judah would rule over Israel (Gn 49:10); this was borne out by the narratives in 1 and 2 Samuel with the ascent of David, of the tribe of Judah, to the throne. Furthermore, the promises that Israel would defeat Moab, Edom, and the Amalekites (Nm 24:17-20) were also shown to have been carried out. Finally, prophecies regarding the establishment of "a covenant of perpetual priesthood" for the family line of Eleazar the priest (Nm 25:13) were also moved toward fulfillment with the judgment enacted against the family line of Eli.

The books of Samuel also provide concrete historical examples that confirm the theological teachings of the Torah. One of the primary precepts of the Torah is that obedience to God brings blessings, while disobedience brings divine judgment. The contrasts between Eli and Samuel, as well as Saul and David, certainly bear this out. Disaster came to Eli and Saul as a result of their sins, but blessings came to Samuel and David as they followed the Lord. The life of David further demonstrates the sobering truth that God will bring judgment. Illustrations of the disastrous consequences that can result from failing to honor one's father (as Absalom did with his father David), as well as committing acts of murder and adultery (as David did with Uriah and Bathsheba) are all provided in vivid detail.

RELIABILITY OF 1 AND 2 SAMUEL

Perhaps the most serious question raised by recent skeptics regarding 1 and 2 Samuel relates to the historical trustworthiness of the narratives contained in these books. Some scholars dismiss the accounts as fanciful tales with no more historical value than the legends of King Arthur. This highly negative view of the historical reliability of these books is unjustified, however.

Though it is impossible to "prove" many of the details found in 1 and 2 Samuel (e.g., the exact words spoken in conversations, the daily whereabouts and activities of the participants in the

narratives, the outcome of a minor military skirmish), it is possible to provide scientific confirmation of the general claims of the biblical texts. Archaeological investigation has confirmed, for example, that Philistines lived in the regions and at the times when the books of Samuel indicated they did. It has also proven that the family line of David (lit., the "house of David") served as kings over Israel; evidence for this is found in the form of two inscriptions coming from the ninth century B.C., the Tell Dan inscription and the Mesha Stele. The existence of a strong centralized government that developed following a period of destruction has been confirmed in such cities as Hazor, Megiddo, and Gezer; this agrees well with the Bible's claims regarding the Israelite conquest of Canaan and the development of a national government during the kingship period.

The books of Samuel are especially valuable for Christians because they lay the foundation for the all-important doctrine of the Messiah, the ultimate descendant of David who would sit on an everlasting throne ruling over God's people and bring deliverance and justice. The promises God made to David in 2 Samuel 7 created hopes and expectations that the NT writers understood to have been fulfilled by
Jesus. The Lord promised David that He would establish the kingdom of one of David's descendants (2 Sm 7:12); in the NT Jesus was identified as that descendant of David (Mt 1:20; 21:9) who brought the kingdom of God to humanity (Mt 12:28; Lk 11:20). God said David's descendant would build a house for God's name (2 Sm 7:13); the NT writers portrayed Jesus as one who built the ultimate temple of God in three days (Mt 26:61; Jn 2:19). God promised David that one of his descendants would have a throne that would last forever (2 Sm 7:13); the NT declares that Jesus had just that (Heb 1:8). God said that one of David's descendants would be a "son to Me" (2 Sm 7:14); Jesus came as the ultimate Son of God (Mt 16:16; Mk 1:1; Lk 1:35).

2 Samuel Study Notes

1:6-10 On whether the Bible contains contradictory accounts of how Saul died, see note on 1 Sm 31:3-5.

1:8,13 On whether this reference to the Amalekites contradicts an earlier passage in 1 Sm, see note on 1 Sm 15:7-8.

1:18 If the Book of Jashar contained the word of God, why was that book left out of the Bible? God directed human authors to use passages from many different works in composing the sacred Scriptures. Other omitted Israelite works mentioned in the Bible include the Book of the LORD's Wars (Nm 21:14), the Events of Samuel the Seer, the Events of Nathan the Prophet, the Events of Gad the Seer, (1 Ch 29:29), the Historical Record of Israel's Kings (1 Kg 14:19), and the Historical Record of Judah's Kings (1 Kg 14:29). Solomon composed more than a thousand songs (1 Kg 4:35), yet only two are preserved in the book of Psalms (72 and 127). Writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit in the NT, Paul included a quotation from the Cretan poet Epimenides (Ti 1:12) and quoted from the poets Epimenides and Aratus in his speech at Athens (Ac 17:28). As would any good human author, the Divine Author of the Bible used materials selected from many sources, fitting them into His grand design for the book of sacred Christian Scriptures.

1:26 On whether Jonathan and David had a homosexual relationship, see note on 1 Sm 18:1-4.

2:2 On whether God approved of David's taking more than one wife, see note on 1 Sm 25:43.

2:8 First Ch 10:6, which states that Saul's "whole house died together" while doing battle with the Philistines, yet here Ish-bosheth is still living. The term "house" is used several ways in the Hebrew OT: it can refer to a human residence (Jdg 19:21), a sacred temple (Is 56:7), or a family line (1 Kg 12:19). Here it means the employees of a powerful individual. A comparison of 1 Ch 10:6 with its parallel passage in 1 Sm 31:6 makes it clear that the writer intended the phrase "and his whole house" (1 Ch 10:6) to refer to "his armor-bearer, and all his men" (1 Sm 31:6)—that is, men close to Saul who were under his authority.

2:8 Two, or possibly three, different names appear in theBible for the son of Saul who became a rival to David. Throughout 2 Sm he is called Ish-bosheth, but in 1 Ch (8:33; 9:39) he is referred to as Esh-baal. Since Esh-baal means "Man of Baal" or "Fire of Baal," the writer of2 Sm apparently substituted *bosheth* ("shame" or "abomination") for *ba'al* in his name to avoid mentioning the title of the pagan god (see Ex 23:13; Jos 23:7). A third name applied to this son may be Ishvi (1 Sm 14:49) The Hebrew word *ba'al* means "husband" or "lord," hence it could have applied to Yahweh (cp. Hs 2:16). Saul need not have been honoring a Canaanite divinity in giving the name to his son. But because the title was so closely associated with pagan worship, the biblical narrator was led to make a substitution.

3:2 On whether God approved of David's taking more than one wife, see note on 1 Sm 25:43.

3:3 In 1 Ch 3:1 David's second son is called Daniel, but here his name is Chileab. Daniel could be an alternate name for Chileab, or another son born to Abigail. If Daniel and Chileab are different persons, then one of them probably died before reaching adulthood.

3:14 Was it right for David to take another man's wife to make her his own? Michal was already David's wife, and he had the right to take action to be reunited with her. Years before, he had paid for and exercised the right to marry her (1 Sm 18:25-27). They had never been divorced; Saul had forced David to flee from his home and had given Michal to another man. David's wife

was thus forced into the awkward situation of being married to two men at the same time. David's actions here were a stern but justifiable effort to put an end to the wrong done to Michal and to him.

3:35 Jesus told his followers not to take oaths (Mt 5:34-37); here David takes one. Jesus' words in the Sermon on the Mount were meant to teach people the importance of speaking the truth at all times. David's oath did not relate to whether or not he was uttering a truthful statement. It was a heartfelt expression of his deep grief over the murder of Abner, his newfound ally.

4:6 Why does this verse read so differently in various Bible versions? In a few recent translations, this verse relates that Recab and Baanah slipped past a female doorkeeper who fell asleep after sifting wheat. Other translations do not mention the doorkeeper, and state that Recab and Baanah stabbed Ish-bosheth in the stomach. These variations mirror the different readings in the Hebrew and Greek texts of the OT, with most following the Hebrew tradition. Both readings stem from ancient sources, and it is impossible to know today which one represents the original text. In either case the essential meaning of the passage is the same: Recab and Baanah entered the king's house and murdered him in a shameful and gory manner.

5:6 On why David would have brought Goliath's head to Jerusalem even before he captured the city, see note on 1 Sm 17:54.

5:8 How did David and his men conquer Jerusalem? According to many modern versions, David spoke of going through a "water shaft." The KJV mentions a "gutter," NEB speaks of a "grappling iron," and the Septuagint reads "dagger." Since no one knows the meaning of the corresponding word in the Hebrew MT, translators have differed on whether David was referring to an architectural feature, a tool, or a weapon. The "water shaft" conjecture draws support from archaeological excavations in Jerusalem, where an ancient underground water shaft (constructed under Hezekiah, 2 Kg 20:20) leads to a spring outside the city walls.

5:8 David did not despise truly lame and blind people, as is evident from his treatment of Jonathan's son Mephibosheth who was crippled in both feet (4:4; 9:3). David permitted Mephibosheth to eat at the royal table daily at the palace in Jerusalem, and treated him as one of his own sons (9:7,11). When he spoke of the lame and the blind here, he was referring sarcastically to what the Jebusites themselves had said about how easy it would be for even the disabled to defend their city.

5:14-16 Two lists of David's sons born to him in Jerusalem appear in 1 Ch 3:5-8 and 14:3-7. Both lists contain the names of 13 sons, with only minor spelling differences. The list in this passage in 2 Sm records only 11 sons, omitting Nogah and Elpelet. This list is an abbreviation, not a contradiction; possibly it mentions only the sons that survived into adulthood.

5:21 This verse is supplemented by the parallel passage in 1 Ch 14:12, which states that David's men burned the Philistine idols. First, of course, they had to carry them away, as described here. The 1 Chronicles passages records their final disposition. No contradiction is present.

5:24 What kind of tree did God use in this miracle? Bible translations differ; suggestions include "mulberry," "aspen," "weeping," and "balsam." As the variant translations imply, the English equivalent of the Hebrew name for this tree is unknown; all translations are conjectural.

6:1 Ancient manuscripts give different totals for the soldiers involved in moving the ark of the covenant. The Hebrew MT reads 30,000 while the Septuagint figure is 70,000. Either total is possible, but there is no way to know which agrees with the original manuscript.

6:5 Were the people celebrating "with all kinds of fir wood instruments" or "with all their might with songs"? English translations that do not refer to fir wood instruments substitute a phrase from 1 Ch 13:8; in the translators' judgment, mention of fir wood

instruments is out of place in the context. Honest efforts on the part of translators to emend what they consider a corrupted reading, the result of an ancient copyist's error, should not be considered contradictions.

6:6-7 Uzzah was only trying to stabilize the ark of the covenant; why did God kill him? The ark was the earthly throne of the living God (Ex 25:22; Nm 7:89; 1 Sm 4:4; 2 Sm 6:2; 2 Kg 19:15), or more properly, the footstool of His invisible throne. It was the holiest object in Israelite religion. As with ancient Asian kings (see Est 4:11), the Lord promised death to any unauthorized person who closely approached His throne (Nm 4:15). Uzzah was not an Aaronic priest and had no authority to touch the ark. He was not slain for his good intentions, but because he violated a command and trespassed into "territory" reserved for consecrated priests.

The tragedy could have been avoided if Uzzah and Ahio had insisted that David move the ark in the way the law of Moses required. It was to be carried by the Levites, not transported on a cart (Nm 4:15; 7:9; see2 Sm 6:13).

6:10 This passage identifies Obed-edom as a Gittite, but throughout 1 Ch he is a Levite (1 Ch 15:17-25; 16:4-5,37-38; 26:1-5). "Gittite" is a geographical designation referring to one living in the region of Gath; "Levite" is a tribal designation. Obed-edom could have been both.

6:14 Within Israelite society the linen ephod was worn only by priests (Ex 28:6; 1 Sm 2:18; 22:18). David was of the tribe of Judah, not the priestly tribe of Levi, yet he wore the ephod on this ceremonial occasion. In so doing he was placing himself in a priestly role, but not that of a Levitical priest. Having recently conquered Jerusalem, he assumed all the titles and offices held by its previous kings, including those of Melchizedek, ancient king of Salem (Jerusalem) who was also a priest of God Most High (Gn 14:18). In this sense David could be considered a priest, though not one that could perform the duties reserved only for Levitical priests.

6:20 Did David expose his nakedness while dancing before the Lord? Though Michal accused David of this, she was probably exaggerating in her anger. David was wearing a linen ephod, a garment worn by priests of the Lord (Ex 28:4). If he was properly dressed as a priest, he would also have worn a linen undergarment (Ex 28:42-43). His modesty would have been preserved even while he was dancing exuberantly. Michal despised David(2 Sm 7:16) and, moreover, seems to have not fully commitment herself to the worship of the Lord; she avoided the religious ceremony, even though other women attended (see vv. 19-22). Her spurious charges against David were only symptomatic of her deeper spiritual problems.

6:23 This passage indicates that Michal remained childless, whereas the Hebrew MT of 21:8 ascribes five sons to her. An ancient scribal error in the Hebrew text of 21:8, followed by some English versions, seems to be responsible for the discrepancy. The ancient Greek and Syriac (Aramaic) manuscripts, and English translations that follow them, preserve the correct reading.

7:16 This important passage is the Bible's earliest full statement about the enduring Davidic dynasty (but cp. Gn 49:10). Did God break His promise when He allowed the Babylonians to conquer Judah in 586 B.C., ending the independent political rule of the Davidic kings? Although the line of David continued during Israel's exile (2 Kg 25:27-30) and afterward (Mt 1:12-16.), the family dropped into obscurity after the governorship of Zerubbabel (Hg 1:1). But this passage can be understood as a messianic prophecy fulfilled by Jesus, who was of the line of David (Mt 1:17; Lk 1:32; Rm 1:3). God had promised through several OT prophets that the line of Davidic kings would one day be reestablished (see Is 11:1; 9:7; Jr 23:5; 33:15-17; Ezk 34:23-24; 37:25; Hs 3:5; Am 9:11). With the coming of Jesus the Christ (Messiah, "anointed"), the ultimate descendant of David and King of the Jews (Mt 27:11,37; Mk 15:2,26; Lk 23:3,38; Jn 18:33-34; 19:19-22; Rev 17:14; 19:16), God fulfilled His promise eternally.

8:1 Did David capture Metheg-ammah or Gath? The parallel passage in 1 Ch 18:1 substitutes the Philistine city Gath for Metheg-ammah. That two-word phrase occurs only here in the Bible, with the obscure literal meaning of "the bridle of the forearm"; it may or may not be a place name. Apparently the writer of 1 Ch understood to the phrase as a description of the important Philistine city and chose to substitute its common name. If Metheg-ammah is a place name, then the writer of2 Sm mentioned one city that David conquered at that time, while the Chronicler mentioned another.

8:4 English versions of this passage, following variant translators' judgments, disagree on whether David captured 1,700, 700 or 7,000 horsemen from Hadadezer. In the 1 Ch 18:4 parallel passage, the total is 7000, with some additional factual differences. The KJV and NKJV apparently try to reconcile the discrepancy by stating that David captured 1,000 chariots and 700 horsemen. The NIV rejects the MT here, following the reading of the Septuagint and Dead Sea scrolls which agrees with 1 Ch 18:4. A copyist's error in pre-Christian times can be assumed for either this verse or 1 Ch 18:4. Most probably of the alteration occurred in 2 Sm after the writing of 1 Ch, which preserves the original wording.

8:8 From which of Hadadezer's cities did David obtain bronze? The city names listed here do not agree with those given in the corresponding verse in 1 Ch (1 Ch 18:8). The differences may be evidence of a damaged text in this chapter, or the writer of 2 Sm may have mentioned two other cities in Hadadezer's territory, not mentioned in the Chronicler's account, from which David obtained bronze. (This is the third time a significant disagreement occurs between this chapter and 1 Ch 18.)

8:13 The Hebrew text here states that David struck down the Arameans; other ancient versions, as well as 1 Ch 18:12, indicate that his forces defeated the Edomites. As with the three previous problems in this chapter, it is probable that a scribal error has occurred here and that 1 Ch 18:12 preserves the original reading. The error could have arisen from confusion of the Hebrew "r" (*resh*) with "d" (*daleth*), which resembles it in both ancient and later script.

8:17 On whether Abiathar was the son of Ahimelech or vice versa, see note on 1 Sm 22:20.

8:17 On who was high priest at that time, see note on 1 Sm 21:1.

10:18 Did David's army kill 700 or 7,000 Aramean charioteers? The figure given here is one-tenth the total in the parallel passage, 1 Ch 19:18. As in other numeric disagreements between 1 and 2 Sm and 1 and 2 Ch (see 2 Sm 8:4), one of the two verses must incorporate a scribal error introduced after the original manuscript was written. It is not possible today to determine which reading is the original, but the smaller number seems more likely.

10:18 The name of Hadadezer's general is Shobach in this verse, but given as Shophach in 1 Ch 19:18. The difference amounts to one letter in Hebrew—"b" (*beth*) here and "p" (*pe*) in Chronicles—and can be accounted for as a transcriptional error by an ancient copyist, an error of hearing through copying by dictation (the sounds are similar), or an alternate name for the same person. In any case, it need not be considered an error in the original manuscript.

11:2 In ancient Israel all houses had flat roofs. Since houses were not air-conditioned and building space was limited within cities, roofs were used as living space. During daylight hours they were used much like patios or decks are today, and at night they might be used as a place to sleep (see Dt 22:8; 1 Sm 9:25-26). It would not have been unusual for David to walk around on the roof. His palace was probably located at the highest point in the city, and his view from the patio roof would have included the entire city below.

11:2 Why was Bathsheba bathing outside where David could see her? The law of Moses declared that a woman in her menstrual cycle would be unclean for seven days, after which the impurity caused by her blood flow would be cleansed with water (see Lv 15:21,27). Verse 4 suggests that Bathsheba was performing this monthly ritual act. Ancient Israelite homes had no indoor plumbing or bathtubs; ritual washings would regularly be done outside, perhaps in the private courtyard of a house or near a public water supply. David may have seen her as she was in her courtyard.

11:8-9 Uriah was on active military duty and devoted to the Lord. Service in battle was considered an act of service to the Lord, and David had required his men to refrain from sexual contact while on duty (1 Sm 21:5; cp. Ex 19:15). Based on the example of Achan (Jos 7) Uriah knew that if even one soldier offended God by violating a divine guideline the whole army might be punished. To protect his fellow soldiers he ignored David's suggestion that he sleep with his wife ("wash your feet" is a euphemism for intercourse).

11:21 Abimelech was the son of Gideon, also called Jerubbaal (Jdg 6:32; 9:1). To avoid pronouncing or writing the title of the Canaanite deity Baal (see Ex 23:13), the author of 2 Sm substituted the word *bosheth* ("shame, abomination") as an element in Gideon's alternate name.

12:13 The law of Moses required the death penalty for adulterers (Lv 20:10; Dt 22:22) and murderers (Gn 9:6; Lv 24:17; Nm 35:33), yet David was spared that penalty. Being king, of course, he had the ability to forestall action by whichever human authority would have dared to enforce the law. But the Lord's hand was also at work in the situation, for He could have overridden any such efforts. The Lord is a God of grace (see Ex 34:6), and chose to spare David's life. In so doing He transformed David into a historic object lesson of divine grace. David's immediate readiness to confess his sin, when confronted with it by the Lord's spokesman Nathan (2 Sm 12:1-7), proved that he still had a heart deeply devoted to God. The Lord gave David better than he deserved; he would not die. But the consequences of his sins would play themselves out in the history of his family, as Nathan predicted (12:10-14,18; 13:28-29; 18:14-15; 1 Kg 2:24-25).

12:14 Why did the son born to Bathsheba die, since it was David who committed the sin? Behavior that ignores the Lord's purposes and precepts always hurts others, including the "innocent"; this is one of sin's most terrifying realities. As an example, an inebriated driver rams his car into a church van full of young people on the way to a conference. David's high-handed and sinful behavior toward Bathsheba and Uriah led to turmoil and great sadness within his own family, including the death of this newborn son.

12:31 Did David make the Ammonites labor at brickmaking, or make them "pass through" the brick kilns as a form of torture? The Hebrew MT (followed by KJV) has the verb "pass through." This appears to be a scribal error in which the verb *'avad* "work" was replaced with *'avar* "pass over or through" by confusion of the similar-appearing Hebrew letters "d" (*daleth*) and "r" (*resh*).

13:18 An obscure Hebrew word is used to describe Tamar's outer garment. Translators must make a judgment based on their understanding of the evidence. Some English versions, following the Septuagint, assume that the word describes the clothing's color. Other versions opt for the garment's style; mention of its length and cut fits the context, where color would be irrelevant.

13:19 Putting ashes on one's head was a traditional expression of extreme grief in the ancient Near East (Est 4:1,3; Is 61:3). It was not specifically associated with rape. But Tamar, who warned Amnon that "such a thing should never be done in Israel" (2 Sm 13:12), was apparently conscious of a serious transgression of the law (Lv 20:17) and the grievous offense to the Lord as well as to her. Tamar's plea for Amnon to ask the king's permission to have her (2 Sm 13:13) may have been her attempt to "buy time."

14:26 How was it possible for Absalom to grow five pounds of hair on his head in a year? Absalom's hair as he wore it weighed five pounds. He may have been quite hairy, but also probably had adornments in his beard and hair—intended to make them look more impressive—that added to the weight of his facial hair.

14:27 According to 18:18 Absalom had no sons. The present verse probably reflects the earlier history of Absalom's family. If so, he fathered three sons, all of whom preceded him in death. Therefore Absalom built the monument mentioned in 18:18 to ensure that his name would be remembered in future generations, and perhaps secondarily as a tribute to his dead sons.

15:7 Many modern English versions indicate that Absalom waited four years before proclaiming himself king, but other major English versions speak of a 40-year period. The disagreement reflects differences in ancient textual authorities; the Hebrew MT gives 40 years, while one tradition of the Septuagint, the Syriac, and Josephus reads "four." Either number may be the correct one, depending on what the number of years signifies. It if indicates Absalom's age the number 40 is original; if it refers to the number of years Absalom schemed, building up his reputation among the Israelites, then four is the correct number.

17:18-20 Since God expects people to tell the truth, was it wrong for the woman to deceive Absalom's messengers about the whereabouts of Jonathan and Ahimaaz? God does want people to tell the truth (see note on Ex 20:16; Eph 4:25); but even more

He expects people to protect innocent human lives (cp. Pr 24:11). Jonathan and Ahimaaz had not committed any crime deserving of death, so it was right to take measures to protect them. Strictly speaking, the woman told the truth; the fugitives were "toward the water," i.e., down in the well. (For further discussion of lying, see notes on Ex 1:19;1 Sm 19:13-17; 20:6.)

17:25 The Hebrew MT of this verse states that Amasa's father was Ithra the Israelite, whereas 1 Ch 2:17 notes that Amasa's father is Jether the Ishmaelite. (The Septuagint reads "Ishmaelite" also for 2 Sm 17:25; see HCSB footnote.) Jether is a (perhaps dialectical) variant form of the name Ithra, but the ethnic designation assigned to the men differs significantly. The difference is probably due to a scribal error in confusing two Hebrew letters, "m" (*mem*) and "r" (*resh*) in the first instance and the two gutturals (unvoiced letters) *ayin* and *aleph* in the second case. Since neither pair of letters in question resemble one another (in either ancient or later Hebrew script) it is possible that the error occurred through a misunderstanding of dictation, rather than a miscopying. As to which reading is correct for this verse, the designation of Ithra as an "Israelite" seems redundant in the context, suggesting that the Septuagint and Chronicles preserve the original.

18:6 Ephraim's tribal territory was west of the Jordan River, but the "forest of Ephraim" mentioned here is in Transjordan (cp. 17:22). This forest could share the name for several reasons. The name may preservethe memory of a major battle fought there in which the Ephraimites lost 42,000 men (Jdg 12:1-6), or it may have come from an individual or group that shared the name of the Israelite tribe. Finally, the name Ephraim came to refer to all the northern Israelite tribes, and the separate kingdom of "Israel," in contrast to Judah (e.g., Is 7:2; 9:9; 11:13; 17:3; Jr 7:15; 31:9,20; Hs 4:17; Zch 9:13). Hence it applied to Israelite territory on both sides of the Jordan.

18:9 Absalom was known for having an extraordinary amount of hair on his head (14:26), probably held back with combs or ornamentation. His fast riding on the mule probably loosed his hair, which became entangled in a low tree branch. To keep his scalp from being literally ripped off, Absalom grasped the branch and the mule ran off without him.

18:18 On whether Absalom had no sons or three sons, see note on 14:27.

19:20 Shimei is identified as a member of the tribe of Benjamin (v. 16), yet here he comes to David as the "first one of the entire house of Joseph." This is not a contradiction of his earlier tribal identification. Especially after the division of the nation following Solomon's death, it was not unusual to refer to all the Israelite tribes north of Judah, collectively, as the "house of Joseph" (see 1 Kg 11:28; Ezk 37:16; Am 5:6; Ob 18; Zch 10:6). Shimei was the first person from Israel, outside of David's own tribe of Judah, to welcome his return to the land west of the Jordan.

19:23 David swore that Shimei would not die, despite his malicious treatment of the king (16:5-13). But later, as he was about to die, David ordered Shimei's death. According to 1 Kg 2:8-9, David promised Shimei only that he—David—would not put him to death. His deathbed instruction to Solomon was to mete out the justice Shimei deserved, which Solomon did after Shimei himself provided a pretext (1 Kg 2:39-46).

19:43 Why did the Israelites speak of only "10 shares" in the king, since there were 12 tribes in all (13, counting Ephraim and Manasseh separately)? Warfare had torn Israel into two major factions, north and south. There are two ways to understand the number of tribes involved, both excluding Levi which had no territorial holdings of its own (see Dt 10:9; 18:1): (1) the north had 10 tribes, counting Ephraim and Manasseh, the Joseph tribes, as one; (2) the north had 10 tribes, counting Ephraim and Manasseh separately, if Benjamin was reckoned with Judah. Jerusalem, David's capital, was located within the territory of Benjamin, and would remain the capital of the separate kingdom of Judah after the reign of Solomon.

20:14 Did Sheba go to the Berites (Hb text) or Bichrites (Septuagint)? The difference between the two words amounts to the omission of a single letter in Hebrew, a possible copyist's mistake. Unlike the HCSB, some English versions prefer the Septuagint's reading, believing that Sheba went to some of his clan members (see 20:13). As with other verses that reflect a disagreement between the earliest texts, there is no way to determine with certainty which reading reproduces the original.

20:23-26 This list of David's officials differs from the earlier list in 8:16-18, but does not contradict it. The two lists apparently contain the names of individuals who held key positions in David's administration at different times. The present list seems to

name the persons who held these positions at the end of David's 40-year reign.

21:2 In the Bible the term "Amorites" can refer, in a general sense, to the inhabitants of Canaan (see Gn 15:16; Am 2:9-10). Though the Gibeonites were specifically Hivites, they could also called Amorites.

21:8 On whether Adriel was the husband of Merab or Michal, see note on 1 Sm 25:44.

21:8 On David's allowing the Gibeonites to execute most of Saul's descendants, see note on 1 Sm 24:21-22.

21:16 Was Ishbi-benob a descendant of "the giant," or of "Rapha"? Modern English versions differ in their translation of an obscure Hebrew word. Some translations render the word as a personal name, while most other translations take it similarly to the HCSB. A recent suggestion is that the phrase "one of the descendants of the Rapha" (the literal Hebrew phrase) means that Ishbi-benob was a member of a group that worshiped a god named Rapha.

21:19 On whether David or Elhanan killed Goliath, see note on 1 Sm 17:50.

22:2-51 Why does the Bible include this psalm twice—here and, in virtually the same form, in the book of Psalms? This, the longest of David's psalms, is used in two ways. The book of Psalms is Israel's collection of hymns and lyrics for use in the service of worship. Here, near the end of the narrative of David's career, the poem is used to bring out the spiritual center of Israel's most beloved king. Several of the psalms are embedded in Israel's historical records (e.g., in 1 Ch 16:8-36; 2 Ch 6:40-42) and some psalms are repeated within the book of Psalms itself (e.g., Pss 14 and 53; Ps 15 and 24:3-6; Ps 135 is based entirely on material in other psalms).

22:9 The biblical writer refers to God's "nostrils" and "mouth" to express, in a colorful and memorable way, God's terrifying acts of judgment against His enemies. God is spirit (Jn 4:24), but Scripture often employs such anthropomorphisms (descriptions of God's action using a human analogy) to convey some aspect of His involvement in the human scene (on anthropomorphism in the Bible, see Gn 3:8).

23:8-39 This list of David's warriors is shorter than the one in 1 Ch 11:1-47. Furthermore, some names found the list here are not in 1 Ch (and vice versa) and some of the names and places of origin differ slightly in spelling. These two lists were probably composed at different times during David's reign, and the different spellings may reflect differences of dialect.

23:8 Adino the Eznite is listed in some English Bibles, but not others. The MT mentions him but the parallel verse in 1 Ch 11:11 does not. Because the name and the syntax of the verse are obscure, and because 1 Ch omits the name, many recent translators suspect a copyist error here and rely on the Chronicler's reading.

23:20 Did Benaiah kill two sons of Ariel, or two lion-like men of Moab? Disagreement between English versions results from variants in ancient texts, and from a Hebrew word with an obscure meaning. Many recent versions assume that Ariel is a personal name, and follow the Septuagint; others interpret the word to mean a "lion-like man." The translators' judgment determines which reading is thought to reflect the original.

24:1 This verse indicates that God's anger incited David to take a census which was not in the Lord's will, yet1 Ch 21:1 states that it was Satan who led David to take this wrongful action. The two statements would not be considered contradictory in the ancient Israelite way of thinking. The writer of 2 Sm affirms that God is the ultimate ruler of the universe; every event is subject to

His authority. If even king David, despite his strength and intelligence, could be led into a foolish decision, the Lord's hand is still involved (cp. Ps 76:10). Satan, too, is subject to God's complete control (cp. Jb 1:6-12). In His position as Sovereign over all, God used one of His created beings—in this case Satan—to bring about judgment on another. People have the authority to resist Satan (Jms 4:7) but David declined to do so, and thus experienced the consequence in the effects of God's wrath (cp. Rm 1:18).

It was not wrong for David to take a census, as such; the law of Moses explicitly permitted this (Ex 30:12). Censuses had been taken among the Israelites on two occasions in the days of Moses (Nm 1:2; 4:2,22; 26:2) with no adverse consequences. The problem with David's census lay either in his motivation for it or the manner in which it was conducted. If the former, David's purpose was to build his nationalistic ego; he would number the troops in order to boast of his nation's military might, instead of trusting in God. If the latter, David failed to direct his officials to use the proper procedure. The law required every person counted to pay half a shekel (about one-fifth of an ounce) of silver to the sanctuary treasury (Ex 30:13), but perhaps this was not done. According to the law, failure to collect the money would result in an outbreak of plague, which is exactly what happened in this case.

24:9 Do these census figures contradict those in 1 Ch 21:5? The numbers indeed differ: 800,000 Israelites versus 1.1 million, 500,000 Judahites versus 470,000. But these differences may not be true contradictions. The figure of 1.1 million Israelite men in 1 Ch may include the 288,000 men in Israel's regular army (see1 Ch 27:1-15), rounding the total. The discrepancy in the Judahite totals may simply be a matter of rounding in 2 Sm. The ancient Jewish historian Josephus recorded 900,000 Israelite soldiers and 400,000 Judahites, perhaps following another textual tradition. It is always possible that the numbers were altered, through copyist error, in one or more ancient manuscript traditions.

24:24 In this passage David is said to have purchased "the threshing floor and the oxen" for 50 shekels of silver. In 1 Ch 21:22-25 David asks to buy the "threshing-floor plot" (lit. "the place of the threshing floor"), apparently a parcel of land that included much more than the threshing floor itself, and accordingly pays a much larger sum of money, 600 shekels of gold. The different payments are not contradictions, but refer to different purchases.

1 Kings Articles

Can Biblical Chronology Be Trusted?

by E. Ray Clendenen

The Bible is not a book of philosophical or ethical principles, although it contains them. It is a book about how God has made Himself known in history. Its message is timeless in that the nature of God and man has not changed. But the framework of that message, which holds it together and cannot be extracted from it, is the story of what God has said and done in history.

Chronology is the foundation of history; without it, history is a swarm of events with no relationship to each other or to us. *Relative* chronology places events before or after (or simultaneous with) each other. *Absolute* chronology relates events to us by fixing them on our conventional time line in terms of B.C. or A.D.

The Bible is full of relative chronology. For example, we are told that Abraham was 100 years old when Isaac was born (Gn 21:5), that the Israelites lived in Egypt for 430 years (Ex 12:40), that Israel wandered in the wilderness for 40 years (Nm 32:13), and that Judah's exile lasted for 70 years (Jr 25:11-12). But no absolute dates are given for any of these or other biblical events. Does this situation leave us unable to confirm or deny biblical chronology? This is not the case for two reasons.

First, the Bible's relative chronology can be shown to be internally consistent. Israel's time in Egypt, the wilderness, and the exile, for example, is consistently given in many different places. Chronological differences between Kings and Chronicles have been closely examined and have yielded to reasonable methods of harmonization.

Second, the historical accounts in both OT and NT intersect at various points the histories of surrounding nations such as Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, and Rome, whose chronologies have been established to a high degree of accuracy. Assyrian chronology, for example, is set according to an eclipse known to have occurred on June 15, 763 B.C.

Problems still remain. Differences between ancient and modern calendars, for example, often require the giving of alternate dates in the form 931/0 B.C. Furthermore, different methods of harmonizing the dates of biblical kings yield slightly different results.

Even conservative scholars do not always agree on how a particular chronological reference should be interpreted. For example, some scholars argue that many numbers in the Bible are figurative, especially 40 and its multiples. These scholars prefer in some cases to give priority to archaeological clues in establishing biblical chronology. Thus the patriarchal period is often dated to the Middle Bronze Age between about 1800–1600 B.C. It is also supposed that the Hebrews migrated to Egypt during the Hyksos period (about 1700–1500 B.C.), when Semitic people ruled Egypt. The exodus is then associated with the reign of Rameses II shortly after 1290 B.C. Following the wilderness period, the conquest of Canaan would have begun about 1250 B.C. Pharaoh Merneptah (1224–1214 B.C.) mounted a campaign against Canaan in the fifth year of his reign (about 1220). In his record of that campaign, he mentioned that, among others, Israel was utterly destroyed. Thus, by that date, the people Israel were a recognized group in Canaan.

Assuming a literal interpretation of 1 Kings 6:1, however, the exodus occurred in 1446 B.C. and the conquest period lasted about seven years around 1400 B.C. Continuing backward, based on Exodus 12:40, Jacob's migration to Egypt would have been in 1876 B.C. Data regarding the ages of the patriarchs would place their births at 2006 B.C. for Jacob (Gn 47:9), 2066 B.C. for Isaac (Gn 25:26), and 2166 B.C. for Abraham (Gn 21:5). Because the genealogical lists in Genesis are believed by most to be intentionally incomplete or "open," attempts are usually not made to establish historical dates prior to Abraham (see "Are the Genealogies Reliable?" in the notes on Genesis).

The NT is not much concerned with *when* events took place, with Luke being somewhat the exception. Luke tells us, for example, that Jesus was 12 when His parents lost Him in Jerusalem (Lk 2:42) and was about 30 at the beginning of His ministry (Lk 3:23). Both references are altogether reasonable. Luke 3:1 gives what appears to set the date for John the Baptist's ministry—"In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, while Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, Herod was tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of the region of Iturea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene." There is nothing problematic about this date except the interpretation of Tiberius's fifteenth year, the determination of which depends on the beginning point and which calendar Luke had in mind.

Due to an error by a sixth-century Scythian monk who was responsible for our current Western calendar, Jesus' birth actually occurred in the B.C. era, perhaps in late 5 B.C. We know that Herod the Great, who was alive when Jesus was born, died between March 12/13 and April 11, 4 B.C.

Unfortunately the date of Jesus' crucifixion is uncertain. Although the majority opinion is that it occurred in A.D. 30, a good argument can be made for A.D. 33. Our knowledge of Roman history allows us to determine that Herod Agrippa and therefore the events of Acts 12 occurred in A.D. 44.

There is no credible reason, then, to question the Bible's historical chronology, even though at times we wish we had more information.

What Does the Bible Teach About Angels?

by Ron Rhodes

• The NT speaks of angels more than 165 times; the OT more than 100 times.

• The angels were created prior to God's creation of the earth (Jb 38:7; Ps 148:2-5).

• Humans do not become angels at the moment of death (1 Co 6:3; 13:1).

• All the angels were created by God as good angels (Gn 1:31).

• The angels were apparently subjected to a period of probation. Some angels remained loyal to God; others did not.

• An angel rebellion, headed by the evil one, arose against God. Apparently the evil one became so impressed with himself that he wanted to take God's place. He came to be referred to as Satan, meaning "adversary." One-third of the angels followed him in this rebellion (Ezk 28:11-19; 2 Pt 2:4; Rv 12:3-4,10), becoming what the Bible calls demons.

• The holy angels live in heaven (Is 6:1-6; Dn 7:10; Heb 12:22). When they are assigned a task by God, they leave heaven, complete their work on earth, and then return to heaven.

• Angels are personal beings, with minds (2 Sm 14:20), emotions (Heb 12:22), and wills (Rv 22:8-9).

• Angels are incorporeal (lacking material form) and invisible (Heb 1:14). We are thus generally unaware of their activities around us (2 Kg 6:17).

• Angels can nevertheless take on human appearance when their assigned task calls for it (Gn 18:1-8; Heb 13:2).

• Angels are localized beings. They are not "everywhere present" like God. They have to move from one place to another (Dn 9:21-23).

• Angels are extremely powerful; they are described as "mighty" (Ps 103:20).

• God's angels are holy ("set apart"). They are set apart from sin and set apart unto God to do His bidding (Jb 5:1; Ps 89:7).

• The holy angels are unreservedly obedient to God (Ps 103:20).

• Angels are immortal, though created. Once created (Ps 148:2-6), they never cease to exist (Lk 20:36).

• The angels are innumerable (Rv 5:11). Daniel 7:10 makes reference to "ten thousand times ten thousand" angels (100 million angels).

• Angels are called "ministering spirits" (Heb 1:14). The word "ministering" comes from a Greek word meaning "serve." Angels, then, are spirit servants who render aid to the heirs of salvation in the outworking of God's purposes on earth.

• This service takes many forms, including being used by God in answering believers' prayers (Ac 12:7), bringing announcements and warnings to God's people (Lk 1:13; Ac 10:3-33), giving encouragement (Ac 27:23-24), providing protection (Ps 91:11), giving guidance (Gn 19:17), providing deliverance (Ac 12:7), and caring for believers at the moment of death (Lk 16:22).

• Many believe that every Christian has a specific guardian angel throughout life (Mt 18:10; Ac 12:15). Others believe that angels are charged with different assignments as God directs (Ps 91:11).

• Angels are organized by rank, including thrones, powers, rulers, authorities, and dominions (Eph 1:20-21; Col 1:16), but the details and nature of these ranks are not revealed to us.

- Among unbelievers, angels restrain wickedness (Gn 19:1-15), announce God's judgments (Rv 14:7-10), execute God's judgments (Ac 12:23; Rv 16:1-18), and in the end times cast them "into the blazing furnace" (Mt 13:37-43).
- In the afterlife Christians will judge angels (1 Co 6:3).

Introduction to 1 Kings

AUTHOR

The books of 1 and 2 Kings were originally one book in the ancient Hebrew manuscripts. They are the account of Israel and Judah from the final days of King David to the fall of Jerusalem under Nebuchadnezzar in 597/6 B.C. They both comprise one complete narrative and exhibit the same literary characteristics. From a contemporary perspective, they are the closest to what we would call "history" in the modern sense, but with important differences noted below. The Septuagint (LXX) first divided the book into two, possibly because the Greek text required more space than the Hebrew. Various Greek and Latin manuscripts divide the text at different points, showing that there was no tradition of two books of Kings and that the division was made arbitrarily. The LXX gives 1 and 2 Kings the titles "Third and Fourth Kingdoms," respectively. The compilers of this ancient Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible evidently considered Samuel and Kings as one narrative split into four parts. Hebrew manuscripts, however, are unanimous in keeping Samuel and Kings as two separate books.

The authorship of 1 and 2 Kings, their literary style, and the principles used in their composition are linked together. The author or authors do not identify themselves, but the books consistently evaluate each king based upon the same moral criterion: How faithful was the king to the law of Moses, and especially to the requirements of the law as recorded in the book of Deuteronomy? If we assume a single author—as is mostly likely, given the books' consistent historiography—then the author lived during or after the final events recorded in the book, that is, during or after the seventy years of Israel's exile.

So who wrote the books of Kings? Jewish tradition (Talmud: *Baba Bathra* 15a) attributes the books to Jeremiah, because 2 Kings 24:18–25:30 is repeated in Jeremiah 52. Certainly the focus upon the kings' faithfulness to Yahweh (or lack of it) fits a concern evident in Jeremiah. Against this conclusion is the fact that the account in Kings of the deportation and imprisonment of Jehoiachin (2 Kg 24:8-17) appears to have been written from Babylon, whereas Jeremiah was in Egypt at that time. We assume that the author or authors lived sometime during the final years of Judah since that is the time when the narrative ends. He or they presumably lived during the exilic period of Israel's history, and so would have been either contemporaneous with or younger than Jeremiah.

Because there are verbal differences between the parallel passages of 2 Kings and Jeremiah, these suggest that both were copied from a larger common written source, perhaps the book of Deuteronomy since the list of phrases and expressions common to 1 and 2 Kings and Deuteronomy is extensive. This fact has led to a theory that Kings was edited by the same group of priests that edited Moses' sermons into Deuteronomy. But there is a fundamental difference between the two books. Deuteronomy presents the lessons history teaches us ("Learn from your parents' mistakes in Egypt and in the wilderness!"), while the books of Kings are much more concerned about the covenant and how closely the king and people followed it.

PURPOSE

Why were the books of Kings written? The answer lies in another question: What kind of historian was the author and what principles of composition and historiography did he use? The author's purposes are revealed in the choices he made in the selection and arrangement of the events he chose to narrate, as well in explicit editorial comments made about those events.

Stepping back and looking at the sweep of the narration, we see a special emphasis upon David's last days and Solomon's achievements as kings. Then, beginning with Jeroboam I (1 Kg 12:25) of Israel, the northern kingdom, the author moves on to cover events contemporaneous with Jeroboam. He continues to narrate reigns in Judah until the death of Asa. After Asa, the author alternates his narration between the northern and southern kingdoms. This pattern shows the author's purpose: to compare and contrast the two kingdoms in light of God's plan for Israel and how well they followed the Deuteronomic ideal for kings and kingdoms. The narration of each individual king has a similar literary pattern: (1) correlation of the date of the reigns of the two kingdoms: the name of the ruler, age at accession to rule, length of reign, name of the ruler's mother; (2) the author's theological assessment of the ruler: Did he follow the law of Moses or not? The literary pattern varies depending upon dynastic changes, especially frequent in the northern kingdom.

POLITICS AND HISTORY

What can we deduce from the author's choices in crafting his narration? First, the books of Kings present a different picture of Israel than one gets from contemporary records of other nations. For example, Omri is given only seven verses (1 Kg 16:21-27) for his reign and accomplishments, but he was mentioned in Assyrian documents and was one of the most "important" rulers of the northern kingdom in terms of political and economic achievements. But the author of 2 Kings dismisses Omri as unimportant. Hezekiah is given three chapters (2 Kg 18–20), but the reign of Jereboam II—accounted by many as a true Golden Age for Israel—is told in just eight verses (2 Kg 13:13; 14:16,23,27-29; 15:1,8).

From a political standpoint, Omri and Jereboam II are important figures, but they are treated in just a few short verses. On the other hand, the short ministries of Elijah and Elisha comprise nearly one-third of the books. The author's purpose is not to present a complete history of Israel but to emphasize certain events to support a specific interpretation of that history. He wanted to show how the kings led the nations to obedience to the Mosaic law or, more frequently, led them away from obedience and how God dealt with the nation and individuals as a result. He selected events and details that were relevant to that purpose. The books of Kings are the author's reflection on the history of the monarchy. The human king of a theocracy had responsibilities laid out in Deuteronomy. The author is concerned to show how it worked out, in accordance with the blessings and curses of Deuteronomy.

The principles that obedience brings blessing and disobedience brings disaster, and that God is active in the judging of individuals and nations on the basis of the covenant are used by the author as his criteria for evaluation of the kings of Israel and Judah. For example, the author consistently condemns kings for allowing the worship of Asherah, the Canaanite goddess of fertility on the "high places" (e.g. 2 Kg 17:9-10; see Dt 16:21). The emphasis on Ahab's reign is due to his marriage to Jezebel, a Phoenician princess, and allowing her to introduce the worship of Phoenician gods into Israel (1 Kg 16:30-33). In contrast, the author reserves his unqualified praise only for Hezekiah (2 Kg 18:3-7) and Josiah (2 Kg 22:2) because they removed the high places and restored national worship to conform to Mosaic prescriptions. He gives qualified commendation to Asa (1 Kg 15:11-14), Jehoshaphat (1 Kg 22:43), Joash (2 Kg 12:2-3), Azariah (2 Kg 15:3-4), and Jotham (2 Kg 15:34-35) for generally following Deuteronomic prescriptions, but explicitly complains about their failure to remove the high places.

WHAT SOURCES DID THE WRITER OF 1 AND 2 KINGS USE?

The books of 1 and 2 Kings are not completely original documents. The author may be described as a compiler of information about Israel's kings who then evaluated each king according to certain religious and moral principles. The text itself mentions at least three sources. The first source is the *Book of Solomon's Events* (1 Kg 11:41), which contained contemporary events,

biographical material, and extracts from the records in the temple archives. Scholars have assigned various parts of 1 Kings to this source: Solomon's marriage with an Egyptian princess (1 Kg 3:1), judgment of the dispute over a newborn infant (1 Kg 3:16-28), lists of court officials (1 Kg 4:1-6) and government administrators (1 Kg 4:7-19,27), the treaty with Hiram of Tyre and preparations for building the temple (1 Kg 5:1-18), construction of the temple (1 Kg 6:1–7:51), the dedication of the temple (1 Kg 8:1-66), additional relations between Hiram and Solomon (1 Kg 9:11-14), the construction of terraces (1 Kg 9:24), the wisdom of Solomon and the visit of the Queen of Sheba (1 Kg 9:26–10:29), and possibly the story of two enemies of Solomon (1 Kg 11:14-25).

The second source, the *Historical Record of Israel's Kings*, records events from the time of Jeroboam I to Pekah (1 Kg 14:19—2 Kg 15:31) and is explicitly cited 18 times as a source. It contained not only current events, but also official records of significant political happenings and other memorable events from each reign.

The *Historical Record of Judah's Kings* is the third source used for much of the material in 1 Kg 14:29—2 Kg 24:5, covering events from Solomon's son Rehoboam and the dividing of the kingdom into two parts until the reign of Jehoiakim. It is cited 15 times as the author's source. These are apparently extracts from court records of state archives in Jerusalem. Although this source is not explicitly mentioned, scholars have ascribed the reigns of Ahaziah, Jehoahaz, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah to it; interestingly, their deaths and burials are not recorded, unlike the other kings of Judah. Some have also included Athaliah (2 Kg 11:1), who usurped the throne and ruled for seven years, as well as the construction projects of Asa (1 Kg 15:23), the wars of Jehoshaphat (1 Kg 22:45), and the conduit of Hezekiah (2 Kg 20:20).

There is the possibility that the author of Kings used other, unidentified sources. There are passages which are tightly composed and appear to be stand on their own as literary units. While only speculation, these literary units might include court records of David (1 Kg 1–2), three "cycles" of tradition for Elijah, Elisha, and Ahab: (1) the Elijah stories (1 Kg 17–19; 21; 2 Kg 1), which are very political and polemic; (2) the Elisha stories (2 Kg 2–13), which focus more upon the needs of religious groups and individuals and the narratives of the wars against Mesha, King of Moab (2 Kg 3:4-27).

The Elisha stories are integrated into the account of Jehoram, second son of Ahab, king of Israel. They are not in chronological order, and the name of the Israelite ruler is unmentioned (deliberately?), so it is not clear which of the Elisha stories actually occurred during the reign of Jehoram. Perhaps this reflects an attitude that the northern kingdom, Israel, had already been rejected by God because of their failure to respond in faith to the clear demonstration of the Lord's reality and power by Elijah on Mount Carmel.

Some postulate an "Ahab source" (1 Kg 20; 22:1-38), but in what way it is different from the Elijah source is difficult to say. The Ahab narratives exhibit a consistent antagonism to the Arameans (1 Kg 20:42), but this is hardly grounds for distinguishing it from the Elijah source. The evidence simply does not allow it. Conclusions based upon this kind of "internal" evidence are subjective at best, and speculative at worst.

However, there is one further source that forces itself on our attention—the so-called "Isaiah source" (2 Kg 18:1–20:20). So named because it is almost a word-for-word parallel to Isaiah 36–39; either the exilic author of 2 Kings quoted from this eighth century B.C. prophet, or both cited a common source. Since 2 Kings 20:20 refers the reader to the *Historical Record of Judah's Kings* for further information about Hezekiah's reign, it is possible, even likely, that this is the common source. However, 2 Chronicles 32:32 refers to the *Visions of the Prophet Isaiah son of Amoz*, and the *Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel* as a source separate from the *Historical Record of Judah's Kings*.

While not completely certain, it is most likely the author of Kings copied his text from Isaiah directly.

1 Kings Study Notes

1:2 The phrase "lie by your side" in Hebrew is literally "lie in your lap," indicating physical proximity, not sexual intimacy.

1:5 Adonijah was the fourth son of David, but the eldest surviving son after the death of Absalom (see 1 Ch 3:1-2).

1:6 The author of 1 and 2 Kg issues the first of many evaluations of a king's behavior.

1:8 This is the same Shimei who cursed David and threw stones at him (2 Sm 16:5-14).

1:9 This was a fellowship offering (Lv 7:11-36), a common occasion for feasting. "En-rogel," literally, "the Fuller's Eye." In geographic names, "eye" always refers to a water source, a natural place to set up an altar where water is needed for the rites. A fuller was someone who thickened and shrunk newly shorn wool or newly woven cloth; also he washed or bleached clothing.

1:13 There is no biblical record of David's promise to Bathsheba. Adonijah was apparently unaware of it. It may never have been publicly announced.

1:23 Literally "with his nose to the ground," a very deep obeisance.

1:27 Since David was the first king of his dynasty, the procedures for the succession had not yet been established.

1:33 In Hebrew, literally "Take the servants of your lords." Not David's palace servants, but the servants of the entire party loyal to David. "Gihon" was another well in the Kidron valley, closer to the city than En-rogel, where Adonijah was.

1:35 The title of "ruler" specifically referred to a tribal authority and leadership role. Both Saul (1 Sm 10:1) and David (2 Sm 7:8) held this office, and here Solomon did.

1:38 Benaiah commanded David's foreign mercenaries (probably Philistines) as his personal bodyguard. Here David gave Solomon this royal protection to face Adonijah's forces.

1:41 The Hebrew word for "town" denotes a smaller settlement than a city. The uproar was in Gihon, not Jerusalem.

1:42 The phrase "excellent man" literally means "man of strength," one high in social standing, a nobleman.

1:45 "Gone" is literally "gone up," i.e., to Jerusalem from Gihon, spreading the announcement of Adonijah's claim to rule.

1:49 They scattered in panic.

1:50 The four corners of the altar curved upward to points, called "horns." A common practice in the ancient Near East was to seek refuge from summary execution in a temple or other sanctuary.

1:52 The term "character" is literally "son of strength," i. e., a great warrior. Solomon was referring to the warrior virtues of loyalty, honor, and obedience.

2:3 The Deuteronomic ideal for a king (Dt 17:14-20) is given here as one who is unswervingly loyal to God and His Word. The author of 1 and 2 Kg evaluated Israel's rulers against this ideal.

2:6 "Sheol" in Hebrew thought was the abode of the dead, both good and evil. Though the overall picture of Sheol is grim, the OT nevertheless affirms that God is there (Ps 139:8; Pr 15:11) or that it is impossible to hide from God in Sheol (Jb 26:6; Am 9:2). The OT also affirms that God has power over Sheol and is capable of ransoming souls from its depths (Jb 33:18,28-30; Ps 16:10; 30:3; 49:15; 86:13).

2:7 See 2 Sm 17:27-29; 19:31-40.

2:8 "Bahurim" was a Benjaminite village north of the Mount of Olives, on the road to Jerusalem from the Jordan Valley. "Mahanaim," meaning "the two camps," was a Gilead city on the Jabbok river used by David during Absalom's revolt as a base of operations.

2:9 For more on "Sheol," see note on 2:6.

2:16 "Don't turn me down" is literally, "Do not make me turn my face." In other words, don't force Adonijah to turn away in shame if Bathsheba refuses his request.

2:22 Abishag was the last of David's harem. Control of the harem was a politically important claim to rulership (2 Sm 16:20-22), and Solomon feared that such a marriage could reunify his political opponents.

2:27 Abiathar was a member of Eli's house (1 Sm 22:20).

2:28 Joab vigorously opposed Absalom (2 Sm 18:14-15) in support of David. The Septuagint reads "Solomon" for "Absalom." "Horns of the altar," see note on 1:50.

2:34 Joab's house would not have been in the uncultivated "wilderness," but he probably had a large country estate of land for cultivation, grazing and hunting.

2:37 Literally "the wadi Kidron." A "wadi" is a river bed which flows with water only part of the year, and is especially dangerous as the path of flash floods. The deep valley formed by the Kidron River (meaning "dark, turbid") served as the eastern boundary of Jerusalem, separating it from the Mount of Olives.

2:39 Gath was one of the five principal cities of the Philistines. Its location is not known exactly, but it lay in the Shephelah, the coastal plains lying below the Judean highlands where Jerusalem is situated.

2:46 This statement is a conclusion for all of chapter 2: the ruthless and systematic elimination of all possible troublemakers by the hand of the Solomon—not by the hand of the Lord.

3:1 "Made an alliance" is literally "to become a son-in-law," used in a political context. Marriage to foreigners was explicitly forbidden by the law (Dt 7:3-4). Her ultimate permanent residence was built outside Jerusalem, but Solomon had higher construction priorities at the moment.

3:2 "High places," the traditional place for sacrifice among the Canaanites, were not limited to the heights, but these open-air sanctuaries were also found in towns and villages. Another translation might be "country shrines."

3:3 The toleration of these places by the kings of Israel is a major and recurring complaint of the author.

3:4 Compare this verse with 2 Ch 1:2-6. Here the author gave only a brief mention of the worship experience at Gibeon and then moved directly on to Solomon's dream. The book of 2 Ch describes Solomon's worship in more detail. This shows a difference in purpose. Second Chronicles focuses on fidelity to the worship of the Lord, whereas this book focuses on Solomon's character.

3:7 "A youth" was an exaggeration. Solomon meant he was inexperienced.

3:11 Jesus enunciated a similar principle in Mt 6:33: "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be provided for you."

3:16 Second Ch 1 omits 3:16-28, the story of Solomon's wisdom in solving the case of the identity of a baby. While the writer of 1 Kg used secular *events* to illustrate Solomon's greatness, the writer of the books of Ch used the building and furnishing of the *temple* to define Solomon's greatness. These two visions of Solomon's greatness are not incompatible or contradictory, but they emphasize different aspects of the king. The author intended to contrast Solomon's wisdom at the beginning of his reign with his fall from wisdom during his latter years.

3:18 The mother's point was that there were no other possible suspects to the murder.

4:2 "Officials" means literally "princes." Zadok had been reassigned to a lesser position, and his son Azariah appointed chief priest.

4:4 Abiathar had been reinstated to the priesthood (see 2:26-27), apparently due to Solomon's change of heart in chapter 3.

4:7 While "12 deputies" recall the traditional number of the tribes of Israel, the 12 districts outlined in verses 8-19 do not at all correspond to the traditional tribal areas. This was clearly a new order for the government of Israel.

4:8 "Hill country of Ephraim" referred not only to the tribal area of Ephraim, including Mount Ephraim, but also part of Manesseh as well.

4:9 These towns were in the Shephelah, the coastal plain previously controlled by the Philistines, and were partly co-extensive with the list of Danite tribal cities.

4:10 The hill country of Manasseh.

4:11 "Naphath-dor" was an important harbor on the Carmel coast.

4:12 These were northern valleys bounded on the north by Jezreel of Issachar, extending eastward to the Jordan Valley, thence south to Jokmeam, a Levitical city of Ephraim.

4:13 This Transjordan district was in the north, encompassing the rich and fertile region north of the Yarmuk river, known as the Argob.

4:14 "Mahanaim" was the capital city of the central of the three Transjordan districts.

4:15 The most northern district, from the Jezreel Valley on the south through eastern Galilee to the river Li-tani on the north including the northern Jordan River valley.

4:16 This ninth district of Asher and Bealoth was what remained of the tribal area of Asher after the Acco plain was given to Hiram of Tyre, and also included the tribal region of Zebulun.

4:17 This district sat right below Naphtali, extending east to the Jordan River and westward to Mt. Tabor.

4:18 Benjamin was the area directly north of Jerusalem, including Jericho on the east.

4:19 Gilead was the southernmost of the three Transjordan districts, although Gilead was the name for the entire Transjordan at that time. But the district occupied the Moabite mesa from Arnon in the south to Heshbon in the north.

4:24 Tiphsah was a town on the upper Euphrates about 75 miles south of Carchemish, located on the main trade route connecting Mesopotamia to the west. Gaza was the old Philistine city on the southern coastal plain of Palestine. Solomon's kingdom, then, went from the Euphrates River in the northeast to the border of Egypt on the southwest. This is the extent promised to Abraham in Gn 15:18.

4:26 Deuteronomy 17:16 forbids the accumulation of many horses.

4:32 The number 1,005 was probably not intended to be an exact number, but rather an idiom similar to the English phrase "a thousand and one"; in other words, more than one thousand.

5:6 Although Solomon appeared to be setting the amount of remuneration in 2 Ch 2:10, Hiram apparently was given the opportunity to set the amount.

5:13 These "laborers" were evidently Israelites. They were supervised by 550 foremen (9:23). They were described by the Hebrew word *mas*, "forced labor." See note on 5:15.

5:14 By sending laborers into Lebanon, Solomon was acting on his original proposal to Hiram, and ignored Hiram's counter-proposal. This suggests that Hiram was subordinate in some way to Solomon, and that the treaty of v. 12 was a vassal treaty. However, in 9:13 Hiram called Solomon "brother." Hiram was paid for his services, rather than providing them without charge.

The treaty in v. 9 makes no mention of any submission or subordination on Hiram's part. While the text appears to make Solomon the more dominant partner, the evidence does not indicate a legal vassalage for Hiram.

5:15 These are 150,000 stonecutters who were supervised by 3,300 foremen, see 11:28; 12:3-4. According to 2 Ch 2:17-18, these are foreigners.

6:1 The parallel passage (2 Ch 3:2) does not include the name of the month, just the month's number. The name *Ziv* has been identified as Canaanite, and only appears in connection with Solomon's building of the temple.

6:14 This statement has been made before in verse 9. It introduces the summary of the final stages of the temple's construction which follows in the rest of the chapter.

6:18 "Flower blossoms" in the Hebrew suggests open flowers.

6:21 The phrase "overlaid it with gold" probably refers to the outside front of the inner sanctuary.

6:37 That is, the fourth year of Solomon's reign. "Ziv" is the Canaanite name for the second month of the year (April/May).

6:38 That is, the eleventh year of Solomon's reign. "Bul" is the Canaanite name for the eighth month of the year (October/November).

7:1 Solomon spent nearly twice as long on his own palace than he did on the Lord's temple. The juxtaposition of this verse with the previous was a statement by the author about Solomon's priorities.

7:2 The "House of the Forest of Lebanon" was probably used as an assembly hall in the temple compound.

7:13 This Hiram is not to be confused with the king of Tyre.

7:14 Hence, he was half-Israelite, unless he was the son of his mother's first husband, in which case he was probably a full-blooded Israelite.

7:21 "Jakin" means "He [the LORD] shall uphold," alluding to the function of the pillar to uphold the ceiling. "Boaz" means "In Him [the LORD] is strength."

7:23 "Reservoir" literally means "sea." This was a poetic term for a very large basin or reservoir of water used in sacrifices and cleansing.

7:39 That is, the main reservoir of water.

7:44 That is, the bronze water reservoir used in the rituals.

7:46 "Succoth" means "huts." It is usually identified with Deir 'Alla just north of the Jabbok River on the east side of the Jordan. Archaeological excavations have revealed extensive metal works and furnaces. "Zarethan" is an uncertain location; the best estimates are of a site about eight miles north of Deir 'Alla (Succoth?), on the east side of the Jordan.

7:47 Solomon decided that, because of the great number of utensils, trying to determine the weight was not worth the effort.

7:48 The "bread of the Presence" symbolized the covenant between God and His people. The term *Presence* was an important concept of Israelite theology: The Lord was personally present with His people.

8:2 "Ethanim" was the Canaanite name for a month later known as Tishri, covering part of September and October. This was the Festival of Booths (see Nm 29). Thus, the dedication of the temple occurred eleven months after its completion (1 Kg 6:38).

8:7 The picture was of cherubim with wings outstretched in obeisance toward the ark.

8:8 "They are there to this day," that is, the days when the books of Kg were first written during the early days of the exile. The disappearance of the ark of the covenant was anticipated by Jeremiah (Jr 3:16).

8:9 Aaron's rod (Nm 17:10) and a jar of manna (Ex 16:33) were never placed in the ark, but alongside it. The only items in the ark were the stone tablets of Moses. "Horeb," also known as Sinai, was located in the southern Sinai peninsula. The exact location is uncertain, but it is traditionally identified with Jebel Musa.

8:11 The "cloud" was the form that represented the Lord's glory and presence (see Ex 40:34-38). It occupied the tabernacle and led the Israelites during the wilderness years.

8:23 The Hebrew word for "gracious" refers to the kindness and good treatment expected by both parties of the covenant, namely God and Israel. Solomon pointed out that the Lord had not only kept His part of the agreement, but had given special treatment to Israel because of that relationship.

8:31 "Forced to take an oath" is literally "lifts a curse against him to curse him." The Hebrew idiom refers to the ancient Near East practice where one taking an oath calls upon the gods (in this case, the Lord) to punish him if he speaks falsely.

8:32 "May You hear . . . and act"; that is, the Lord will carry out the punishment. "Bringing . . . on his own head" refers to the guilty person suffering the consequence of his actions.

8:33 See Dt 29:17-27. Solomon was deliberately using the language of this passage.

8:41,43 The Lord will hear the praying foreigners and treat them according to what they deserve.
8:42 This is the fulfillment of God's purpose in creating Israel as a "kingdom of priests" (Ex 19:6).

8:51 The "iron furnace" referred to a furnace where iron is smelted.

8:63 Given the fact that "all the Israelites" were gathered together and that the feast lasted for 14 days (see v. 65), the numbers for the sacrifices are not unreasonable.

8:64 The large number of sacrifices overflowed into the courtyard in order to handle the volume.

8:65 Hamath was located at the northernmost boundary of Israel; the Brook of Egypt was at the southernmost boundary of Israel. The festival lasted 14 days: seven days for the dedication of the temple, and then seven days for the Festival of Booths.

8:66 This would be the day after the Festival of Booths, the fifteenth day of the combined celebrations.

9:8 Seeing the ruined temple, "every passersby will be appalled and will hiss." The horror of the scene will cause the observer to suddenly have an intake of breath that would audibly hiss through their lips and teeth.

9:13 The name *Cabul* was a pun meaning "like nothing," an allusion to Hiram's assessment of the region.

9:15 The "supporting terraces"; literally "the Millo" or "Filling." It was probably a system of terraced embankments on the enormous gulf between the City of David on the southeast hill and the Orphel "bulge" to the northeast, east of Solomon's palace. This was likely the site of the barracks of the praetorian guard of professional soldiers so important to the Davidic dynasty.

9:21 The phrase "until today" was not the actual time of the author, who lived after the destruction of Jerusalem, but the "today" of the source he used, probably the Acts of Solomon. See the Introduction for more on the authorship of 1 and 2 Kg.

9:22 The Canaanites were permanently enslaved as workers for the Israelites. The Israelites were drafted temporarily for specific periods of time.

10:11 "Almug wood" is traditionally identified as sandalwood (*Pterocarpus santalinus*), imported from India. Elsewhere almug was said to be native to Lebanon (see 2 Ch 2:8), suggesting that it may refer to juniper (*Juniperus phoenicea excelsa)*.

10:26 A large part of Solomon's wealth came from taxes and tolls on international commerce. The army's primary mission was to protect commercial traffic on Israelite caravan routes.

10:27 "Foothills", literally "Shephelah," the coastal plains lying below the Judean highlands.

10:28 The Masoretic scribes may have misread the Hebrew word that is translated here as "Egypt." This Hebrew word differs by only one letter from a word that refers to "Mutsri," the Cappadocian seacoast in Anatolia (modern Turkey). This fits with the other source of import, Kue, which is also located in Anatolia. The kings of Israel were forbidden to import horses from Egypt in Dt 17:16.

11:1 Solomon did this in direct disobedience to Dt 17:17. Most of the marriages were designed to seal political alliances.

11:2 The term "intermarry" is an idiom used for more than just marriage. While the context clearly centers upon marriage, it is the entire cultural package that went along with marriage (economic, political) and the negative moral influence of close association

with unbelievers that was in view here.

11:5 "Milcom" was the national deity of the Ammonites; the name apparently means "the king," and was identified with Chemosh, the deity of Moab, by Jephthah in Jdg 11:24. Some suggest Milcom is the same god as Molech, see Jr 49:1.

11:6 "Did what was evil"; literally "The Evil." This expression with the definite article, referring to idolatry, is very common in the Former Prophets: Jos, Jdg, 1 and 2 Sm, and 1 and 2 Kg (see Ex 20). The use of capitalization captures the original intent. Of all sin, the greatest in the eyes of the biblical authors was idolatry, and they often wrote of it this way.

11:11 "Since you have done this," can mean, "since this idolatry is your habitual practice."

11:20 "Tahpenes herself": it was not the sister of Tahpenes who weaned her son, but Tahpenes, the queen, who did so; a signal honor for Hadad.

11:25 "Aram" is modern Syria.

11:28 The porters provided the basic labor of carrying materials to the craftsmen. In this case, the primary job was to fill the breach, so the responsibility assigned to Jeroboam was significant.

11:30 The Hebrew word used here for "cloak," *salmah,* was a pun on Solomon's name (Hb *shelomoh*), having almost exactly the same consonants. The cloak was symbolic of the entire nation about to be divided, and the pun emphasized the irony: it was Solomon who was about to be divided.

11:34 The title of "ruler" referred to a leader of a single tribe, and so was a demotion from king.

12:4 There is strong evidence that Solomon, while not starting out enslaving Israelites, ended up doing so.

12:18 Rehoboam insulted "all Israel" by sending the man in charge of the Canaanite slave work force. By sending Adoram, Rehoboam implied that Israel was to be dealt with the same way.

12:28 "Here is your God": literally "behold your gods." This was almost exactly the same language used by Aaron in presenting the golden calves to Israel at Sinai (Ex 32:4).

12:29 Dan was in the far north of the kingdom, Bethel was in the southernmost part.

13:18 Though the man of God was deceived by the "word of the LORD" from the old prophet, he still disobeyed a clear command (v. 9), and God held him accountable.

13:30 He mourned not because of any regret for the Judean prophet's death but because that death demonstrated that the Judean prophet's denunciation of Jeroboam and Samaria would also be fulfilled.

13:33 Jereboam had a clear word from the Lord, but he disregarded it. The modern reader sometimes wonders why God does not do more miracles today to authenticate His message. One reason is that miracles are not always heeded even when they cannot be explained away (see Lk 16:31).

14:14 See 15:29 for the fulfillment of this prophecy.

14:22 "Did what was evil," literally "The Evil"; that is, idolatry. See note on 11:6.

14:23 The "sacred pillars" were among those objects to be destroyed by the people when they entered the land (see Dt 12:3).

14:30 Since outright war is not recorded between the two kings, we assume this refers to a "cold war" with skirmishes and other incidents.

15:1 The "eighteenth year" was 913 B.C. "Abijam" is the same person called Abijah in 2 Ch 13.

15:2 Abijam reigned for three years, until 909 B.C.

15:9 The "twentieth year" was 910 B.C.

15:10 Asa reigned for 41 years until 869 B.C.

15:11 The phrase "what was right" is literally "The Right Thing," a deliberate contrast to "The Evil" thing of idolatry that characterized disobedient kings.

15:17 "Ramah" was four miles north of Jerusalem on the road leading from the coastal plain. This would be the primary route for an invading army.

15:25 The focus of the narrative shifts to Israel, the northern kingdom, until the final verses of the book.

15:26 Literally, "The Evil," i.e., idolatry, see note on 11:6.

15:27 Nadab and Israel had their military attention on the Philistines and so were vulnerable to internal treason.

15:28 Asa's "third year" was 908 B.C.

15:29 See 14:10-11.

15:33 Baasha reigned 24 years, until 886 B.C.

15:34 Literally, "The Evil," i.e., idolatry, see note on 11:6.

16:7 The author's comments here reflected his philosophy of history and theological perspective: kings who commit "The Evil" of idolatry and break the first commandment are judged by the Lord. Both the king and people experienced disaster.

16:8 The "twenty-sixth year" of Asa's reign was 886 B.C. Elah reigned two years until 885 B.C.

16:10 Asa's twenty-seventh year was 885 B.C.

16:11 Baasha experiences the same fate as he gave to the house of Jeroboam.

16:13 "Worthless idols," literally "vapors, mists."

16:15 The: twenty-seventh year of Asa's reign was 885 B.C.

16:21 Tibni reigned six years, 885-880 B.C., overlapping with Omri's reign by two years.

16:23 Asa's "thirty-first year" was 880 B.C.

16:24 The term for "150 pounds" is literally "two talents." Originally representing the weight a man could carry, a talent was a weight of about 62-66 pounds (28-30 kg) and was divided into 3,000 shekels.

16:25-26 "The Evil": that is, idolatry, see note on 11:6. "Worthless idols," literally "vapors, mists."

16:27 According to secular records of Moab and Assyria, the "house of Omri" made significant accomplishments. But in 1 Kg, the author evaluated and then dismissed Omri on the basis of spiritual—not political, economic, or military—criteria.

16:29 Asa's "thirty-eighth year" was 874 B.C. Ahab reigned 22 years, until 853 B.C.

16:30 "The Evil," i.e., idolatry, see note on 11:6.

16:34 Most commentators understand Hiel's sons to be a reference to child sacrifice, in light of the prophecy of Joshua about the one who rebuilds Jericho (see Jos 6:26).

17:1 "Gilead" on the east of the Jordan river and south of the Yarmuk river was wild, forested, and largely unsettled during this era. "Baal," the Canaanite storm god, supposedly brought life-giving rain to the land. The drought and control of the weather was a direct challenge to Baal's credibility as a deity.

17:3 A "wadi" is a stream that is dry most of the year, but which tended to have flash floods during the wet season.

17:9 Zarephath was located in Phoenicia, the heart and home of Baal worship and Jezebel's home. The story of Elijah and the widow demonstrates the Lord's sovereignty over Phoenicia as well as His grace and mercy even to Phoenician idolaters.

17:18 The woman was a Phoenician and a witness to the Lord's provision for her needs. She thought her son had died as punishment for her guilt. The guilt she referred to was most likely due to her previous worship of Baal, which she had presumably ceased since Elijah came to stay with her.

18:4 They used two different caves.

18:5 For "wadi," see note on 17:3.

18:15 The "Hosts" in "Lord of Hosts" is a reference to the angelic might of heaven. Elijah used this divine title to reassure Obadiah's fears.

18:21 The phrase "two opinions" uses the Hebrew word *saif,* which means "crutches made from two sticks." So an alternative translation might be, "How long will you limp about on two crutches?" The point of this metaphor was not about wavering between two opinions, but about the damage Israel was doing to itself by refusing to follow the Lord.

18:26 The phrase "did their lame dance" is literally "pass over, hence leaped, danced." This is a pun on the concept of limping in verse 21. Elijah was making a derogatory pun to describe their ritualistic dance. Such ecstatic dancing was a documented characteristic of Phoenician and Canaanite religions.

18:33-34 Note the symbolism: 12 jugs of water, like the 12 stones of the altar—one for each tribe of Israel.

18:40 For "Wadi," see note on 17:3.

19:10 "Hosts," or, "armies"; a reference to the angelic might of heaven.

19:15 "Aram" is modern day Syria.

19:21 Elisha demonstrated his commitment to his new calling by destroying the means of his former livelihood.

20:1 "Aram" is modern day Syria. The "thirty-two kings" were rulers of allied city-states.
20:11 An English proverb with the same meaning is, "Don't count your chickens before they hatch!"

20:12 The Hebrew word used for "tents" is the same word as the city of Succoth, so it could possibly be a reference to the city rather than the literal meaning of "tents."

20:22-23 "Consider" is literally "know"; i.e., learn what you can from military intelligence. "Aram" is modern Syria.

21:10,13 "Wicked men," literally "sons of worthlessness, scoundrels."

21:20 "What is evil," literally "The Evil," i.e., idolatry, see note on 11:6.

21:21 The phrase "sweep away" could also be "burn." The image is of a wildfire out of control, chasing Ahab.

21:25 "The Evil," i.e., idolatry, see note on 11:6.

22:4 "My horses as your horses" is a Hebrew idiom that simply means, "We are unified in this action."

22:21 Literally, "the spirit," using the definite article. The most natural understanding would be the Holy Spirit. However, there is a theological problem with God being a deceiver. Some try to moderate the tone by translating the verb *deceive* as "entice." This does not solve the problem. Both Jeremiah (Jr 20:7) and Ezekiel (Ezk 14:9) spoke of the Lord deceiving a prophet, using the exact same Hebrew word as here.

22:22 A "lying spirit" was a pun on the Hebrew word, which can mean both spirit, wind, or breath.

22:23 While the "lying spirit" spoke through the prophets, the Lord clearly laid out the truth and Ahab had a choice whom to believe. God is truth and cannot lie. He does permit lying spirits to deceive those who will not believe the truth (2 Th 2:5-12).

22:28 Micaiah appealed to the Lord's test of the true prophet: 100 percent accuracy in prediction verifies that the prophet's message is from the Lord (Dt18:21-22).

22:34 "Without taking special aim," literally, "guilelessly, in his integrity." The man drawing the bow did not do so with the intent of killing the king, but was simply doing his job in good faith.

22:41 The narrative now shifts its focus from the northern kingdom of Israel to the southern kingdom of Judah, and this continues into 2 Kg. The "fourth year" of Ahab was 869 B.C., after a co-regency with Asa.

22:42 Jehoshaphat reigned twenty-five years, until848 B.C. This number includes a three-year co-regency with Asa.

22:43 He did "what was right," literally, "The Right Thing," a deliberate contrast to "The Evil" of idolatry that disobedient kings did.

22:48 The "ships of Tarshish" were a particular type of ship, evidently a special metal-carrying ship. Tarshish is the ancient name for the Iberian peninsula.

22:51 The "seventeenth year" was 853 B.C. Ahaziah reigned for two years, until 852 B.C.

22:52 "Did what was evil," literally, "The Evil," i.e., idolatry. See note on 11:6.

2 Kings Articles

Aren't All Religions Basically the Same?

by Craig J. Hazen

There is a very old and famous fable—of either Buddhist or Jain origin—that has been used through the centuries to illustrate what is thought to be a fundamental truth about the religions of mankind. Several blind men were led into a rajah's (king's) courtyard, where they encountered an elephant. One felt a tusk and concluded that an elephant is like a spear. Another touched a leg and thought that an elephant is like a tree. Yet another bumped into the side of the beast and thought that it is like a wall. And so on. The rajah heard the activity, came out on his balcony, and told the blind men that they were each encountering only one small part of the magnificent whole.

The lesson by analogy, of course, is that the different religious traditions of the world are all stumbling upon only one particular aspect of ultimate reality and are blind to the total picture. But all the religious hands are touching the same essential truth.

It is easy to see the appeal of this unifying approach to the broad spectrum of religious beliefs. After all, exclusive claims to religious truth are seen by many to be the root of so much violence and suffering in the world as believers in one tradition fight those of other traditions—sometimes for centuries. If at their core all religions are the same, or each is heading toward the same end, then there is no real reason for conflict or quarrel.

Ironically, this fable has built into it an element that is not highlighted in the traditional interpretations but may be the most important issue in the story. How do the blind men discover the truth about their encounter with the elephant? It is revealed to them from above. The rajah steps out on his balcony and from his transcendent perspective, and with his intact sense of sight, communicates to those below the full picture of their experience. The more profound real-world question that emerges from the fable is where is our "Rajah" who can see all and can reveal to us the truth that is not accessible from our limited perspective?

Unless there is some word from above to tell us that all religions are basically the same, there is no good reason to conclude they are, because the evidence is stacked heavily against it. Although one can identify common beliefs and practices, some of the differences among the traditions are stark and irreconcilable.

Compare, for instance, Mormonism, Buddhism, and Christianity on the critical question of what is ultimately real. Mormon scripture teaches that ultimate reality is material or physical and that even God and spirits are material objects whose constituent matter has existed for all eternity. Mahayana Buddhists believe that ultimate reality is emptiness (*sunyata*) or beinglessness (*nisvabhava*)—no gods, no matter, no spirit, no self. Christians, by contrast, see ultimate reality in God, who is an eternal, personal, triune Being who created all there is—both physical and nonphysical—from nothing. By any measure these are dramatic differences.

The conflicting ideas are multiplied once other issues are addressed. What is a human being? Why do we exist? What is good? Why is there pain and suffering? Where is history going? How do I reach salvation or enlightenment? Given the deep divergence on such timeless questions, it is completely legitimate to wonder if the essential unity of all religions is really just a noble wish or a pious hope. Indeed, without a word from the "Rajah" to tell us that the contradictions among the great faiths can be overcome, the notion that all religions are the same seems utterly untenable.

Another irony about the fable presented here is that there is excellent reason to believe that *there really is a Rajah* who has spoken to mankind and has given us the transcendent perspective we need to know the truth. Jesus Christ is a radical figure in the history of the great religious traditions in that

he is the only leader who claimed to be the one eternal God in human flesh. He knows the beginning from the end and knows the deepest religious yearnings of all people. He said definitively that there is only one God and only one source of salvation: Jesus Christ Himself. Moreover (and this is very important), Jesus did not leave us with "blind faith" as the only means to know that His claims are true. Rather, He established the truth of His claims objectively through His glorious resurrection from the dead—the central miracle of human history.

The King has indeed spoken from on high. All religions are not the same. And although we are all blind in sin, we can still hear the Savior's words. He who has ears, let him hear the voice of the King.

Introduction to 1 Kings

AUTHOR

The books of 1 and 2 Kings were originally one book in the ancient Hebrew manuscripts. They are the account of Israel and Judah from the final days of King David to the fall of Jerusalem under Nebuchadnezzar in 597/6 B.C. They both comprise one complete narrative and exhibit the same literary characteristics. From a contemporary perspective, they are the closest to what we would call "history" in the modern sense, but with important differences noted below. The Septuagint (LXX) first divided the book into two, possibly because the Greek text required more space than the Hebrew. Various Greek and Latin manuscripts divide the text at different points, showing that there was no tradition of two books of Kings and that the division was made arbitrarily. The LXX gives 1 and 2 Kings the titles "Third and Fourth Kingdoms," respectively. The compilers of this ancient Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible evidently considered Samuel and Kings as one narrative split into four parts. Hebrew manuscripts, however, are unanimous in keeping Samuel and Kings as two separate books.

The authorship of 1 and 2 Kings, their literary style, and the principles used in their composition are linked together. The author or authors do not identify themselves, but the books consistently evaluate each king based upon the same moral criterion: How faithful was the king to the law of Moses, and especially to the requirements of the law as recorded in the book of Deuteronomy? If we assume a single author—as is mostly likely, given the books' consistent historiography—then the author lived during or after the final events recorded in the book, that is, during or after the seventy years of Israel's exile.

So who wrote the books of Kings? Jewish tradition (Talmud: *Baba Bathra* 15a) attributes the books to Jeremiah, because 2 Kings 24:18–25:30 is repeated in Jeremiah 52. Certainly the focus upon the kings' faithfulness to Yahweh (or lack of it) fits a concern evident in Jeremiah. Against this conclusion is the fact that the account in Kings of the deportation and imprisonment of Jehoiachin (2 Kg 24:8-17) appears to have been written from Babylon, whereas Jeremiah was in Egypt at that time. We assume that the author or authors lived sometime during the final years of Judah since that is the time when the narrative ends. He or they presumably lived during the exilic period of Israel's history, and so would have been either contemporaneous with or younger than Jeremiah.

Because there are verbal differences between the parallel passages of 2 Kings and Jeremiah, these suggest that both were copied from a larger common written source, perhaps the book of Deuteronomy since the list of phrases and expressions common to 1 and 2 Kings and Deuteronomy is extensive. This fact has led to a theory that Kings was edited by the same group of priests that edited Moses' sermons into Deuteronomy. But there is a fundamental difference between the two books. Deuteronomy presents the lessons history teaches us ("Learn from your parents' mistakes in Egypt and in the wilderness!"), while the books of Kings are much more concerned about the covenant and how closely the king and people followed it.

PURPOSE

Why were the books of Kings written? The answer lies in another question: What kind of historian was the author and what principles of composition and historiography did he use? The author's purposes are revealed in the choices he made in the selection and arrangement of the events he chose to narrate, as well in explicit editorial comments made about those events.

Stepping back and looking at the sweep of the narration, we see a special emphasis upon David's last days and Solomon's achievements as kings. Then, beginning with Jeroboam I (1 Kg 12:25) of Israel, the northern kingdom, the author moves on to cover events contemporaneous with Jeroboam. He continues to narrate reigns in Judah until the death of Asa. After Asa, the author alternates his narration between the northern and southern kingdoms. This pattern shows the author's purpose: to compare and contrast the two kingdoms in light of God's plan for Israel and how well they followed the Deuteronomic ideal for kings and kingdoms. The narration of each individual king has a similar literary pattern: (1) correlation of the date of the reigns of the two kingdoms: the name of the ruler, age at accession to rule, length of reign, name of the ruler's mother; (2) the author's theological assessment of the ruler: Did he follow the law of Moses or not? The literary pattern varies depending upon dynastic changes, especially frequent in the northern kingdom.

POLITICS AND HISTORY

What can we deduce from the author's choices in crafting his narration? First, the books of Kings present a different picture of Israel than one gets from contemporary records of other nations. For example, Omri is given only seven verses (1 Kg 16:21-27) for his reign and accomplishments, but he was mentioned in Assyrian documents and was one of the most "important" rulers of the northern kingdom in terms of political and economic achievements. But the author of 2 Kings dismisses Omri as unimportant. Hezekiah is given three chapters (2 Kg 18–20), but the reign of Jereboam II—accounted by many as a true Golden Age for Israel—is told in just eight verses (2 Kg 13:13; 14:16,23,27-29; 15:1,8).

From a political standpoint, Omri and Jereboam II are important figures, but they are treated in just a few short verses. On the other hand, the short ministries of Elijah and Elisha comprise nearly one-third of the books. The author's purpose is not to present a complete history of Israel but to emphasize certain events to support a specific interpretation of that history. He wanted to show how the kings led the nations to obedience to the Mosaic law or, more frequently, led them away from obedience and how God dealt with the nation and individuals as a result. He selected events and details that were relevant to that purpose. The books of Kings are the author's reflection on the history of the monarchy. The human king of a theocracy had responsibilities laid out in Deuteronomy. The author is concerned to show how it worked out, in accordance with the blessings and curses of Deuteronomy.

The principles that obedience brings blessing and disobedience brings disaster, and that God is active in the judging of individuals and nations on the basis of the covenant are used by the author as his criteria for evaluation of the kings of Israel and Judah. For example, the author consistently condemns kings for allowing the worship of Asherah, the Canaanite goddess of fertility on the "high places" (e.g. 2 Kg 17:9-10; see Dt 16:21). The emphasis on Ahab's reign is due to his marriage to Jezebel, a Phoenician princess, and allowing her to introduce the worship of Phoenician gods into Israel (1 Kg 16:30-33). In contrast, the author reserves his unqualified praise only for Hezekiah (2 Kg 18:3-7) and Josiah (2 Kg 22:2) because they removed the high places and restored national worship to conform to Mosaic prescriptions. He gives qualified commendation to Asa (1 Kg 15:11-14), Jehoshaphat (1 Kg 22:43), Joash (2 Kg 12:2-3), Azariah (2 Kg 15:3-4), and Jotham (2 Kg 15:34-35) for generally following Deuteronomic prescriptions, but explicitly complains about their failure to remove the high places.

WHAT SOURCES DID THE WRITER OF 1 AND 2 KINGS USE?

The books of 1 and 2 Kings are not completely original documents. The author may be described as a compiler of information about Israel's kings who then evaluated each king according to certain religious and moral principles. The text itself mentions at least three sources. The first source is the *Book of Solomon's Events* (1 Kg 11:41), which contained contemporary events,

biographical material, and extracts from the records in the temple archives. Scholars have assigned various parts of 1 Kings to this source: Solomon's marriage with an Egyptian princess (1 Kg 3:1), judgment of the dispute over a newborn infant (1 Kg 3:16-28), lists of court officials (1 Kg 4:1-6) and government administrators (1 Kg 4:7-19,27), the treaty with Hiram of Tyre and preparations for building the temple (1 Kg 5:1-18), construction of the temple (1 Kg 6:1–7:51), the dedication of the temple (1 Kg 8:1-66), additional relations between Hiram and Solomon (1 Kg 9:11-14), the construction of terraces (1 Kg 9:24), the wisdom of Solomon and the visit of the Queen of Sheba (1 Kg 9:26–10:29), and possibly the story of two enemies of Solomon (1 Kg 11:14-25).

The second source, the *Historical Record of Israel's Kings*, records events from the time of Jeroboam I to Pekah (1 Kg 14:19—2 Kg 15:31) and is explicitly cited 18 times as a source. It contained not only current events, but also official records of significant political happenings and other memorable events from each reign.

The *Historical Record of Judah's Kings* is the third source used for much of the material in 1 Kg 14:29—2 Kg 24:5, covering events from Solomon's son Rehoboam and the dividing of the kingdom into two parts until the reign of Jehoiakim. It is cited 15 times as the author's source. These are apparently extracts from court records of state archives in Jerusalem. Although this source is not explicitly mentioned, scholars have ascribed the reigns of Ahaziah, Jehoahaz, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah to it; interestingly, their deaths and burials are not recorded, unlike the other kings of Judah. Some have also included Athaliah (2 Kg 11:1), who usurped the throne and ruled for seven years, as well as the construction projects of Asa
(1 Kg 15:23), the wars of Jehoshaphat (1 Kg 22:45), and the conduit of Hezekiah
(2 Kg 20:20).

There is the possibility that the author of Kings used other, unidentified sources. There are passages which are tightly composed and appear to be stand on their own as literary units. While only speculation, these literary units might include court records of David (1 Kg 1–2), three "cycles" of tradition for Elijah, Elisha, and Ahab: (1) the Elijah stories (1 Kg 17–19; 21; 2 Kg 1), which are very political and polemic; (2) the Elisha stories (2 Kg 2–13), which focus more upon the needs of religious groups and individuals and the narratives of the wars against Mesha, King of Moab (2 Kg 3:4-27).

The Elisha stories are integrated into the account of Jehoram, second son of Ahab, king of Israel. They are not in chronological order, and the name of the Israelite ruler is unmentioned (deliberately?), so it is not clear which of the Elisha stories actually occurred during the reign of Jehoram. Perhaps this reflects an attitude that the northern kingdom, Israel, had already been rejected by God because of their failure to respond in faith to the clear demonstration of the Lord's reality and power by Elijah on Mount Carmel.

Some postulate an "Ahab source" (1 Kg 20; 22:1-38), but in what way it is different from the Elijah source is difficult to say. The Ahab narratives exhibit a consistent antagonism to the Arameans (1 Kg 20:42), but this is hardly grounds for distinguishing it from the Elijah source. The evidence simply does not allow it. Conclusions based upon this kind of "internal" evidence are subjective at best, and speculative at worst.

However, there is one further source that forces itself on our attention—the so-called "Isaiah source" (2 Kg 18:1–20:20). So named because it is almost a word-for-word parallel to Isaiah 36–39; either the exilic author of 2 Kings quoted from this eighth century B.C. prophet, or both cited a common source. Since 2 Kings 20:20 refers the reader to the *Historical Record of Judah's Kings* for further information about Hezekiah's reign, it is possible, even likely, that this is the common source. However, 2 Chronicles 32:32 refers to the *Visions of the Prophet Isaiah son of Amoz*, and the *Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel* as a source separate from the *Historical Record of Judah's Kings*.

While not completely certain, it is most likely the author of Kings copied his text from Isaiah directly.

2 Kings Study Notes

1:2 "Baal-zebub" literally translates to "Lord [Baal] of the flies." This was a deliberate change from "Baal-zebul," meaning "Baal the Prince," a parody designed to be insulting. "Ekron" was a Philistine city on the coastal plains.

1:5 The king's surprise may have been due to the swift return of the messengers. The road to Ekron entered the hills about seven miles from Samaria. Verse 9 places Elijah on a hilltop, suggesting the confrontation occurred close to Samaria.

1:16 The ideal king first consulted the true God for guidance. Elijah spoke of the consequences Ahaziah would suffer because he sought guidance from the false god Baal-zebub rather than the Lord.

1:17 Joram was Ahaziah's brother (see 3:1). The "second year" was 852 B.C. Jehoram son of Jehoshaphat was co-regent with his father at the end of his father's reign.

2:1 The town of Gilgal had two possible locations. There was a Gilgal between Jordan and Jericho (Jos 4:19-20). A second possibility was the Gilgal that was eight miles north of Bethel, because they "went down to Bethel" (2 Kg 2:2). "In a whirlwind" is literally "in the storm of the heavens." It is unclear whether a literal funnel was meant.

2:5 The "sons of the prophets" were not literal sons but metaphorical ones, that is, disciples.

2:9 A "double portion" was the inheritance or blessing that a firstborn son would expect from his father (see Dt 21:15-17).

2:12 The "chariots and horsemen" refer to the divine army that had come for Elijah and that would also be Israel's defense. Later, the prophet Elisha was so strongly committed to God's purposes that Joash the king used the same expression at Elisha's death (13:14). Elisha "tore" his clothes, which was a common expression of grief upon the death of a loved one.

2:21 Mineral salts are often what makes ground water unusable. The symbolism here is not completely clear, but the concrete image focused attention on the prophet's words, which were the vital part of his actions.

2:23 The Hebrew phrase for "small boys" refers to adolescents from 12 to 30 years old (see 1 Sm 20:35; 1 Kg 3:7; 11:17). It is unlikely that these youths were younger than 12 years old. Many readers and commentators are uncomfortable with the idea that God would hold children accountable for their actions with such severe judgment. But many of God's judgments upon Israel also affected children as well as their parents. Keep in mind that Bethel was the center of Jeroboam's idolatrous worship. Disrespect for God's prophet is disrespect for the Lord. A strong message was sent to the city and parents.

2:24 "Cursed" in Hebrew means "to call for divine judgment" from the Lord. Elisha did not use vulgar language or invoke a magical spell. The number "42" implies there were more who escaped the bears. With such a large number, there is reason to believe there could have been some threat to Elisha. The Hebrew word for "mauled" means "to tear to pieces." It is likely that some, if not all, died, but the word allows for some ambiguity.

3:1 "Joram" is "Jehoram" in the Hebrew. This son of Ahab should not be confused with Joram (Jehoram), son of Jehoshaphat (see 8:16-24; 1 Kg 22:50). An additional source of confusion is that these two king's reigns overlapped. The "12 years" were 852–841 B.C.

3:2 "He did what was evil"; literally "The Evil," i.e., idolatry (see note on 1 Kg 11:6). This expression with the definite article, referring to idolatry, is very common. The use of capitalization captures the original intent. Of all sin, the greatest in the eyes of the biblical authors was idolatry (see Ex 20), and they often wrote of it this way. The writer carefully applied God's criteria for evaluating a king's reign, noting a redeemable quality in Joram: He abandoned Baal worship.

3:8 The attack on Moab was to be from the south through Edom, which was a dependency of Judah.

3:15 Note the similar association of prophesying with music in 1 Sm 10:5-15.

3:22 The water was flowing out from Edom. The Hebrew word *adom*, "red," sounds similar to the proper noun *edom,* "Edom."

3:27 "Wrath"; the Moabites' anger was in view here, although God's judgment was behind it.

4:12 "Before him"; that is, before Gehazi.

4:38 The phrase "a famine" is translated literally "the hunger." Because of the definite article, some scholars believe this is a reference to the seven-year famine of chapter 8, where the exact same expression occurs in the Hebrew.

4:39 The "wild vine" is not a grapevine, but more likely *citrullus colocynthus*, a yellow fruit of the size of a small melon. They were purgative and could be fatal in large quantities.

4:42 Baal-shalishah was about 14 miles north of Lydda in the foothills of Ephraim, where Saul searched for the lost donkeys (1 Sm 9:3-4). Since the temple in Jerusalem was politically inaccessible, this believer gave the "first bread of the harvest" (see Lv 23:20; Dt 18:4-5) for the support of the servants of Yahweh.

5:1 "Aram" is modern Syria. "The LORD had given victory": the author repeatedly emphasized that Yahweh was the only God and that He controlled the fate of Israel and every nation (see 1 Kg 19:15). This possibly referred to Aram's victory over Israel at Ramoth-gilead (1 Kg 22:29-36). The Hebrew word for Naaman's "skin disease" includes a range of diseases besides leprosy (Hansen's Disease). Whatever it was, it apparently was not advanced enough yet to interfere with his military exploits.

5:7 There was no mention of Elisha or a prophet in the letter. The king of Israel assumed he was the one who was expected to effect the cure. Possibly the king of Aram assumed the prophet was in the king of Israel's employ or under his command.

5:10 Seven days of quarantine were required for certain diseases (see Lv 13–14), and perhaps washing seven times reflected that quarantine.

5:12 The name "Abana" is not attested elsewhere, so the actual location of this river cannot be determined. The Pharpar River is probably the Wadi al-Awaj, which flows from Mount Hermon into the swamps southeast of Damascus. Naaman expected real healing, and was offered what he thought was only a ritual cleansing.

6:8 These "servants" were high ranking, including military officers.

6:13 Dothan was a city within 12 miles of Samaria. Itcommanded the pass between the southern end of the Carmel mountain range and the hills of Manasseh, on the primary road between Damascus and Egypt via Samaria.

6:14 That the Aramean army could come this far into Israel means Ramoth-gilead must have been in Aramean hands.

6:17 "The mountain," that is, the hill upon which the city stood, not the hills surrounding Dothan.

6:24 This was Ben-hadad III, son of Hazael.

6:25 Famine came as a result of the siege, limited to the capital city. The Aramean army lived quite well off the country (see 7:7).

6:26 The "king of Israel" here was either Jehoahaz or Joash.

6:33 The messenger "came down" from the citadel of Samaria, at the highest point in the city.

7:1 These prices are cheap for real produce, compared to the high prices of 6:25.

7:2 "Windows in heaven"; the idea is of the Lord handing out His bounty from heavenly storehouses (see Mal 3:10).

8:3 By abandoning her property, the land had reverted to the king. Since she made the appeal to the king directly, it appears her husband had died (4:8-37), making her situation very similar to that of Naomi and Ruth (see Ex 21:2; 23:10-11; Dt 15:1-4; Ru 1:1,22).

8:4 Gehazi's leprosy evidently did not change his relationship to the prophet, unless this story occurred before the Naaman incident.

8:7 This story dates before 6:24–7:20, because the Ben-hadad of that incident was the son of Hazael. This increases the likelihood that the Elisha stories in this section are not in strict chronological order.

8:9 "All kinds of goods" translates literally "every good thing of Damascus." Hazael "stood," showing a significant sign of respect from the crown prince to a commoner, and a foreigner at that. "Your son" is the metaphoric deference of a child to a

parent.

8:10 The Hebrew word for "to him" sounds exactly the same as the Hebrew word for "not," making possible the alternate translation: "Go say, 'You will surely not recover.' "

8:11 "Stared steadily": the Hebrew syntax of these clauses makes it impossible to understand Elisha as the subject of this verb. Hazael stared steadily at Elisha, perhaps stunned by Elisha's pronouncement, until Elisha's weeping breaks into his thoughts.

8:12 See Am 1:13.

8:13 Calling himself a "mere dog," Hazael continued to express deference to Elisha with his self-deprecation. The term was commonly used in the ancient Near East for this purpose.

8:15 Assyrian records name Hazael "the son of a nobody," meaning he usurped the throne, although they do not record how it was accomplished.

8:16 The "fifth year" was 848 B.C. "Joram . . . Jehoram" are two separate kings, with overlapping reigns. "Joram" is a variant spelling or pronunciation of "Jehoram," and the text uses both spellings to refer to both men.

8:17 "Reigned eight years," until 841 B.C.

8:18 This is the first king of Judah to descend to the same level of idolatry as the kings of Israel had done. And no wonder, with Ahab's (and Jezebel's) daughter as a wife. Her name, we discover later, is Athaliah (8:26). "Evil" is literally "The Evil," i.e., idolatry, see note on 3:2.

8:19 This editorial comment is placed here to explain why the Lord did not treat Judah the same way He had treated Israel.

8:20 In his father's reign, they lost control of Moab, and the kingdom was diminished once again.

8:22 "Today" refers to the time of the source document used by the author, not the "today" of the exilic compiler of the books of Kg. "Libnah" means "white," and it was a town on the border of the Philistine coastal plains, and probably never really considered itself a part of Judah. So, east and west, Judah is losing its political and economic dominance in the south.

8:25 The "twelfth year" was 841 B.C. This Ahaziah is not to be confused by Ahaziah, king of Israel, who reigned 853–852 B.C. during the reign of Jehoshaphat ofJudah.

8:26 "One year," until 841 B.C.

8:27 "He did what was evil," literally "The Evil," i.e., idolatry, see note on 3:2.

9:1 This was some unfinished business that the Lord had commanded Elijah to do, see 1 Kg 19:15-17.

9:2 The "Jehoshaphat" here was not the king of the same name.

9:3 Jehu would be anointed king of Israel, not of Judah, citing yet another dynastic change for the northern kingdom.

9:5 "Sitting there": in a council of war.

9:22 It's not possible for Joram to know Jehu's intentions. Joram means "peace" in the sense of "Is everything in order?" He was anxious to hear a report from his military officers. Jehu ironically used the word in a literal sense.

9:29 The "eleventh year" was 841 B.C.

9:31 "Zimri" was a mocking reference to the seven-day reign of Zimri (1 Kg 16:8-20).

9:36 See 1 Kg 21:23.

10:11 So began a bloodbath that went far beyond his prophetic mandate, and Jehu would be judged for it (Hs 1:3-5).

10:31 See Dt 6:5. The Lord requires exclusive loyalty at whatever cost. Jehu went only part of the way. More was required and expected of the leader of God's chosen people.

10:33 Assyrian records show Jehu offering voluntary tribute to King Shalmaneser III in 841 B.C., leading to a pro-Assyrian policy carried out by his successors and earning the enmity of Hazael of Aram.

10:36 Jehu's reign of "28 years" was from 841–814 B.C.

11:1 The literal translation for "all the royal heirs" is "all the seed of the kingdom." But one royal prince survived.

11:2 Jehosheba was also the wife of the priest Jehoiada according to 2 Ch 22:11.

11:4 Jehoiada was "the priest," meaning the chief priest (see 11:9,15). The "Carites" could possibly be the same group of David's personal bodyguards, the Kerethites(1 Kg 1:38; see also 2 Sm 20:23, where a scribal note corrects "Carites" to "Kerethites").

11:6 "You are to take turns providing protection for the palace," literally translates, "You will keep the watch of the house *massach*." This last Hebrew word only occurs here in the OT and is translated here as "take turns." But the Hebrew root, *nsch,* means "tear down, take away." Other forms of this root word occur in the OT always in the context of the Lord's judgment of the wicked. Thus, an alternate translation might be, "keep watch of the house [named/destined for] Destruction," which was different from the king's palace in 11:5 or the Lord's temple in 8:7, and was Baal's temple destined for destruction in 11:18.

11:18 "Mattan" was a Phoenician personal name. He possibly was not a Judean, but an imported priest of Baal.

11:19 "Carites," see note on 11:4.

11:20 The usual final summary notations about Athaliah's rule were omitted. Clearly, the author did not consider her rule to have been legitimate, and so undeserving of the same treatment as a "real" ruler.

12:1 The "seventh year" was 835 B.C. He reigned 40 years until 796 B.C.

12:2 The phrase "what was right" is literally "The Right Thing" (see 1 Kg 15:11), a deliberate contrast to "The Evil" thing of idolatry that characterized disobedient kings.

12:20 Details on the assassination are provided in 2 Ch 24:17-25. Joash promoted idolatry toward the end of his reign. He was wounded in battle with the Arameans, and these men found him and finished him off.

12:21 Amaziah became king in 796 B.C.

13:1 The "twenty-third year" was 814 B.C. He reigned 17 years, until 798 B.C.

13:5 The identity of this "deliverer" is not known. Because of language similar to Jdg, Elisha is a likely candidate. See the king of Israel's comment in v. 14.

13:10 The "thirty-seventh year" was 798 B.C. He reigned for 16 years, until 782 B.C.

13:14 See note on 2:12. Jehoash was particularly referring to Elisha's protection of Israel against Aram. The phrase "wept over him" is literally "wept before (in front of) him." Jehoash was grieved because of his impending defeat, not because of Elisha's mortal illness.

14:1 The "second year" of Jehoash was 793–782 B.C., in co-regency with Joash.

14:2 Amaziah reigned 29 years, until 767 B.C.

14:3 The phrase "what was right" is literally "The Right Thing" (1 Kg 15:11), a deliberate contrast to "The Evil" thing of idolatry that characterized disobedient kings.

14:7 The "Valley of Salt" is in northern Arabia, just south of the Dead Sea.

14:23 The "fifteenth year" was 782 B.C. This was the beginning of Jereboam's official reign. This "Jeroboam" was the second Israelite king with this name, and he served a co-regency with Jehoash from 793–753 B.C. The "41 years" was his total reign, including the co-regency.

14:25 "Jonah son of Amittai" was the same reluctant prophet whose story is told in the book of Jonah.

15:1 The "twenty-seventh year" was 767 B.C. "Azariah" was also known as "Uzziah." Isaiah the prophet ministered during his reign (Is 1:1).

15:2 The "52 years" was from 792–740 B.C. He was co-regent with Amaziah from 792–767 B.C.

15:5 Jotham's co-regency with Azariah was from 750–740 B.C. the phrase "separate house" is literally "house of freedom." The term "freedom" may possibly mean "free from responsibility," that is, "house of retirement."

15:8 The "thirty-eighth year" was 753 B.C.

15:13 The "thirty-ninth year" was 752 B.C. "Uzziah" was also known as "Azariah." Shallum's record was unique in that there is no evaluation of his actions and attitudes toward idolatry. This omission does not imply he was faithful to Yahweh, but that his reign was so short there was nothing by which to evaluate him.

15:17 "Azariah" was also known as "Uzziah." The "thirty-ninth year" was 752 B.C. Menahem reigned 10 years, until 742 B.C.

15:19 "Pul" is also known as "Tiglath-pileser" (see 15:29). Assyria replaced Aram (Syria) as the primary perceived threat to the northern kingdom. Menahem tried to buy Assyria off.

15:23 The "fiftieth year" was 742 B.C. Pekahiah reigned for "two years" until 740 B.C.

15:25 Pekahiah's assassination occurred in 740 B.C.

15:27 The "fifty-second year" was 740 B.C. Pekah reigned 20 years, 752–732 B.C. He ruled in Gilead from 752–740 B.C., overlapping with Pekahiah's reign in Samaria before he killed Pekahiah in 740 B.C.

15:29 This began the deportation of the northern kingdom into exile by Assyria. The purpose of deportation was to destroy political and social structures of the enemy population so they would be easier to rule. At the end of Pekah's reign, it was only ten years before Samaria was destroyed and the northern kingdom ceased to exist.

15:30 The "twentieth year" was 732 B.C.

15:32 The "second year" was 750 B.C.

15:33 Jothan reigned 16 years, until 735 B.C.

15:35 See 2 Ch 27 for details on Jotham's building programs.

15:37 "Aram" is modern Syria.

16:1 The "seventeenth year" was 735 B.C.

16:2 Ahaz reigned 16 years, until 715 B.C. His official reign was 16 years, with four years co-regency with his father Jotham.

16:3 The first recorded human sacrifice by a Judean kingdom; his idolatry reaches a new low in Judah's history.

16:4 Ahaz worshiped every god he could in the hopes that one of them might deliver him from his political and military crises.

16:5 The purpose of this attack was to push Judah into supporting their war against Assyria.

16:7 Ahaz did this against the prophet Isaiah's counsel (Is 7:1-10).

16:9 It was Assyria's standard policy to deport conquered peoples so that they would not continue to be a source of rebellion. Aram (Syria) was no longer a political power.

16:10 Ahaz met with the king of Assyria to offer tribute and to affirm loyalty to Tiglath-pileser. Israel was now no more than an Assyrian province.

16:12 "Ascended" is from a Hebrew verb that uses the causative inflection; that is, he caused (something) to go up on it, meaning to offer a burnt offering. It was a summary statement that is detailed in the next verse.

16:18 "To satisfy the king of Assyria," see Ezk 46:1-2. This was the place where the king made his public sacrifices to the Lord. Tiglath-pileser reduced the dignity of Ahaz, emphasizing Ahaz's dependence on him rather than on the Lord.

17:1 The "twelfth year" was 732 B.C. Hoshea reigned nine years, until 723 B.C.

17:4 "So" was the personal name of the king of Egypt.

17:7 Here the author summarized his conclusions for his readers: it was not politics, but sin and idolatry, that brought about Israel's downfall.

17:41 The phrase "until today" was the "today" of the author's time.

18:1 The "third year" was 715 B.C.

18:2 "Became king," that is, when his co-regency ended and he became king in his own right. Hezekiah reigned 29 years, until 686 B.C.

18:3 The phrase "what was right" is literally "The Right Thing" (1 Kg 15:11), a deliberate contrast to "The Evil" thing of idolatry that characterized disobedient kings. The author's ideal king was David, who worshiped the Lord with his whole heart. All other kings were evaluated against David. And, until Hezekiah, no king of Israel or Judah approached this ideal.

18:4 Unlike the other kings, Hezekiah removed the high places.

18:10 The "sixth year" was 722 B.C.

18:13 An almost word-for-word parallel of this passage in 18:13–20:21 can be found in Is 36:1–39:8. This is not surprising, since Isaiah was a contemporary of Hezekiah. Clearly they were using the same source document of Hezekiah's reign. It is also possible that the author of 2 Kg used Isaiah as his source. The "fourteenth year" was 701 B.C.

18:17 The "Tartan" was the commander in chief. The "Rab-saris" was the chief eunuch/court official. *Rabshakeh* in Hebrew means "field commander," but the Assyrian title may have meant "chief cupbearer," i.e., chief spokesman.

18:26 The Aramaic language is closely related to Hebrew, but is not mutually comprehensible with it. Judeans would have been more isolated than the northern kingdom and so most would not have been able to speak it. However, Aramaic had become the language of diplomacy and international trade and politics.

19:24 Sennacherib had an exaggerated notion of his own greatness, as rulers often do.

19:28 "I will put My hook," thus treating Assyria the way she treated her defeated enemies. (See Am 4:1-3.)

20:1 "In those days": This must have been before Sennacherib's arrival, perhaps 712 B.C. Others suggest701 B.C.

20:9 Isaiah had also offered Hezekiah's father, Ahaz, the opportunity to choose a sign, but Ahaz had refused (Is 7:10-12).

20:12 Hezekiah had rebelled against Sargon of Assyria and was looking for political and military allies.

21:1 Manasseh co-reigned with Hezekiah from 697–686 B.C. He reigned in his own right until 642 B.C.

21:3 Manasseh worshiped every god for which there had been precedent in Israel's history, and then added new ones to the list! The "heavenly host" were astral deities that were popular throughout the ancient Near East. Assyrian influence undoubtedly contributed to Manasseh's decision to worship them.

21:5 "Both courtyards" is literally "in the two courts." First Kg 6:36 talks about an inner court and 2 Kg 20:4 about an outer court. In the temple description of Ezekiel's vision (Ezk 40:17-20), there is both an inner and outer court. Some suggest the second courtyard is that of the royal palace, which was part of the general temple complex.

21:6 "Pass through the fire," that is, human sacrifice.

21:13 The "measuring line" is the image of a surveyor marking how the destruction of this "urban renewal" will take place.

21:16 The reference to "innocent blood" may include Manasseh's persecution of the prophets. Isaiah was sawn in two during this time (Heb 11:37). "What was evil," literally "The Evil," i.e., idolatry, see note on 3:2.

21:17 Spiritually, Judah went from one extreme to the other. Manasseh's apostasy was not just spectacular in its own right, but had an even greater contrast with his father, Hezekiah.

21:19 Amon reigned "two years," from 642–640 B.C.

22:1 Josiah reigned "31 years," from 640–609 B.C.

22:2 The phrase "what was right" is literally "The Right Thing" (see 1 Kg 15:11), a deliberate contrast to "The Evil" thing of idolatry that characterized disobedient kings. "To the right or the left" is an allusion to Dt 17:20, where the ideal king perfectly obeys the law. Josiah joined the exalted company of David and Hezekiah, serving the Lord with his whole heart.

22:8 The "book of the law" is the book of Dt (see Dt 28:61; 29:21; Jos 1:8). How long had the book of the law been out of public view? It certainly was available to Josiah's great-grandfather Hezekiah (2 Kg 18:6). Its proper place was next to the ark of the covenant (Dt 31:26). It mostly likely dropped out of sight during Manasseh's reorganization of temple worship. Did Hilkiah truly "find" it, or did he bring it out of hiding, convinced that Josiah would accept it? We cannot say for sure.

22:20 Although Josiah died a violent death at the hands of the Egyptians at Megiddo, he did not see Judah's final destruction. This is the "peace" that he had in death.

23:7 "Weaving tapestries" is literally "weaving (in) quarters." Perhaps this was a reference to the production of ritual garments.

23:8 "Geba to Beer-sheba" were the official northern and southern boundaries of Judah.

23:9 The idolatrous priests (see also 23:5) were removed from their positions, but were allowed to live with their families ("fellow priests"). This was the mercy of the king.

23:12 The roof would be the appropriate place to worship astral deities; hence, the reference to "altars . . . on the roof."

23:13 The "Mount of Destruction" is from the Hebrew *har hammishchit,* and was the deliberate change of the actual name of the place, *har hammishchah*, the "Mount of Anointing" (probably the Mount of Olives). The idolatry that occurred there was so detestable, they changed the last syllable to reflect the ultimate fate of those who worshiped other gods there.

23:15 Bethel was not a part of Judah. Here Josiah stepped beyond his authority as a vassal of Assyria.

23:19 Nineveh fell to the Babylonians and Medes (Persians) in 612 B.C. Assyria was completely under Babylonian control by 609 B.C. and its hold on Aram and northern Israel faded. For the first time since Solomon, the king could treat the northern kingdom just like the south.

23:25 The highest praise the author of 1 and 2 Kg had for any king, including David or Solomon.

23:29 With Assyria weakening and Babylon on the ascendancy, Egypt saw its chance to retake control of Palestine all the way up to the Euphrates. Why did Josiah confront Neco? He perhaps was pro-Babylon, like his great-grandfather, Hezekiah. More likely, he wanted to contest Egypt's bid for control of the former northern kingdom of Israel.

23:31 Jehoahaz became king in 609 B.C.

23:36 Jehoiakim reigned "11 years," from 609–598 B.C.

24:8 Jehoiachin reigned "three months," from 598–597 B.C.

24:12 The king of Babylon's "eighth year" was 597 B.C. This is the first time the regnal date of a foreign ruler is used in Kg.

24:18 Zedekiah reigned "11 years," from 597–586 B.C.

25:3 The "fourth month" was Tammuz (June/July). The famine was severe because the Babylonians had interfered with two harvests, living off the land and consuming what was available.

25:8 Nebuchadnezzar's "nineteenth year" was 586 B.C.

25:22 Jeremiah 40:7–48:18 has a much more detailed account of 2 Kg 25:22-26. Gedaliah's grandfather was the scribe for King Josiah (22:3); his father was one of those sent to the prophetess Huldah (22:14) and who saved the life of Jeremiah the prophet (Jr 26:24).

25:27 "The year he became king" was 561 B.C.

25:30 The book of 2 Kg ends on a positive although bittersweet note. Not all is lost, for God's promises still remain. If we learn anything at all from the history of Israel's kings, it is that idolatry brings disaster, and obedience to God's law brings hope.

1 Chronicles Articles

Does the Existence of the Mind Provide Evidence for God?

by J. P. Moreland

Many believe that finite (limited) minds provide evidence of a divine mind as their Creator. If we limit our options to theism and naturalism, it is hard to see how finite consciousness could result from the rearrangement of brute matter; it is easier to see how a conscious Being could produce finite consciousness.

This argument assumes a commonsense understanding of conscious states such as sensations, thoughts, beliefs, desires, and volitions. So understood, mental states are in no sense physical since they possess four features not owned by physical states:

1. There is a raw qualitative feel, or a "what it is like," to have a mental state such as a pain.
2. Many mental states have intentionality—being or aboutness—directed toward an object (for example, a thought about the moon).
3. Mental states are inner, private, and immediate to the subject having them.
4. Mental states fail to have crucial features (for instance, spatial extension and location) that characterize physical states and, in general, cannot be described using physical language.

Given that conscious states are immaterial and not physical, at least two reasons have been offered for why there can be no natural scientific explanation for the existence of conscious states:

Something from nothing. Before consciousness appeared, the universe contained nothing but aggregates of particles/waves standing in fields of forces. The naturalistic story of the cosmos's evolution involves the rearrangement of atomic parts into increasingly more complex structures according to natural law. Matter is brute, mechanical, physical stuff. The emergence of consciousness seems to be a case of getting something from nothing. In general, physico-chemical reactions do not generate consciousness. Some say they do in the brain, yet brains seem similar to other parts of organisms' bodies (e.g., both are collections of cells totally describable in physical terms). How can like causes produce radically different effects? The appearance of mind is utterly unpredictable and inexplicable. This radical discontinuity seems like a rupture in the natural world.

The inadequacy of evolutionary explanations. Naturalists claim that evolutionary explanations can be provided for the appearance of all organisms and their parts. In principle, an evolutionary account could be given for increasingly complex physical structures that constitute different organisms. It is clear that as long as an organism, when receiving certain inputs, generates the correct behavioral outputs under the demands of reproductive advantage, the organism will survive. What goes on inside the organism is irrelevant and becomes significant for the processes of evolution only when an output is produced. Strictly speaking, it is the output, not what caused it, that impacts the struggle for reproductive advantage. Moreover, the functions organisms carry out consciously *could just as well have been done unconsciously*. Thus both the sheer existence of conscious states and the precise mental content that constitutes them is outside the pale of evolutionary explanation.

It will not do to claim that consciousness simply emerged from matter when it reached a certain level of complexity, because "emergence" is merely a label for, and not an explanation of, the phenomena to be explained.

Introduction to 1 Chronicles

AUTHOR

In 538 B.C., having overthrown the Babylonian Empire the previous year, Cyrus of Persia decreed that the Jews could return to their homeland after 70 years in exile. The first 75 years were difficult. There was no temple and the land available to the returned Jews had included only about a 15-mile radius around Jerusalem. The walls of Jerusalem were in ruins. The people were vulnerable to the enemies who surrounded them—their neighbors hardly welcomed these "interlopers" who had come home to compete with them politically and economically. Harvests were poor or failed completely, and the people had to endure the subsequent famines. Morale was low and there was little to motivate the people's spiritual life.

The author of the books of Chronicles, whom we shall call the Chronicler, saw a need to remind the returnees of their national identity. This identity superseded the division of the nation into northern and southern kingdoms and found its center in the law of Moses. With the spiritual life of the nation in shambles, temple worship needed to be restored by the Levites and priests as the true mediators of God's Word and will. So the Chronicler sat down to pen a book to encourage a change in the self-image and identity of God's chosen people.

These two books were originally one. The book's Hebrew title is "the words of the days" or "the events of the times," that is, the annals of the nation of Israel. When the book was translated into Greek (the Septuagint version, or LXX), it was divided into two parts. Since the Greek language used vowels and consonants, whereas the Hebrew text at the time included only consonants, this division was possibly made because of the expanded length of the translated text. The LXX gave the book the title "the things omitted," referring to the fact that Chronicles includes material not found in the parallel material in the books of Samuel and Kings. Several hundred years later, the Christian scholar Jerome described the book as "a chronicle of all sacred history." Our modern title, Chronicles, is a shortened form of that description.

Chronicles appears as the last book of the third division of the Jewish canon, the "Writings." The LXX, Vulgate, and modern translations place it after Kings and before Ezra—Nehemiah, probably because its contents were historical and overlapped the period narrated by Samuel and Kings. In fact, the book is a history of the Hebrew people from Adam to the Persian king Cyrus, which parallels the writings of Genesis through Kings, with Ezra—Nehemiah as a continuation of what happened after Cyrus permitted the Jews to return to their land.

The earliest that Chronicles could have been written was 538 B.C. since the end of the book records Cyrus's decree of that date. The use of Chronicles in the book of Ben Sira (published in 180 B.C.), and the second-century LXX translation of Chronicles, give us the approximate latest date when it could have been written. Thus we have about a 350-year span of time when the book could have been produced.

But we can be more specific than that. First Chronicles 3:19-24 records Zerubbabel's descendants for two (not, as it might appear, four) generations. And since Zerubabbel can be dated to around 520 B.C., this means Chronicles was compiled around 400 B.C. or slightly later. There is no scholarly consensus on the exact date, but the purposes for which the book was intended suggest that a fourth century B.C. date fits best.

While the author of Chronicles is anonymous, rabbinic authorities claimed that Ezra the scribe wrote the genealogies. Did the same author write the Chronicles as well as Ezra and Nehemiah? Since the book ends with Cyrus's decree, the author could not have lived much earlier than Ezra's

time. The opening verses of Ezra are also the closing verses of Chronicles, which means the author of Ezra and Nehemiah had access to Chronicles. However, these same facts are compatible with the conclusion that Chronicles is an independent work. Ezra may simply have borrowed the last verses of Chronicles to establish a context for his work.

The common linguistic features of the books are standard post-exilic Hebrew, proving they were written in the same linguistic era but not necessarily by the same person. The common theological position and viewpoint supports the notion that both authors were from the same theological community and shared the same religious values. Ultimately, whether written by one author or two, Chronicles and Ezra/Nehemiah stand on their own as separate works, with separate purposes and aims, exhibiting internally consistent unity of composition. They should be interpreted as complete, self-contained works.

Reading Chronicles carefully reveals a number of facts about the author. He was evidently a member of the post-exilic theological community, with a religious orientation to life rather than a secular one. He may have been a priest or a Levite, but he certainly believed God's will was mediated to the people though the Levitical priesthood. He reflected the values and ideals of Ezekiel and some of the post-exilic prophets about Temple worship and correct ritual observances. This theological emphasis on strict adherence to ritual and social organization was a preemptive effort to prevent a fall back into the idolatry and apostasy that had brought on God's judgment in the first place. The Chronicler, like the post-exilic prophets, did not desire a repeat of the Lord's judgment on Israel for disobedience to the First Commandment. He emphasized a strict compliance with liturgical worship and moral purity in order to realize God's blessing upon the newly restored nation.

First Chronicles starts with nine chapters of genealogies that trace Adam's line down to the sons of Jacob. The rest of 1 Chronicles (chaps. 10–29) narrate the life of David. The first nine chapters of 2 Chronicles detail the reign of David's son Solomon. The stories of David and Solomon should be treated as one unit, for the Chronicler presented both of them as models for Israel's kings. Chapters 10–36 record the history of the southern kingdom of the divided monarchy, Judah.

THE IMPORTANCE OF GENEALOGIES

Genealogies were very important to the Chronicler, and thus the modern reader cannot gloss over them and still expect to understand the message of the book. Some were used to show the kinship between Israel and neighboring tribes, while others established the legitimacy for persons of rank and authority. The genealogies reflect a teleological view of history, that is, a view in which humankind is moving toward a goal set by the Creator. More importantly, they provide a framework for the Chronicler's concept of "all Israel."

The Chronicler used this important phrase 45 times. For the Chronicler, there was no more north and south, Israel and Judah, but just "all Israel." His genealogies emphasized the unity of the sons of Jacob, whom the Chronicler always called "Israel." "All Israel" accepted David as king at Hebron (1 Ch 11:1). The lists of
1 Chronicles 11–12 are apparently motivated by the "all Israel" concept. "All Israel" was at the dedication of the temple (2 Ch 7:8). Hezekiah invited "all Israel" to come to Jerusalem for worship (2 Ch 30:1), and although most mocked the invitation, some "humbled themselves" before Yahweh and came to worship at Jerusalem
(2 Ch 30:11). Although Israel had been divided, the damage was never irreparable, and repentance was always available to the people.

In Chronicles the northern kingdom is essentially ignored except insofar as it interacted with Judah. This is an important clue to the Chronicler's purpose for writing the book. He sought to prove that the newly restored nation was the true successor to the Davidic covenant. It is no surprise, then, that most of the text of Chronicles is devoted to David and Solomon, representing the ideals of kingship laid

out in Deuteronomy. The author assumed his readers knew the contents of the books of Samuel and Kings, and so he gave only enough detail to establish the historical context. Also omitted were the personal failings of David and Solomon as well as the stories of Absalom, Amnon, and Adonijah. They were not relevant to temple worship and other institutions of the theocracy (God-ruled government).

Some have suggested that the Chronicler was attempting to whitewash David and Solomon's sins and failures, but it is clear that the Chronicler expected his readers to be familiar with the books of Samuel and Kings. These negative elements in the lives of the kings were public and well known; they were simply not pertinent to the issues pressing upon the Chronicler. He focused upon the consequences of idolatry and God's desire for the sinner to repent and return to a life of obedience to the law of Moses. This obedience is the basic characteristic of anyone who had a covenant relationship with Yahweh, since God's moral character had to be reflected by the nation He had chosen.

In his grand survey of Israelite history, the Chronicler made liberal use of sources within the Scriptures: the Pentateuch (first five books of the Bible), Joshua, Samuel, and especially Kings, which he explicitly cited (2 Ch 27:7; 35:27; 36:8). For the genealogies, the Chronicler must have drawn upon other sources than just the biblical ones. The difference in arrangement and balance is great enough to suggest there were other sources that survived the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B.C.

THE RELIABILITY OF 1 AND 2 CHRONICLES

While it is certain that the Chronicler knew of and consulted with the book of Kings, a careful comparison of the parallel passages show Chronicles giving details not found in Kings, and, at the same time, omitting details that Kings includes. This suggests that the Chronicler used a source other than Kings, but that this source or sources was also used by the author of Kings. Second Chronicles 24:27 cites "Writing of the Book of the Kings." Other extra-canonical sources used by the Chronicler were narratives of the prophets and seers (1 Ch 29:29; 2 Ch 9:29; 12:15; 13:22; 24:30; 26:22; 32:32; 33:19) and official genealogies preserved in government archives, although these have been lost to us.

Some of the differences in text of the books of Chronicles arose from the Chronicler using a different Hebrew text tradition from that of the author of Kings. Textual criticism has traced the history of manuscripts by comparing sets of text variations among manuscripts. They conclude that during the time of the Chronicler there were two major "families" of Hebrew manuscripts of that book: the family that eventually became known as the "Masoretic Text" (MT) and a lesser known "Palestinian" family, represented by the (Lucianic) LXX and the Samaritan Pentateuch. Chronicles used a copy of Samuel—Kings that is closer to the Palestinian family than the MT used for our printed editions of the Hebrew Bible. But most of the differences can be accounted for by comparing and contrasting the literary purposes of Kings and Chronicles.

Are the books of 1 and 2 Chronicles historically trustworthy? Yes, but because of the clearly Judean and Levitical viewpoint from which the author wrote and selected material from his sources, critics have tended to hold Chronicles to be slanted and so not a valuable historical witness. But the Chronicler did not claim to be writing a modern, objective historical narrative. The selection of material was based upon different criteria. Chronicles was written in the context of a post-exilic Jewish theocracy to present a corrective understanding of Israel's history from its origins to the ending of Israel's exile by Cyrus's decree. The Chronicler synthesized a historical narrative from a specific theological stance and intended it as an antidote to contemporary spiritual apathy.

1 Chronicles Study Notes

1:1 To the modern reader, genealogies make for boring reading. Why did the Chronicler devote so much space (chaps. 1–9) to them? In the ancient world one's identity was rooted in one's family and then in one's clan or tribe. Ethnicity was the essence of one's public and private loyalties. The Chronicler's primary purpose in writing his book was to impart a sense of unity and loyalty to a scattered and demoralized nation. The genealogy shows one's place, who is family, and who is not. To whom am I obligated, and to what degree? One cannot deny family relationships, wrote the Chronicler to his "brothers." The lists and genealogies make up between 25-30 percent of the Chronicles, based upon actual word count. Clearly, ancestry and relationships are a major part of the Chronicler's message: the importance of Israel in world history and its essential unity.

Genealogies come in two basic forms: (1) linear: tracing a single line of descent from generation to generation; (2) lateral: tracing several parallel lines of "siblings" one after the other. The tracing is usually descending (tracing descendants) but occasionally ascending (tracing ancestors). The names found in the genealogies often represent not only the individual, but also the clan or the geographical region or towns founded by that individual. Here the Chronicler followed the genealogy in Gn 10 with only minor differences.

1:7 "Rodanim" refers to the inhabitants of Rhodes.

1:8 "Cush" represented the Sudan and Nubia in the south. "Mizraim" is literally "Egypt." "Put" represents Libya in the west. As with the Table of Nations in Gn 10, these names also point to geographic relationships. Although "Canaan" is included with the other nations in the south and southwest of the Fertile Crescent, the languages and ethnicity of the Canaanites known to Israel are clearly Semitic from archaeological and extra-biblical literary evidence. Most of Canaan and the rest of Palestine were frequently under Egypt's sphere of influence in ancient times.

1:10 While most of the extra comments in Gn 10 about individuals were omitted in this list, it is not clear why Nimrod was an exception to this practice.

1:11 "Mizraim" was Egypt.

1:12 The Philistines were of great interest to Israelites, since they were enemies of Israel for centuries.

1:17 The Chronicler began to focus upon the line that would end with Israel (Jacob).

1:24 The Chronicler recapitulated the line in summary fashion, following the path leading to Israel (Jacob).

1:29 The pattern of this genealogy is to deal with the secondary lines first, and then continuing the ever-sharpening focus upon the line leading to Israel (Jacob). Thus, Ishmael's descendants were recorded first, then Isaac's.

1:34 From Adam to Jacob (Israel), the trail narrows down to the twelve tribes of Israel. Notice the Chronicler named him "Israel" not "Jacob." He began presenting his theology right from the start, a theme that will echo back again and again: "We're all together in this exile; one for all and all for one." The Chronicler only rarely uses the name "Jacob" (16:13,17) rather than "Israel." This was part of his emphasis upon the unity of the nation of Israel—that they all came from the same father.

1:35 "Esau's sons"; throughout the Chronicler's genealogies, the descendants of Esau (including Edom and Seir) were given substantial attention, probably because Edom had a significant economic and political presence in the post-exilic era and because of their close proximity to Judah.

1:38 "Seir" was not among the recorded descendants of Esau. But Seir is mentioned in 2 Ch 25:11,14 as dwelling in the same region as Esau. The implication is that the relationship is national rather than ethnic, but strong enough to be included (see Gn 36:20-28).

1:43 It is not clear why the Chronicler includes the kings of Edom. Certainly it was not to record ethnic continuity. The digression of Seir's descendants and now Edom's rulers demonstrated a special interest in this land. Proximity to Judah perhaps gave Edom a greater relevance to the Chronicler's readers. Edom was conquered by David (18:13), but was later a source of rebellion against the kings of Judah.

1:51 The use of the word "chiefs" suggests these names are not direct relatives. The list simply outlines their political structure, not so much the family relationships.

2:1 The genealogy here narrows its focus upon the sons of Jacob, which has been the thread of this story told in terms of names. Telling that story from Adam to Jacob takes one chapter of 54 verses. Telling the story of Jacob's family will take the next eight chapters. The sons are listed (with one exception—Dan) by birth mother, and then by birth order: Leah (Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun); Rachel (Joseph, Benjamin); Rachel's servant Bilhah (Dan, Naphtali); Leah's servant Zilpah (Gad, Asher). See Gn 29–30.

2:3 The presentation of Israel's sons is not in order of birth or by birth mother at all. Instead, it began with Judah as the surviving and most cohesive of the tribes in exile, but also as the tribe of David and the hope for restoration of the nation. Judah and Levi (the next tribe in this presentation) were at the center of the Chronicler's hopes for Israel's future. The "Lord" is the first mention of the Hebrew *YHWH*, "Yahweh," in Chronicles.

2:6 The superscriptions to Pss 88 (Heman) and 89 (Ethan) suggest this branch of the family was musically talented. The name *Zimri* comes from the Hebrew verb "to make music," either as a composer or performer.

2:9 This is the line of David, so the thread turns to Hezron's descendants. The name *Hezron* occurs in Gn 46:12 and Nm 26:21. Since there is no biblical record of Hezron's family, the Chronicler had used some extra-biblical genealogical source (probably archived at the Jerusalem temple) unknown to us.

2:10 "Ram," Hezron's middle son, was the next link leading to David. The word "leader" is from the Hb *nasi,* meaning "chief, sheikh" of a tribe; a lesser ruler than a *melech*, "king."

2:15 First Sm 16:10 lists seven sons of Jesse, excluding David, who was the eighth. First Ch 27:18 names "Elihu" as a brother of David, a name not found in this list. Some suggest that one of the brothers might have died at some point, but the text is silent on this matter.

2:18 This "Caleb" (son of Hezron) was not the same as Caleb (son of Jephunneh), Moses' spy and warrior of the conquest of Canaan. That Caleb was a contemporary of Bezalel (v. 20), who was the great-grandson of this Caleb.

2:20 "Bezalel" was important to the Chronicler because of his work on the tabernacle furnishings (Ex 31).

2:21 "Machir" was a member of the tribe of Manasseh (see Nm 32:39-41). Intertribal marriage at this early stage in Israel's history already had begun to blur tribal distinctions and create cross-tribal loyalties.

2:42 "Hebron" was associated with Caleb's family in Jos 14:13, and is the name of a city in 15:13 and in Jdg 1:20.

2:49 Caleb son of Jephunneh had a daughter named *Achsah* (Jos 15:16), yet the following list of descendants in vv. 50-52 are the sons of Caleb son of Hezron. Taking the text as it stands, the most likely solution is that both Calebs had daughters with the same name.

2:50 This was Caleb son of Hezron. See vv. 18-19,24.

2:52 "Shobal" was an Edomite name; see 1:38,40. Some see the presence of Edomite genealogy here to be evidence of Edomite clans being incorporated into Judah.

2:54 The term "sons" clearly includes the later development of these families into larger communities and were synonymous with towns founded by them.

2:55 The name "Kenites" was the same as the ancient tribe mentioned in Gn 15:19, who apparently took their name from Cain, the son of Adam. Just how closely related the scribal Kenites were to the family of Rechab is unclear. "Hammath" could refer not just to a person but to a city or region, as we have seen before in this genealogy. Some suggest a relationship by marriage.

Here is an insight into the economies of that time. "Scribes" were apparently a hereditary guild where the skills are passed from generation to generation as part of the "family business." They were not necessarily related to the family of Caleb. See also Pr 31 for evidence of textile production and import-export business conducted on an (extended) family basis.

3:1 David first ruled in Hebron over Judah for seven years and six months before coming to power over all Israel (2 Sm 5:5). Because of his desire to emphasize Israel's unity, the Chronicler did not mention this early period of David's reign again.

3:2 "Maacah" was probably a political marriage on David's part to bolster his claim on an area claimed by Saul's son, Ishbaal (2 Sm 2:8-9; Geshur was east of the Sea of Galilee).

3:5 "Bath-shua," or Bathsheba. Note that Solomon was the youngest of the sons of Bathsheba. In ancient Israel, birthright (succession to the throne, in this case) and the position of firstborn were not always synonymous. It is possible that the list was not in birth order, but if so, it would be highly unusual.

3:11 Athaliah, Ahaziah's Canaanite mother, was not mentioned as she was a usurper (2 Kg 11:1,13).

3:12 Azariah was also known as "Uzziah" (2 Kg 14:21).

3:15 Shallum's throne name was "Jehoahaz" (see Jr 22:11).

3:16 Jeconiah was also known as "Jehoiachin" (see Jr 27:20) and "Coniah" (Jr 22:24).

3:17-24 This follows the line of David after the exile.

3:19 Zerubbabel's part in the return to Judah is told in Ezr (Ezr 3:2,8; 5:2) and Neh (Neh 12:1).

3:24 "Anani": names of this type were commonly attested during the sixth and fifth centuries B.C. Some consider this evidence for dating the books of Ch to the late fifth century B.C. This verse ends the record of David's descendants. For the Chronicler, the fact that David's line still existed was reason for the hope of the restoration of Israel.

4:2 "Zorathites": Rehoboam built the town of Zorah(2 Ch 11:10), and it was occupied by Jews in the post-exilic period (Neh 11:29).

4:4 Most of the names here also correspond to towns.

4:6 "Haahashtari" is literally "[the clan of] the Ashashtarites." The word is not Hebrew, possibly Persian.

4:9 This and the following verse were independent from the preceding list, and apparently were included for theological rather than genealogical reasons. The word "honorable" is literally "heavy." If taken literally, this would then be the explanation of his mother's misery in birth.

4:10 The name *Jabez* literally means "he afflicts, gives pain." He was asking God not to allow his name to characterize his destiny. In the ancient Near East, names were often associated with the character of a person, or of a desirable or undesirable destiny.

4:12 The name *Irnahash* means "city of Nahash, city of the craftsman."

4:14 Joab established a family or clan guild of craftsmen in that location. The location of the valley is not known.

4:15 The Hebrew word *elah* can be translated "these," and the final sentence could be (possibly) better translated: "These are the sons of Kenaz." This "Caleb" (to be distinguished from the son of Hezron of the same name) was one of Moses' twelve spies and was prominent in the initial conquest of Canaan.

4:21 Here is yet another reference to the guild economic system based upon clan relations.

4:22 The word "married" is the Hebrew *ba'alu* meaning "they ruled," and so secondarily could mean "rule over a woman, i.e., marry." But since Moab is the object of this verb, it is more naturally to be understood that "they ruled Moab." "Lehem" may be a shortened form of Bethlehem. The phrase "ancient records" was an explicit reference to the Chronicler's sources, possibly surviving temple records.

4:27 "Did not become as numerous": Simeon (v. 24) was early absorbed into Judah (see Jos 19:1,9). It is interesting to note that Simeon was not mentioned in Moses' blessing of the tribes (Dt 33).

4:39 If the identification of Gedor being near Gaza is correct, then population pressure caused the Simeonites to expand in coastal Philistine areas.

4:41 See 2 Kg 18:8.

4:42 "Mount Seir" shows that the tribe of Simeon also extended their habitation in the southeast direction, toward Edom.

4:43 They "still live there today." Although Simeon was no longer a political or geographical entity, they were part of Israel and so still had a place. In light of the need for unity, Simeon provided an important example to the rest of Israel of God's grace and commitment to Israel's continuing existence.

5:1 See note on Gn 35:22-26.

5:2 "Ruler" was a reference to David. See also Gn 49:10. The Chronicler distinguished between birth order and birthright. The two were not necessarily synonymous.

5:6 Tiglath-pileser reigned from 745–727 B.C. See 2 Kg 15:29.

5:7 Because land was originally apportioned on the basis of tribe and clan, the term "families" could also include the idea of "neighborhood," since family and geography are so closely associated in Israel.

5:8 "They settled" is literally "he settled." "He" probably referred to Bela as the closest possible referent, although some suggest Reuben as a possibility.

5:10 For more on the "Hagrites," see vv. 19-22. Other than Ps 83:6, there is no mention of this war.

5:14 This is an ascending genealogy beginning with "Abihail" and ending in the next verse with "Guni." No sons of Abihail are actually listed. Some suggest the phrase "sons of Abihail" is a standard formula and so is not to be understood literally.

5:16 "Sharon" was not the same place on the coastal plain, but was in the Transjordan region (east of the Jordon River).

5:17 Jotham reigned 742–745 B.C. Jeroboam reigned 786–746 B.C.

5:18 Eventually Reuben was absorbed by Gad, as Simeon was by Judah. "44,760 warriors": this number was considerably smaller than the combined number for these three tribes in Nm 26:7,18,34.

5:20 "Received help": One principle of the Chronicler's historiography was that when Israel called upon the Lord, He heard and answered them. See v. 25, where 300 years later they failed to call upon the Lord.

5:25 While acknowledging the fact that the nations worshiped gods other than Yahweh, this statement "gods of the nations" was not an acknowledgment of their reality. The Chronicler explicitly denied this (2 Ch 32:19). We see here a partial statement of the Chronicler's historiography: Israel's exile was a direct consequence of faithlessness to God. Restoration of the nation would be predicated upon the opposite attitude of the returnees: faithfulness to God's word and law; most importantly, turning away from the worship of any other deity.

5:26 "Today," that is, at the time of the Chronicler. Even though these tribes were in exile and though Judah, Benjamin, and Levi were the dominant tribes of the post-exilic era, nevertheless the Chronicler was at pains to include "all Israel" as a part of his message of unity.

6:1-15 This passage lists the high priests of Israel in their succession. Verses 1-3 form a lateral list; verses 4-15trace descent linearly. The name *Gershom* is spelled "Gershon" in the Hebrew text.

6:1 The tribe of "Levi," like Judah, was important to the theology of the Chronicler. Since the tribe was scattered throughout the land of Israel, they were crucial to Israel's faithfulness or lack thereof.

6:2 The list of priests was arranged in 25 generations with Zadok (v. 12) at the center, and with 12 generations listed before and after. This emphasized Kohath, Zadok, and Jehozadak (v. 15), the beginning, middle, and end.

6:16 Having listed the high priests in a straight line vertical descent, the Chronicler backed up and recorded the branching lines of Levi's sons.

6:25 This list (vv. 25-33) is an ascending list.

6:28 First Sm 1:1 lists Samuel's ancestors as Ephraimite, yet here he was included with the tribe of Levi. Either his fosterage by Eli the priest and his subsequent service to the Lord caused him to be included in the Levitical lists, or else he was a Levite from one of the Levitical towns in Ephraim (see Jos 21:20-22). The name "Joel" is not present here in the text, but added by the translator. The text reads only, "the firstborn, and his second son Abijah." We learn that the name of the firstborn is "Joel" from 1 Sm 8:2.

6:31-32 David was a musician (playing the harp; 1 Sm 16:23; 2 Sm 6:5) and a composer (see 2 Sm 23:1), so it is natural that David organized the tabernacle worship himself. Singing was important to the Chronicler as a part of the proper worship of the Lord, and he was careful to detail those Levites who specialize as musicians.

6:50-53 The list of high priests in verses 3-8 was repeated here from Aaron to the time of David. The point is that David appointed priests from the line of Aaron, and the legitimacy of the Aaronic line was confirmed.

6:66 For the Chronicler, it was not just about genealogy or pedigree; it was also about the land, which was the rightful heritage of an Israelite.

7:1 This chapter deals with the "northern" tribes of Issachar, Benjamin, Naphtali, Manasseh, Ephraim, and Asher.

7:2 Because of the seemingly high numbers of those capable of bearing arms, some suggest the Hebrew word *eleph*, usually translated "thousand," had come to be the designation of a military unit, which may have been theoretically 1,000 strong. While plausible, this meaning of *eleph* is not unambiguously attested either inside or outside the biblical text.

7:6 The descendants of Benjamin were given greater attention in chapter 8.

7:7 The number "22,034" is too exact to be considered a round number. Apparently the Chronicler was working from (perhaps official) census documents.

7:13 Genesis 30:5-8 lists Dan and Naphtali as Bilhah's sons, but Dan was omitted here. See also Gn46:23-25.

7:14 Manasseh in the Transjordan (east of the Jordan River) was dealt with in 5:23-26; the Manasseh in the Cisjordan (west of the Jordan River) was the one written of here in verses 14-19.

8:1 Already introduced in summary fashion in 7:6-12, greater detail is now given for the line of Benjamin.

8:8 That Israelites lived in Moab territory is also attested in Ru 1:1 (during the time of the judges) and in1 Sm 22:3-4 (in the time of David).

8:9 "Mesha," a king of Moab had this name, known from the "Mesha stele." See 2 Kg 3:4.

8:28 Jerusalem was on the border between Benjaminite territory and Judah, so the idea of Benjamin chiefs and clan leaders living in Jerusalem was not at all strange. Being the "City of David," it may very well have been viewed as neutral ground, not belonging to any tribe.

8:29 From here to the end of the chapter, the records focus upon Benjaminites who lived in or near Gibeon, six miles northwest of Jerusalem. Gibeon's modern name is *el-Jib*.

8:33 "Esh-baal": the use of the word *baal* in the names of this verse and the next reflect an origin before the introduction of the Phoenician deity of Baal. The word in its common, non-technical meaning here is simply "lord, husband." Only later did it gain the connotation of a divine name. When that occurred, the use of the *baal* element in names discontinued. See 5:5.

9:1 "All Israel" means both Judah and the northern tribes were registered in the official genealogies. "But" is literally "and." The Hebrew conjunction here does not express contrast. Since v. 2 speaks of their return to the land after the exile, the Chronicler carefully reminded his readers why Judah went into exile in the first place.

9:2 The term "Israelites" (Judeans) refers to laymen in contrast to the clergy: priests, Levites, and temple servants. This is not a reference to the northern tribes.

9:20 See Nm 25:12 in which Phinehas's zeal against idolatry earned him a "covenant of peace."

9:26 In the ancient Near East, most ordinary economic transactions were by barter, with standard weights of goods equivalent to other goods. What money or precious metal existed was usually entrusted to places of worship, where they functioned something like a bank. The temple in Jerusalem was the national repository of wealth apart from that of the king. The role of a gatekeeper included providing security for the treasuries.

9:35 Beginning with this verse, the Chronicler rehearsed Saul's lineage. In some ways, the rest of the book of Chronicles is simply an extension or continuation of the genealogies of the first nine chapters, but with ever more extensive notes about the individuals in the lineage.

9:39 "Esh-baal" is literally "man of Baal." This son of Saul was named "Ish-bosheth," which means "man of shame" (2 Sm 2:8-10), see note on 2 Sm 2:8.

10:1 The Chronicler began with the final days of Saul's life. Why? Because from the Chronicler's point of view, Saul was simply an introduction to the ideal king, David. As Israel's first king, Saul cannot be ignored, but his reign was a disaster politically and spiritually for Israel—a condition that David spent a good part of his reign trying to correct. The Chronicler's source here was 1 Sm 31, and he copied it nearly word for word.

10:4 "Uncircumcised men" referred to the Philistines.

10:6 "Three sons died." Ish-bosheth survived Saul's death, but Saul's family was no longer an effective dynasty and played no further role in Israel's history.

10:13 Here is a clear statement of the Chronicler's view of history. Saul's death was the consequence of a failure of faith and a lack of obedience to God's law. He consulted a medium (1 Sm 28:8-25), an act which was forbidden in Dt 18:9-13.

11:1 From here to the end of the book, David is the focus of the Chronicler's narrative. Second Ch begins with David's son, Solomon. What was omitted from the Chronicler's narration tells us almost as much of the Chronicler's purpose as the story itself. He omitted all of David's youth, his exile among the Philistines, and the struggle with Saul. He began after David's first seven-year reign over Judah at Hebron. The narrative began with "all Israel" asking him to be king over the rest of the tribes. The Chronicler wanted to emphasize Israel's corporate identity as a nation, with a divinely chosen ruler. If all the tribes of Israel were once unified under God, it could—and would—be so again in the future.

11:4 The Chronicler used the phrase "all Israel" repeatedly to hammer home his message of national unity to his readers.

11:7 The "city of David" is Jerusalem, which became David's personal property by right of conquest. The Chronicler included this event because a united Israel needed a political center, a capital. It was only later, during Solomon's reign, that Jerusalem became the religious center of the nation.

11:8 "Built up" probably means "restoration, repair." The "supporting terraces" are literally "the Millo." See also 1 Kg 9:15,24. Although 1 Kg only mentioned Solomon as the builder, it is clear that he was continuing and completing a project his father had begun.

11:9 This was in contrast to Saul. David was able to complete the task of occupying the land and conquering its inhabitants.

11:10 "David's warriors" formed the base of his military forces.

11:12 See 2 Sm 23:9-10.

11:15 The number "30" occurs with the definite article: "The Thirty."

11:19 David's action here showed his respect of life and God's value of life. The drinking of blood was forbidden by the law (Dt 12:16).

11:21 Literally, "Of The Three, he was honored in [more than?] The Two and he became their commander. And [But] [up] to The Three he did not come." This is a difficult verse because it apparently contradicts itself. There are a number of manuscript variations that attempt to solve the problem. The translation here is probably the best solution; but the problem remains unresolved.

11:42 This "30" was a different group from "the 30" in verse 15. The number here occurs without the definite article.

12:1 Ziklag was given to David for his base of operations as a mercenary for Achish, king of Gath, after David had fled Saul (see 1 Sm 27:6).

12:3 Gibeah was Saul's hometown.

12:15 The "first month" refers to the new year that began in the spring, when the Jordan would be flooding due to winter snow-melt and rain (see Jos 3:13).

12:16 The "stronghold"; if this was not a reference to Ziklag, then the location is not known.

12:18 "Took control" is literally "wore" or "clothed himself with." "Amasai" was possibly the same person as Absalom's general, Amasa (see 2 Sm 17:25).

12:20 Some commentators interpret "thousands" to be the name of a kind of military unit, and did not necessarily denote a literal thousand men.

12:22 "Like an army of God." The Chronicler compared David's army to the innumerable and unimaginably powerful angelic host that God is able to muster.

12:23 Recruits came to David from "all Israel," as the following verses show. The list shows that David led a united Israel.

12:24 The numbers have troubled many commentators because they seem larger than our knowledge of ancient Palestine would support. Some solutions are: (1) the Hebrew word *eleph*, "thousand," is the name of a military unit and not a literal number. In this case, 6,800 becomes "six military units, 800 strong." (2) Another proposal is that the Hebrew word should be pronounced *alluph*, "military leader." Then 6,800 becomes 800 troops under the command of six officers. In light of the comparison of David's army to the innumerable hosts of heaven in v. 22, perhaps these numbers should be best understood literally.

12:37 "120,000" probably means 40,000 from each tribe.

13:1 The story of bringing the ark to Jerusalem is told in 2 Sm 6:2-11. However, the Chronicler added the detail of how David called Israel to this task in vv. 1-5.

13:2 The "whole assembly" is emphasized. Throughout the book of Chronicles, the author was at great pains to emphasize Israel's unity. His message to the reader was, "We are one people, not merely separate tribes, and our great leaders led all Israel."

13:3 David was superior to Saul, the Chronicler noted, because David cared about the will and word of God and understood his role under the high kingship of the Lord, unlike Saul.

13:6 The Hebrew word for "dwells" means literally "the one who sits"; meaning one who literally sits, or by extension, "the one who dwells." In the present context, and in light of 28:2 where the ark is called a "footstool for our God," the better translation here is, "the one who is enthroned between the cherubim."

13:11 While David emotionally felt anger against what he considered to be an unjust response of the Lord's, the next emotion that he felt was fear and respect for God's requirements. God's holiness does not make exceptions, even when the result might be tragic.

13:13 Obed-edom is a Levite (15:18,21), and so was a lawful keeper of sacred objects such as the ark.

14:8 The Philistines were David's former employers and allies.

14:10 David "inquired." In sharp contrast to Saul, and essential to a king's success, David first found out if he should do battle with the Philistines.

14:12 The Philistines viewed their defeat as evidence of their gods' inability or unwillingness to defend them and defeat David, and in the rout they left the useless idols behind.

14:15 Unlike the Philistines' gods, the Lord is able and willing to intervene directly to fight for His people.

15:2 David had learned his lesson about transporting the ark! (For more on the ark, see 13:9-13; Dt 10:8.)

15:15 For the Chronicler, proper observance of the law's ritual and regulations was of utmost importance. Here he noted the proper way to transport the ark: Levites carrying it with poles (see Ex 25:13-15; Nm 7:9). David had used a cart with no Levites. Had they followed the correct procedure, the ark would not have been in any danger of falling and a man would not have died.

15:17 Asaph was the composer of Pss 73–83.

15:28 Note the "all Israel" motif, the Chronicler's most frequent phrase used to communicate his message of the unity of Israel.

15:29 The Chronicler omitted Michal's verbal confrontation of David for his dancing before the ark in 2 Sm 6:16-23. Her opinion had no bearing on David's piety, which was the Chronicler's main point.
16:14 Verses 14-22 are parallel to Ps 105:7-15.

16:35 A prayer for a return from exile and restoration to nationhood, see Ps 106:47.

16:39 That there was a tabernacle at Gibeon is not recorded elsewhere in the OT, and some have questioned the historicity of this tradition. The Chronicler clearly used genealogical records that other Chroniclers of the OT did not have access to or did not use. That is the most natural understanding here: The author had access to ancient records that did not otherwise survive.

17:1 If the central theme is the building of the temple, then the account of Nathan's prophecy of David's dynasty and the identification of David's son as the builder of the temple is the preface to that theme. For the Chronicler, the temple was the theological, geographical, and spiritual heart of the nation.

17:6 David's desire to build a temple to the Lord that he loved and worshiped is understandable and commendable. But the Lord did not share that concern. Indeed, before He spoke of who would build His temple, God noted that He was building David's "house" or dynasty as rulers over Israel.

17:7 "Ruler" is from the Hebrew word *nagid,* referring to a tribal chieftain or a lesser ruler accountable to a "high king." This term was deliberately chosen instead of the more usual Hebrew word *melek*, "king." This latter word should be applied to the Lord. David was *nagid* and served his *melek*, the Lord. This is a very different understanding of ruling from Israel's ancient Near Eastern neighbors, where nearly every little town boasted of a "king" jealous of his prerogatives and prerequisites. These rulers claimed divinity more often than not, instead of acknowledging stewardship to a higher authority.

17:12 This verse encompasses the Chronicler's two major themes: the temple and the dynasty of David.

17:14 The parallel passage in 2 Sm 7:16 says, "your house and kingdom" in reference to David. This shift from second person (David) to first person (the Lord) shows the Chronicler's more theological point of view. The Chronicler was deeply committed to the restoration of the nation, and this historiographical principle is reflected in how he wrote his story.

18:1 Although the wars David fought disqualified him from building the temple (see 22:8-9; 28:3), they were necessary wars. These wars brought peace and political strength required for national survival as well as the booty and wealth needed for the building materials. The next three chapters record how David completed what Joshua began in the conquest of the land the Lord had given Israel.

18:6 The Chronicler's worldview is evident here: David's success was first of all caused by the Lord—not simply by his own military prowess.

18:11 This booty became part of the stock used for the needs of the temple. In 2 Sm 8:12, some manuscripts use "Edom" in place of "Aram." This is because the Hebrew letters *r* and *d* are very similar shapes, and the copyist of Samuel misread his original.

18:12 Second Sm 8:13 mentions a victory of David's in Edom where there were 18,000 Edomite casualties. The superscription of Ps 60 mentions Joab—also a son of Zeruiah (1 Ch 18:15)—as victorious over 12,000 in the Valley of Salt. Apparently, both Joab and Abishai acted together under David's command.

18:17 "Cherethites and Pelethites" were David's personal guard, non-Israelites and mercenaries. One might think of them as a professional, standing army. The Chronicler omitted naming David's sons as priests, in contrast to 2 Sm 8:18. He was jealous of the Levitical privilege and evidently did not consider David's sons to be true priests, regardless of what Levitical functions they might have performed. Some have suggested that there was a textual corruption in Samuel, a book famous for the many scribal errors in the history of its transmission. The Hebrew word for "administrator" is just one letter different from the word for "priest."

19:7 Such a large number of chariots seems incredible to some commentators and so some consider the Chronicler or his sources to be in error, if the number is taken literally. The Hebrew word for "thousand," *eleph*, could be understood as a military unit originally numbering one thousand, but now used as a proper name for a military unit of a much smaller number. While plausible, there is no independent evidence that *eleph* was ever used in this way.

20:1 The Chronicler omitted writing of David's affair with Bathsheba and the consequent murder of her husband Uriah, a member of the Thirty Mighty Men narrated in 2 Sm 11–12. Because the Chronicler wished to emphasize David's role as the ruler of "all Israel," many interpret his omission as an attempted cover-up of David's failure and sin, that David was the "perfect" ruler. But this interpretation requires the assumption that the Chronicler's readers were unaware of this event and had no access to the book of Samuel, when it is clear that the Chronicler had access to it. Instead, the more natural explanation requiring fewer assumptions is that the Chronicler assumed his readers knew about the story, but he omitted it because it contributed little or nothing to his message. There is nothing to suggest that the Chronicler was rewriting history to hide the faults and sins of David. We will see this choice again in the case of Solomon as well.

20:8 The Chronicler again omitted an incident in David's life when the Philistine Ishbibenob was killed by Abshai so that David was not put at risk in battle any further (2 Sm 21:16-17). Some suggest the Chronicler felt the event showed weakness in a ruler too weak to face combat. But this interpretation has no evidence to support it. The Chronicler only selected material that advanced his message, and this event was evidently too minor to be included.

21:1 "Satan" is not mentioned in the parallel passage (2 Sm 24:1). There, the Lord is stated to be the cause. He was angry with David, although we are not told why. The Hebrew word *satan* (meaning "accuser") occurs elsewhere (Jb 1:12; 2:6; Zch 3:1-2) with a definite article: "the accuser." Here it occurs without the definite article, implying it is a proper noun, "Satan." The "count," as the following verses make clear, was a military census. Such a census for the purpose of mobilizing an army was authorized by Nm 26:2. The difference is that previous censuses were authorized by the Lord. We're not given any details as to what caused David to prepare to mobilize, but it is clear that even his general Joab knew better.

21:5 If one assumes the Bible is not historically trustworthy unless external evidence demonstrates to the contrary, then these numbers are not in line with the archaeological evidence of the population of Palestine in the tenth century B.C. However, since archaeological data is by definition what *remains* of ancient civilizations, this text is documentary evidence that such interpretations of the archaeological data are too pessimistic. And certainly the land could have supported such population.

21:8 Here is evidence that the Chronicler had no intention of "whitewashing" David or any other character about whom he wrote. David had his faults, but not everyexisting story about them served the author's purposes. The Chronicler included this story of the census, but omitted the Bathsheba affair (cp. 20:1 with 2 Sm 11:1). One major difference between the two events is that while David's sin and murder affected only a small number of people, his ordering the census had consequences for many thousands. Put another way, the Chronicler chose to omit personal sins, but he included sins of a king that had negative consequences for "all Israel."

21:18 In 2 Sm 24:18 it is Gad who gave the message of the Lord to David, with no mention of the Angel of the Lord.

22:1 The material in chapters 22–29 is found nowhere else in the OT, and the Chronicler's source or sources for this detailed section on David has been the object of much speculation.

22:2 Although Solomon built the temple, David accumulated a great mass of the required building materials. "Foreigners" included Canaanites as a permanent forced labor corps. The "finished stones" are probably limestone, of which there was a great quantity near Jerusalem.

22:3 The tenth century B.C. is part of what historians call the Iron Age. Iron was relatively new and expensive. The Philistines were masters of iron technology, and the origin of this iron was almost certainly captured booty from David's wars.

22:13 A basic moral principle for the Chronicler: follow the law carefully and with precision.

23:1 Chapters 23–27 document how David fulfilled all of his duties as a true ruler under the Lord. While some have argued this section is more of a parenthesis or appendix—or even placed here by someone other than the Chronicler—the function of these chapters clearly argue for the faithfulness to the Lord's expectations of a pious ruler. Note that the focus of David's duties was to organize and provide for the worship of the Lord. Verse 1 says he "installed" Solomon. David did not necessarily die immediately upon appointing Solomon as his successor. They probably ruled together for a time as co-regents, a practice known from Egyptian politics of the time. But we do not know how long the co-regency lasted.

23:3 The Chronicler gave the Levites the honor of describing their administration first.

23:4 The "officers" were perhaps "record keepers."

24:10 "To Abijah." This was the priestly division to which Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist, belonged (see Lk 1:5).

25:1 The term *army* refers to an "army" of Levites (see Nm 4:3, where "qualified to do work" is literally "entering the [Levitical] service"). Therefore, these officers were senior Levitical leaders.

25:7 The number "288" is the product of 24 courses (divisions) times 12.

26:1 The gatekeepers primary duty was evidently the security of the temple compound.

26:4 "Obed-edom": it was at his home that the ark rested after its return from the Philistines (13:14).

26:16 "Shallecheth": this gate is not spoken of elsewhere in the OT.

27:24 "Didn't complete it": see 21:5-6, where Joab refused to count Levi or Benjamin in the census numbering.

27:25 In ancient Israel there was no formal taxation of the people at this time. Expenses of the state were paid for out of the income of the king, usually from crown lands and the agricultural activities mentioned herein vv. 26-31. Solomon also used forced labor for his building program.

27:33 Ahithophel later defected to Absalom's rebellion (2 Sm 15:12,31). Hushai, on the other hand, remained loyal to David during that same rebellion (2 Sm 15:32).

28:1 This verse reprises 23:2, picking up the thread of the narrative after concluding the record of the Levites and their organization in chapters 23–27.

28:2 "Footstool": see Ps 132:7.

28:3 See 22:8-9.

28:4 God "chose Judah." See Gn 49:8-12 and Jacob's prophecy concerning the future of Judah's descendants.

28:7 Another principle the Chronicler emphasized is that the kingdom survives and prospers, if and only if, the king and people are faithful in obedience to God's law.

28:12 The phrase "in mind" is literally "in/by the spirit." The Hebrew *ruach* can mean "wind, mind, (human) spirit, (Holy) Spirit." This phrase could also be interpreted as "under the inspiration of the Spirit."

28:19 This verse seems to support the interpretation of verse 12 that the source of David's building plans was the Holy Spirit. Note the parallel to Moses being shown the model of the tabernacle by the Lord (Ex 25:9).

29:6 See Ex 35:4-9, where the people also gave willingly to build the tabernacle.

29:7 "Drachmas" were the Persian coinage in use in the Chronicler's day. This was his attempt to communicate to his readers the amount of the gifts in terms his readers would understand.

29:10 "Praised" is literally "blessed." The Hebrew verb *barach* is normally used for when the Lord is blessing human beings, but it is also used this way in Neh 8:6 and Ps 145:21.

29:22 "A second time": the first time was in 1 Kg 1:32-40.It was a rushed affair with a small audience due to the urgency of Adonijah's self-proclamation as king. Once the immediate crisis had passed, a more formal and public anointing was possible.

29:29 This may be a reference to the canonical books of Samuel and Kings or to other sources now lost to us. The Chronicler here explicitly told us that more was written in those sources than he had chosen to narrate.

2 Chronicles Articles

Don't Christian Missionaries Impose Their Culture on Others?

by Philip J. Sampson

Many people believe Christian missionaries impose their culture on others. Missionaries allegedly soften up native peoples by weakening their cultural resistance, leaving the field open for colonists and Western capitalism. Mission has been described as enslavement or even as genocide, and the gospel has been called the "everlasting story of the West against the Indians."

Such extreme accusations signal that we are entering a world of stereotype and caricature. We first find them in the nineteenth century, but stereotypes of missionaries became widespread in the mid-twentieth century, with the recognition that some cultures can oppress others. This insight was selectively applied to "Christian" cultures of the West, especially as supposedly spread by missionaries.

Most caricatures have a basis in fact, however flimsy, and some missionaries have fit aspects of the stereotype. The early church faced similar issues (Ac 15; Gl 2) when the apostles rejected the imposition of traditions upon new converts. The fact that Scripture records such disagreements is strong witness to its historical reliability. It's also a warning to churches to be vigilant against imposing local customs on other people groups. The stereotypes assert that missionaries have consistently ignored this warning. Have they?

Missionaries cannot avoid taking their own culture with them, but they can avoid imposing it on others. As Henry Venn remarked in 1868, long before the twentieth-century secular discovery of pluralism, that the "marked national characteristics" of the church will be its "perfection and glory." Indeed, at a time when the study of native cultures was almost racist in its focus on the evolution of culture from primitive to sophisticated, some missionary scholars—such as James Legge, Robert Morrison, and John Farquhar—insisted on the value of native cultures.

Examples abound of missionaries recognizing cultural diversity and pioneering its study and preservation. This isn't surprising, as missionaries often lived alongside native people and learned their language in order to translate the Bible. From José de Acosta in Latin America to William Carey in India, from Jacob Grigg in Africa to John Smith in Jamaica, missionaries have helped preserve cultures and native languages. Linguist Mary Haas has estimated that 90 percent of the material available on Native American languages is missionary in origin. Some missionaries courageously identified with native peoples. For example, Samuel Worcester went to prison for his defense of Cherokee rights.

Stereotypes of missionaries aren't only factually inaccurate; they can also be unjust toward black and Asian peoples. The stereotype of Christianity as white and Western misrepresents the church's origin and has long been out of date. The period of Western dominance came full circle many years ago when the church's centers of gravity moved to Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

Moreover, we do no favors to native cultures in saying a few missionaries easily overpowered them. This presumes native cultures fell easily to Western influence and obscures the violent oppression of native people.

Stereotypes that treat Christianity as Western, and native cultures as weak, are culturally biased at best and unintentionally racist at worst.

All cultures, developed and developing, fall short of biblical standards and need the gospel. We shouldn't fear or ignore all criticism of missionary methods. But to be helpful, such criticism should be informed and fair. Stereotypes of missionaries are neither.

Introduction to 1 Chronicles

AUTHOR

In 538 B.C., having overthrown the Babylonian Empire the previous year, Cyrus of Persia decreed that the Jews could return to their homeland after 70 years in exile. The first 75 years were difficult. There was no temple and the land available to the returned Jews had included only about a 15-mile radius around Jerusalem. The walls of Jerusalem were in ruins. The people were vulnerable to the enemies who surrounded them—their neighbors hardly welcomed these "interlopers" who had come home to compete with them politically and economically. Harvests were poor or failed completely, and the people had to endure the subsequent famines. Morale was low and there was little to motivate the people's spiritual life.

The author of the books of Chronicles, whom we shall call the Chronicler, saw a need to remind the returnees of their national identity. This identity superseded the division of the nation into northern and southern kingdoms and found its center in the law of Moses. With the spiritual life of the nation in shambles, temple worship needed to be restored by the Levites and priests as the true mediators of God's Word and will. So the Chronicler sat down to pen a book to encourage a change in the self-image and identity of God's chosen people.

These two books were originally one. The book's Hebrew title is "the words of the days" or "the events of the times," that is, the annals of the nation of Israel. When the book was translated into Greek (the Septuagint version, or LXX), it was divided into two parts. Since the Greek language used vowels and consonants, whereas the Hebrew text at the time included only consonants, this division was possibly made because of the expanded length of the translated text. The LXX gave the book the title "the things omitted," referring to the fact that Chronicles includes material not found in the parallel material in the books of Samuel and Kings. Several hundred years later, the Christian scholar Jerome described the book as "a chronicle of all sacred history." Our modern title, Chronicles, is a shortened form of that description.

Chronicles appears as the last book of the third division of the Jewish canon, the "Writings." The LXX, Vulgate, and modern translations place it after Kings and before Ezra—Nehemiah, probably because its contents were historical and overlapped the period narrated by Samuel and Kings. In fact, the book is a history of the Hebrew people from Adam to the Persian king Cyrus, which parallels the writings of Genesis through Kings, with Ezra—Nehemiah as a continuation of what happened after Cyrus permitted the Jews to return to their land.

The earliest that Chronicles could have been written was 538 B.C. since the end of the book records Cyrus's decree of that date. The use of Chronicles in the book of Ben Sira (published in 180 B.C.), and the second-century LXX translation of Chronicles, give us the approximate latest date when it could have been written. Thus we have about a 350-year span of time when the book could have been produced.

But we can be more specific than that. First Chronicles 3:19-24 records Zerubbabel's descendants for two (not, as it might appear, four) generations. And since Zerubabbel can be dated to around 520 B.C., this means Chronicles was compiled around 400 B.C. or slightly later. There is no scholarly consensus on the exact date, but the purposes for which the book was intended suggest that a fourth century B.C. date fits best.

While the author of Chronicles is anonymous, rabbinic authorities claimed that Ezra the scribe wrote the genealogies. Did the same author write the Chronicles as well as Ezra and Nehemiah? Since the book ends with Cyrus's decree, the author could not have lived much earlier than Ezra's

time. The opening verses of Ezra are also the closing verses of Chronicles, which means the author of Ezra and Nehemiah had access to Chronicles. However, these same facts are compatible with the conclusion that Chronicles is an independent work. Ezra may simply have borrowed the last verses of Chronicles to establish a context for his work.

The common linguistic features of the books are standard post-exilic Hebrew, proving they were written in the same linguistic era but not necessarily by the same person. The common theological position and viewpoint supports the notion that both authors were from the same theological community and shared the same religious values. Ultimately, whether written by one author or two, Chronicles and Ezra/Nehemiah stand on their own as separate works, with separate purposes and aims, exhibiting internally consistent unity of composition. They should be interpreted as complete, self-contained works.

Reading Chronicles carefully reveals a number of facts about the author. He was evidently a member of the post-exilic theological community, with a religious orientation to life rather than a secular one. He may have been a priest or a Levite, but he certainly believed God's will was mediated to the people though the Levitical priesthood. He reflected the values and ideals of Ezekiel and some of the post-exilic prophets about Temple worship and correct ritual observances. This theological emphasis on strict adherence to ritual and social organization was a preemptive effort to prevent a fall back into the idolatry and apostasy that had brought on God's judgment in the first place. The Chronicler, like the post-exilic prophets, did not desire a repeat of the Lord's judgment on Israel for disobedience to the First Commandment. He emphasized a strict compliance with liturgical worship and moral purity in order to realize God's blessing upon the newly restored nation.

First Chronicles starts with nine chapters of genealogies that trace Adam's line down to the sons of Jacob. The rest of 1 Chronicles (chaps. 10–29) narrate the life of David. The first nine chapters of 2 Chronicles detail the reign of David's son Solomon. The stories of David and Solomon should be treated as one unit, for the Chronicler presented both of them as models for Israel's kings. Chapters 10–36 record the history of the southern kingdom of the divided monarchy, Judah.

THE IMPORTANCE OF GENEALOGIES

Genealogies were very important to the Chronicler, and thus the modern reader cannot gloss over them and still expect to understand the message of the book. Some were used to show the kinship between Israel and neighboring tribes, while others established the legitimacy for persons of rank and authority. The genealogies reflect a teleological view of history, that is, a view in which humankind is moving toward a goal set by the Creator. More importantly, they provide a framework for the Chronicler's concept of "all Israel."

The Chronicler used this important phrase 45 times. For the Chronicler, there was no more north and south, Israel and Judah, but just "all Israel." His genealogies emphasized the unity of the sons of Jacob, whom the Chronicler always called "Israel." "All Israel" accepted David as king at Hebron (1 Ch 11:1). The lists of
1 Chronicles 11–12 are apparently motivated by the "all Israel" concept. "All Israel" was at the dedication of the temple (2 Ch 7:8). Hezekiah invited "all Israel" to come to Jerusalem for worship (2 Ch 30:1), and although most mocked the invitation, some "humbled themselves" before Yahweh and came to worship at Jerusalem
(2 Ch 30:11). Although Israel had been divided, the damage was never irreparable, and repentance was always available to the people.

In Chronicles the northern kingdom is essentially ignored except insofar as it interacted with Judah. This is an important clue to the Chronicler's purpose for writing the book. He sought to prove that the newly restored nation was the true successor to the Davidic covenant. It is no surprise, then, that most of the text of Chronicles is devoted to David and Solomon, representing the ideals of kingship laid

out in Deuteronomy. The author assumed his readers knew the contents of the books of Samuel and Kings, and so he gave only enough detail to establish the historical context. Also omitted were the personal failings of David and Solomon as well as the stories of Absalom, Amnon, and Adonijah. They were not relevant to temple worship and other institutions of the theocracy (God-ruled government).

Some have suggested that the Chronicler was attempting to whitewash David and Solomon's sins and failures, but it is clear that the Chronicler expected his readers to be familiar with the books of Samuel and Kings. These negative elements in the lives of the kings were public and well known; they were simply not pertinent to the issues pressing upon the Chronicler. He focused upon the consequences of idolatry and God's desire for the sinner to repent and return to a life of obedience to the law of Moses. This obedience is the basic characteristic of anyone who had a covenant relationship with Yahweh, since God's moral character had to be reflected by the nation He had chosen.

In his grand survey of Israelite history, the Chronicler made liberal use of sources within the Scriptures: the Pentateuch (first five books of the Bible), Joshua, Samuel, and especially Kings, which he explicitly cited (2 Ch 27:7; 35:27; 36:8). For the genealogies, the Chronicler must have drawn upon other sources than just the biblical ones. The difference in arrangement and balance is great enough to suggest there were other sources that survived the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B.C.

THE RELIABILITY OF 1 AND 2 CHRONICLES

While it is certain that the Chronicler knew of and consulted with the book of Kings, a careful comparison of the parallel passages show Chronicles giving details not found in Kings, and, at the same time, omitting details that Kings includes. This suggests that the Chronicler used a source other than Kings, but that this source or sources was also used by the author of Kings. Second Chronicles 24:27 cites "Writing of the Book of the Kings." Other extra-canonical sources used by the Chronicler were narratives of the prophets and seers (1 Ch 29:29; 2 Ch 9:29; 12:15; 13:22; 24:30; 26:22; 32:32; 33:19) and official genealogies preserved in government archives, although these have been lost to us.

Some of the differences in text of the books of Chronicles arose from the Chronicler using a different Hebrew text tradition from that of the author of Kings. Textual criticism has traced the history of manuscripts by comparing sets of text variations among manuscripts. They conclude that during the time of the Chronicler there were two major "families" of Hebrew manuscripts of that book: the family that eventually became known as the "Masoretic Text" (MT) and a lesser known "Palestinian" family, represented by the (Lucianic) LXX and the Samaritan Pentateuch. Chronicles used a copy of Samuel—Kings that is closer to the Palestinian family than the MT used for our printed editions of the Hebrew Bible. But most of the differences can be accounted for by comparing and contrasting the literary purposes of Kings and Chronicles.

Are the books of 1 and 2 Chronicles historically trustworthy? Yes, but because of the clearly Judean and Levitical viewpoint from which the author wrote and selected material from his sources, critics have tended to hold Chronicles to be slanted and so not a valuable historical witness. But the Chronicler did not claim to be writing a modern, objective historical narrative. The selection of material was based upon different criteria. Chronicles was written in the context of a post-exilic Jewish theocracy to present a corrective understanding of Israel's history from its origins to the ending of Israel's exile by Cyrus's decree. The Chronicler synthesized a historical narrative from a specific theological stance and intended it as an antidote to contemporary spiritual apathy.

2 Chronicles Study Notes

1:1 Most of the material on Solomon is more or less related to the temple and its construction. The Chronicler saw the temple as essential for the unity of Israel as a theocracy.

1:2 Compare vv. 2-6 with 1 Kg 3:4, where the author of Kg gave only a brief mention of the worship experience at Gibeon, and then moved directly on to Solomon's dream. This shows a difference in the Chronicler's purpose in comparison to the author of Kg: Solomon's character is the point in Kg, whereas fidelity to the worship of the Lord is the focus of Ch.

1:4 This verse summarizes information already given in great detail in 1 Ch 13:15–26.

1:5 Why was Solomon great? Because he "inquired" of the Lord and he led the people to do the same. The Chronicler's implication is that Solomon began well because he sought the Lord and his readers ought to do the same.

1:7 See Mt 7:7.

1:11-12 Jesus enunciated this same principle in Mt 6:33: "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be provided for you."

1:13 The Chronicler omitted 1 Kg 3:16-28, the story of Solomon's wisdom in solving the case of the identity of a baby. While Kg used secular events to illustrate Solomon's greatness, the Chronicler's definition of greatness began and ended with the building and furnishing of the temple and its dedication. These two visions of Solomon's greatness are not incompatible or contradictory, but they emphasize different aspects of the king.

1:14 These are not unreasonable numbers (9:25 speaks of 4,000 stalls). Assuming each chariot required two horses, then 2,800 horses would be required. If we include horses for individual riders and remounts, there would be room for 1,200 additional horses.

1:15 The phrase "as common . . . as stones" is hyperbole and not to be understood literally. "Apparently limitless quantity" is what it means.

1:16 "Kue" is usually identified with Cilicia (southern Turkey) in the north. Israel sat squarely on the main north-south trade routes connecting Africa, Asia, and Europe. This was the source of much of Israel's wealth, both by participating in trade and by collecting tolls and tariffs on goods transiting through Israel on their way elsewhere.

1:17 The sale of military equipment has been lucrative throughout mankind's history.

2:6 The temple was never the "house" where God had His being, unlike the temples of the surrounding nations. Rather, Israel's temple was a place to meet the Lord in worship. See also Jesus' statement to the Samaritanwoman at the well, that true worshipers of God must do so in spirit and truth, not in a physical location (Jn 4:17-24).

2:7 The Hebrew word for "purple" is spelled in the Aramaic, the same language found in Dn 5:7,16,29. This reflectsthe impact of the exile upon the Chronicler's language.

2:10 These are probably total, not annual, numbers. In 1 Kg 5:6, Solomon asked Hiram to set the price. Here Solomon appeared to be setting the price. The treaty would certainly spell out the numbers, with Hiram having input into the amount of remuneration.

Was Hiram a vassal of Solomon's? In 1 Kg 9:13, Hiram calls Solomon "brother." Here Hiram was paid for his services, rather than providing them without charge. The treaty in 1 Kg 5:9 made no mention of any submission or subordination on Hiram's part. The evidence does not support Hiram being a legal vassal of Solomon, although Solomon does appear to be the more dominant partner.

2:17 There is some question as to whether Solomon imposed forced labor on Israelites in addition to the Canaanite "foreigners" mentioned here. In the parallel passage, 1 Kg 5:13, Solomon raised his forced labor out of "all Israel." This could mean that Solomon used Israelites as forced labor, something forbidden by the law (see Lv 25:43,46,53). Second Ch 8:9 and 1 Kg 9:22 explicitly deny that Solomon did this.

Nevertheless, there is strong evidence that Solomon, while not starting out enslaving Israelites, ended up doing so. The northern tribes begged Rehoboam, Solomon's son and successor, to lighten their heavy burdens (1 Kg 12:4). Further, why would Rehoboam send the officer in charge of forced labor to negotiate with Israelites (Canaanite forced laborers would not be in a position to negotiate)? And why would the Israelites stone Adoram to death (1 Kg 12:18), if they did not view him as the source of their suffering?

3:3 "Length" is literally "in the former measure." There were two different standards for the length of the cubit, based upon an Egyptian system of six palms per cubit and a longer one at seven palms. A short cubit was 17.4 inches and a long cubit was 20.4 inches. It's not completely clear what is meant by the "former measure," but the Jerusalem temple used the long cubit.

4:1 First Kg 7:21-24 omitted any description of the altar, although it was mentioned elsewhere in Kg (1 Kg 8:64; 9:24; 2 Kg 16:14).

4:2 "Reservoir" is literally "the Sea." It was given this name to signify its large size. This basin has the same function as the laver in the tabernacle (Ex 30:18).

4:7 See Zch 4:1-3.

4:9 The "courtyard of the priests" was the "inner court" of 1 Kg 6:36 and 7:12.

4:19 The "gold altar" was the altar of incense (Ex 30:1-10).The instructions in Exodus are that it should be made of acacia wood and overlaid with gold.

5:2 The "all Israel" theme is present here. When the ark was brought to Jerusalem, "all Israel" was present. Regardless of the competing places of worship established by the northern kingdom or those established during the exile, the proper place for the unity of Israel's worship to manifest itself was Jerusalem.

5:4 First Kg 8:3 says the "priests" moved the ark. The Chronicler's less precise term is consistent with his desire to emphasize the role of the Levites in the life of Israel. This use of "Levites" is in sharp contrast to the ones who moved the ark previously (1 Ch 13:9-10; 15:2).

5:9 "To this very day"; that is, the day of the Chronicler's source, which in this case is 1 Kg 8:8. The poles may or may not have still been there at the time the Chronicler wrote.

5:14 The "cloud" was a frequent sign of God's presence in a particular place (see Ex 13; Nm 9; Ezk 10:3-4). It also signified God's acceptance of the temple as an appropriate place to meet His people.

6:6-7 The establishment of the house of David on the throne of Israel and the building of the temple are two important themes for the Chronicler, ones which he repeatedly stressed or highlighted in various ways. Here we have both themes in close proximity to one another.

6:24 Israel's defeat by an enemy because of its sin was a recapitulation of the curses for breaking the Mosaic covenant, laid out in detail in Dt 28:15-68. Here, and in the verses that follow, Solomon was seeking forgiveness in advance of the sins that he knew Israel would commit, but only on the basis of repentance.

6:28 The geography of the Fertile Crescent placed Israel in the midst of trade and traffic from all over the known world. Along with that traffic came wealth, war, and disease.

6:30 God judges the individual and rewards or punishes on the basis of individual and personal responsibility.

6:42 This verse echoes Ps 132:10. The phrase "loyalty of Your servant David" is ambiguous. It means either:(1) the loyalty which David expressed toward God; or(2) the loyalty that David received from the Lord. In light of Is 55:3, it seems that the second explanation is to be preferred. Solomon recognized that his position comes as a result of the Lord's promise to David, and Solomon asked the Lord to remember that promise and fulfill it in his own case.

7:5 These very large numbers have caused much comment. For the 15 days of the celebration, it has been calculated that it would require 20 sacrifices per minute for 10 hours per day. Some resolve this by interpreting the numbers as hyperbole (intentional exaggeration). Others suggest "sacrifice" meant Solomon gave the animals to the priests, but that they were not all necessarily sacrificed at once during the celebration.

7:8 "The entrance to Hamath to the Brook of Egypt" marked the ideal north and south boundaries of thenation, see Gn 15:18; Nm 34:5,8.

7:9-10 What apparently happened was that the dedication of the temple occurred before the Festival of Booths, from the eighth to the fourteenth of the month. Then the Festival of Booths began on the fifteenth day of the month, lasting until the twenty-second day, see Lv 23.

7:12 The Lord's statement to Solomon (vv. 12-22) summarizes the events that occur in chapters 10–36.

7:18 See Mc 5:2. This was a reaffirmation of God's promise to David spoken by Nathan (2 Sm 7:12-16). This centered the hope of Israel on the dynasty of David for succeeding generations. In the exilic and postexilic ages, the expectation of a coming Messiah came into sharper focus, commencing with Jeremiah's and Ezekiel's vision of a Messiah who would combine the traits of a king and a priest (Jr 33:14-18; Ezk 46:1-8; Zch 4:1-14; 6:13).

7:19 The Hebrew uses the plural form of "you" throughout the verse. The Lord is not referring just to Solomon or even to his generation, but to their descendants.

8:2 First Kg 9:12 said Hiram was not pleased with the 20 Galilean cities that Solomon had given him. Apparently Hiram returned the cities to Solomon and this is what Solomon did with them.

8:3 This is the only record of a military action by Solomon. This event is omitted by 1 Kg 9:17-19, the parallel passage (see 1 Ch 22:9).

8:11 The Chronicler assumed his readers knew all about Solomon's marriage to Pharaoh's daughter as a part of his international diplomacy.

8:18 Because the round trip journeys to Ophir took three years (9:21; 1 Kg 10:22), the city (or country) has been located in India, in Somaliland (on the African coast), or in western or southern Arabia. However, in the absence of other evidence, the location remains a mystery.

9:1 "Sheba" was the kingdom of Saba in southern Arabia, modern Yemen.

9:15 These shields were taken by the Pharaoh Shishak in an attack made shortly after Solomon's death (12:9).

9:21 The phrase "kept going to Tarshish" is literally "the Tarshish goers." The Hebrew is not clear whether Tarshish (on the Iberian peninsula at the far end of the Mediterranean sea) was a literal destination or a description of a class of ships. In this case they would be the kind of ocean-going vessel that can sail to Tarshish (that is, they can go anywhere).

9:29 These sources that the Chronicler used are no longer available to us.

9:31 The Chronicler omitted Solomon's latter years where his fidelity to the Lord slipped. It is not, as some have asserted, that the Chronicler was covering up Solomon's failures. Time and time again we see that the Chronicler assumed his readers had access to and knew the books of Samuel and Kings. He omitted details that were not relevant to his purpose in order to show what kind of person should sit on the throne of David. The latter Solomon was not that kind of person, and so was left out of the narrative. This authorial decision was the same as the decision to omit the Bathsheba affair and Uriah's murder by David.

10:3 Jeroboam is presented here as a spokesman or ringleader for the rebellion. The book of Kings does not mention him in connection with the confrontation with Rehoboam.

10:16 The term "Israel" here had not yet taken the meaning of "the ten northern tribes."

10:18 "Hadoram" was known as "Adoniram" in the book of Kings. The king accompanied him, apparently in an attempt to abort the split.

11:5 Verses 5-12 do not appear in the book of Kings. The Chronicler evidently followed sources known only to himself. The military reinforcement of these cities was important because they guarded mountain passes and roads leading into the heart of Judah.

11:8 This "Gath" was not the Philistine city of Gath, which was west of Rehoboam's line of fortresses, and there is no evidence that Solomon or Rehoboam ever conquered that city. More likely, it was a shortened name of the city of Moresheth-gath, just north of Mareshah.

11:13 The Chronicler was careful to note that there were faithful Levites from "all Israel," to counteract the notion that any particular part of Israel was totally apostate.

11:14 Jeroboam had reason to fear: loyalty to the Lord required continued worship at Jerusalem. After he decided to establish his own worship center and priesthood, the question of loyalty became sharper. One could no longer support the political regime and continue to obey the Lord. For the Levites, it meant becoming refugees and migrating to Judah to start their lives over again.

11:17 Rehoboam departed from God's law after this period of "three years" (see 12:1-2). Then Shishak's attack came as a direct judgment against Rehoboam's apostasy.

11:18 "Jerimoth" is not mentioned anywhere else as David's son. It is unclear whether this was an alternate name for one of David's sons or a previously unknown son to be added to the list.

11:22 "Abijah" was known as "Abijam" in the book of Kings.

12:1 "All Israel" refers to Judah and Benjamin, the southern kingdom. The northern kingdom had already abandoned the Lord's law.

12:3 While the number of chariots is in line with documented military units of the time, the number of horsemen seems excessive. If it was a scribal error for 6,000, the number would be appropriate for the number of chariots. There is, however, no documented evidence for a scribal error, and so the question of the large number of horsemen is an open one.

12:4 From Egyptian records it appears that Shishak's primary military objective was the northern kingdom.

12:12 "Conditions were good" is literally "good [things/people] were [existed]." If we take the phrase to mean "good things" existed, then it may mean that Judah was spared looting and pillaging from enemies. If it means "good people," then it may mean there were many faithful people living there. Since the previous sentence speaks of Rehoboam's repentance as a reason for moderating God's judgment, "good people" is the preferred understanding of the phrase, and adds an additional reason for the Lord's forbearance.

12:16 "Abijah" was known as "Abijam" in the book of Kings. He reigned from 913–909 B.C.

13:3 Because archaeologists have estimated Palestine's population during this period as around 300,000, there have been various efforts to resolve this conflict of numbers. Some suggest the Hebrew word for "thousand," *elef*, is also the name of a military unit that had less than a literal thousand, much like the Roman centurion commanded a unit of less than one hundred soldiers. Others understand the use of numbers here as hyperbolic, not intended to be taken literally, but to show the size of the victory the Lord gave to Abijah. There is one other possible explanation that few seem to entertain: that the documentary evidence of the biblical text suggests the archaeological estimate of the population at that time is in error.

13:4 The Chronicler passed over all of Abijah's sins, described in 1 Kg 15:1-8. Instead, he narrated an event where the king placed his trust in the Lord.

13:18 The Chronicler's view of history is stated here again: success and failure are dependent upon one's faithfulness—or lack of it—to the Lord and His law.

14:1 The notation of "10 years" is probably a round number. The next recorded attack on Judah was by Zerah and the Cushites (14:9-15).

14:2 Although Kings recounts Asa's reign in 16 verses (1 Kg 15:9-24), Chronicles takes 47 verses (14:1–16:14). While 16 verses are sufficient to evaluate Asa's reign for the author of Kings, the Chronicler's purpose was to illustrate the theological principles of proper kingship. That required more detail.

14:4 The Hebrew word for "instruction" includes the definite article, *hatorah*, "the law," and is very possibly one of the first references to the canonical books of Moses.

14:9 "One million" is probably hyperbole for "vast, uncountable." An argument against this is the number of chariots (300) which seems small for a "vast" army. Some suggest the number 300 is somehow symbolic, but the symbolic meaning is not known. The point here is that, from a human and military standpoint, Asa and Judah were outmatched. Their subsequent victory against overwhelming odds was all the more evidence of the Lord's action.

14:15 The Cushites were nomads, not an urban civilization.

15:3 A reference to the period of the judges, between the initial conquest of Canaan by the 12 tribes and the appointment of Saul as king of Israel.

15:9 Although the tribal area of Simeon was south of Judah (1 Ch 4:23-43), evidently some had moved out of their territory to the Transjordan tribes. They may have been pressured from attacks from Edom or the Arabian desert. When they saw Asa's faith and the Lord's deliverance, they left the northern kingdom to Judah.

15:16 Removing Maacah from being "queen mother" shows that the position was not automatic and hereditary. Apparently, by removing her, Asa prevented her from leading Judah into further idolatry.

15:17 This apparently contradicts 14:2, which says Asa did remove the high places. But as the books of Kg make clear, the cult of Asherah and the country shrines built on the "high places" were popular and nearly impossible to stamp out, springing back into existence after every suppression. It also explains why the kings were reluctant to destroy them and incur the people's wrath.

16:1 By the thirty-sixth year of Asa, Omri ruled the northern kingdom of Israel, contradicting this verse. Some suggest "36" refers to the years since the division of the nation, thus putting it at the sixteenth year of Asa's reign. However, the text clearly states that it was Asa's reign, not the years since the kingdom had been divided. First Kg 15:16 says that there was war the entire time Baasha was king. So the events narrated here could have been at any point during that 24-year period. A clear solution to this chronological problem has not yet presented itself.

16:9 See Zch 4:10; Ps 33:18; 34:15; Pr 15:3; 1 Pt 3:12.

16:11 See 1 Kg 15:23, where this same source is cited.

16:14 This "great fire" was not cremation, but a ritual or memorial of honor.

17:1 Jehoshaphat reigned from 872–848 B.C. More space is given to Jehoshaphat here in Ch (17:1–21:1) than in Kg (1 Kg 22:1-38; 2 Kg 3:4-27), which is consistent with the Chronicler's habit of focusing upon the faithful kings of Judah in contrast to the tendency of the books of Kg to focus upon the kings of Israel.

17:7 "Third year," that is, the third year (870 B.C.) from the beginning of his co-regency (872 B.C.). His own reign was 869–848 B.C.

17:9 The "book of the LORD's instruction," or "book of the Torah of the LORD." Regardless of the translation, this is a clear reference to an authoritative document representing God's will. The five books of Moses were beginning to be "published" and distributed among the Levites for educational purposes. See note on 14:4.

18:2 The Chronicler made Jehoshaphat the central figure of his narrative, while in 1 Kg 22 Jehoshaphat was peripheral to Ahab. This difference is the reflection of their different purposes in writing. The books of Kg emphasize the damage caused by faithless and idolatrous kings. The Chronicler emphasized the national blessings that come from faithfulness to the Lord and His law.

18:3 Although the Chronicler followed 1 Kg 22 closely, most of 1 Kg 22:3 is omitted, where Ahab claimedRamoth-gilead to be his.

18:20 "A spirit" is literally "the spirit," using the definite article. The most natural understanding would be the Holy Spirit. However, there is a theological problem with God being a deceiver. Some try to moderate the tone by translating the verb *deceive* as "entice." This does not solve the problem. Both Jeremiah (Jr 20:7) and Ezekiel (Ezk 14:9) wrote of the Lord deceiving a prophet, using the exact same Hebrew word as here; see 1 Kg 22:21-28.

18:21 "Lying spirit" is a pun on the Hebrew word, which can mean "spirit, wind, or breath."

18:22 While the "lying spirit" spoke through the prophets, the Lord clearly laid out the truth and Ahab had a choice whom to believe.

18:27 Micaiah appealed to the Deuteronomic test of the true prophet: 100 percent accuracy in prediction verifies that the prophet's message is from the Lord (see Dt 18:21-22).

18:33 "Without taking special aim" is literally "guilelessly, in his integrity." The man drawing the bow did not do so with the intent of killing the king, but was simply doing his job in good faith.

19:8 The "Israelite families" must refer to the southern kingdom and would not include the ten northern tribes.

20:1 This invasion is not recorded in the books of Kg. It was included here to show the king's repentance and trust in the Lord, along with the positive results of that act of faith.

20:31 "Reigned 25 years": in 2 Kg 3:1 and 8:16 his reign is recorded to be 22 years. The difference is because of the three year co-regency with his father Asa.

20:34 "Israel's Kings": Judah was, as far as the Chronicler was concerned, the only part of the nation that remained loyal to Israel's legitimate king.

21:2 "King of Judah" is literally "king of Israel." This was not the only time where the Chronicler used the term "Israel" to refer to Judah. As far as he was concerned, the divided kingdom was an aberration. All the kings of Judah were the legitimate kings of all Israel. (See note on 20:34.)

21:5 Jehoram became co-regent with his father Jehoshaphat in 853 B.C., and his official reign was 848–841 B.C.

21:6 "Ahab's daughter" was Athaliah, also the granddaughter of Omri (22:2).

21:7 In contrast to the "house of David" here, 2 Kg 8:19 uses "Judah." It also says "because of His servant David." The Chronicler emphasizes the covenant that promises a dynasty to David. "A lamp" indicates a house is occupied; so the house of David would survive.

21:10 "Today," that is, at the time the Chronicler wrote.

21:19 "Two full years" is literally "two days." Most modern translations understand the Hebrew word for "days" in the plural to mean a year. Otherwise, it seems to contradict the longer period of illness implied in v. 15 above. Some interpret the expression to mean his intestines came out two days before he died. The "fire" was not a cremation, but a ritual of honor (see note on 16:14).

22:2 "22 years old": the Hebrew text says "forty-two," in contradiction to 2 Kg 8:26, the Septuagint, and the Syriac version. It is best to understand a textual error here and follow the majority opinion of 22 years. The term "granddaughter" is literally "daughter." Hebrew idiom often uses the terms "son" and "daughter" for "descendant."

22:10 Athaliah ruled 841–835 B.C. Given only three verses to describe her reign, the Chronicler clearly did not view Athaliah's rule as legitimate. The Chronicler did not include the usual formulas about her reign that he used with the other rulers of Judah.

23:1 The narrative here emphasizes the role of the priests and Levites in the palace coup, whereas the parallel passage in 2 Kg 11 highlights the role of the military.

23:17 Athaliah was the granddaughter of the Phoenician king of Tyre, and the daughter of Ahab. It is no wonder that she had permitted the worship of Baal in the Jerusalem temple, perhaps hoping that it would replace the worship of the Lord.

24:1 Joash reigned from 835–796 B.C.

24:7 Who are the "sons of Athaliah" mentioned here? Since all the brothers of Ahaziah had been murdered, are these natural sons of her body? More likely, the word "son" is used in the sense of "supporter," a gang of thugs used by Athaliah to bully others, as in this case.

24:9 See Ex 30:11-16 for details about the half-shekel tax. It was a one-time fund-raising tax then. It was not commanded to be collected regularly. The tax was taken as a precedent in this situation to raise funds for the restoration of the temple.

24:14 The parallel passage in 2 Kg 12:13-16 says that the temple utensils were not made from the gold andsilver given for the temple restoration. The articles were made out of the surplus funds after the restoration was completed.

24:15 Long life is a sign of God's blessing, and so many understand the number "130" to be symbolic of that blessing rather than Jehoiada's actual age at death. It is unusual enough that the Chronicler recorded his age at death. There seems to be no reason not to understand his age literally, except that it was much longer than a normal lifespan.

24:21 Jesus may have referred to this incident (Mt 23:35; Lk 11:51).

25:1 Amaziah ruled from 796–782 B.C.

25:4 See Dt 24:16.

25:24 E. R. Thiele suggests that it was likely during Amaziah's captivity that Uzziah his son became co-regent.

26:3 Uzziah became co-regent in 792 B.C. Beginning in 767 B.C. he ruled in his own right until 740 B.C.

26:10 "Fertile lands" is from the Hebrew word, *karmel*, "orchard, tree farm." It is not a reference to the Carmel mountain range in the north, but to a place south of Hebron.

26:14 Unlike earlier times when the militias provided their own weapons, the king provided the material means for war.

26:15 Some have interpreted these "devices" to be catapults used to throw arrows and stones. However, such weapons were not otherwise known until 400 B.C. Ancient murals of the siege of Lachish (shortly after Uzziah's time) show defensive constructs on the walls, wooden frameworks holding shields in place, protecting archers and other defenders (Yigdal Yadin, *The Art of Warfare in Biblical Lands*). This appears to be the best explanation for this verse.

26:19 Only priests were to offer incense, according to the law (Nm 16:40). This was the sin of Aaron's sons (Lv 10:1). "Skin disease" is traditionally, "leprosy." (This was not necessarily Hansen's disease, what modern doctors call leprosy.)

26:21 Uzziah's quarantine was required by Mosaic law (Lv 13:46; Nm 5:1-14; 12:15). His disease required his son to be appointed as co-regent.

26:22 The Chronicler's source is not the canonical book of Isaiah, but some other record. We know that Isaiah had a government position and had access to government records, as well as being an eyewitness to Uzziah's reign. It was in the year that Uzziah died that Isaiah was called by the Lord to become His prophet (Is 6:1).

27:1 Jotham's co-regency was 750–740 B.C. His official reign lasted until 735 B.C.

27:6 The principle declared here is one of the main themes of the Chronicler: When one obeys the Lord, success follows. Disaster comes when one forgets what one's success is based upon (as happened in the case of Jotham's father, Uzziah).

28:1 Ahaz reigned from 735–715 B.C.

28:15 This event reminds us of Jesus' parable of the Good Samaritan, where a Samaritan helped a Judean in need (Lk 10:30-37).

29:1 Hezekiah ruled from 715–686 B.C. Although the material in 2 Kg 18-20 was substantially the same size as that given to Hezekiah here, the two accounts overlap one another very little.

29:2 The Chronicler wrote more about Hezekiah than any other king except David or Solomon. But unlike the books of Kg, in which Hezekiah's religious reforms are handled in one verse, the Chronicler devoted three chapters (chaps. 29–31) to them.

29:16 The "Kidron Valley" was a burial place, and so the proper place for the "detestable things." According to Mosaic law, corpses were unclean (Lv 22:4; Nm 19:13).

29:20 The events of vv. 20-24 and vv. 25-30 probably occurred at the same time.

29:21 "For the kingdom" probably referred to the royal dynasty.

30:2-3 Passover was normally held on the first month of the year (Ex 12:2; Lv 23:5; Nm 9:5). But exceptions were not unknown for those who had been unclean because of contact with a corpse or who had been traveling (Nm 9:10-11). Both of these exceptions were applied here. The temple and the nation were unclean due to contact with Ahaz's idols. The burial of the idols in the Kidron Valley was an important symbol in this respect (29:16). In addition, because the northern kingdom was invited to the feast, time was needed for the journey. Also, Jeroboam had changed the religious calendar by one month (1 Kg 12:32-33).

30:5 "From Beer-sheba to Dan" was the theoretical extent of the nation's territory (see 1 Ch 21:2).

30:7 See Zch 1:2-6 for a very similar exhortation. Repentance is always available.

30:25 One purpose of the nation of Israel was to declare the glory of the Lord to the nations (see Ex 6:1-6). Non-Israelites, "foreigners," had always been welcome at Passover (see Ex 12:48-49).

31:2 "Camp of the Lord": the Chronicler used the image of the tabernacle in the wilderness, another time of spiritual renewal for the nation, to refer to the temple.

31:3 Evidently Ahaz had discontinued the morning and evening offerings.

31:10 "Azariah" named here is not the same Azariah named in 26:17, nor is this one mentioned in the list of high priests in 1 Ch 6:3-15.

32:1 According to Sennacherib's own records of this campaign, he claimed to have conquered 46 Judean cities.

32:18 "They": 2 Kg 18:28 says more specifically that it was Rabshakeh who was the Assyrian spokesman before the walls of Jerusalem.

32:24 "In those days"; that is, the days following the confrontation with the Assyrians.

32:30 This is the famous "Hezekiah's tunnel" where the Siloam inscription was cut into the wall of the tunnel as work was still going on. (See 2 Kg 20:20.)

32:33 Other possible meanings of the Hebrew word for "ascent" are "upper storey, platform." The actual architectural reference is unclear. It could have been the upper level of a multilayered tomb, or even an expression of a finer quality of tomb.

33:1 Manasseh's reign began with a co-regency with Hezekiah from 697–686 B.C. He continued to reign after Hezekiah's death until 642 B.C.

33:3 The use of the plural for "Baals" indicates that many competing deities were being worshiped.

33:6 See Dt 18:9-13 for similar language. Manasseh was the personification of doing "everything wrong."

33:12 The parallel account in 2 Kg 21:1-18 does not mention this repentance, but is completely negative in its evaluation of Manasseh. The Chronicler was always ready to point out the constant availability of repentance to the believer.

33:17 The people clearly did not understand the law, where sacrifices were only to be done at the temple. The language suggests Levites were not present, but that the people themselves were conducting the sacrifices. At best, the place and context of this "worship" were inappropriate and ignorant of the law; at worst, it was deliberate syncretism.

33:21 Amon reigned from 642–640 B.C.

33:24 Since Amon was a vassal of Assyria at a time when Assyria was appearing weaker on the international scene, perhaps the conspirators were pro-Egyptian.

33:25 This execution was probably made to avoid retaliation by Assyria.

34:1 Josiah reigned from 640–609 B.C. Assyria's power declined during this period, allowing Josiah greater independence and freedom of action.

34:2 Along with Josiah, Hezekiah is the only other king who is compared to David in a positive manner (29:2).

34:3 In the "eighth year" Josiah would have been 16 years old, and 20 years old in his twelfth year (the year of his majority) when he began his cleansing of Judah.

34:6 After the fall of Samaria in 722 B.C. Josiah would have had more influence on the former northern kingdom. Although still officially an Assyrian province, that empire was pre-occupied with power struggles in Mesopotamia.

34:8 Josiah was now 26 years old and exerting his full authority as king.

34:14 Many if not most scholars believe this "book of the law" was the book of Dt. Because it is referred to as the "book of the covenant" (34:30; see Ex 24:7; 2 Kg 23:2, 21), it is also possible that the entire five books of Moses were present together.

34:30 "Book of the covenant": see note on 34:14.

35:3 There is no record of the ark having been removed from the temple. It could have happened during Ahaz's reign with the introduction of idols into the temple area (2 Kg 16:10-16), or it might have occurred during Manasseh's reign (33:7).

35:21 Neco was moving north to support Assyria against Babylonia, who was successfully pushing against Assyria's southern flanks. Josiah's motivation must have been that anything bad for Assyria was good for Israel. There is no evidence that Josiah was in any way formally allied with Babylonia.

35:25 This book of "the Dirges" (laments) for Josiah is not to be confused with the canonical book of Lamentations, which includes laments over Jerusalem's fate. The Dirges work is lost to us.

36:2 Jehoahaz's "three months" occurred in 609 B.C.

36:5 Jehoiakim reigned from 609–598 B.C. See also the prophecy of Jeremiah for additional information about his reign (Jr 26).

36:6 Jehoiakim was an Egyptian vassal, but Egypt could not protect him.

36:9 Jehoiachin's reign was in 598–597 B.C. "18 years old": the Masoretic Text reads "eight years old," but the Septuagint and 2 Kg 24:8 agree he was 18 years of age. In addition to this, Babylonian records show that Jehoiachin had five sons in 592 B.C., five years after his exile. All of this leads to the conclusion that a scribe made an error here in the Masoretic Text.

36:11 Zedekiah's reign was from 597 B.C. until the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. More information about Zedekiah may be found in 2 Kg 24:18–25:7; Jr 27:1–28:17; 34:1-22; 37:1–38:28; 39:1-7; 52:1-11.

36:21 See Lv 26:34-35,43; Jr 25:11-12; 29:10. The Babylonian exile extended from the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. to the dedication of the rebuilt temple in 516 B.C.

36:22 Verses 22-23 are verbatim with Ez 1:1-3; many believe a later editor copied these from the book of Ezr to show the historical connection and continuity of these books. The "first year" of Cyrus was 539 B.C.

36:23 Thus the Chronicler brought his story up to his own time, leaving his readers with the possibility of hope through repentance and the freedom to return and rebuild the temple in Jerusalem. See Jr 25:11-14; 28:10; Ezk 1:2-4; 6:2-5.

Introduction to Ezra

AUTHOR

The book of Ezra is a history of the early days of the return of the Jewish people from their 70 years of captivity in Babylon. The book covers the period from 538 B.C. to around 456 B.C. Two principal units make up the book. The first is Ezra 1–6, which describes the return under the leadership of Sheshbazzar and Zerubbabel and the rebuilding of the Jerusalem temple. The second is Ezra 7–10, referred to as the Ezra Memoir since it is Ezra's own account of his activities as priest and scribe to order the life of the returned Jewish community according to biblical standards.

Two features of the Ezra Memoir cause concern for some people. The first is the fact that Ezra 10 changes from first to third person reporting. The second is the realization that another part of this memoir is probably in the book of Nehemiah (Neh 8–10).

However, while it seems unusual to the modern reader for a person to speak of his own actions in the third person, this was not a problem in the ancient Near East. A perfect example of this is the fact that the Cyrus Cylinder (an archaeological artifact recording statements from King Cyrus) uses both first and third person reporting, though all of it is considered to be the statement of Cyrus.

Also, the location of part of the Ezra Memoir in the book of Nehemiah helps to tie the two books together and serves as an indicator of the unity of the two works. Another indicator of this unity is found in Nehemiah 12, where Ezra is present at the dedication of the wall.

The unity of the books of Ezra and Nehemiah is so evident that it is common to hear them referred to as a single work: Ezra/Nehemiah. This is the work of a single individual who, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, recognized the hand of God at work in this community's restoration and wrote a history of its emergence, using primary source materials to accentuate the credibility of his work.

The books of Ezra and Nehemiah share a literary bond with the books of Chronicles.
The last verses of 2 Chronicles and the first verses of Ezra are nearly identical (cp. 2 Ch 36:22-23 with Ezr 1:1-3). The verses preserve Cyrus's decree authorizing the return that coincided with the end of the 70 years of captivity as prophesied by Jeremiah (Jr 25:11). This literary bond casts the books of Ezra and Nehemiah as sequels to the events described in Chronicles. Together the three works form a history of Israel, from its beginnings to its return from exile.

The literary bond established by the repetition of Cyrus's decree in 2 Chronicles and Ezra has created considerable speculation about the authorship of the two works. Until recently, the view commonly held was that Chronicles and the two-part Ezra/Nehemiah were written by the same person. Jewish tradition credits Ezra the scribe. Subsequent detailed analysis, however, has revealed a number of significant ideological differences between Chronicles and Ezra/Nehemiah. These differences have led to the prevailing (and probably correct) view of the majority of scholars that Chronicles and Ezra/Nehemiah were written by different people.

Given the significant prominence Jewish tradition places on the importance of Ezra to the emergence of Judaism, and its attribution of authorship of Ezra and Nehemiah to him, it is possible that Ezra was responsible for the final text. However, since it appears certain that the same person did not write both Chronicles and Ezra/Nehemiah, and since there is considerable speculation that Ezra authored the Chronicles, a definitive answer to the question of the authorship of Ezra and Nehemiah cannot be given.

DATING THE TEXT

A number of suggestions have been offered for the date of the composition of Ezra and Nehemiah, from 400 B.C. to 100 B.C. Much of this speculation rests on conjectures about the reason for the composition and the number of revisions the text went through. Certainly much of the material found in the books (e.g., the Ezra Memoir, the Nehemiah Memoir, the decree of Cyrus, and the letters to and from the Persian royal court in Ezra) predates the composition of the books.

In the absence of any definitive statements resolving the question, it becomes necessary to rely on clues from the text itself. Nehemiah was still active in 433 B.C., so he must have written his own memoir sometime after that. This gives an approximate date of 400 B.C. as a likely early date for the final composition. If the Jaddua mentioned in Nehemiah 12:22 was the same person whom the first-century A.D. Jewish historian Josephus says was high priest when Alexander the Great invaded Persia, then it would make him the last mentioned high priest in Nehemiah's list of priests, and it would mean that the final composition of Ezra/Nehemiah would have to have been after 333 B.C. This identification is not certain; it serves merely to provide the latest possible date for the final composition.

THE RELIABILITY OF EZRA

Prominent in Ezra are texts of official proclamations of the Persian government (e.g., Ezr 1:1-5; 4:8-10,11-16,17-22; 5:6-17; 6:6-12; 7:11-26). Until recently many scholars doubted the authenticity of these texts. They claimed that the language sounded too theological or that they didn't follow standard Persian form. However, recent studies have silenced these criticisms. Study of the letters from the Jewish community at Elephantine, Egypt, reveals that the theological sound of the royal edicts is probably the result of the interaction of the Jewish people with the king prior to the issue of his edicts. In other words, the king (or his scribe) used language that would be familiar to the recipients. The official letters in the book are now known to be comparable in style to typical letters of the day, varying partly in whether they were written from inferiors to superiors or vice versa.

Another question that has occupied scholars is the chronological order of Ezra and Nehemiah. Some scholars have concluded that Nehemiah arrived in Jerusalem before Ezra. This has significant bearing on the historical reliability of the works since they clearly contend that Ezra preceded Nehemiah. Those who make this claim use two principal arguments.

First, there is the supposed evidence from archaeology. Some scholars argue that the archaeological data suggest that the geopolitical climate during the reign of Artaxerxes II (404–359 B.C.) was more suited to the kinds of activity in which Ezra engaged. It is certainly true that the situation with Egypt had declined considerably by the time of Artaxerxes II and that it would have been in Persia's best interest to strengthen its relationship with this buffer region as a result. But Egypt had also revolted around 459 B.C., and that rebellion was not put down until 454 B.C. So it is equally plausible that Persia could have seen the value in a stronger relationship with this outlying region at an earlier time.

Furthermore, the adherents to a late date for Ezra must remove from the biblical text the two instances in which Ezra appeared in Jerusalem with Nehemiah (Neh 8:1–10:39; 12:27-47) since Nehemiah was governor from 445–433 B.C. While some scholars differ about the date of Nehemiah's mission, most agree that he arrived in Jerusalem in the twentieth year of the reign of Artaxerxes I (445 B.C.; Neh 1:1; 2:1). The first time Ezra and Nehemiah appeared together occurred less than two months after Nehemiah arrived in Jerusalem. Nehemiah recorded that he was in Jerusalem three days before he challenged the people to rebuild the wall (Neh 2:11). It took 52 days to complete the wall (Neh 6:15). The dedication, at which Ezra was present, would most likely have occurred shortly afterward (Neh 12:27-36). In any event, Nehemiah recorded that he returned to Babylon in the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes's reign (433 B.C.), and the dedication most certainly would have been conducted before he left. Ezra's significance in these events is totally unexplained if he had not already been active in Jerusalem.

The second line of argument is based on supposed discrepancies in the two texts. Critics argue the following points: (1) Jerusalem was better populated during Ezra's time than during Nehemiah's time (cp. Ezr 10:1; Neh 11:1). (2) The high priest during Ezra's activity was Jehohanan, who appears to have been the grandson of Eliashib, who was high priest during Nehemiah's activity (Neh 3:1,20). (3) Nehemiah had to appoint temple treasurers (Neh 13:13), whereas they were already present in Ezra's time (Ezr 8:33). (4) Ezra thanked God for giving them a wall in Judah and Jerusalem, whereas Nehemiah is credited with building Jerusalem's wall (Neh 6:15).

For many reasons, these arguments do not hold up. For example, Ezra 10:1 refers to a large gathering of Israelite men. It does not say they all were inhabitants of Jerusalem. It is probable that the Eliashib mentioned in Nehemiah 3:1 and 20 was Eliashib II, a later priest. Nehemiah 13:13 does not say there were no treasurers. Verse 10 says only that the Levites and singers had not received their allocation from the temple storehouse. Nehemiah said that he appointed trustworthy men to assure this didn't happen again. It is possible that the previous treasurers were simply not trustworthy and had to be replaced. The wall Ezra referred to was probably a figurative wall, that is, God's hedge of protection, since it refers to Judah as well as Jerusalem. Obviously, Nehemiah's wall pertained only to Jerusalem. The arguments for reversing the missions of Ezra and Nehemiah are not adequate to overrule the biblical chronology.

Ezra Study Notes

1:1 Shortly after Cyrus the Great assumed rule over the former Babylonian Empire in 539 B.C., Cyrus gave an account of his conquest of Babylon on a clay cylinder. The Cyrus Cylinder, inscribed in 538 B.C. in Babylonian cuneiform, claims that he began a campaign of restoration. This included allowing displaced people to return to their homelands and returning statues of deities taken from their homelands in Babylonian victories. Skeptics note that the magnanimity shown by Cyrus toward the Jewish exiles was not due to divine intervention. It was a typical policy toward displaced people under his rule. This is undeniable, but this fact of history does not diminish the significance of the return of the Jews from exile. After all, the return was a fulfillment of prophecy. Isaiah prophesied the rise of Cyrus and his benevolence toward Israel 150 years earlier (see Is 44:28–45:7). Furthermore, the timing was impeccable. Cyrus's decree coincided with Jeremiah's prophecy that the captivity in Babylon would last 70 years (see Jr 25:11).

1:2-4 Some scholars claim that Cyrus's edict is not genuine. They believe that Cyrus would never have spoken in these terms. However, the Cyrus Cylinder (see note on v. 1), as well as inscriptions from the cities of Uruk and Ur contain language by Cyrus that reads very much like parts of this edict. Furthermore, the biblical character of the language is very likely the result of Cyrus's interaction with Jews with whom he conversed as he prepared to authorize the return of the Jews and the rebuilding of the temple. This kind of interaction may have been fairly common. For example, a papyrus from the Jewish community in Elephantine, Egypt, dated around 407 B.C., asks Bagoas, governor of Judah, to authorize the rebuilding of their temple in Elephantine.

2:1 As some people debate the appropriateness of the Jewish presence in Israel, it is important to remember that God promised this land to Abraham and his descendants (Gn 17:1-8). This passage is used by some to lend support to the Jewish claim to the land of Israel. The returnees traced their ancestry to this land. No other identifiable group can claim a more ancient relationship to the Holy Land.

2:2 There is no reason to doubt the accuracy of the list's head count. It is probable that it represents a series of returns, so that all these people did not return as one group. The scope of the captivity was extensive (see2 Kg 24:14-16). After 70 years, this exiled community would have grown even more numerous. The total number that returned would be much higher if women and children had been counted. Recent demographic analyses of the archaeological data have led some to propose that the province of Judah never had this many people within its borders in the fifth century B.C., even if one assumes this list records successive returns covering over a century. However, these studies are based on incomplete data and a number of suppositions about population density. In addition, no consideration has been given to the possible depleting effects of disease, conflict, and discouragement that may have caused many people to move on to more favorable locations, like Elephantine, for example. This list also occurs at Neh 7:4-73. For an explanation of its reoccurrence, see note on Neh 7:4-69.

2:3 This group is not to be confused with the community of faith. While it is likely that many of those listed had a saving faith in God, faith was not the principal criteria for this list. Ancestry was the determining factor. In all times, saving faith is the sole determining factor for salvation (Rm 2:28-29).

2:62 To qualify for service in the priesthood, certain standards had to be met. The ancestry standards established here reveal that ability or desire were not the only criteria for some areas of spiritual service.
2:63 God had specified the use of Urim and Thummim for discerning His will (see Ex 28:30). This practice does not persist in the church since all believers now have the Holy Spirit indwelling them and also have the complete written revelation ofGod's will in the Bible to help them discern God's will.

2:68 Some believers today discourage the use of money for buildings and other expenses that they consider to be unnecessary for the church's mission, claiming that all money should go toward reaching and helping people. The freewill gifts contributed for the rebuilding of the temple, however, are regarded positively (cp.1 Ch 29:1-9).

3:2 Some scholars claim that the Pentateuch came into existence through a gradual process of additions and edits, which started some time around 950 B.C. However, this community attributed its origin to Moses.

3:3 God's people are a "set-apart" people. This distinction between believers and non-believers has led some out of fear or resentment to persecute Christians. Just because believers have deeply held beliefs and practices that are contrary to popular culture is no justification to persecute them.

3:4 The returnees knew that there was a proper way to worship God and that any form of religious expression was not necessarily pleasing to God. This is an important principle for today when so many people advocate that there is more than one way to God. Jesus said that He is the only way to God (Jn 14:6).

3:6 The people began to offer sacrifices to God before they built the temple. Relationship with God does not depend on a building or any other religious structure. The institutions of worship may facilitate worship but they can never substitute for it.

3:10 The descendants of Asaph (see 1 Ch 15:16-17) used a musical instrument in this worship event. The use of musical instruments in worship is not uncommon or unbiblical. They are often called for in the psalms. See the heading for Ps 67 and the calls for musical accompaniment in Ps 98:4-6 and 150:3-5.

3:11 "All the people gave a great shout of praise." Worship is not reserved for the professional clergy. All believers may, and are expected to, engage in worship. Worship comes in many styles, from subdued to exuberant, and when done in the right spirit according to biblical standards, they are all pleasing to God.

4:3 Some people see an arrogant attitude at work in this rejection of help. However, the Jews were applying an important spiritual principle—service to God should be conducted by God's people. They should be very wary of partnerships that involve unbelievers in fulfilling their service to God.

4:9 Some scholars have questioned the authenticity of the letters reproduced in the book of Ezra. Recent scholarship has reversed this negative assessment. See the Introduction for a discussion of the authenticity of the official documents in the book of Ezra.

4:20 Some scholars doubt the Bible's depiction of a once-powerful kingdom of Israel. However, the enemies used Israel's glorious past as a principal argument to convince Artaxerxes to stop the rebuilding project. Artaxerxes's principal motivation for complying with their request was his discovery in Persia's historical archives that this was indeed part of Israel's past.

5:1 The government had the power to prevent continued work on the temple, but this constituted an improper intrusion of government in religion. The prophets Haggai and Zechariah opposed this intrusion and called the people back to the work. This episode provides a good example of the need for a sound policy of separation of church and state. The state should not have the power to dictate to the church. God created both institutions, but He gave them separate responsibilities (cp. Rm 13:1-7).

5:5 Contrary to the opinions of some, God is activelyengaged in helping His people with their work. He is not unknowing or uncaring. He can intervene in whatever way He chooses (Is 59:1).

5:12 People cannot live any way they choose without consequences. The judgment of God is a reality. His judgment may come immediately, or He may choose to delay His judgment, but no one should think that God is indifferent to sin. God's people are held to this standard as well. In fact, it is likely that God expects more from His people who have been given the truth of His will (see Heb 6:4-8; 10:31; 1 Pt 4:17-18).

6:8 While it is preferable not to take government money for ministry activities, this passage reveals that the Bible does not condemn such assistance. However, a ministry must be very careful if it chooses to take government funding to assist its work, for it is always possible that government intrusion will follow government investment.

6:18 Here is another example of this community's belief that Moses wrote the Pentateuch. See note on 3:2 for an explanation.

6:21 Spiritual holiness was expected of those who worshiped God. Today's church could learn from this early community. Church discipline has fallen by the wayside as contemporary congregations attempt to shed their image of exclusivity. However, God expects to be served by a holy people. The church today must demand that church members conduct themselves according to certain spiritual standards that honor the faith community and God (see Rm 12:1-2; 1 Pt 1:13-16).

7:6 The people of Israel had a high view of their Scriptures. While they credited Moses with authorship of the Pentateuch, they credited God as the source of Moses' text. Unfortunately this belief is not common among many scholars today, who consider the Bible to be merely a human text.

7:24 The exemption of religious workers from state taxation is not a new practice. Artaxerxes instructed the government not to impose any monetary demands on those engaged in religious service. The church should be free to engage in its work without government interference or hindrance, except when the church's practices break civil laws.

7:25 Ezra was a religious as well as a civil leader. His service in both of these spheres provides important guidance on the appropriate role of believers in public life. It is completely acceptable for people of faith to serve in government positions. Membership in the spiritual household does not disqualify someone from service in the public sector. Other biblical examples of believers who served in public positions are Joseph, Daniel, and Esther.

7:26 Artaxerxes allowed the requirements of religious law to become state law in Israel. This was appropriate since Israel was both a religious and a political entity. It would be inappropriate to apply the religious laws of the church to the state in the same way today since the church is not a political entity.

9:3 Ezra's reaction to the intermarriages was not driven by racism. His concern was a spiritual one. These "surrounding peoples" (v. 2) adhered to other faiths. Ezra was deeply saddened that the people, especially the leaders, had jeopardized the spiritual purity of the community by allying themselves with people of other faiths. God had instructed His people not to adopt other beliefs (see Dt 11:13-32).

9:11-12 Ezra's recitation of scriptural injunctions is not a verbatim quote of a specific passage. But this should not be construed to mean that he didn't know the precise language of the passages to which he referred. Nor should his loose wording be construed to mean that he didn't believe in the verbal inspiration of Scripture. The text gives no indication that Ezra thought he was quoting a specific passage or that he was trying to. Ezra was expressing what he understood to be the meaning of God's instructions regarding intermarriage. At times, he quoted God's instructions verbatim. At other times he paraphrased them.

10:3 Though some consider this solution to be too harsh, it is important to understand it in light of the situation. Israel was a political entity as well as a spiritual entity. The intermarriages should be understood from a nationalistic perspective. These intermarriages jeopardized all of Israel. If they resulted in a failure of the people to comply with God's standards, the entire nation was at risk of suffering God's judgment once again (9:10-15). Ezra's solution is unacceptable for the church today. Since the church is not a political entity, it is not threatened in the same way if some members intermarry and go astray. While God's judgment may very well fall on some congregations that allow non-Christian influences to lead them astray, this judgment would not affect all other Christians since the church is decentralized. Furthermore, the contemporary church benefits from additional guidance on the issue of divorce. Jesus reiterated God's abhorrence of divorce (Mt 19:4-9), and Paul instructed believers not to divorce unbelieving spouses (1 Co 7:10-17).

Introduction to Nehemiah

AUTHOR

The book of Nehemiah is the second part of the two-part sequel to the books of Chronicles (the other part being the book of Ezra). The book of Nehemiah, which covers the period from 445 B.C. to sometime after 433 B.C., relates the continuing efforts of the Jewish people who returned from 70 years of captivity in the Babylonian Empire to reestablish themselves in their homeland. The principal person in this part of the history is Nehemiah, a Jew who had attained the influential position of cupbearer in the court of the Persian King Artaxerxes.

Nehemiah was the last in a succession of Jewish leaders in the biblical record to help the people achieve a stable and vibrant life in the Persian province known as Yehud, or Judah. Nehemiah followed Sheshbazzar (who led the first return), Zerubbabel (who led the temple rebuilding project), and Ezra the priest and scribe (who led the spiritual renewal of the people). Nehemiah's principal contribution to the emerging community was the rebuilding of Jerusalem's wall, which had been destroyed in 586 B.C. by the Babylonians. The apocryphal text Sirach praises Nehemiah's successful completion of this task (Sir 49:13).

Scholars are not in agreement about the dates for Nehemiah's activity. Some suggest that the growing problem of unrest in Egypt in the late fifth century B.C. prompted the Persians to strengthen the buffer province of Judah for security purposes. The matter is complicated by the fact that Nehemiah credited a Persian king by the name of Artaxerxes for his permission to return to Judah. Two Persian kings from this period were named Artaxerxes: Artaxerxes I (464–424 B.C.) and Artaxerxes II (404–359 B.C.). Relating Nehemiah's mission to these two kings results in very different dates, beginning in either 445 B.C. or 385 B.C.

While credible arguments can be made for either date, the earlier date is preferred by most scholars. There are a couple of key reasons for that preference. First, a letter from the Jewish colony in Elephantine, Egypt, written around 407 B.C., indicates that Judah had a different governor (a man named Bagoas) at the end of the fifth century B.C. This fact favors the earlier date for Nehemiah's governorship. Second, the biblical text of Nehemiah places Nehemiah and Ezra together on a couple of occasions, at the covenant renewal (8:9) and at the dedication of the wall (12:36). Consequently, if one accepts the late date for Nehemiah's mission, then one must also accept a late date for Ezra's mission—or else reject the reliability of these passages.

THE RELIABILITY OF NEHEMIAH

As with the book of Ezra, the book of Nehemiah consists of a number of source documents. Its principal source is known as the Nehemiah Memoir, attributed to Nehemiah. The full extent of the Nehemiah Memoir is uncertain, but it definitely includes the autobiographical sections (1:1–7:73; 12:27-43; 13:4-31). The other major section is attributed to the Ezra Memoir (chap. 8 and probably chaps. 9–10). This unit is written in the third person and mentions Ezra numerous times (8:1-2,4-6,9,13). One also finds a number of lists, including these: (1) a list of the residents of Jerusalem (11:3-24); (2) a list of the farming settlements occupied by members of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin (11:25-36); and (3) a list of priests and Levites (12:1-26).

While the book of Nehemiah can be read independently of the book of Ezra, it probably was not intended to be read in isolation, for it comprises a crucial part of the message begun in the book of Ezra. For a description of the function of this book in the work Ezra/Nehemiah, refer to the introduction to the book of Ezra.

Many people treat the OT historical texts as works of fiction that attempt to communicate certain values or lessons. They must overlook many evidences of history telling in order to do this. In Nehemiah these evidences include such history telling devices as (1) the dating of events (e.g., "the month of Chislev in the twentieth year," which was November–December 445 B.C.; 1:1); (2) references to historical settings confirmed by the archaeological record (e.g., Susa is known to have been one of the three capitals of the Persian Empire as well as the spring residence of the Persian kings; 1:1); and (3) the naming of historical personages (e.g., King Artaxerxes; Sanballat, who is known from the Elephantine Papyri to have been governor of Samaria; 2:1,10).

Nehemiah Study Notes

1:1 Some scholars discredit the historical reliability of the Neh text by pointing to alleged dating inaccuracies as evidence that the writer was not an eyewitness of the events described or that he was ignorant of key historical details. However, the author was most certainly a careful historian.

1:7 Some scholars believe that the Pentateuch (Gn–Dt) was not written until the post-exilic period. The numerous references in the book of Nehemiah to Mosaic authorship of authoritative passages found in the Pentateuch and the intense reverence the people felt toward many of these passages argue for Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch. Some of the Pentateuchal passages attributed to Moses in the book of Nehemiah include Dt 4:25-27; 28:64, cp. Neh 1:8; Lv 26:33; Dt 4:27; 26:12, cp. Neh 8:10; Lev 23:34-43, cp. Neh 8:14-15; Ex 16:23, cp. Neh 9:14; Dt 7:3, cp. Neh 10:29-30; Dt 23:3-6, cp. Neh 13:1.

1:11 Some have misunderstood the importance of what Nehemiah divulged at the end of this verse, thinking that the cupbearer was a lowly position. To the contrary, the cupbearer in the Persian court served in a position of honor and influence, second only to the crown prince in relation to the king. Nehemiah's relationship to the king actually explains why he received such a positive response to his request and the subsequent authority he exercised in the province of Judah.

2:3 Rightful claim to Jerusalem is hotly debated today. This is nothing new. Nehemiah's later response to Sanballat and his associates suggests that even in his day rightful claim to Jerusalem was contested (see v. 20). Nehemiah's ancestral relationship to Jerusalem helps support the priority of the Jewish claim to this ancient city.

2:8 Some people doubt God's active involvement in the affairs of people. Nehemiah acknowledged just the opposite. He knew that God was responsible for his success (see also v. 18; 4:15,20; 6:16). God's direct involvement in Nehemiah's success also serves as a reminder that He had not abandoned His people. His covenant with the nation of Israel is an everlasting covenant (see Gn 17:1-9).

2:10 The animosity that Israel's neighbors felt toward the nation should not be thought of as a recent development brought on by the restoration of the nation of Israel in 1948. Hostilities were the same in Nehemiah's day.

2:16 A significant population was already established in Jerusalem when Nehemiah arrived. This fact helps to support the biblical order of the return, in contrast to the contention of some that Nehemiah's return preceded Ezra.

4:15 Some have suggested that God is a helpless spectator, unable to prevent misfortune. Nehemiah's experience reveals a much different God. He reveals that God is a sovereign ruler. People can only do so much. When their plans conflict with God's plans, He is able and willing to step in to thwart them (see Gn 50:20; Pr 21:1).

5:15 There is no consensus on the political status of Judah prior to Nehemiah's appointment as governor of the region. Some argue that Judah was under the administration of governors based in Samaria prior to Nehemiah's appointment. However, both Sheshbazzar (Ezr 5:14) and Zerubbabel (Hg 1:1,14) are referred to as governors of this region. Additionally, N. Avigad, *Bullae and Seals from a Post-Exilic Judean Archive,* has identified inscriptions excavated in the region that point strongly to the likelihood that there were governors over the region known as "Yehud" (Judah) prior to Nehemiah's governorship. The archaeological support for the existence of other governors of Judah also helps to offset the possibility that Nehemiah was criticizing Sheshbazzar and Zerubbabel in this passage. He could easily be referring to other governors of Judah.

6:10 The existence of the temple prior to the completion of the walls provides additional support for the biblical order of the return to Jerusalem as Zerubbabel–Ezra–Nehemiah, rather than Zerubbabel–Nehemiah–Ezra as some have suggested. Zerubbabel led the

people to build the temple; Nehemiah led them to build the wall.

7:4-69 This list also occurs at Ezr 2:1-70, but this should not be a cause for doubting the reliability of either book. Most scholars agree that this list existed separately and was incorporated into both books. In most cases differences in names and numbers between the two lists can be attributed to scribal errors that occurred in the copying process over the centuries. In other cases, material may have been added or deleted to provide the kind of information that the authors wanted the reader to know. For example, Neh 7:70 records the contribution made by a governor, whereas this is not mentioned in the list in Ezr. It must be remembered that the doctrine of inspiration applies to the original text as the author intended it, not to the text as it may have existed before it was incorporated or after it was affected by various problems during its transmission from one generation to the next. Consequently, both lists are equally inspired, and they fulfill the purpose for which they were each intended. It is, in fact, the authorial changes made to previously existing material that can often give clues to aspects the author wanted to stress. In this case, for example, it is significant that the list in Nehemiah includes this note about the contributions made by a governor, since this memoir was written by Governor Nehemiah, who was concerned that God would look favorably on his contributions to this community, evidenced by his numerous "Remember me" statements (e.g., 5:19; 13:14). For additional discussion of this list, see note on Ezr 2:2.

7:65 See the note on Ezr 2:63 for an explanation of the significance of the mention of the Urim andThummim.

7:73 The Jewish people can trace their ancestors to the land surrounding Jerusalem as well as to the city itself. This ancient connection to the land supports the Jewish claim to their current residency there. See 11:20 for further support.

8:1 Ezra's abrupt appearance at this point and the shift to third person reporting has led some scholars to contend that some portion of this material (8:1–10:39) was added to Nehemiah's memoir by a later editor and that these events actually preceded Nehemiah's presence in Judah. This is probably partially correct. Most likely this material was placed here by the author of Ezra/Nehemiah. However, Neh 8:9 includes Nehemiah in this event. It seems preferable to conclude that Ezra was active during Nehemiah's governorship, and that this material was inserted at this point because it fit in the actual chronology of the events of the return. Nehemiah's memoir notes that the wall was completed on the "twenty-fifth day of Elul," which was the sixth month in the Jewish calendar (6:15). The covenant renewal ceremony began on the first day of the seventh month (8:2).

8:3 Some scholars argue that much of the OT Scriptures were written or obtained their current form during the post-exilic period. The reverence that the people show for the Scriptures in this public reading dictates against this argument. Their response suggests that the people had a long-standing knowledge of and love for their sacred writings.

8:14 Instructions for observance of the Festival of Booths are found in Lv 23:34-42. This passage in Neh attributes these instructions to Moses, providing further support for an early date for the Pentateuch and its Mosaic authorship.

9:6 The Bible does not support naturalistic explanations for the existence of life (see Gn 1:1-31). Here the Levites confess their belief that God gave life to all things. The entire community accepted this confession (cp. 10:28-29).

9:7 The following confession provides a fairly comprehensive summary of Israel's past. It is evident that their history was well known, which suggests that much of it was already written and in circulation prior to the post-exilic period.

9:8 The Levites noted that God had given the land of Israel to Abraham by a covenant commitment (see Gn 17:1-9). They believed this covenant was still valid. In fact, they considered their restoration to the land as an indication that God is righteous. His failure to keep His covenant commitment would have been an unrighteous act. God would be unrighteous today if He were to renege on His covenant commitment to Abraham.

9:10-11 Many people today question whether or not the miracles recorded in the Bible actually occurred. These Jews, who had suffered so long in captivity and were now restored to their homeland, did not question them. They believed their God had performed these miracles in their distant past.

9:30 Recently scholars have attempted to equate Israel's prophets with similar figures in contemporary near eastern cultures. They believe prophets constituted a unique social institution of ancient near eastern cultures, speaking to their communities about their social and religious responsibilities. While it is evident that these other cultures had their own so-called prophets, they were not speaking on behalf of the Lord, but rather on behalf of their own gods. God warned the people not to listen to these other prophets (see Dt 18:9-22). Even some of Israel's own prophets were false (Dt 13:1-5; Jr 23:9-40).

10:30-39 What follows is a commitment to a wide range of responsibilities, which the people ascribe to the "law of God given through God's servant Moses" (v. 29). The breadth of the responsibilities provides further evidence that a large body of legislation was already in existence and considered authoritative. What we now call the Pentateuch must have been in existence prior to this commitment service.

13:3 Racists cite this act as support for their bigotry. They are mistaken when they do so, however. God'sexclusion of Ammonites and Moabites from the assembly was in response to their refusal to assist the Israelites during the wilderness journey (Nm 21:21-24; 22:1–24:25; Dt 23:3-6). Their race was not the issue; their refusal to assist God's people was the issue. These people experienced God's vow to bless those who bless Abraham and to curse those who curse Him (Gn 12:3; 27:29; Nm 24:9). This vow is still in force today.

13:23-28 Nehemiah's action does not reveal a racist attitude, nor can it be used today as support for discrimination against others on the basis of race or ethnicity. His concern about these foreign women was spiritual in nature. These other peoples were not true believers. Consequently, they represented a threat to the spiritual integrity of the community. Nehemiah's reference to Solomon makes clear that he was concerned about the negative spiritual ramifications of these marriages. Solomon's marriages to foreign women resulted in his own worship of false gods and the introduction of the worship of false gods in Israel (see 1 Kg 11:1-13). Nehemiah's concern is echoed in the Apostle Paul's exhortation not to be "mismatched with unbelievers" (2 Co 6:14). See note on Ezr 10:3 for more discussion.

Esther Articles

How Can We Know the Bible Includes the Correct Books?

Norman L. Geisler

Why are there only these 66 books in the Bible? Because God is the ultimate author of the Bible, and He inspired only these 66. All Scripture is breathed out of the mouth of God (Mt 4:4; 2 Tm 3:16). What the human authors wrote did not originate with them but with God, who moved upon them (2 Sm 23:2; 1 Pt 1:20-21). So God *determined* which books would be in the Bible, and the people of God merely *discovered* which books these were. Believers did not bestow authority on them; God did.

How did the people of God discover that only these 66 books were inspired of God? Because only these had the "fingerprints" of God on them. These "fingerprints" of God include characteristics reflected in the answers to these questions: (1) Was it written by a prophet of God, such as Moses (Ex 4:1-9) or Paul (1 Co 9:1)? (2) Was it confirmed by acts of God (Heb 1:1; 2:3-4)? Did the human author tell the truth of God known from other revelations and facts (Dt 18:20-22)? (3) Did it have the power of God to edify (2 Tm 3:16-17; Heb 4:12)? (4) Was it accepted and collected by the people of God?

The collection of books known as the canon of Scripture was made gradually as the books were written. When Moses wrote the first five books of the Bible, they were taken immediately and put in the most holy place (Dt 31:24-26). The book of Joshua, his successor, was added to the collection upon his death (Jos 24:26). Likewise the books of Samuel (1 Sm 10:25) and the prophets were added after they wrote them (Zch 7:12). Daniel had a collection of Moses' books and the prophetic writings up to Daniel's time, including the book of his contemporary, Jeremiah (Dn 9:2).

The so-called missing books of the OT, known as the Apocrypha (meaning "hidden" or "doubtful"), are not missing and do not belong in the OT for many reasons. (1) Unlike the canonical books, the apocryphal books do not have either an explicit or implicit claim to be inspired by God. In fact, some even disclaim being prophetic (cp. 1 Mac 9:27; 14:41). (2) They were written between 250 B.C. and the first century A.D., but according to Judaism, the Spirit of prophecy had departed from Israel before that time, by about 400 B.C. (3) The Jewish historian Josephus gave the names and numbers of the authentic Jewish OT, which correspond exactly with the 39 books of our OT (*Against Apion* 1.8). Judaism, which produced these books, has never accepted them into its Bible (the Hebrew Scriptures, corresponding to our OT).

(5) Neither Jesus nor the apostles ever cited any of the Apocrypha in the NT as inspired. (6) Most of the church fathers of the first four centuries of the Christian church did not accept these books as inspired. (7) Jerome, the great Roman Catholic scholar (c. A.D. 420) who translated the Latin Vulgate Bible, emphatically rejected the apocryphal books. (8) The acceptance of these books in A.D. 1546 by the Roman Catholic Church is unjustified since: (a) they were the wrong group to make this decision (Christians, not Jews); (b) it took place at the wrong time (sixteenth century A.D.); and (c) it was done for the wrong reasons (for example, to support the doctrine of prayers for the dead [see 2 Mac 12:45] in response to the Reformation and biblical teaching to the contrary [Heb 9:27]).

The NT books were also written by apostles and prophets of God (Eph 2:20), who were confirmed by acts of God (2 Co 12:12; Heb 1:1; 2:3-4), and their books were immediately accepted into the growing canon of Scripture. Luke acknowledged that other narratives were written (Lk 1:1) in his time (possibly Matthew and Mark). In 1 Timothy 5:18, Paul cited the Gospel of Luke (10:7) as "Scripture" alongside the OT. The Apostle Peter referred to Paul's epistles as "Scripture," just like the OT (2 Pt 3:16). The first-century church publicly read and circulated the books written by apostles and

prophets (Col 4:16; 1 Th 5:27). What is more, the early Christian fathers, beginning in the first century, collected every one of the 27 books of the NT and cited almost every verse and over 36,000 quotations! From the second century A.D. on, there were collections of these books and translation in other languages, such as Syriac and Old Latin. All groups of Christendom, including Roman Catholics, Eastern Orthodox, and Protestants, accept all and only the 27 books of the NT as the inspired Word of God, right alongside the 39 books of the OT.

The apocryphal books of the second and third centuries A.D. are universally rejected by the Christian church. There are many good reasons for this. (1) They were not written by the apostles whose names they bear, since the apostles died in the first century. (2) They contain many heresies and doctrinal errors. (3) They claim to contain childhood miracles of Jesus, but John said Jesus did not perform any miracles until He was an adult (Jn 2:11). (3) They contain highly embellished accounts of Gospel stories, indicating they were later fabrications. (4) They are rejected by every section of official Christendom.

In brief, only the 66 books of the common canon claim to be and prove to be the divinely inspired, infallible, and inerrant Word of God. That is, only these books were inspired of God, written by prophets of God, collected by the people of God, and preserved by the providence of God for the spiritual edification of the people of God (2 Tm 3:16-17).

Does the Bible Demean Women?

by Sharon James

If there is an unforgivable sin today, it is that of sexism. We are conditioned by modern presuppositions about equality to react against any role distinctions for men and women. When we read that God created woman as the "helper" (Gn 2:18), that "the man is the head of the woman" (1 Co 11:3), that wives should submit (Eph 5:22), or that only men are to lead the church (1 Tm 2:12), we instinctively think, *How unfair!* The issue is even more serious because throughout history men have used their superior physical strength to exploit women, and sometimes the Bible has been misquoted to justify abuse of women.

It is sadly true that, since the fall of humanity into sin, male leadership has often been expressed in sinful oppression (Gn 3:16). It is also sadly true that, often in church history, the gifts of women have not been properly affirmed. Yet historically, wherever Christianity has spread, the status of women has improved. Those countries where women are most exploited today are those with least exposure to the gospel. The Bible teaches that men and women were made equally in God's image (Gn 1:27-28) and that all human life is sacred. Christians have been among the first to provide education and other rights for women.

What about the intrinsic patriarchy of Scripture? Evangelical feminists (egalitarians) reject role distinctions. They argue that the Bible was written in a patriarchal context but that we have moved beyond that today. So marriage is an equal partnership with mutual submission (see Gn 2:24; Mt 19:4-5; Eph 5:31), and women should engage in every ministry in the church. But their efforts to explain away the "difficult texts" (for instance, 1 Tm 2:8-15) are unconvincing. Feminist scholars who reject the authority of Scripture simply say that the Bible is wrong on this issue.

We should be willing to challenge contemporary presuppositions in the light of Scripture.

Presupposition 1: Equality means sameness. Talk of different roles is discriminatory.

Response: Equality does not mean sameness. The three persons of the Trinity are equal in deity but different in role.

Presupposition 2: Difference in role relates directly to personal worth. Submission equals relegation.

Response: Submission does not mean being of lesser worth. The Son submits to the Father, while being equal in deity, and His submission is His glory.

Presupposition 3: Women will be empowered only when they have become the same as men (filling the same jobs and reaching the same status).

Response: Women do not have to fill the same jobs as men in order to be empowered. This idea insults the large number of women who regard relational success as of greater importance than career success. The Bible honors those women who were wives, mothers, and homemakers (Pr 31; 1 Tm 5:9-10,14) as well as women who ministered and worked in other ways.

If we abandon false presuppositions, we can see that the Bible affirms women. God wonderfully designed them to bear and nurture new life, equipping them in a multitude of ways (physical, emotional, psychological) for that task. The calling of wife and mother is an exalted one. The Bible also affirms the calling of single women (1 Co 7:34), those who are unable to have biological

children: they can be "spiritual mothers" to many. God equips women with distinctive strengths that can be used not only in the family but also in many areas of ministry as well as in the workplace.

Those men who lead the church are responsible for equipping other members, including women, for ministry (Eph 4:12). The NT mentions many women who were involved in important ministries. Mary Magdalene, Joanna, and Susanna traveled with Jesus and the Twelve and supported His ministry financially (Lk 8:1-3). While all but one of the disciples was in hiding following Jesus' arrest, several women witnessed Jesus' death and prepared His body for burial (Mt 27:55). Jesus first appeared to women following His resurrection (Mt 28:1-7). The church at Jerusalem met at the home of Mary, mother of John Mark, apparently a woman of means (Ac 12:12). Paul commended Phoebe and other female co-workers (Rm 16); Euodia and Syntyche contended with him in the cause of the gospel (Php 4:3); Priscilla and her husband taught Apollos (Ac 18:26); women prayed and prophesied in the meetings of the Corinthian church (1 Co 11:5); godly widows were placed on an official list—probably to receive aid and for a ministry of prayer and practical service (1 Tm 5:3-10). Many believe that female deacons were involved with mercy ministries (1 Tm 3:11). Elders were to equip mature women to teach younger women (Ti 2:3-5).

Those who see defined gender roles in Scripture maintain that the Bible explains the meaning behind gender distinctions. Masculine strength can be for *protection* and *provision*. Many women are gifted with a "helper design"—relational capacities to *nurture* and *care*. These distinctive qualities, and the way we relate to each other, reflect something deep within God Himself. In short, a closer look at Scripture shows that women are honored and affirmed in the Bible. They are not second class in His eyes.

Introduction to Esther

AUTHOR

The book of Esther is anonymous but Jewish tradition maintains that Mordecai wrote it. This tradition is plausible in the fact that Mordecai was an eyewitness or had access to all of the eyewitnesses to the events narrated in the book. As Ahasuerus's prime minister, he may well have placed his account in the official Persian archives (9:32; 10:2). The Hebrew of Esther is highly polished. The writer was skilled in character and plot development and in creating narrative tension.

DATE

The book of Esther is an account of the Jewish people living in exile in Persia. It recounts how the hatred of one man for the Jews nearly resulted in the eradication of the Jewish people in the entire Persian Empire. Events in the book of Esther took place during the reign of Ahasuerus I (486–465 B.C.). Ahasuerus is the Hebrew form of his name; Xerxes is the Greek form; Khshayarsha is the Persian form. The events described in the book occurred between 483–473 B.C.

GOD IN ESTHER

Some question the appropriateness of the book's presence in the Bible because of the lack of any direct mention of God. Those who translated Esther from Hebrew into Greek (second century B.C.) were apparently so concerned by the lack of reference to God, they inserted more than 100 verses with numerous mentions of God. Protestants have accepted as Hebrew Scripture only what was in Hebrew manuscripts.

While the omission of God is unusual, the book shows considerable evidence of belief in the active involvement of God in the events described. In fact, direct mention of God is hardly required. The outcome of the book is so unexpected that it cannot be explained without acknowledging the work of God behind the scenes. This would certainly be an appropriate way for a people who may feel forgotten by God to see afresh that, while God may be hidden from their sight, He certainly hasn't abandoned them. The narrative reflects the way the exiles feel and causes them to see God working in their own circumstances in the same way they see Him working on behalf of these fellow exiles.

In addition there are several clear evidences that characters in the story believed in God. For example, Mordecai and Esther are called Jews, which at the very least identifies them as among God's covenant people (2:5-7). Mordecai refused to bow to Haman, indicating that his faith would not allow him to bow to anyone except his God (3:2). The Jewish people's allegiance to another law suggests their commitment to the law of Moses (3:8). The people fasted—a typical practice in urgent prayer (4:3,16). Mordecai spoke with certainty that the Jewish people would not be annihilated, revealing a strong faith in God's care for the Jewish people (4:14). Zeresh informed Haman that if Mordecai was Jewish, his "downfall [was] certain," reflecting a clear understanding that a powerful hand protected the Jewish people (6:13).

Finally, the book is filled with instances of incredible reversals of fortune that can only be ascribed to the presence of a powerful guiding hand. Vashti was removed and Esther took her place. Haman was hanged on the gallows he had built for Mordecai's death. Zeresh counseled Haman to have Mordecai hanged and then informed him that he would be the one destroyed instead. The Jewish people defeated the enemies who were intending their defeat.

THE RELIABILITY OF ESTHER

Many scholars doubt the historicity of the events described in the book because there is no evidence outside the Bible for some of the characters, events, and customs described in the book. Consequently these scholars prefer to designate the book as something other than history. Some have suggested that the book of Esther is a wisdom tale, a historical romance, a festival tale, a novel whose central characters are Jews living outside their homeland , a sermon with a moral, a Persian court chronicle, and even a comedy along the lines of Greek comedy.

Many other scholars are not nearly so skeptical about the book's relationship to history. They note that Vashti may well be the Hebrew name for the cruel and self-willed queen Amestris, Ahasuerus' wife during this time. The difference in spelling has been attributed to the lack of certain vocalizations in Hebrew, making it difficult to pronounce the Greek name. Certainly Vashti's character appears similar to the character of the historical Amestris.

In addition, the historical situation in Persia during this time tracks closely with the events described in Esther. With the help of such important Greek historians as Herodotus and Ctesias, and Persian records discovered during archaeological digs, it is possible to reconstruct a history of this period without reference to the biblical record. These records enable scholars to piece together the following order of events.

Revolts in the empire toward the end of Darius's life (Egypt in 486–484 B.C. and Babylon in 484 B.C.) required a crushing response from his son Ahasuerus in 484. Following these victories, Ahasuerus held a banquet in Susa for the leading people in his kingdom as preparation for his planned invasion of Greece. This may coincide with the banquet mentioned in 1:5. Ahasuerus failed in his attempt to defeat Greece, assured by his naval defeat at Salamis in 480 B.C. He returned home in defeat and engaged in a series of harem intrigues. The search for a new queen described in chapter 2 fits well within this time period. (Many other supposed historical inaccuracies are refuted in the study notes.)

There is no doubt that the book of Esther intends the reader to believe the events actually happened as they are described. The author located them within the reign of a specific king, Ahasuerus/Xerxes (1:1). He associated events with specific dates (e.g., the "third year" of Ahasuerus' reign, 1:3; "the tenth month, the month Tebeth, in the seventh year" of Ahasuerus' reign, 2:16; "the first month, the month of Nisan, in King Ahasuerus' twelfth year," 3:7). And he tied the establishment of the Festival of Purim to the events in the book (9:26). It is difficult to imagine that the author would fabricate a story to explain the origin of Purim.

D. Clines has noted that many details of Persian life recorded in Esther are confirmed by sources beyond the Bible. These confirmed details include the extent of the empire under Ahasuerus from India to Ethiopia (1:1), the council of seven nobles (1:14), the efficient postal system (3:13; 8:10), the keeping of official diaries including records of the king's benefactors (2:23), the use of gallows as a form of capital punishment (2:23; 5:14; 7:10), the practice of obeisance to kings and nobles (3:2), belief in lucky days (3:7), setting crowns on the heads of royal horses (6:8), and reclining on couches at meals (7:8).

Dating the composition of Esther is made more difficult by the existence of several versions of the story. Three principal Esther texts exist. These are the Hebrew Masoretic Text (MT) and two Greek texts: the LXX and another Greek text referred to as the "alternative Alpha Text" (AT). The AT is a Greek translation of an earlier Hebrew text. It is shorter than the MT, omitting a number of episodes and the concluding legislation regarding Purim. The LXX text is a translation of the MT, with some additions. It is likely that the AT represents an early account of the events described in Esther, before Purim was well established. Once Purim became a prominent festival in the life of the Jewish people, the relationship between its observance and the events that led to it was explained, resulting in the MT.

There is some textual evidence for this conjecture. Esther 9:20 states that Mordecai recorded what had transpired and sent letters to the Jewish people instructing them to observe the Festival of Purim. This might be the AT. What follows after 9:20 is an accounting of how things developed after this, which is the MT. It is likely that Mordecai first recorded the events shortly after the first celebration (9:17; c. 473 B.C.). If we allow at least a generation to pass for the festival to become an integral part of life in the Jewish communities, we should expect the text preserved in the MT to have been written some time after 433 B.C.

Esther Study Notes

1:1 The 127 provinces mentioned here should not be confused with the mention of 120 satraps in Dn 6:1. This difference does not reveal an error. First, the texts come from two different periods during Persian rule. The Dn text relates an incident that occurred in the early years of the Persian Empire, during the reign of a ruler identified as Darius, whereas this passage refers to a later time in the Persian period, during the reign of Ahasuerus/Xerxes. It is certainly possible that different administrations subdivided the empire differently. Second, the Est passage refers to administrative districts, whereas the Dn passage refers to administrators. It is also possible that some administrators had more than one province assigned to them. Also, this passage should not be compared to the mention by Herodotus that Darius had divided the Persian Empire into 20 satrapies (*Her* 3:89). Verse 1 refers to "provinces" (Hb *medinoth*), which are smaller regions than "satrapies" (Hb *satrapeiai*).

1:3-4 Critics question the likelihood that the king would have held a feast that lasted 180 days. They contend that this is an exaggeration that reveals the fictional nature of the story. It is of interest that the non-canonical book of Judith mentions a victory celebration by Nebuchadnezzar that lasted 120 days (Jdt 1:16). However, it is likely that two different activities are described here. The king held a feast for all these people and he also displayed the wealth of his kingdom for 180 days. There is no reason to think that the people feasted for 180 days, and then immediately followed that with a weeklong banquet (Est 1:5). When examined in the light of the historical record, the events gain more clarity. Ahasuerus became king in 486 B.C. In 484 B.C. he successfully put down two revolts. It is easy to imagine that the king would celebrate these victories with a feast. Furthermore, it was around this time that he began to prepare for his campaign against Greece, which began in 480 B.C. Many scholars believe that Ahasuerus used the six-month period described here to convince his leadership that he had the wealth that would be required to field an army large enough to defeat Greece.

1:10-12 The king commanded his wife to display herself in an inappropriate manner. We are not given the details of why Vashti felt her appearance at the banquet would be inappropriate. The writer's primary focus in the narrative is to explain Esther's rise to the throne. In the course of doing so, he shows Ahasuerus to be a pompous and selfish man, driven by his own lusts, and ruling by whim. In contrast, Vashti, brief though her appearance is, conveys strength. While the king condemned Vashti's refusal to put herself on display, the Bible does not.

1:19 Skeptics note that there is no extra-biblical evidence for this policy. They claim that such a policy would make it very difficult to administer a kingdom. Granted such a policy could make things difficult at times, but it does not make them impossible. In Est, the king overcame a later problem with this policy by permitting Esther and Mordecai to issue another command that in essence allowed the Jews to counter the effects of an irrevocable law (cp. 3:10-12; 8:8-10). Herodotus provides an example of a similar type of policy. He notes that at the Royal Supper, the annual celebration of the king's birthday, no one who made a request of the king could be denied the request. It was called "the law of the Supper" (*Her* 9:109). In this case as well, Herodotus relates that the king attempted to prevent the fulfillment of the request by circumventing it rather than canceling it.

1:22 The king and his advisers were worried that Vashti's disobedience would encourage other wives to disobey their husbands, so the king issued a command that husbands were to be the masters in their homes. The Hebrew word for "masters" (*sarar*) refers to a lord/subject relationship. This is not what the Bible teaches about headship. The biblical model of headship is to be exercised in the home in a spirit of servant-leadership, not a spirit of domination. This passage should not be used to teach the principle of headship, nor should it be used to discredit that model. What the king had in mind here is unbiblical (see Eph 5:22-33).

2:1-2 The king acted very rashly. His behavior is not condoned by the Bible. The Bible instructs a husband to "take pleasure in the wife of your youth" (Pr 5:18). The king felt that he had been dishonored, and chose to rid himself of his wife rather than reconcile with her. His pride and misunderstanding about the proper relationship between a husband and wife prevented him from doing the right thing (see Mt 19:1-12).

2:5-6 Critics looking for evidence of historical inaccuracies often cite this passage as evidence. They contend that the text says Mordecai is the one who had been carried into exile with Jeconiah. If this were so, then Mordecai would have been about 119 years old when Esther became queen. While this cannot be ruled completely out of the realm of possibility, there is another possible explanation. The Hebrew text of v. 6 actually begins with a relative pronoun, *asher*. The immediate antecedent is "Kish,"

not "Mordecai." So the pronoun may be referring to Kish, Mordecai's great-grandfather, as the person who had been taken into exile.

2:6 This mention supports the Bible's account of the exile and captivity of the people of Judah (see 2 Kg 24:10-16).It even corroborates the role of Nebuchadnezzar and Jehoiachin in the captivity. "Jeconiah" was another name for the Judean King Jehoiachin.

2:7 The reference to Esther's beautiful figure should not be construed as an indication of sexist attitudes by the biblical writers. The statement helps the reader understand one reason Esther came to the king's attention.

2:7 Mordecai's kindness to Esther reveals an important pro-life principle. He was willing to care for Esther when she was essentially destitute. His act provides an important example for believers today as they consider what can be done for the millions of unwanted babies and orphans throughout the world. Adoption is a biblical principle.

2:9 The king had numerous wives, which was customary for rulers of his day. The fact that the Bible acknowledges this does not mean that it condones it. To the contrary, the Bible makes it clear that God's ideal is the union of one man and one woman for life (Gn 2:18-25).

2:17 Some critics contend that this marriage could not have occurred. They note that according to Herodotus the Persian kings agreed to restrict themselves to marrying only within a circle of seven noble families (*Her* 3:84). However, Herodotus also records that Darius, who was a party to the agreement, married three women, none of whom were related to any of those seven noble families (*Her* 3:88).

2:21-22 Mordecai persisted in his obedience despite the fact that Esther had been taken from him by that same government (v. 8). Mordecai's behavior exemplified the biblical command to obey the ruling authorities (1 Pt 2:13-17).

3:2 Mordecai's obedience to the civil authorities had a limit. It stopped at the point where his loyalty to the civil authorities violated the biblical mandate. As a Jewish man, if Mordecai bowed down to Haman, he would have violated the covenant obligation of obedience to God above all other allegiances (Ex 20:3).

3:6 Haman's intention to eradicate all the Jews in Ahasuerus' kingdom revealed a horrible prejudice that is inexcusable. It is never permissible to persecute a person because of religion, race, or ethnicity. Every person is created in the image of God, regardless of these differences (Gn 1:26-27). All deserve equal treatment and respect.

3:11 Some critics doubt that the king would approve the eradication of an entire race of people within his kingdom. However, there is historical evidence from this period of just such acts. Herodotus records an event some time before Darius became king, in which a group known as magi became so reviled by Persians that the Persians killed all of them they could find. Then the Persians instituted an annual festival known as *Magophonia* or "Killing of the Magi," during which no Magus was to show himself in public for the entire day (*Her* 3:79).

3:13 Critics doubt that the king would have issued an order of this magnitude that wouldn't be carried out for eleven months. However, in 193 B.C. Antiochus IIIissued a decree for a similar action that had a four-month delay.

4:11 Skeptics often attack the credibility of the book of Esther by claiming that the law Esther quoted was ludicrous. They assert that if such a law existed, no one could ever be in the king's presence. However, these objections result from a failure to read the text carefully. Esther did not say that no one could see the king without being summoned, but that anyone who approached the king without being summoned could forfeit his or her life. Josephus supports this fact (*Antiquities,* XI 205), also noting that the

king surrounded himself with men bearing axes who would punish anyone who approached the throne without being summoned. Herodotus describes a similar, but not exact, policy (*Her* 3:85, 118, 140).

4:14 Mordecai acknowledged the sovereignty of God. He knew that Haman could not ultimately succeed in his campaign because God's design cannot be thwarted. God is the one in control and He was committed to the preservation of the Jews, who are beneficiaries of God's covenant with Abraham (Gn 17:1-9).

4:17 Some feminists claim that the Bible devalues women. Mordecai's response to Esther reveals the opposite. Obviously, he held women in high esteem. Mordecai was perfectly willing to follow the leadership of a woman, an example found in other places in the Bible, for example, Deborah (Jdg 4). (See also the article, "Does the Bible Demean Women?" page 730.)

5:5 Esther was not seeking revenge; she was seeking a way to protect her people from the coming attacks organized by Haman. Chapter 9 reveals the way in which the Jews defended themselves. The text purposely states that the Jews did not enrich themselves at the expense of those against whom they defended themselves, even though the king's edict permitted it.

9:14 Esther's request to have the bodies of Haman's 10 sons hung from the gallows is understandable in light of similar practices of her contemporaries. It was common in her day for a ruler to put on public display the bodies of those executed for certain crimes. The display served as a warning to others. Similarly, Esther's request would serve as a warning to those who would seek to destroy the Jews. Today such a display of the dead is no longer considered appropriate for any reason.

10:3 The fact that the historical record has not corroborated the biblical claim of Mordecai's power and fame is insufficient reason to doubt its truthfulness. Undoubtedly, the names of numerous powerful and influential people in ancient societies have been lost. It is fortunate that the biblical record has preserved the memory of this great man.

Job Articles

How Can God Have All Power and Be Loving and Yet There Be Evil?

by Gregory E. Ganssle

What philosophers call "the problem of evil" is a family of arguments from the existence or nature of evil to the conclusion that God does not or probably does not exist. The oldest form of the argument is that the mere existence of evil is logically incompatible with God's existence. If God exists, evil could not, and if evil exists, God could not. I call this argument the "charge of contradiction." The claim is that there is a logical contradiction in asserting that God is all-powerful, God is all-loving, and that evil exists. Wouldn't this kind of God eliminate all evil? The existence of God, in this view, is on a par with a square circle. Given the existence of evil, it is impossible for God to exist. The challenge is to show that theism is logically consistent.

Few today, including atheists, think this argument succeeds. If God might have a good reason to allow evil, then it is possible that both God and evil exist. We need not know what God's actual reasons are, but if it is possible He has one, then the argument is defeated. Most think it is possible that God has good reasons to allow evil and that, therefore, there is no contradiction between God's existence and the existence of evil.

Today, the most important form of the argument against the existence of God from evil is called the "evidential argument from evil." The one who presses this argument admits that the existence of God and the reality of evil are not logically incompatible. The argument is that the amount and the kinds of evil we find in the world is strong evidence against the existence of God.

Even though it is possible that God has a reason to allow the evils we find in the world, it does not seem likely that there are good reasons for some of the evils we see. We cannot prove that there is no good reason, but if we have lots of cases in which it seems as though there is none, we will conclude that there probably is no good reason to allow these evils. If it is true that probably there is no good reason to allow these cases of evil, then it is probable that God does not exist. This argument is called the "evidential argument" because we cannot prove that there is no good reason to allow the particular evils we are thinking about. These evils do, then, look like good evidence that God does not exist.

In order to begin to answer this argument, we must think about the claim that it is probable that no good reason exists to allow the evil in question. Why should we believe this is true? The one who puts this argument forward will appeal to cases of evil in which it is difficult to find a reason that might fit. Does this mean we ought to conclude that it is probable that there is no reason? No.

The reasoning here goes as follows: It seems like there is no reason to allow this evil therefore, probably there is no reason to allow it. Sometimes this kind of reasoning is strong and other times it is weak. Let me illustrate. The argument is of the form: It seems like there is no x, therefore, probably there is no x. The Bible has numerous cases where one could mount this argument. Let's take the case of Lazarus's death in John 11. Lazarus was likely in the prime of his life. He's a good man and a close friend of Jesus. Lazarus becomes ill and dies. The citizens of his village, Bethany, could see such an evil and after three days of mourning come to the conclusion that there is no reason for this. Therefore, God doesn't exist. Then Jesus comes to Bethany. Lazarus's sisters, Mary and Martha, chastise Jesus for not getting there sooner. As we read John's account, we see that unbeknownst to Mary and Martha, Jesus had reasons for delaying. Moreover, there were reasons Lazarus was permitted to die in the prime of his life. When Jesus arrived at Lazarus's tomb, He prayed and then called Lazarus to come out of the tomb four days after his death. The reason for

Lazarus's sickness, death, Jesus' delay, and Lazarus's resuscitation was that God's glory might be seen.

Some of the citizens might have thought they had a strong case against the existence of God the three days after Lazarus died. But subsequent events place the evil of Lazarus's death in a much different context. In light of this context, Lazarus's death is seen to be part of a much greater good than anyone in Bethany could imagine.

The pattern that we see in this and numerous other biblical cases shows that there are times when we can't say, "If God had a reason to allow this particular case of evil, we would probably know what it is."

There are two reasons we can't always make this claim. First, we can figure out reasons that God might have for many (perhaps most) of the evils in the world. For example, both human freedom and a stable, cause-effect universe are necessary for any meaningful action. Meaningful action, then, may be a reason that God allows various kinds of evil. Second, it is reasonable to think that God will have reasons that we cannot grasp for allowing evils in our lives. In fact, to think that we should be able to figure out God's reasons for allowing every case of evil implies that we think God is not much smarter than we are. If God is the almighty creator of the universe, there will be evil the reason for which we cannot discern. This is exactly what we should expect if there is a God. It cannot be counted as evidence against God.

So even though it might seem, at first glance, that there are no good reasons to allow certain evils we see, this does not provide strong evidence that these evils are really unjustified. The argument that the kinds of evil we see make it unlikely that God exists has been seen to be pretty weak.

The philosophical problem of evil has to do with what is reasonable to believe. To what degree is it reasonable to believe in God in light of what we seem to know about evil? We have seen that evil does not contradict God's existence. Nor is it strong evidence against the existence of God. The evil in the world, then, does not make it unreasonable to believe in an all-powerful and all-loving God.

What Does the Bible Say About Euthanasia?

by Nigel Cameron

Euthanasia is any act or omission, in the context of sickness or disability, that intentionally causes death. As such, it has become a topic of contemporary debate. But it is nothing new. The killing and abandonment of the sick and elderly have been common practices in cultures around the globe, and one of the most powerful impacts of the gospel has been to defend the defenseless and to devalue those without economic benefit to society.

In the Greco-Roman world of the early church, euthanasia was common and widely approved. The powerful pagan protest against physicians who had taken the Hippocratic oath, repudiating euthanasia and assisted suicide, came in a context in which euthanasia could be an appealing option in the face of chronic disease or uncontrollable pain. What is remarkable about the resurgence of interest in this primitive approach to sickness and suffering in our own day is that we now have far greater medical and other resources with which to cope with these challenges. It is perhaps the surest indicator that our understanding of human nature is being reinvented as the culture turns its back on its Judeo-Christian roots.

The starting point for a biblical understanding of human nature is the idea that human beings are made in the image of God. It is clear from Genesis 1:26-27 that this applies to all members of the human species. *Homo sapiens* is distinguished from all other "kinds" by our bearing the likeness of our Maker. The *imago Dei* (image of God) is what makes us the beings we are, and it is in place wherever there are members of our species. This godly image plainly applies to those who are sick and disabled as well as those in the flower of human giftedness. Those with severe mental impairments, including the so-called persistent vegetative state, remain full members of the human species and therefore bear God's image.

A definition of euthanasia that focuses on the intent to cause death is important, and in principle it distinguishes euthanasia from health care decisions affecting terminal patients when there is no intent to end life. The term "physician-assisted suicide" has been coined to promote voluntary euthanasia, but it is misleading. Voluntary euthanasia does entail a suicidal motive, and suicide is a sad but immoral case of homicide—the homicide of the self. But euthanasia always involves a homicide on the part of the physician, whether it comes through the prescription of lethal drugs or another method. And if it is legal, it involves a community policy decision which states that such lives are not worth living.

A distinction is often made between "active" and "passive" euthanasia, but this distinction can be misleading. If the intent is to bring about death, the moral accounting is the same. A more useful distinction lies among voluntary, involuntary, and nonvoluntary euthanasia. Voluntary euthanasia is the public policy goal of some activists and intellectuals who deny that they favor involuntary killing. Yet there are problems in defining adequate consent in the case of the seriously ill. For example, even some who favor voluntary euthanasia would consider Dr. Jack Kevorkian a serial killer, since even though he secured "consents," he preyed on the fears of lonely people. Moreover, there is the problem of "nonvoluntary" killing—the euthanasia of those who are not competent, such as Alzheimer's patients or infants, who constitute some of the prime candidates for an induced death.

The biblical doctrine of the sanctity of life of those in God's image offers a fundamental protection for patients, aging relatives, the handicapped, and the poor by ruling out the option of acting to bring about death. Job—the OT's great example of suffering and faithfulness—was challenged by his wife to take the euthanasia option: "Curse God and die!" (Jb 2:9). But he maintained his integrity and proclaimed in response, "Should we accept only good from God and not adversity?" (2:10).

Didn't the Church Oppose Galileo?

by Mark A. Kalthoff

Simple questions do not always have simple answers. "Didn't the church oppose Galileo?" is certainly one such question. Everyone "knows" the church opposed Galileo, but what does this mean?

Despite the complexity of Galileo's engagement with the church, there are several relevant facts that can be simply stated.

For one thing, every significant player in the Galileo affair was a committed Christian. This was no tale of a secular scientific community pitted against a backward, antiscientific church. The Roman Catholic Church provided greater patronage to astronomical study than did all other contemporary institutions combined.

That being said, straightforward readings of certain biblical passages (Gn 1; Jos 10:12; Pss 19:4-6; 93:1; 104:5,19; Ec 1:4-5) suggest an earth-centered cosmology with the sun revolving about a stationary earth. By the early seventeenth century, in the wake of the Protestant Reformation and the Roman Catholic Council of Trent, such a plain interpretation of these passages was normative throughout Christendom. Moreover, both common sense and the weight of contemporary scientific opinion opposed the idea of the earth's motion.

Hence, any public defender of the Copernican (sun-centered) cosmology would have to overcome two difficult challenges. He would have to supply conclusive scientific evidence for the earth's motion and the sun's fixity—something that was not then available, even to Galileo. In addition, he would have to provide expert theological guidance to explain how properly to interpret those biblical texts that seemingly contradicted the Copernican hypothesis. Galileo was not a theologian. He was a mathematician and natural philosopher.

Although Galileo believed that he possessed proof of the Copernican hypothesis (in his theory of the tides), he was mistaken. His theory was seriously flawed. Overconfidence in the strength of his case led Galileo to tread out of his area of expertise and into the theological territory of biblical interpretation. As a layman, he overstepped his bounds by presuming to give guidance on reading the Bible.

What did the Roman Catholic Church do? It acted prudently and conservatively by upholding the received biblical and scientific opinion of the day. In 1616 the Theological Consultors of the Holy Office (advisers to the Pope) declared the Copernican theory heretical and foolish. Protestant leaders, such as Martin Luther and John Calvin, had expressed similar disapproval of Copernicanism.

In 1633, Galileo was judged to be "vehemently suspected of heresy" and sentenced to house arrest for defending the Copernican hypothesis. Of greater significance is the fact that the church never formally condemned the Copernican theory *ex cathedra*. That is, it never formally made opposition to Copernicanism an article of faith. Neither has any Protestant denomination done so. The Pope, his advisers, and other Christian leaders may have erred in their personal opinions on the matter, but all stopped short of asserting anti-Copernicanism an official doctrine of Christianity. Galileo was punished as a Christian layman for overstepping his bounds in a theological matter (biblical interpretation) that touched on a scientific question. In the end this was a religious dispute about biblical interpretation between Christians within the Roman Catholic Church.

Did the church oppose Galileo? Yes, it did. But that opposition was grounded in a careful attempt to preserve both Christian orthodoxy and scientific integrity in a time of tumultuous change. The remarkable fact is that, despite the inclinations of its leaders, both Protestant and Catholic, the Christian churches never made opposition to Copernicanism an official article of faith.

Does the Bible Teach the Abuse of Nature?

by Steve W. Lemke

The answer to this question requires balancing and blending two truths.

1. God expects us to use nature. God commanded humans to have dominion over all of nature, subduing it and ruling over it (Gn 1:20-31). God gave persons broad latitude in their dominion over nature, including permission for humans to eat plants and animals for food (Gn 1:29-30; 9:1-3). Jesus demonstrated His absolute control over nature in events such as calming a storm (Mt 8:24-27) and causing a fig tree to wither (Mt 21:18-27). We thus have divine approval to use nature for our own needs and purposes. Good stewards are expected to maximize production by shrewd management of God-given resources (Mt 25:14-30).

2. God opposes the abuse of nature. Our having dominion over nature should not be confused with our owning nature. Humans do not own nature, because the earth is the Lord's (Lv 25:23; Ps 24:1; 50:10-11). We are given the natural world as a stewardship, not as a possession.

Scripture teaches that, as stewards of God's good creation, we should apply sound principles of land and resource management. In the agricultural regulations of OT law, for instance, the land was to lie fallow in the seventh year so its minerals could be replenished (Ex 23:10-11; Lv 25:1-22). In two key NT parables—the parable of the vineyard (Mt 21:33-44; Mk 12:1-12; Lk 20:9-19) and the parable of the talents (Mt 25:14-30)—human beings are depicted as stewards or managers of God's property. These parables emphasize that God will hold us accountable for our management of these resources.

Nature is good because it was created by God and pleases God (Gn 1:1-31). God designed the natural world with an orderly structure, and violating that natural order is sinful (Rm 1:26-27). The natural world shares the burden of the curse of the fallen world (Gn 3:17-19), but Scripture repeatedly affirms God's providential care for the world of nature (Ps 104:1-35; 147:7-9; 148:1-10). Scripture also suggests that all of creation will share in redemption (Rm 8:20-22), promising the creation of the new heavens and the new earth (Rv 21:1).

Introduction to Job

AUTHOR

It is often said that Job is the oldest book in the Bible. One support for such a view is found in the statement in the Talmud (a collection of rabbinical writings on Jewish law and practice) that "Moses wrote his own book and Job" (*Baba Bathra* 14b). Additional support for the ancient origin of this book comes from the absence of any mention of the nation Israel in Job as well as a lack of specific references to the law of Moses or any priestly system. Further support is noted in the centrality of the clan in the narrative, a situation that was typical of patriarchal society. Moreover, the names of the characters in the book are compatible with those of the patriarchal period.

Critical scholars are quick to point out, however, that in *Baba Bathra* 15a a divergent Jewish opinion is cited, giving dates for Job from the era of the judges to the fifth century B.C. Current critical opinion opts for a date of the book ranging from the seventh to the second century B.C.

Conservative scholars also disagree as to the date of the writing of the book. Some decide for a pre-Mosaic date; others for a Solomonic date; and still others for a time as late as the seventh century B.C.

We must take care to differentiate between the date of the composition of Job and the date of its setting. Many of the arguments for an early date for Job apply to its setting, which can be shown to be early. Further indications of an early setting include the fact that Job's lofty social standing revolved around his wealth, consisting primarily of livestock and a large number of servants (1:3). The reference to silver as an item of monetary exchange is mentioned (28:15), but the term *qesitah* used in 42:11 is employed elsewhere only before the Israelite monarchy (Gn 33:19; Jos 24:32). In addition, Job led his family in matters of religion such as purification rituals and sacrifices (Jb 1:5)—matters that were delegated to the Levites in the law. Job's death at age 140, "old and full of days" (42:17), is also typical of the patriarchal period (e.g., Abraham, Gn 25:7-8; Isaac, Gn 35:28-29).

When the story of Job was put into writing is another matter. All attempts to assign a date, whether on the basis of literary or linguistic data or with regard to its philosophical and theological viewpoint, have proved to be capable of variant interpretations and therefore inconclusive. The age of Solomon, when other such wisdom literature began to flourish, is perhaps a likely time.

Although the author and date of Job are unknown, the status of Job as a biblical book has never been seriously questioned. What has been questioned, however, is whether the story of Job is history or fiction.

THE RELIABILITY OF JOB

Did Job really live, and did the things that the book reports really happen, or is all this just a good story? Is the book of Job pure fiction like some of the stories of innocent sufferers preserved in ancient literature from Mesopotamia, Egypt, and elsewhere? In answer, it must be pointed out that these other stories may be more than fiction; they could be stories of historical events. Moreover, efforts to equate Job with, or derive the account of Job's trials from, such ancient Near Eastern sources have not provided much insight into the book.

The absence of convincing contradictory data suggests that a fair hearing of the evidence points to the existence of a real person named Job. Certainly the style of the opening statement concerning Job (1:1) is much like that of Samuel's father, Elkanah (1 Sm 1:1), whose historical existence is not seriously doubted. Moreover, Ezekiel links Job with two other historical figures, Moses and Daniel (Ezk 14:14,20). Jesus' brother James apparently accepted the history of both Job and the Lord's

dealing with him as much as the facts concerning the prophets who suffered in their service for the Lord (Jms 5:10-11).

A further area of criticism concerning Job has to do with its theological outlook, which some have categorized as undeveloped. Critics say that God is portrayed in the book as a sovereign who is interested solely in His power and control rather than in the plight of His creatures. Nor can He be the good and merciful God of the later Hebrew-Christian Scriptures, for He seems uninterested in Job's situation and unwilling to alleviate his suffering until He has demonstrated His mastery over all creation and creatures, including Job.

Such a viewpoint misses a great deal of the presentation of God in the book. From the beginning God is seen to be conscious of Job and his integrity (1:8; 2:3) and concerned for Job's life (1:12; 2:6). During Job's long test at the hands of Satan, his friends and even Job himself often acknowledged that God is just and the giver of that which is good.

THE PROBLEM OF SUFFERING

While the book of Job never fully addresses the solution to the problem of suffering, nothing in the book is out of harmony with general scriptural teaching on the subject. Thus the story of Job reminds us that suffering can be a sacred trust allowed by God to bring the sufferer to full dependence on and trust in God. Indeed the meaning of Job's name ("where is the father") may reflect the deeper purpose of the book. Rather than asking "Where is God when I need Him?" the more basic question may be "Is God sufficient for everything in life?" The answer is a resounding yes. God, not man, is alone the true source for strength, guidance, and success.

Sufferers should realize that God's power is available for all of life, even to carry them through their severest trials. When we see that God is truly the God of all life, we have a comforting assurance that, whatever may happen, God's good purposes for our lives will be accomplished.

All of life is for God's glory and for human good. So it is that when Job came to a realization of God's sufficiency rather than his own, God's greatest blessing followed.

Job Study Notes

1:1 Critical suggestions that the description of Job's character (lit. "perfect and upright") contradicts texts indicating mankind's sinfulness (Rm 3:23; 1 Jn 1:8) are unfounded. God twice attested to Job's integrity (Jb 1:8; 2:3). Both Hebrew words are used of God (Dt 32:4). Men and women in God's image are to reflect those attributes (Mt 5:48; Eph 4:20-24).

1:6 Canaanite mythology portrays the "sons of God" as an assembly of gods. However, angels are meant here. No contradiction exists between the use of this term for "angel" and texts that speak of Christ as God's only Son (Jn 3:18; 1 Jn 4:9) who was with God and was God before creation (Jn 1:1). Spiritually, believers become sons (Rm 8:14) and children (1 Jn 3:1) of God.

1:7-8 God's rhetorical questions to Satan do not imply that God had no knowledge of Satan's activities. The Scriptures attest to God's omniscience and omnipresence (Ps 33:13-15; 139:7-12). The phrase "roaming through the earth" has led some commentators to suggest that Satan was God's "roving agent" to detect mischief in the world, much like the spies who served in the secret service of the Persian king (known from texts from Mari in upper Mesopotamia, contemporaneous with the Hebrew patriarchs). But this is mere speculation. God does not cooperate with Satan in any way.

1:12 God's justice and integrity were not impugned by allowing Satan to inflict suffering upon an innocent man. Only a genuine test could demonstrate to Satan whether Job's devotion was real or was, as Satan insinuated, the result of God's having protected and blessed Job beyond that of most human beings. More important than proving something to Satan, God had purposes for Job's good that could only come through this arduous path of testing.

1:14-19 Skeptics charge that the four disasters that befell Job's possessions and family were violently unjust. Yet all fell within the bounds allowed to Satan. Some note a parallel with the epic of Keret, from Ugarit (Ras Shamra) on the Syrian Mediterranean coast, whose hero saw his entire family perish. That there are parallels does not prove that Job is a copy. Similar tragedies can occur in any family.

1:15 Because Sabeans are traditionally associated with a location in present-day Yemen hundreds of miles to the south (1 Kg 10:1; Jr 6:20), some consider as unlikely the arrival of marauders in Job's homeland in Uz, east of the Jordan River somewhere between Aram (Gn 10:23) and Edom (Gn 36:28). But the Bible indicates Sabean presence further north (Gn 10:7; Jb 6:19). These Sabeans were brigands, hence may point to an early setting of the book before they became the well-known later traders of southern Arabia.

1:17 The Chaldeans (Hb *kasdim*) were not the later people associated with Nebuchadnezzar but an earlier Bedouin group, perhaps related to Abraham's brother Nahor (Gn 22:22). The appearance of "Chaldeans" does not require a late date for Jb.

2:3-6 The charge that God and Satan were playing games, with Job as the pawn, is insensitive and erroneous. Job's ordeal was intensified to test the depths of his faith and to achieve an end that could only come through these trials.

2:9-10 The skeptical observation that Job's wife was right to fault God for Job's problems and urge him to curse God and receive God's death blow is preposterous. Job rightly rejected her suggestion as "foolish."

3:8 "Leviathan" is known from texts from Ras Shamra (ancient Ugarit, see 1:14-19) in which the god Baal battles and defeats Lotan (a great sea monster) and Yam (the sea god) with weapons over which he has pronounced an incantation. Some suggest this

verse reflects those events and revocalizes the Hebrew word "day" (y*om*) to "sea" (*yam*). Others seek a background in mythologies that portray a solar or lunar eclipse as being caused by a great dragon. Mythological allusions need not indicate scriptural endorsement of paganism. Identical terms have different meanings in different contexts. Ancient Near Eastern backgrounds may have supplied the form but not the content of biblical material. Metaphorical use of "Leviathan" occurs elsewhere (Jb 41:1; Ps 74:14; 104:26; Is 27:1). Leviathan may symbolize an evil spirit. Job wished that it could have eradicated the day of his birth. A similar picture occurs in Rv 12:1-6.

3:13-19 Job's portrayal of death as a place where all the deceased go does not indicate scriptural endorsement of a mythological underworld. Although all go to the grave, all do not share the same eternal destiny (Ps 49:14-15; 73:25-26; 2 Co 5:1-8).

4:12-21 Eliphaz's dream/vision did not indicate that he and the prophets engaged in ecstatic behavior. The text does not suggest that Eliphaz was a prophet.

5:1 Eliphaz's rhetorical question, "Which of the holy ones . . . ?" does not imply scriptural belief in ancient Near Eastern minor deities who served as mediating personal gods. Although the need for a mediator is a prominent theme in Jb (9:33; 13:3; 16:19-21; 19:23-27), the Scriptures do not endorse the idea of angels as mediators. Only One serves in this capacity (1 Tm 2:5;Heb 7:25; 1 Jn 2:1).

5:13 Paul's endorsement of Eliphaz's statement (1 Co 3:19) does not validate all of Eliphaz's remarks or those of his friends, any more than his citing the words of a Cretan prophet (Ti 1:12). Inerrancy guarantees only the accuracy of what the three friends said.

6:1-4 Job's perception of God as his enemy (see 13:24; 33:10), who like a cosmic warrior was shooting poison-tipped arrows into him, was colored by his intense suffering. It was far from objective or accurate. God is neither mean-spirited nor arbitrary with people. God is perfectly just in all of His dealings (Dt 32:4; Dn 9:14; Rv 16:5).

6:27 Job's words should not be understood as indicating that his friends practiced such deeds. In hisdisappointment with Eliphaz, Job pictured the callous treatment he was receiving from his friends as resembling those who made merchandise of an orphan or a friend. Such detestable activities were widely attested in ancient Near Eastern writings, such as the *Kilamuwa Inscription* from Syria. Righteous kings (e.g., the Code of Hammurabi, eighteenth century B.C.) claimed to be the protector of the underprivileged of society. God is declared to be the defender of the widow, the orphan, the poor, and the resident alien; He instructed His people to have the same concern (Dt 27:19; Ps 68:4-6).

7:1 Again, Job's intense suffering caused him to view life as a form of bondage to a cruel tyrant. It would be interesting to compare Job's present view of God with the view that he held during his many years of pros-perity.

7:7-9 For discussion on Job's view of death, see note on 7:21.

7:12 Earlier critical scholars suggested that Job's remark alluded to the Babylonian *Enuma Elish* epic, in which Marduk slew Tiamat (the sea goddess) and divided her body in order to form heaven and earth, and then set a guard on her. Contemporary scholars suggest a mythological background in the Ugaritis epic of Baal and Anat (see note on 3:8). Such an allusion may have apologetic value to clarify that it is Yahweh who controls the elements (Gn 1:1-23; Ps 74:12-14; 104:1-5).No mythological allusion may have been intended, however, for the Hebrew *yam* can mean "sea" (Gn 1:10) and *tannin*, "a reptile" (Gn 1:21; Ex 7:10). For more about the monster, see note on 9:13.

7:21 Job's pessimistic remarks about death and the grave do not reflect the full biblical perspectives on the subject. Job felt that he would soon die and it would be too late for God to help him. The Bible indicates that no place escapes the view of an

omnipresent God (Ps 139:7-8) and that there is life after death (Ps 73:23-27; 1 Co 15:20-57). See notes on 14:13-15; 19:25-27.

8:9 Bildad's statement was not absurd as skeptics charge, but was a metaphor denoting relative age (cp. v. 8). Job and his three friends lived too short a time to acquire the sophisticated wisdom of earlier generations.

9:4 Job's words do not indicate that God acts arbitrarily, capriciously, or maliciously in dealing with mankind, even those who oppose Him (Hs 11:7-11; Rm 5:8; 6:23). God's ultimate purposes are His glory (Is 48:11; Hab 2:14) and man's good (Ps 145:7-13; Eph 2:7-10). See the note on 6:1-4.

9:6 Some Scriptures portray the earth metaphorically and should not be construed as reflecting primitive cosmology. Architectural terms are used (1 Sm 2:8; Ps 75:3); God forms the earth upon the seas (Ps 24:2); the mountains are viewed as pillars for the sky (Jb 26:11); and the circle of the earth and heaven stretched out over it are described as being "like a tent" (Is 40:22). Such metaphors are reminders that the earth belongs to its Creator (Ps 24:1) and is designed to be a place where God and man may meet together.

9:8 The name of the Canaanite goddess Asherah means "she who treads on the sea." The Bible portrays God's sovereignty using similar metaphors, countering pagan mythology with depictions of His greater power. He treads upon the sea with His horses and chariots (Hab 3:8,15) or upon the high places of earth (Am 4:13). He rides upon the clouds of the sky (Ps 68:4,33). The imagery shows God's complete sovereignty over the natural world.

9:13 Because "Rahab" is mentioned elsewhere (26:12-13; Ps 89:10; Is 51:9-10), critics have concluded that the Hebrews shared the Canaanite mythological belief concerning the defeat of a chaos monster. Some critics say that this picture of Rahab as having "assistants" or allies indicates a borrowing of the Babylonian creation account in which Tiamat had her helpers.Hebrew awareness of pagan mythologies does not mean that they embraced them. When the Bible alludes to mythological themes, the writers' purpose was to put them into a different context, one that reveals Yahweh's sovereignty and His control of nature (Ps 74:12-23; Is 51:9-10). See notes on 3:8; 7:12; 9:8; 26:12-13.

10:21-22 Job's view of the afterlife was shaped by his despondency. His view does not represent the full biblical view of the subject. For more on just the OT perspective on the afterlife, see the note on 14:13-15.

11:6 Zophar's remarks are not to be taken literally. He meant that Job was being punished far less than he deserved. The Scriptures report that God remembers sinful actions and will never forget the crimes of those who oppress the poor (Hs 7:1-2). The best example of God's forgetfulness is with those whose sins are forgiven (Is 43:25; Jr 31:34).

11:7-8 No contradiction exists between Zophar's question concerning knowing God's person, power, and wisdom. Paul demonstrates that man can understand enough of God's existence and power to make him accountable for not seeking to know God (Rm 1:18-20).

12:4-6 Skeptics have imagined a contradiction between God's apparent reward of evildoers and the psalmist's declaration of their disastrous end (Ps 34:21; 37:35-38).In his reversals, losses, and the resultant suffering, Job was far more aware of the great injustices in this present world. The Scriptures affirm that evildoers' own wickedness will cause them earthly and eternal ruin (Ps 1:4-5; Pr 11:5; Mt 25:26).

12:9 Critics have suggested that the word "Lord" *(Yahweh)* is a later substitution for the original *'eloah* ("God"), since the name Yahweh does not appear elsewhere in the dialogues. They propose that a later scribe changed the rare phrase "hand of God" to the phrase "hand of the Lord," which is common in the rest of the OT. However, there are very few manuscripts that support *'eloah*,

and they can be explained as the result of later scribes making consistent Job's usage of *'eloah* as the name of God. Some critics say that Job did not know God as Yahweh, but the use of God's covenant name in chapters 1-2 and 38-42 show that he did. Therefore, "LORD" is probably the original text.

13:15 Critical scholars take the Hebrew particle *lo'* to mean "not." Accordingly they suggest that Job felt that if God slayed him, he would have no hope. HCSB follows the reading of the MT marginal note, "to him," which fits Job's positive reply to his own question (v. 14). The Hebrew particle could also be translated "surely."

14:1-4 Skeptical observations that Job's remarks indicate that women are unclean are without foundation. Some ancient cultures viewed the birth process as conferring ritual uncleanness (see Lv 12:1-8; Lk 2:22), but this did not mean that women, as such, were "unclean."

14:13-15 Although critical opinion discounts any belief in personal immortality here, Job's words can express such an underlying hope. The word translated "wait" (v. 14) is the same word used in 13:15 for "hope," indicating full trust in God. The word translated "relief" (14:14) occurs commonly for change of garments(Jdg 14:12,13). Thus Job's condition will be changed from misery to life and renewed fellowship with God, as indicated in the "call/answer" motif (e.g., Ps 102:1-2; Is 65:24). Belief in immortality is attested to in the OT (e.g., Ps 49:14-15; Dn 12:2).

15:14-16 Eliphaz's philosophical rambling that nothing is pure in God's eyes does not reflect the Bible's full teaching on the subject. Those who truly believe and exercise total trust and faith in God are counted as righteous (Gn 15:6; Hab 2:4). Made righteous in God's sight through Christ's atoning death (Rm 1:17; 2 Co 5:25) and taken into union with Christ (Col 1:27), believers can live virtuous and faithful lives through Christ who lives through them (Gl 2:20).

16:19-21 The need for an intermediary between God and man is an important theme in Jb (9:33). Job feels that his desire to speak directly to God was not possible (13:3), so he spoke of his "advocate . . . in the heights" (16:19). Such an advocate need not have been some personal angel or other heavenly figure; Job may have had in mind that God would intercede with Himself on his behalf (cp. Hs 11:8). See the notes on 5:1; 19:25-27; 33:23.

17:13-15 Job's remarks stemmed from his despair and do not contradict the biblical teaching on life after death (1 Co 15:12-58; 2 Co 5:1-8).

17:16 Some scholars suggest that Job's remarks indicate a belief in a Mesopotamian underworld into which people enter via a series of gates, but this interpretation is unfounded. The term "gates" is a metaphor for entrance into the state of death or the grave. Similar expressions are found in 38:17; Ps 9:13; 107:18; Is 38:10; and Mt 16:18.

18:12-13 Critical suggestions that "disaster" and "death" reflect Mesopotamian or Ugaritic mythology are erroneous. These terms are metaphors of the calamities and diseases that affect humanity. The term "firstborn" often speaks not only of a man's first offspring but metaphorically of priority, authoritative position, or first in rank (Col 1:15; Heb 1:6). The imagery here refers to the most extreme form of death-causing disease.

18:14 Some critics equate the "king of terrors" with Nergal, the Canaanite death deity, but this is unnecessary. The term represents a metaphor for death, mankind's "last enemy" (1 Co 15:26).

19:20 The phrase "by the skin of my teeth" was a common metaphor, with "skin" being a play on an idea in the preceding line. It spoke of Job's desperate circumstances. Skeptical suggestions that the Bible teaches error in saying that teeth literally have skin are nonsense.

19:23-24 Critics once thought that Job could not write because only professional scribes did so in the pre-Mosaic period. Inscriptions discovered at Serabit el-Khadim in the western Sinai Pennisula dating from the seventeenth and sixteenth centuries B.C. demonstrate that ordinary Semitic laborers working in the turquoise mines could write. If ordinary laborers could read and write, doubtless Job could.

19:25-27 The translation of this passage is difficult, but most English versions take it as a glimpse into the reality of the resurrection. Commentators who consider Job's hopeful words inconsistent with his feelings expressed elsewhere fail to reckon with his vacillating thoughts throughout the dialogue. His suffering often caused him to expect (17:1) and desire death (3:3-19; 10:18), considering it a place of nonexistence and no return (7:7-10; 10:21-22; 14:12; 17:13-16). Although Job had viewed God as his enemy (6:4; 7:17-21; 10:3,8-14; 13:21,24; 16:7-14; 17:6; 19:7-12,22) from whom he could receive no justice (9:2-3,16,20,28-33; 10:15; 19:7) but only death (16:18), yet his faith in God (12:13,16,18; 13:15-18; 17:3) and hope in immortality had surfaced previously (14:13-17). Job's words indicate that God was his Redeemer (19:25) whom he would see in some future day after his body had wasted away in death. Job expected to live again bodily and, from the vantage point of his own flesh, behold God (vv. 26-27). See note on 14:13-15 (cp. Jn 11:25; Heb 7:25).

20:1-29 Although Zophar's second speech reflects many biblical truths concerning the wicked, it does not guarantee that his words were given in true biblical spirit. Zophar painted pictures of the certain failure and disastrous end of the wicked but left Job to make the application to himself. Words have the power to wound or heal (Pr 11:9,11; 15:4) and need to be used in a positive manner (Pr 15:23). Believers are to be ready to give a defense of their faith, but their apologetic needs to be spoken with all due propriety and truth, bathed in love (Eph 4:15; Col 4:6; 1 Pt 3:15).

21:7-15 Skeptics point out that Job's characterization of the success of the wicked, despite their godless lives, contradicts biblical teaching (cp. 21:10 with Ps 49:12-15). But Job's issue here was given voice elsewhere in Scripture (e.g., Ps 73:1-14). Biblical writers did not gloss over the seeming contradiction between the prosperity of the wicked and God's promise of blessing for those who obey Him; but their answer came from a change of perspective in which they realized the ultimate destiny of those who disregard God (Ps 73:17-20). The book of Jb is a dialogue in which the speakers, including Job, encircled the main issue—God's righteousness—approaching it from a variety of angles. Along the way some negative (Job) and superficial (the friends) ideas came out, but they should never be taken as the author's final teaching. Although seemingly reminiscent of the innocent sufferer's lament in other ancient documents, including one known as the *Babylonian Theodicy,* Job's remarks were a true report of his feelings at this stage of the discussion, not the book's final position.

22:8 Some critics have denied the integrity of this verse because the MT is written in the third person, while the succeeding verses are in the second person. Yet such variation is not uncommon in Hebrew, and verse 8 actually provides the basic premise upon which Eliphaz built his argument: The wealthy too often get rich at the expense of others. Eliphaz reasoned that whether knowingly or unknowingly, Job had become wealthy by violating common standards of decency. He had taken advantage of the poor, the widow, and the orphan (vv. 6,9). He had failed to assist those in need of life's basic staples (v. 7). The charges were false (1:1,8; 2:3) and Job would speak against such actions (29:12; 31:16-23). Eliphaz's false accusations are a reminder that texts must be read in context and compared with other passages so as not to be incorrectly cited as proof. Verses 6-10 are a true report of Eliphaz's speech, but Eliphaz's words are not to be read as the truth concerning Job.

22:24 Although "Ophir" has not been located with certainty, scriptural reports of Solomon's trading ventures there (1 Kg 9:26-28; 10:11) dispel any notion that such a place was a fabled land such as Shangri-La.

23:8-9 Job's complaint concerning the inaccessibility of God does not contradict the biblical teaching of God's omnipresence (Ps 139:7-12) and nearness to those in need (Ps 34:18; 103:1-2; 145:18; Is 65:24). Job's cry arose from what he considered to be unjust suffering (23:10-12). His remarks reflected accurately his perspective of things but does not guarantee theological accuracy.

24:1-17 Critical tendencies to date this chapter in the Babylonian exile period are unnecessary. The crimes listed here reflect the general moral and spiritual failure of mankind. Job's questions as to why a just God fails to deal with crimes condemned in His law (for example, cp. v. 2 with Ex 20:5; Dt 19:4; v. 3 with Ex 22:22; Dt 28:31; v. 7 with Ex 22:26-27; v. 14 with Ex 20:13,15; v. 15 with Ex 20:14) expressed only his opinion. God's seeming inactivity does not indicate divine inability or unconcern. He controls all things (Ps 22:28). Though not always condoned by God, man's free acts are under His jurisdiction (Jr 10:23; Php

2:13). People may not understand His purposes or "delays" (Ps 10:1; 2 Pt 3:9), but God's administration of the universe is just (Ps 75:2; 89:14; Is 45:21).

24:18-25 Critics have either deleted portions of this passage (e.g., v. 21) or largely transferred it to another place in the book (e.g., after 27:13 or 27:23). The difficult Hebrew and the emphasis on divine retribution upon the wicked are cited as evidence of a dislocation here. Various schemes have been suggested, such as assigning it to Bildad or to a supposed lost speech of Zophar. The number and variety of differing proposals show that the critical approach is unlikely to resolve the issue. Because this is an ongoing discussion, Job's remarks at this point need not be consistent with his previous or subsequent statements. Job endorsed the principle of divine retribution earlier (10:14-15), even if he did not think it rightly applied to his situation (23:10-12).

25:4-5 Bildad's question should not be understood as a denial that man's reconciliation with God is impossible. Bildad returned to where the dialogue began, and he repeatedly surfaced in stating that weak, flawed human beings cannot hope to be so morally perfect that they are pure in God's sight (4:15-18; 9:2; 14:4; 15:14-16). His statement was designed to counter Job's claim that were he to present his case before God, his innocence and righteousness would be established (23:10-12). Bildad asked better than he knew. The Scriptures answer the question by declaring that sinful people can be just in God's sight by meeting God's terms (Gn 15:6; Hab 2:4), faith in the substitutionary death of Christ for sins (Rm 3:21-26; 5:8; 2 Co 5:21; 1 Pt 3:18).

25:6 "Maggot" and "worm" are metaphors of man's relative weakness and imperfection. Psalm 22, quoted by Jesus as He was dying, uses this same imagery (v. 6). Bildad built upon Job's previous remarks (Jb 7:5; 17:14; 21:26). His philosophy did not represent the biblical view of man's essential dignity and potential worth as created in the image of God (Gn 1:26). Although that image is marred by sin, it is not obliterated (1 Co 11:7; Jms 3:7). It can be renewed by faith in Christ, who is the precise image of God (Col 1:15-20; Heb 1:3). The price of restoring the image of God in man was Jesus' full participation in the wretchedness of the human condition that is so aptly described in Bildad's and the psalmist's metaphors. The believer's full conformity to the image of Christ lies in the future (1 Co 15:49).

26:7 Critical attempts to view the "northern" skies (Hb. *tsaphon*) in terms of Ugaritic mythology in which the god Baal's title was Baal-zephon with his residence on Mount Zaphon are unnecessary, despite Ps 48:2-3 and Is 14:13-14, where the north figures prominently in connection with God and mountains. These texts may indicate that it is Yahweh, not Baal, who rightly indwells Zaphon (i.e., "heaven"). Mythological derivation may not be present, however. Job could intend "the northern skies," home to the North Star and constellations. Some scholars suggest that Job wrote better than he knew, for his observation approached the knowledge that the earth is suspended in space supported only by gravitational forces.

26:12-13 Critical theory endorses a mythological reference to Baal's subjugation of *Yam* (the sea) and Leviathan (a sea monster). Whether "Rahab" is to be identified with *Yam* or the sea monster is unclear. Similar phraseology is used of God's crushing Leviathan's heads (Ps 74:13-14; 89:9-10; Is 51:9-10). Leviathan is also called the gliding and twisting serpent that God will pierce in eschatological times (Is 27:1). The biblical accounts demythologize Canaanite theology by pointing out that Yahweh is the Creator and Controller of the forces of nature. See the notes on 3:8; 7:12; 9:13.

27:2 The text gives a true record of Job's feelings but these do not represent the scriptural position as to God's righteous and just character (Dt 32:4; Is 30:18; Zph 3:5). God loves righteousness and justice (Ps 33:5), and reigns in justice (Ps 97:2). He also expects His people to act justly (Mc 6:8) so that He might pour out His blessings on them (Dt 16:20). Isaiah predicted that David's heir would one day rule Israel with justice (Is 1:27; 11:1-5).

27:13-23 Because Job appears to adopt his friends' view in this passage, some critics theorize that this description of the wicked is wrongly attributed to Job. Some suggest this passage is a lost third speech of Zophar, or that it should be added to Bildad's short speech (25:1-6). But, as seen elsewhere in the dialogue, Job was searching for answers and encircling his problem from different angles, so his pronouncements were not necessarily consistent with one another (see 21:7-15; 24:18-25). There is no reason to question the text as it stands.

28:1-28 Many critical scholars suggest that because the poem of chapter 28 seems to bear no relation to the surrounding discussions, it was once an independent composition that was incorporated later into the text. This view is unnecessary. Job mused concerning the nature of true wisdom that had not been adequately determined in the previous discussions (e.g., 4:21; 11:6-9; 12:12-13; 15:8; 26:3-4). Chapter 28 serves as a transitional piece, clarifying many issues relating to wisdom that have been brought up previously and laying the groundwork for Job's soliloquy in chaps. 29–31.

28:2 Critics once held that the use of iron was a late development. Mining of iron is now known to have taken place as early as the third millennium B.C. in Egypt, Anatolia, and Mesopotamia, though widespread mining operations began around 1200 B.C. Since the use of iron antedates Moses, Job could have been familiar with it.

28:28 Some critics have denied the integrity of this verse for several reasons. (1) The opening line is considered to be too short and to be a poetic line. (2) The divine name that is used, *Adonai* ("Lord"), occurs only here in Jb. (3) The verse is said to be inconsistent with the rest of the chapter. The critical charges do not stand, for these reasons: (1) Other poetic pieces have short introductory lines (e.g., Ps 1:1; 50:16). (2) It is gratuitous to suggest that the traditional formula concerning "the fear of the Lord" must always appear exactly the same. (3) Verse 28 provides the logical end to Job's poem. It is by fearing the Lord and submitting to him as master (*Adonai*) that man can acquire wisdom. There aresuggestions from critics that "mankind" *('adam*) should be translated to read "He said to Adam," since he would be the first recipient of God-given wisdom. But this idea is questionable at best.

29:6 The imagery spoke of Job's former luxury. "Cream" was so available to him that he could have bathed his feet in it (see Dt 33:24). Olive oil flowed over his stone olive presses. Similar images of abundance occur in the OT (e.g., Dt 32:13-14; Ps 81:16).

30:16-23 Job's characterization of God as One who had abused His power by causing Job's pain and refusing to answer Job's pleas should not be interpreted as normative theology. Job's accusations arose out of suffering and psychological trauma. The Scriptures plainly teach that God is not the author of evil (Jms 1:13) but that He is holy, just, and perfect in all that He does (Lv 11:44-45; 19:2; Dt 32:4). His grace and goodness flow out of His love to needy human beings (Ps 145:8-9). He answers those who call upon Him in their distress(Ps 22:24; 102:1-2), unless they have broken fellowship with Him (Ps 66:18). Although all must face the eventuality of death, even then God lovingly cares for His own (Ps 16:10; 23:4).

31:1-34 Suggestions that Job's ethical standards reflect a late date for the book are unfounded. Many verses reflect the principles in early law codes of the ancient Near East, the Decalogue, and the Pentateuch (e.g., Nm 15:39). Some critics have attempted to restructure the chapter so that Job's list of specific sins has a more logical grouping. Thus v. 1 would be placed together with vv. 9-12. Such attempts are unnecessary for three reasons: (1) Job's remarks do not constitute a legal brief but reflect the passionate outburst of a man who felt that he suffered as one who was innocent of wrongdoing. (2) Textual support for the transposition of verses is lacking. (3) The final editors saw no need to restructure the text.

31:1 Some critics attempt to link the "young woman" that Job mentioned with either the Ugaritic virgin *Anat* or the Mesopotamian *Ishtar,* thus suggesting the worship of fertility goddesses. But this is unfounded. The standard warnings against the lust of the eyes are sufficient to explain the verse without resorting to deeper meanings gleaned from supposed pagan precedents.

31:15 The suggestion that Job embraced the universal fatherhood of God finds no support in the context. Job pointed out that he had no inherent superiority to his servants (v. 13), for God oversaw their birth process as well as his. Although God is the universal Creator, He is Father to those who stand in covenant relation with Him (Dt 32:6; Hs 11:1-11; Jn 1:12) and to the Messiah, His Son Jesus Christ (Ps 2:7; Mt 3:17; 11:27).

31:18 Some scholars are skeptical that Job actually cared for the orphan "from [his] youth." However, such hyperbolic speech was as common then as when we now say, "I've done it all my life." Job testified to his life-long commitment to caring for the underprivileged of society (cp. 29:12).

31:40 "The words of Job are concluded" should not be construed to indicate that the subsequent chapters were added later to bring closure to the story line. Similar editorial notes are found in Ps 72:20 and Jr 51:64. The remark indicates that Job had made his case before God and would allow Him to respond.

32:1 Critics view the speeches of Elihu (chaps. 32–37) as a late interpolation into the text, and they offer the following reasons: (1) Elihu is not mentioned in the prologue or epilogue. (2) These chapters contain an unusual proportion of Aramaic words in the Hebrew text. (3) These speeches contain fewer metaphors than the preceding ones and have vocabulary differences.(4) Elihu's speeches are more philosophically/theologically reasoned than those of Job's three friends.

But these charges lack validity. First, Elihu's absence from the prologue is understandable, if he arrived after the dialogue had begun. His absence from the epilogue is no more inexplicable than that of Satan or Job's wife. Second, Elihu's speeches give allusions to all three rounds of the dialogue. Third, the presence of 12 Aramaic words is scarcely disproportionate to the 26 Aramaic words found elsewhere in the book. Arguments based on style are subjective; Elihu should be allowed his own style. Fourth, the failure of Job's friends to convince him necessitates Elihu's philosophical and theological approach. Elihu's speeches were a preparatory bridge between Job's summation of his case and God's reply.

33:13 Elihu's remarks should not be understood as indicating that God is callous, frivolous, or inconsistent in dealing with peoples' prayers. God is under no obligation to answer prayer but the Bible indicates that He does answer prayers that are in accordance with His will (Jms 5:13-18; 1 Pt 3:12). The answer may not be what the petitioner is seeking but it will be that which is best (2 Co 12:7-10). Many believers testify to God's gracious answers to prayer (Ps 34:6).

33:18 Some scholars suggest that this is a mythological allusion to passing through a river into the underworld, where all the departed enter. But this is erroneous. The Scriptures reveal a difference between the state of the saved and unsaved dead (Ps 49:10-15; Lk 16:22-23). The imagery here is a passing through "the river of death" into the grave (the "Pit").

33:23-25 Elihu's remarks form a conditional sentence. They should not be interpreted that angels hear believers' prayers or serve as mediators between the petitioner and God. There is one heavenly Mediator between God and man, and that is Christ Jesus (Jn 14:14; 1 Tm 2:5-6; Heb 7:25). Elihu's thoughts resemble the biblical teaching concerning the "Angel" of the Lord, who is often closely tied to God Himself.

34:29-37 These verses are difficult in Hebrew. The widely differing attempts by critical scholars to emend the text have no supportive manuscript evidence, so it is best to let the MT stand as the reliable source. As has sometimes been the case in the past, future archaeological discoveries may clarify the meaning of obscure terms in this passage.

35:6-8 Elihu's statement that human conduct (whether sinful or righteous) has no effect on God is misleading. Although human conduct does not affect God's essential character, God does respond to human actions. God expresses concern, sorrow, and disappointment over Israel's infidelity (Hs 11:1-11; Mal 1:6-9). Jeremiah declared that God repeatedly sought earnestly to warn His disobedient people but to no avail (e.g., Jr 7:13; 25:4-7; 32:33-35; 35:14-15; 44:4-6). Jesus lamented over Jerusalem's stubborn refusal to turn from disbelief and receive God's appointed means of reconciliation (Mt 23:37). As the believer's great High Priest, Jesus feels all the temptations that a Christian might face (Heb 4:13-16). The Holy Spirit can be grieved (Eph 4:30). God's goodness (Nah 1:7; Rm 2:4) toward man, His love for people (1 Jn 4:10), and His forgiveness all demonstrate that God cares for people (1 Pt 5:7) and has concern for their eternal destiny (2 Pt 3:9).

36:25 Elihu's observation flies in the face of those who say they have "seen" no evidence of God. The Scriptures affirm, "The heavens declare the glory of God" (Ps 19:1; cp. 8:1-4). Paul indicates that this natural revelation is sufficient to hold people accountable for knowing God and their conduct before Him (Rm 1:18-23).

36:31 Some critics suggest transposing this verse after verse 28. No textual evidence supports this view.

36:33 Despite dozens of interpretations and emendations to this verse, HCSB supports the simple meaning of the text. Even the cattle are aware of an approaching storm, which may herald the coming presence of the Judge of all the earth (Ps 96:13; 98:9; Ac 17:31).

37:9 Some critics suggest that "chamber" is an allusion either to the subterranean abode of the god *El,* mentioned in the texts from Ugarit (see note on 1:14-19), or the sacred chambers of the Mesopotamian god *Ea.* Others propose that it refers to the seven chambers of the winds of the earth. But the metaphor refers to God as the source of weather phenomena (Ps 135:7). The constellations of the southern sky are often called "chambers" (Jb 9:9, footnote).

37:18 Skeptics suggest a primitive cosmology is shown here, in which the sky is a dome made of solid bronze, fashioned like ancient mirrors. The simile, however, refers to a prolonged draught featuring a prevailing south wind. Under such conditions the sky seems like "cast metal." Similar metaphors are used of God's judgment via a draught that renders the sky like "bronze" and the earth like "iron" (Dt 28:23). Still other comparative metaphors of the expanse of the sky occur elsewhere (Ex 24:10; Ps 104:2; Is 40:22).

37:22 For information refuting the interpretation of "north" as a supposed mythological reference, see note on 26:7.

38:4-6 Some critics use this passage to assert that the Bible teaches that the earth stands on "pillars" (cp. 9:6), set on a foundation with a cornerstone, and built according to measured specifications. But throughout this chapter the imagery of creation is cast in bold metaphors designed for human understanding. The Lord's speeches should not be viewed as scientific treatises (see note on 26:7).

38:7 Some think the "morning stars" reflect ancient Near Eastern mythology in which stellar bodies were considered gods. But this interpretation ignores the obvious metaphor. For more on "the sons of God," see note on 1:6.

38:8-11 Critical attempts to relate the delineation of ocean boundaries only to Mesopotamian or Canaanite mythology overlook the varied metaphors here. Literal interpretation demands taking metaphors as metaphors.

38:19-20 This is another obvious metaphor. Light and darkness are likened to those who put in their work period and go home.

38:22-23 The storing of "snow" and "hail" in storehouses is metaphorical. Much as an army keeps its arsenal of weapons in an armory, so God's "weapons" are available to Him for use at the proper time of judgment, for "warfare and battle."

38:31-32 No reflection of Greek mythology in which Orion is chained in the sky should be read here. Uncertainty as to the identity of "the Bear and her cubs" should not obscure the fact that God controls all the constellations.

38:37 A colorful word-picture, comparing the raining clouds to "water jars of heaven," underscores the poetic quality of the book of Jb.

39:13-18 In these verses the style of the speech changes from rhetorical questions to narrative description. Some commentators, noting their omission from the Greek OT, have questioned their originality. Such stylistic variation, however, is common in poetry and is utilized in the verses that follow. The fact that God is referred to in the third person rather than the expected first person is not unusual in divine discourse (e.g., Ex 34:14; Jb 40:2; Hab 2:14, 20). The MT offers no support for dropping this passage.

39:14-16 The charge that the description of the ostrich is erroneous misses the point. The description conforms to popular perception rather than intending to be based upon scientific observation. The intention was to demonstrate Job's inability to comprehend the natural world. Nevertheless, the description contains some valid observations concerning the ostrich. She lays her eggs in the sand to be warmed by the sun(v. 14). Despite the eggs' thick shells, an extremely heavy foot might crush them (v. 15). Some females share the same nesting area so that a female may look disdainfully at the eggs (v. 16). The ostrich can run at great speeds (v. 18).

40:15-24 Although skeptics ridicule the existence of such a beast as this "Behemoth," critical scholars attempt to relate it to an ancient mythological beast. Some suggest an allusion to the "Bull of Heaven" found in the ancient Mesopotamian epic of Gilgamesh, others relate it to the monstrous, ferocious bullock that the goddess Anat defeated. Because Job is invited to consider a creature known to him (v. 15), most commentators identify Behemoth with some large, ferocious animal such as a buffalo, dinosaur, rhinoceros, or hippopotamus. Although all identifications are tenuous, the hippopotamus appears to be the most likely reference, despite the description of his short tail as being "like a cedar tree" (v. 17). Although Egyptian royalty regularly sponsored hunts for the hippopotamus, only God would metaphorically dare to face the Behemoth alone with a sword (v. 19).

41:1 For the critical view that Leviathan is drawn from Canaanite mythology, see note on 3:8. References to Leviathan are found elsewhere in the Bible, characteristically as metaphors to depict the enemies of God and Israel (e.g., Ps 74:14; 104:26; Is 27:1). Although some suggest that Leviathan was a whale or a great shark, most hold that the reference was to a crocodile. Like the hippopotamus (see note on 40:15-24), the crocodile was a hunted animal in Egypt. The appearance in successive chapters of Egypt's two most hunted animals supports the prevailing view concerning Behemoth and Leviathan. As in ancient Egypt, where the crocodile could symbolize royal power, so Leviathan may stand for a hostile force that only God can subdue (41:33-34). Similarly, God is portrayed as slaying the great dragon, Satan, in the eschaton (Rv 20:7-10).

41:25 "The mighty" can be translated "the divine beings," critics suggest a mythological reference in which the gods tremble before an impending disaster or trouble. But names for divinity are often used as superlatives (e.g., Ezk 31:11; 32:21). Thus whether they are people or other animals, "the mighty" are terrified.

42:1-7 This crucial passage reveals the key to the entire book of Jb. Job finally received the answer to the question of his unjust treatment, but the answer did not come in the form of a logical argument that vindicated either his righteousness or his friends' accusations against him. Instead—thanks, in part, to Elihu's intervention—Job came to a revelation of God's overwhelming majesty and, what is more, God had spoken to him at last. Job saw that, in questioning God's justice, he had spoken out of turn; God does the questioning ("When I question you, you will inform Me," v. 4). Job had "seen" the God of whom he had formerly only "heard rumors." This revelation moved Job to repentance (vv. 5-6). He had made much of his own integrity, failing to recognize Who was really in charge of the discussion all along.

42:7-17 A widely accepted theory of critical scholarship holds that the dialogues of the book of Jb were inserted into an original story in which Job displayed his proverbial "patience" and piety, while his friends found fault with both him and God. According to this theory, the ending (and beginning) of the book come from the old story, which would explain why Job appears to behave differently here from the way he responded in the dialogues with his friends. When one considers the logical method of Israelite wisdom literature, such a theory becomes unnecessary. Looking at the book as a whole, we see that Job (and his friends as well) proposed various answers to the problem of his suffering. Job considered it unmerited and demanded an explanation from God. The friends tried to explain it, defending God's justice. Yet in the end God told them, "You have not spoken the truth about Me, as My servant Job has" (v. 7). This sounds odd, since the friends' arguments sounded completely "orthodox" in terms of the Bible's general view of God's punishment of the guilty. What they failed to do—and which Job did—was to deal directly with God about the issue instead of just talking about Him. They felt they had to defend God, while Job "dared" God to speak for Himself—because God needs no defense.

Psalms Articles

What Does the Bible Teach About Human Beings?

by Russell D. Moore

According to the Bible, one of the most powerful apologetic arguments for the Christian faith is humanity itself. The Scriptures tell us that the wonder of the human body points to the creativity and genius of the Creator God in a way that should evoke both fear and awe (Ps 139:14). The human exercise of dominion over the created order reflects God's kingship over the universe (Gn 1:26), a kingship that is fully realized in the mediation of Christ Jesus (Eph 1:10). Man is created male and female in the image of God for a one-flesh union resulting in offspring, a union that foreshadows the reality of the Christ/church relationship (Eph 5:22-33).

The Bible tells us that the human conscience testifies to the content and the rightness of the law of the Creator. Although human beings sought to define good and evil apart from the authoritative Word of God (Jms 4:17), God nonetheless planted within all children of Adam a witness to His standards of good and evil. The fact that fallen humans acknowledge any standards of morality indicates that there is a transcendent code of law, somewhere above merely constructing societal rules and boundaries (Rm 2:12-16). Moreover, as the Apostle Paul pointed out, this conscience points beyond itself to a day of reckoning. When humans make moral choices—or make immoral choices using moral arguments—they are actually acknowledging that they know of a day in which God will judge all the secrets of the heart (Rm 2:16).

Regardless of how often fallen humans seek to classify themselves as merely biological, they know on the basis of their common rationality, morality, and search for meaning that this is not the case. No matter how many times Darwinians, for example, speak of humans as one more kind of animal, and no matter how many times some psychologists explain our behavior on the basis of evolutionary mechanisms, human beings know it just isn't so. We know there is something distinctive about us—which is why the Bible calls on us to appeal to the minds and consciences of unbelievers, even though the minds are blinded (2 Co 4:4) and the consciences are often calloused (1 Tm 4:2).

Therefore, the biblical witness about human beings stands in stark contrast with other belief systems. Unlike some Eastern religions, the Bible does not present the life of a human being as a cycle of incarnations, nor does it affirm, as Mormonism does, the preexistence of disembodied human spirits. Unlike many nature religions and various forms of pagan worship, the Bible does not present humanity as part of the larger "life force" of nature. Unlike Islam, the Bible affirms the freedom and responsibility of human beings as moral creatures before a God whose image they reflect. Unlike many psychological theories, the Bible does not reduce human motivations or actions to the interactions of unconscious desires, habitual patterns, or the firing of neurons. Unlike Marxism and libertarian capitalism, the Bible presents the longings of the human heart as far more than material. Unlike Gnosticism or feminism, God's good creative purposes are seen in the goodness and permanence of sexual differentiation, in the equal worth of the sexes as image bearers (Gn 2:27), and in the protective, sacrificial headship of men as fathers of families and leaders of tribes (1 Co 11:3). In contrast to rival belief systems, the Bible presents human beings as distinct from a nature they are called to govern (Ps 8:5-8), free to act according to their natures (Jos 24:15), responsible for actions before the tribunal of Christ (Rv 20:12-13), and created for conformity to the image of Jesus as joint heirs of a glorious new creation (Rm 8:17,29). The doctrine of the image of God grants value to every human life, regardless of its vulnerability or stage of development (Gn 9:6), and it stands in eternal hostility to any form of racial bigotry or nation-state idolatry (Ac 17:25-27).

The Bible's truthfulness about human depravity contrasts strongly with belief systems that are more optimistic about human nature, such as Mormonism, Scientology, or secularism. Human sin is an apologetic issue since a Christian framework explains how educated, rational, loving persons can bring forth cruelty, violence, and hatred. The biblical teaching on sin also answers what may be the most persistent charge against the truthfulness of Christianity: Christian hypocrisy.

Likewise, the prevalence of world religions and ideologies, which is often used as an objection to Christianity, actually serves as an apologetic argument for Christian claims. The Bible tells us that the universal instinct to worship and to interpret reality is grounded in the revelation of God and that the universal suppression of this truth leads to diverse idolatries (Rm 1:18-32). We should not be surprised, then, that literally every human civilization in history has had some practice of worship, but also that cults, world religions, and even secular ideologies often ape some aspects of Christian truth. Nor should we be surprised, as the ancient book of Ecclesiastes illustrates, when the human quest for sensual gratification, material abundance, or the wielding of power apart from the Creator's purposes leads to despair.

Notable Christian Apologist: Anselm

by Ted Cabal

Born in what would be modern-day Italy, Anselm (A.D. 1033–1109) was raised by a father who resisted his son's desire for a life of scholarly devotion. His mother, however, instilled in him a vision and love of God. Through his unwavering commitment Anselm became not only a Christian scholar but eventually also a celebrated teacher and the archbishop of Canterbury. Like the earlier scholar and churchman Augustine, Anselm sought to better understand the faith he already believed. In the classic *Why God Became Man*, Anselm produced what has become the standard view of the atonement: God alone can satisfy the infinite demands of His righteous wrath—and He graciously does so through the saving work of the God-man, Jesus Christ.

Written in a spirit of prayer, Anselm's *Proslogion* presents one of the most controversial and fascinating arguments for God's existence—the so-called ontological argument (argument from being). When a fool says in his heart that there is no God (Ps 14:1), he demonstrates that he understands what is meant by the term God, namely "that than which nothing greater can be conceived." And anything that can be conceived *not* to exist is not God. Thus God cannot be conceived *not* to exist. Or in other terms, God would not be that than which nothing greater can be conceived if He existed only in one's mind, for it is greater to exist in reality than in thought alone. Hence God must exist. In response to charges that the argument is unsound, Anselm expounded the argument further by noting that God is a *necessary* being, that is, a being whose uncaused self-existence accounts for the existence of all other *contingent* things.

Does the Cosmological Argument Show There Is a God?

by J. P. Moreland

The cosmological argument starts with the existence of the universe and reasons to the existence of God as the best explanation of the universe. There are different forms of the argument. Two important versions are the Leibnizian and Thomist arguments, which are named, respectively, after Gottfried W. Leibniz (A.D. 1646–1716) and Thomas Aquinas (A.D. 1225–1274). In recent years a third version has become prominent and it may be the most effective of all: the *kalam cosmological argument*, which can be diagrammed as a series of alternatives:

Universe
Beginning No Beginning
Caused Uncaused
Personal Impersonal

The defender of the argument tries to establish one horn of each dilemma and thus to argue for these three premises:

1. The universe had a beginning.
2. The beginning of the universe was caused.
3. The cause of the beginning of the universe was personal.

One philosophical argument for premise 1 involves the impossibility of creating an actual infinite number of events. For example, if you start counting 1, 2, 3, . . . , then you could count forever and never reach a time when an actual infinite amount of numbers had been counted. Your counting could continue forever but would always be finite; that is, it would have some point of ending. If the universe had no beginning, then the number of events crossed to reach the present moment would be actually infinite because the universe would be infinite. It would be like counting to zero from negative infinity. Since one cannot have an actual infinite, then the present moment could never have arrived if the universe had no beginning. Since the present is real, it had to have been preceded by a finite past; therefore, there was a beginning or first event!

One scientific argument for premise 1 derives from the second law of thermodynamics, which in one form states that the amount of useful energy in the universe is being used up. If the universe were infinitely old, it would already have used up all its useful energy and have arrived at a temperature of absolute zero. Since there are many pockets of useful energy (for example, the sun), the universe must be finite in duration. Therefore, there was a beginning when the universe's useful energy was put into it "from the outside."

Premise 2 is confirmed by universal experience with no clear counterexamples. Alleged cases where something comes from nothing actually involve one thing coming into existence from something else (for example, lead from uranium).

Evidence for premise 3 derives from the fact that since time, space, and matter did not exist earlier than the beginning of the universe, the universe's cause had to be timeless, spaceless, and immaterial. This cause cannot be physical or subject to scientific law since all such causes presuppose time, space, and matter to exist. The universe's immaterial cause was timeless, spaceless, and had the power to spontaneously bring the world into existence without changing first to do so. (If it had to change before bringing the world into existence, then that change, not the act of bringing the world into existence, would be the first event.) Such a cause must have free will, and since only persons have free will, it is a personal Creator.

Is Beauty in the Eye of the Beholder?

by David A. Horner

The answer to this question is yes—and no. Beauty involves both subjective and objective elements, both taste and truth, which is why there is often confusion about it.

The ability to perceive beauty does involve a kind of taste, which can be either cultivated and trained or distorted and dulled. Some instances of beauty are perceptible only to those who have cultivated a taste for them through disciplined practice. For example, trained musicians hear subtle distinctions of tone that others miss, and painters see additional hues in the sunset. In a fallen world we can lose our taste for beauty through inattention, self-absorption, and suffering. We can even develop a taste for what is ugly.

Beauty itself, however, is objective, a matter of truth. Tones and hues are real properties of music and sunsets; they are there whether or not we are sensitive enough to perceive them. The way we experience beauty shows this. We are struck by something beautiful. We may even be surprised by it—it takes our breath away. We respond to it with spontaneous expressions of awe, gratitude, appreciation, or reverence. These reactions show we don't really think it is beautiful merely because we think it's beautiful. We are responding to the beauty it *has*, independently of us. What is truly beautiful merits such a response.

Ultimately, beauty is grounded in the nature of God Himself, the supremely beautiful Person (Ps 27:4), and then in His creation, which reflects His beautiful intentions and artistry (Gn 1; Ps 50:2). The created order is magnificently diverse in its beauty, meaning we can see beauty in a variety of things that can all be considered beautiful (Ec 3:11).

There are deep connections among goodness, truth, and beauty (e.g., goodness is a kind of moral beauty; Php 4:8). The full meaning of the Hebrew word *shalom* conveys this rich biblical picture. More than merely "peace," *shalom* is the uniting and flowering of truth, goodness, and beauty in the wholeness of life. However, the fall has broken *shalom* and as a result sin has introduced ugliness into the world. Evil is not only false and bad but ugly (for instance, pornography is an ugly distortion of God's beautiful created context of sexuality). Thus our experiences of beauty are often distorted—and even dangerous, when we worship beauty instead of God (Gn 3:6; Rm 1:21-25).

Each of us needs beauty in our lives, relationships, work, and worship. We are made for it and we long for it. Our hunger for beauty is an expression of our fundamental human longing for *shalom*—ultimately for *shalom* with God (Rm 5:1).

Beauty has value for apologetics in the sense that it is part of the common ground we share with all people, since we are made in the image of God and live in a God-created world. Beauty points beyond the physical cosmos to the Creator. Like goodness and truth, beauty is not a physical property, measurable by science, and its reality indicates that the physical world is not all there is. The beauty of the world points to the nature of the Divine Artist whose handiwork it is. And the fundamental human longing for beauty, for *shalom*, is a hunger that cannot ultimately be satisfied in this fallen world—it is a clue that we were made for more than this life (Ec 3:11).

Does Science Support the Bible?

by Walter L. Bradley

Introduction

Two major areas of scientific inquiry can in principle either support or undermine the Bible, namely, what science tells us about the nature of our universe and planet and what it can tell us about the history of our universe and planet. Biblical theism describes a God who is immediately responsible for all physical reality, with the laws of nature seen as descriptions of God's customary way of caring for His creatures (as in Col 1:17). Biblical theism also affirms that God sometimes works in extraordinary (or supernatural) ways to shape and care for His creation (Gn 1:1). The challenge is, can the biblical and scientific pictures of our universe and planet be harmonized?

Our Remarkable Home

One of the most surprising scientific developments of the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries has been the discovery of the many remarkable features of our universe and planet that are essential to make it such an ideal habitat for life. First, we need a sufficient diversity of elements, combined with a relative abundance of certain critical elements, to make possible the production of complex "molecular machines" capable of processing energy, storing information, and replicating molecules such as RNA, DNA, and protein. Second, at least one element in this complexity of life must be capable of serving as a ready connector, reacting with essentially all elements to form bonds that are stable but not too stable to be broken during "reuse"; carbon is such an element. Third, we must have an individual element or compound that is liquid at certain temperatures on planet earth and very abundant and that can serve as a universal solvent. This liquid must be capable of dissolving most elements and/or compounds essential to the chemistry of life; that describes water. Fourth, we need long-term sources of energy that fit with the chemical energy in the carbon bonds so that this energy can fuel the chemical reactions we find in the carbon-based, chain molecules that are essential to life.

At least 50 such requirements have been identified, all necessary for life to exist in our universe.

God's Remarkable Design

God has satisfied the many requirements for life in three remarkable ways: the elegant mathematical form that is encoded in nature and that we call "the laws of nature"; the fine-tuning of the 19 universal constants (e.g., the speed of light, the gravity force constant, the mass of the electron, and the unit charge); and the unbelievably demanding initial conditions that God had to set. For example, the ratio of the strong force constant to the electromagnetic force constant must fall within a window of 5 percent of the actual ratio if we are to have elemental diversity and a star like our sun that gives a long-term, stable source of energy. To match the energy of the light from the sun to the chemical bonding energy in organic compounds, six of the universal constants have to be carefully tailored to each other. The speed of light (c), the mass of the electron (m_e), the mass of the proton (m_p), Planck's constant (h), the gravity force constant, and the unit charge must have carefully matched magnitudes that satisfy the following algebraic equation:

$$m_p^2 \cdot G/[h\ c] >\sim [e^2/\{hc\}]^{12} [me/mp]^4$$

Remarkably, these six constants do have exactly the right relative values for the energy from the sun to be matched precisely to that needed to facilitate critical chemical reactions in organic molecules.

Many scientists have remarked with admiration about this amazing characteristic of our universe. For example, the famous English astronomer Sir Fred Hoyle commented, "A common sense interpretation of the facts suggests that a super intellect has 'monkeyed' with the physics as well as the chemistry and biology, and there are no blind forces worth speaking about in nature."

Possibly the most impressive scientific achievement of twentieth century was the discovery of DNA, upon which is encoded the information of life. That such a remarkable information storage system exists, and that the DNA molecules have somehow come to be encoded with the precise information needed for life, is the climax to an amazing testimony from science of God's providential care for us in His creation. For example, for the accidental origin of the cytochrome-C molecule to have the required sequencing of the various amino acids has a probability of only 1 in 10^{60}.

These findings from recent science give an even more profound significance to Paul's testimony in Rm 1:20 that God's divinity can be seen even in the invisible elements of His universe.

Can We Harmonize Genesis 1 and Science?

While the scientific discoveries of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries have strengthened belief in a Designer/Creator, highly publicized conflicts between science and the Bible such as the Scopes "Monkey Trial" have eroded confidence in the biblical inferences about natural history found in Genesis 1–2. This conflict is the result of unsubstantiated scientific claims and unnecessarily limited interpretations of Genesis 1–2 (whether they be of the liberal or conservative variety).

The unsupported claim from science is that the origin of life and its progression from simple to complex forms are achieved by molecular selection and mutation/natural selection respectively. While this synthesis of mutation/natural selection adequately explains how organisms become more adapted to their environment and how incremental improvement in existing characteristics might occur, it seems incapable of explaining the origin of multicomponent systems, such as the human eye. New multicomponent systems would have no advantage from natural selection until the individual parts had already evolved to an advanced stage of development. Yet without natural selection to guide this development, it is almost impossible to imagine how complex, multicomponent systems can originate. Biochemist Michael Behe has dubbed this process "Darwin's black box"—a whimsical term for a device that does something but whose inner workings cannot be seen and sometimes are not comprehensible.

Notable Christian Apologist: Joseph Butler

by Ted Cabal

Joseph Butler (1692–1752) received an Oxford University education, was made bishop of Bristol and later Durham, and became chaplain to the queen of England. But prestige did not dominate his interests; rather, he was concerned about the defense of the Christian faith. In his day Enlightenment views prevailed in Europe. While faith and revelation were increasingly spurned or ridiculed, confidence in reason and science was rising. Biblical Christianity was openly attacked as irrational and superstitious. The intellectual elite regarded deism, with its disavowal of any divine activity after creation, as the true religion. Deism could not accept the supernatural involvement of the biblical God in history.

Butler's *Analogy of Religion* undermined the deists by employing the very reasoning they used to attack the Bible. He claimed that if biblical revelation is to be doubted due to its difficulties and mysteries, then science should also be disbelieved. The same kinds of obscurities and unanswered questions are part of science, yet deists were all too quick to trumpet science as the new revelation. This example of inconsistent thinking, Butler argued, did not exalt the rationality honored by intellectuals. If anything, the common patterns in nature and the Bible point to one and the same Author. And if deists believed in the grandest of miracles, the creation of the universe, then why should they doubt the lesser miracles of the Bible? Butler's *Analogy* mightily rebutted deism in his generation and became a standard text at Cambridge and Oxford for more than a century.

If God Made the Universe, Who Made God?

by Paul Copan

Atheist philosopher Bertrand Russell mused, "If everything must have a cause, then God must have a cause." But the question of what or who caused God is misguided.

First, science supports the notion that the universe had a beginning and that something independent of the universe brought it into being. The well-accepted scientific belief in the universe's origination and expansion and the second law of thermodynamics (energy tends to spread out) support the universe's absolute beginning from nothing. This sounds remarkably like Gn 1:1! The chances of a thing's popping into being from literally nothing are exactly zero. Being cannot come from nonbeing; there's no potential for this. Even skeptic David Hume called this "absurd"—a scientific (real) impossibility.

Second, believers reject the claim "Everything that exists has a cause" and affirm "Whatever begins to exist has a cause." To say "Everything needs a cause" would necessarily exclude an uncaused God. This is "question begging" (assuming what needs to be proved). It's like presuming that since all reality is physical (which can't be demonstrated), a nonphysical God cannot exist.

Third, why think everything needs a cause, since an uncaused entity is logical and intelligible? Through the centuries, many believed that the universe didn't need a cause; it was self-existent. They thought a beginningless/uncaused universe wasn't illogical or impossible. But now that contemporary cosmology points to the universe's beginning and an external cause, skeptics insist everything needs a cause after all!

Fourth, a good number of uncaused things exist. Logical laws are real; we can't think coherently without using them (e.g., the law of identity, X = X, tells you: "This book is this book"). Moral laws or virtues (love, justice) are real. But none of these began to exist. They are eternal and uncaused (being in God's mind).

Fifth, the question "Who made God?" commits the category fallacy. To say that all things, even God, must be caused is incoherent—like the question "How does the color green taste?" Why fault God for being uncaused? When we rephrase the question to say, "What caused the self-existent, uncaused Cause, who is by definition unmade, to exist?" the answer is obvious.

How Should a Christian Understand the Age of the Earth Controversy?

by Ted Cabal

Only three major Bible-science controversies have confronted the church: (1) the Copernican controversy, (2) the Darwinian controversy, and (3) the age-of-the-earth controversy. The question about the age of the earth did not become significantly heated until the latter third of the twentieth century. The primary disputants today are young- and old-earth creationists (YCs and OCs); theistic evolutionists and those not holding to biblical inerrancy have little interest in the issue. The debate does not pertain to dating Adam's creation, since both sides believe this occurred only thousands, not millions, of years ago. Nor is the controversy about the age of the universe, because some YCs believe in an old universe. And both creationist camps oppose Darwinian common descent. What is needed is a clearer understanding of both sides and a discussion of how significant an issue this is for biblical faith.

Some OCs contribute to the controversy by contending that YCs undercut biblical credibility with an artificial clash between science and Scripture. The biggest source of the controversy, however, is the contention of some YCs that only belief in a young earth is doctrinally acceptable. Some YCs believe this doctrine is so clear that its rejection compromises biblical authority. While OCs agree that biblical genealogies teach the recent creation of Adam, they don't agree that Scripture teaches that the creation days were consecutive 24-hour periods. (See the article "Are the Days of Genesis to Be Interpreted Literally?" p. 4.)

Some YCs argue that old-earth views, by placing animal death before the fall, conflict with Romans 5:12. OCs respond that Romans 5:12 says nothing about animal death. The Apostle Paul's context treats only of sin and death's entrance into the human race.

Some YCs worry that old-earth interpretations make the Bible subservient to science. And it is true that old-earth interpretations arose due to the (pre-Darwinian) discovery of enormous numbers of extinct animals such as dinosaurs. But this same data also led YCs to interpret Scripture in light of science (such as interpreting the book of Jb to describe dinosaurs). Indeed, some YCs have suggested plate tectonics as the possible interpretation for Genesis 10:25, and some offer a young-earth "big bang" interpretation of the first four creation days. Moreover, virtually all creationists now believe biblical descriptions of a stationary earth and revolving sun are from a human observational standpoint and are not intended as technical scientific descriptions.

Some YCs charge OCs with caving in to evolutionary theory, alleging the "long ages" are synonymous with the evolutionary system. Macroevolutionary theory needs an old earth, but inferring that old-earth views are thereby macroevolutionary is to commit a logical fallacy (x and y regularly occur together; therefore, x is the cause of y). By this same logic, YCs can be charged with accommodating naturalistic views for accepting "microevolution" (the idea that species change over time); Darwinian macroevolution needs microevolution, but this does not entail the two being synonymous. Neo-Darwinists contend that the layers of fossil strata constitute the main evidence for macroevolution. But YCs and OCs agree that this same fossil record, with its scarcity of credible transitional fossils, does not reveal a history of common biological descent. YCs typically understand fossils as depositions from Noah's flood, and OCs view them as artifacts of supernatural creative acts separated by long time spans.

Some YCs even contend that OCs have contributed to the demise of Western culture, but such contentions are historically unjustified. References by YCs to OCs as "evangelical evolutionists," "semi-creationists," or "compromisers" have clouded rather than clarified the debate. Indeed, YCs are

not agreed as to just what is "evolutionary" in matters such as ice ages, star formation, and the origins of species.

A lesson from a past controversy may be helpful. Early in the twentieth century, some held the pretribulational rapture to be central to the faith. Great controversy followed, but eventually most Bible believers realized the issue was not worthy of such contention. Perhaps one day this will be true of the age-of-the-earth controversy. Creationist leaders should work hard to understand the data. And exploring, holding, and promoting various creationist views are legitimate projects. But promoting the controversy as a basis for disunity in the church is another matter altogether.

Does the Bible Provide Guidance Regarding Human Cloning?

by R. Albert Mohler Jr.

When Dolly the cloned sheep was born in 1997, few thoughtful persons could avoid wondering whether this stunning new technology would soon be used to clone a human being. Now human cloning has become an issue of immediate, urgent, and universal importance. The cloning of a human being represents a radical break with the human past and with the established patterns of human life. It also raises a host of ethical questions: Who would be the "parents" of a cloned child? In an age of patented forms of life, could a cloned being be "owned," at least in genetic pattern? Will parents seek to clone children in order to provide organs for transplant into another child?

These are but a few of the many pressing questions that will demand answers, and the worldview of secular humanism provides only tentative and provisional answers. The fact is that *only* the Christian worldview—revealed in God's Word—can provide us with an ethical context and authority adequate to address such questions.

The biblical creation account presents the creation of human beings as the pinnacle of God's creative purpose. After creating the world and filling it with living creatures, God purposed to create human beings. The human creature—set apart from all other creatures—would bear the *imago Dei,* the image of God.

Though the image of God in human beings has been corrupted by sin, it has not been removed, and this image is an essential mark of true humanity. Each human being is a special creation of God, made in His own image. Each is unique by design of the Creator. The status of human beings as created beings, each unique but all bearing the image of God, establishes a foundation for theological understanding—and for answering the questions raised by human cloning.

This understanding also makes clear the decisive distinction between the biblical and secular conceptions of human nature and value. The nonbiblical understanding of humanity rejects any conception of divine purpose. Human beings are cosmic accidents—the incredible by-products of blind evolutionary process. Any value thus ascribed to human life is arbitrary, tentative, and self-centered.

The Bible, on the other hand, teaches that human beings, like all of creation, were created in order to glorify God. But humans were created with a distinct and unique capacity to know, revere, worship, and glorify the Creator. He made human beings, male and female, of His own good pleasure, in His own image, and to His own sovereign purpose. Thus human beings are not mere biological artifacts nor accidental forms of life.

Human cloning represents an effort to redefine human identity and human reproduction by allowing individuals to replicate themselves. This reality cannot be separated from the related questions of "designer" children, human-enhancement technologies, eugenics, and sexuality. Furthermore, the use of cloning technology in human embryonic stem cell research undermines human dignity and will eventually lead to an expansion of human cloning for other purposes.

The artificiality of cloning technology undermines marriage by further separating sex and reproduction. Human cloning—whatever its form—violates the sanctity of human life as revealed in Scripture.

ARTICLE

What Does the Bible Say About Abortion?

by Nigel Cameron

The intentional taking of life before birth is not new. Though adoption of "abortion rights" as a progressive political cause in Western societies is recent, abortion has been practiced in every culture from ancient times. Indeed, one of the signal achievements of the spread of the gospel in the Greco-Roman world was to push this practice and its close sibling, infanticide, to the margins of society. In classical paganism, while it was sometimes controversial, abortion (like euthanasia) was common and widely approved. The ancient physicians who took the Hippocratic oath, whose medical vision was powered by saving life and not taking it, were swimming upstream. It was the church of Jesus Christ that swept through the later Roman world as the great pro-life movement, setting standards in medicine, culture, and public policy that still condition the thinking of fractured Christendom in the twenty-first century.

Readers who seek *abortion* in a concordance are unlikely to find it, and as a result believers have sometimes suggested that Scripture is silent on the subject and that therefore we may do as we please. Such a conclusion depends on some serious misunderstandings. The biblical foundations of a comprehensive prohibition on induced abortion lie deep, in the doctrines of creation and incarnation.

The starting point for a biblical understanding of human nature is the truth that human beings are created in God's image. It is clear from Genesis 1:26-27 that this applies to all those who are members of the human species. *Homo sapiens* is distinguished from all other "kinds" by our bearing the likeness of our Maker. The image is specifically stated to have been given to women as well as men and to remain after the fall (Gn 9:6). And it applies to Jew and Gentile, religious and irreligious, young and old, those in the flower of human ability as well as the disabled and sick. The *imago Dei* is what makes us the beings we are and it is in place wherever there are members of our species. The question of which beings bear the image is one of species membership and therefore genetics.

While extraordinarily difficult issues are raised by the prospect of human-animal hybrids (and also, perhaps, humanoid robots), the issue here is simple. If someone is a member of the human species, that person bears the divine image. Therefore, his or her life is sacred. With this single recognition, we find the basis of biblical bioethics and immediate answers to many of the most pressing questions in contemporary medicine and bioscience. It provides a straightforward response to the issue of induced abortion, since the commandment "Do not murder" (Ex 20:13) therefore applies to all human beings, from the beginning of life to its end. And this command is explicitly rooted in the bearing of the divine image in Genesis 9:6, in the ironic context of the provision for capital punishment: "Whoever sheds man's blood, his blood shall be shed by man, for God made man in His image."

This species principle is of central importance to debate about human embryos, as researchers have developed techniques using in vitro fertilization and cloning, making it possible to use embryos for destructive research. The biblical position is unambiguous: those who are part of the species, made in the divine image, should not be murdered.

The second foundation lies in the doctrine of the incarnation. As if to illustrate this creation principle of the species-wide bearing of the image, in His incarnation the Son of God, the second Person of the Trinity, took human form and did so from the beginning of human biological existence. When in the "sixth month" (Lk 1:36, a reference not to the calendar but to the advanced state of her cousin Elizabeth's pregnancy) Mary was told by the angel that she would conceive by a miracle, the human life of the Son of God began. Shortly afterward she visited Elizabeth, and we witness John the Baptist's first testimony to his kinsman and his Lord as a six-month fetus leaped in his mother's womb at the presence of the days-old embryonic Jesus (Lk 1:39-45).

In light of these basic theological affirmations, the many incidental references to unborn life in the OT—in the prophets, Job, and especially Psalms—take on powerful significance (for example, Ps 139:13 and the following verses).

The one biblical text sometimes offered as a counterargument is in Exodus 21:22 and following, which refers to the appropriate punishment to be applied if men, while fighting, accidentally hit a woman and cause her to miscarry. There are varying translations of the passage, but it has no relevance to the debate about deliberate abortion, since it refers to manslaughter of the unborn child and not to deliberate killing.

Introduction to Psalms

AUTHORS

The book of Psalms is the largest collection of ancient lyrical poetry in existence. As part of the Bible, this poetry is of course religious; it expresses the emotions of believers as they are stirred by the thought of God and developments in the life of faith. The feelings of joy and pain, fear and security, triumph and tragedy, confidence and doubt, hope and despair are expressed with piety and reverence but honestly and boldly.

The reader is sometimes taken aback by the blunt and powerful words that the psalmists used. But these folk were often in life-and-death situations, attacked by ruthless and cruel enemies, betrayed by friends, or in natural dangers as they traveled the land. Because there was no lasting peace and no sense of security, life was a daily challenge. Yet they were convinced that the Lord reigned over the affairs of men, and so they rejoiced over the law of God as their guide.

Whenever the Lord demonstrated His sovereignty by direct intervention in their affairs, they praised Him. When God's intervention did not seem to be forthcoming, they lamented over their dilemmas and prayed more earnestly. When the affairs of life seemed unfair, they analyzed the wisdom of God's decisions. But in every case they reaffirmed their hope in His loyal love and their commitment to serving Him. That is why the works collected here became the prayer and hymnbook of the temple.

The superscriptions (those little notices that later editors of the collection added to the heads of some psalms to clarify the purpose of the pieces, their melody, or the performers) frequently include notations of authorship. About half the psalms are attributed to David with the brief prepositional phrase "of David." Critical scholars, wishing to date most of the psalms to a much later period (at least the post-exilic period, if not the Maccabean period [c. 150 B.C.]), contend that this preposition (*lamed*) should be translated "for" rather than "of," because that was its most frequent meaning. The passages would then be dedicated to David but written by others. Of course, many modern scholars simply write off the superscriptions as spurious additions. They may concede that David could have written a number of the psalms, but they say that most of the psalms were written much later and that even the Davidic compositions were heavily edited.

However, there is more than enough evidence to sustain the traditional view that David wrote at least half these psalms, and many of the others were written in the nation's early period rather than later (although some psalms, such as Ps 126, were definitely post-exilic). First, Scripture attests that David was a singer of songs, a composer, and the primary organizer of temple music (2 Sm 6:5; 1 Ch 15:3-28; 16:4-43; 23:1-5). Second, the NT often cites passages from the Psalter and attributes Davidic authorship to them or uses his name in general for the whole collection. Third, the literary form of the psalms, with its parallelism and meter, common vocabulary, and use of verbal forms, finds identical use in the poetry of Canaan dating from some 400 years before David. There is no reason to date the book of Psalms later on the basis of style and vocabulary. Fourth, there is ample evidence in the Bible (Hab 3:1) and outside the Bible (see the early Hebrew *ostraca*) to support the use of the preposition *lamed* as an indicator of the author or sender of a document.

Certainly, each psalm must be studied in its totality because the preposition can be used in different ways, even within the heading. But if the "*lamed* of authorship" stands, then we have the ancient traditions that Moses wrote Psalm 90, David wrote 73 of the psalms, Psalms 50 and 73–83 came from Asaph or his descendants, Heman the Ezrahite wrote Psalm 88, Ethan the Ezrahite wrote Psalm 89, and Solomon wrote Psalms 72 and 127. The rest are anonymous. At times the preposition is used to indicate that the psalm was "for the choir director" or to be sung by "the sons of Korah," or for a

number of other purposes. The psalms were written over the centuries, then, by different people, beginning with Moses (Ps 90) and culminating with those who returned from the captivity (Ps 126).

The many superscriptions to the psalms, whether notes of authorship, occasion, performance, or musical notations, may not have been part of the original composition. But they record the ancient traditions about the origin and use of the psalms and therefore may be taken seriously as part of the study of the collection.

A BOOK OF PRAISE

The collection is called the book of Psalms based on its Greek title. (A psalm is a composition sung to the accompaniment of stringed instruments; the word is *mizmor* in Hebrew, *psalmos* in Greek.) The Hebrew title is the book of Praises, or more simply, Praises. This is most fitting for the collection because almost all the psalms include praise one way or another. Even lament psalms progress from prayer to praise, the praise often offered as a vow to be fulfilled in the sanctuary once God answered the prayer. The type of psalm indicates whether the praise is current or vowed; English translation cannot always clarify this.

Because the psalms capture the religious ideas of the Israelites, many of them were given over to the temple for use in the services. Accordingly, they often exult in the privilege of entering God's courts and drawing near to His altar and celebrate the ordinances of the sanctuary ritual. Many of the psalms contain lines that formed the liturgy of the temple and later of the church. This function of the psalms, as well as their display of personal religious feelings, make them the most powerful expression of the worship of ancient Israel, both of individual piety and of communal celebration at the great festivals.

The psalms are written in a more concentrated form of discourse than other literary forms, with more consciously artistic elements—images, symbols, figures of speech, emotive vocabulary, and multiple meanings. Often the reader has to become familiar with the way their poetic discourse works in order to gain the full and intended meaning of the texts. Figurative language is used to express more than straightforward propositional statements can express, for it conveys both emotional and intellectual connotations and draws on the culture and history with allusions and references. To understand the psalms and their impact, one must try to live in that culture and sense Israel's experience among pagan neighbors who usually sought to destroy them. Then one will better understand the hope of the psalms for the Lord to reign over all the nations and more greatly appreciate their praise for what the Lord has done.

Being a hymnbook, Psalms is filled with references to music and musical instruments. Some of these are in the superscriptions to the psalms; others are in the text, where the psalms themselves call for praise with all manner of instruments (some of which we know and some of which we do not). The reader must recognize that these are not simply contemplative poems to be studied but hymns and prayers to be sung and prayed. Accordingly, meter and musical accompaniment served to fix the words in the minds of the people more than any other form could do.

THE RELIABILITY OF THE PSALMS

Over the years, the book of Psalms has been approached in different ways. For a long while the psalms were studied for dogma without much consideration given to what they revealed about Israelite worship, even though they were sung in liturgical services. After the Reformation, with the development of higher criticism, studies began to appear that applied the same critical approach that was used for other books of the Bible, focusing on philology, poetic structure, and theological ideas; this led to dating the psalms much later. On the more traditional side, scholars tried to identify the historical settings out of which the psalms had come, even if there was little to go on.

In the early 1900s, form critical studies provided a somewhat more positive approach to critical studies, making the reader aware of ancient literary forms and their functions, especially in

conjunction with the ritual acts of Israel's worship. Form critical scholars also sought to determine the setting out of which each psalm grew, depending more on the form and function than on the occasional historical reference. Such an identification is not often possible. But the approach did distinguish types of psalms—laments, declarative praises, descriptive praises, royal psalms, pilgrim psalms, enthronement psalms, and wisdom psalms, as well as a number of others based on these. Many form critical scholars, however, have tried to trace the development of each psalm to its final form, a task that is probably impossible (there is no evidence) and certainly unnecessary (the final form of the text is the canonical text we study and expound). Attempts to decide what was written earlier and what came later in a psalm have not been convincing.

Modern studies have focused on the biblical theology of the psalms. The main theme running through the collection is the reign of the Lord and how that reign is established over all creation. The praises of Israel celebrate every step in the establishment of that reign; they pray for God's will to be done on earth as it is in heaven. Within the psalms the hope of the great coming King begins to take shape, not often, but rather dramatically in places. Thus, the psalms not only express the faith of ancient Israel as it sought to live in this world but also point to the One who would perfectly fulfill the divine Word and establish the kingdom of God.

For the Christian who reads the psalms, many of the passages about the kingdom speak clearly of the person and work of Jesus the Messiah. Moreover, many psalms point to Him as indirect prophecies of His suffering, death, and resurrection or as appropriate descriptions of His obedient life in the midst of enemies. Many of these so-called messianic passages were recognized as such by Jewish interpreters before Jesus was born and thus cannot be explained away as Christian readings of the texts. The Spirit of God was so directing the hearts and minds of the psalmists, especially David, that the words they used to express their own experiences were designed by God not only to fit the historical occasion but also to be fulfilled perfectly in the person and work of the Son of God, not only in His first coming but also in His coming in glory to reign.

There is also substantial agreement about the original text of the psalms. The Hebrew original is largely preserved in the Masoretic Text, clearly the superior text type due to its marks of authenticity. The Greek translation is a serviceable work, capturing for the most part the meaning of the verses in the contexts. But rather than preserving the rugged original, it often smoothes out the difficulties, using familiar words, or general words for specific ones, and clarifying difficult constructions. The Dead Sea Scrolls have confirmed that the text preserved in the Masoretic tradition is much earlier than the Masoretic manuscripts we have. In short, we can be fairly certain we have the original text of Psalms preserved for us in the manuscripts. When there are variant readings, the proper use of textual criticism almost always determines the correct text.

Whenever the NT quotes the Psalter, it is usually from the Greek translation (or translations) because it was easier for communicating to the widening Greek-speaking world. Frequently the Greek text is not precise in its translation, but its wording captures the sense of the context and provided the NT writers with a biblical text to use in their expositions and instructions. On a few occasions the Greek wording appears to be significantly different. Therefore, each case of a Greek citation from the intertestamental period has to be studied on its own merits to see its meaning and how it is being applied in the NT.

Psalms Study Notes

Ps 1 This psalm, which introduces the entire collection in the book of Ps by describing the type of person who reads and uses them, belongs more to the category of "wisdom" than to that of the hymns and prayers that make up most of the book. Wisdom literature is concerned with the conflicting lifestyles of believers and unbelievers, emphasizing that only divine judgment will end the inequity of life and bring reward to the righteous.

1:1 The word "happy" (Hb *'ashrei*, "blessedness of") refers to the joy and satisfaction that comes from knowing that one is right with God, even though at times conflict with the world may bring difficulties. Such blessedness is the opposite of the "curse" (see Ex 19:8; 24:3,7; Lv 26:14-39; Dt 11:26; 28:1-68) that takes effect as a result of disobedience to the Lord's commands. The use of "man" in biblical literature refers to persons in general, here any believer who is trying to live in obedience to God. The "advice" of unbelievers may be necessary in matters of commerce, law, medicine or other technical fields, but chapter 1 is concerned with spiritual matters such as ethics, morality, and faithfulness to the Lord in daily life.

1:2 Meditation involves studying a passage of Scripture, memorizing it, praying about it, and exhorting oneself to fulfill it (42:5,11; 63:6; 119:9-10). Spiritual success depends on the constant study and application of God's Word (Dt 6:6-9; Jos 1:8).

1:3 The promise of prosperity is qualified by the context: "whatever he does" will be determined by living in obedience to the Scriptures—that is what will prosper.

1:4 The word translated "wicked" in Ps (*rasha'*) is a general term for an unbeliever (10:2,4,13 and many other places), someone who is not a member of the covenant and not living in obedience to God. Although perhaps appearing to be a good person, such a one is capable of great evil (50:16-20) through his lack of regard for the Lord. Imagery from the harvest is common in contexts of judgment. Chaff, the dried husks surrounding the kernels, has to be separated from the grain by winnowing so it can blow away (35:5; Is 17:13; Mt 3:12). The comparison of those who ignore or rebel against God with chaff indicates that their life is worthless and will be removed in the judgment.

1:5 The word translated "righteous" in the OT (*tsaddiq*) refers to a member of the covenant who seeks to live righteously; it is a description of the true believer. The righteous are not sinless, but they seek to maintain a right relationship with the Lord.

1:6 "Watches over" (Hb *yodea'*, "knows") has the force of "saves" or "delivers," because it expresses the opposite of the "ruin" in the parallel half of the verse (see also Ex 2:25). Jesus will say to the unbelievers, "I never knew you" (Mt 7:23). If the Lord "knows" the way of the righteous, they will be protected from the judgment (Ps 37:12-17,28-29).

Ps 2 Royal psalms focus on some high point in the life of the king—here his coronation. Because Jesus was raised from the dead, the NT writers saw that He is the Messiah or anointed King, Son of David par excellence (e.g., Ac 2:22-36). Accordingly, they understood that these "royal psalms" found their fullest meaning in Christ (e.g., Mk 1:11; 9:7; Heb 1:5).

2:1 "Nations" refers primarily to the states around Israel that were always attacking. David subjugated many of these ethnic groups, but they were always trying to break free of Israelite control. Peter included unbelieving Jews in this group, because they rejected the Messiah (Ac 4:25-28).

2:2 The king is the Lord's "anointed" (*mashiah* means "anointed one", translated into Greek as *christos*). Every legitimate king was a "messiah" (1 Sm 16:13;2 Kg 11:12); but the biblical writers prophesied that a greater king was coming, the Messiah (e.g., Is 9:2-7; Jr 23:5-6; Ezk 34:23-24; cp. 2 Sm 7:11-15). To reject God's anointed king is to reject God.

2:4 The description of God's laughing and mocking is a bold anthropomorphism, a comparison from human behavior (see Gn 3:8) to emphasize how ridiculous their plan is. In the same way, God's being "enthroned in heaven" (Hb *yoshev*, "sitting") describes His sovereign reign (Ps 29:10; 55:19; 102:12; 123:1).

2:7 The Davidic covenant (2 Sm 7:5-16; Ps 89:26-27) declared that the king would be God's "son." When the king ascended the throne he declared that God called him His son. This was a way of saying that God has installed him as king, heir to the kingdom. Earthly monarchs consistently fell short of this high calling, and the writers of Scripture realized that the coming Messiah would be a "Son" as no other king had been or could be (Is 9:6). When the voice from heaven declared Jesus to be the beloved Son at His baptism (Mt. 3:17), the Messianic Age was introduced. And when John described Jesus as the "the One and Only Son," he was speaking of Jesus' divine nature (Jn 1:14). But Ps 2:7 is used specifically in the NT for Jesus' resurrection and exaltation to the right hand of the Father—His coronation, in harmony with the meaning of the psalm (Ac 13:32-33; Heb 1:3-6; 5:5-6).

2:9 The Hebrew text has "you will smash (*ra'a'*) them with a rod of iron," which is parallel to the second half of the verse. The Greek OT translated it "you will shepherd [rule] (assuming *ra'ah*) them with a rod of iron," taking the Hebrew letters as a different verb but recognizing the context was concerned with the reign of the king. The emphasis on his iron rule is retained, but the verb ("to shepherd") reflects the whole scope of his rule and not just the putting down of enemies. In the ancient Near East, with its agricultural economy, rulers were often spoken of as shepherds (e.g., 2 Sm 5:2; 7:7; Ezk 34:8,23; Zch 13:7). The NT uses (but does not quote directly) the Greek version (Rv 2:27; 12:5; 19:15) to make its point about the reign of Christ. What John declares in Revelation is true because God inspired it, even though his quote was taken from a different version of the psalm.

2:12 To "pay homage to the Son" can also be translated "kiss the son" (1 Kg 19:18; Hs 13:2). The translation takes the word *bar* as the Aramaic word for "son"; this is appropriate because David is addressing nations that speak that language. To "kiss" was more than to kiss the face; the word refers to bowing in submissive prostration before a conqueror (cp. RSV "kiss his feet"). Other versions assumed *bar* was a Hebrew word for "purity" and offered translations along the line of "worship in purity."

Ps 3 The historical note, or superscription, about David fleeing from Absalom (2 Sm 15:13-17) may not have been part of the original text but was included at an early stage when the psalms were collected.

3:2 *Selah*, which may mean "lift up," was an instruction for the musicians and was inserted when the psalms were adapted to temple service. It could refer to an interlude during which instruments played (see 1 Ch 15:16), but its meaning is uncertain.

3:3 The line uses several metaphors—"shield" for God's protection (Gn 15:1), "glory" for the evidence of His blessing of kingship (Ps 34:7; 91:11), and "lifts up my head" for the restoration to the throne (Gn 40:13; 1 Sm 2:7-8; Ps 110:7).

3:4-5 The report of the deliverance calls for past tense translations even though the Bible text is in the present tense: "I cried" and "he answered me," "I lay down and slept; I woke again because the Lord sustained me." Then, because he made it through the night, David expressed his renewed confidence and prayed for complete deliverance.

3:7 The verbs "strike" and "break" refer to completed action and may be translated in the past tense. They could refer to previous victories of the king; more likely they refer to his future victory. To David the outcome was so certain that he stated it as having already happened. This use of the verb is called the "prophetic perfect" because it often appears in prophetic literature, presenting future acts in the past tense (e.g., lit. "a child will be born," Is 9:6; "he was despised," Is 53:3). The language is also poetic: smashing the jaw and breaking the teeth refer to combat resulting in a convincing victory (1 Kg 22:24; Ps 58:6; Is 50:6; Mc 5:1). The figures are metonymies (substituting the Lord for the armies); this means God will deliver this crushing blow, though it is the armies who will actually fight.

Ps 4 The superscription indicates that this piece was given to "the choir director" for use in the temple by the choirs, accompanied by instruments. The ascription "a Davidic psalm" used here, and with many other psalms, is literally "for David" or "to David." The term may refer to authorship, but can also refer to usage; that is, the "Davidic" psalms are for the use of the Judean kings in the Davidic dynasty (or, actually, the Levitical singers performing in his name). The psalms as a whole are generalized; the

situations they describe could apply to David himself, to succeeding rulers, or to any worshiper and servant of the Lord. Thus they have application, supremely, to the Servant Messiah, Jesus Christ.

Ps 5 The psalms include many petitions for swift judgment on the wicked. David was the leader of the covenant community and had the responsibility to defend the people of God against attacks of all kinds from pagans, and even unfaithful Israelites, who opposed the righteous and their God. His prayer was not a personal vendetta; it was a prayer that God would do what He had said He would do at some future time. Christians have been taught to pray for their enemies; even though they have a different way of praying because of the full revelation in Christ, praying for the Lord's coming is still a prayer for judgment upon a sinful world.

5:5-6 The language of "hate" in the Bible may seem discordant until its meaning is understood in depth. The word emphasizes rejection along with displeasure; to hate evil is to avoid association with it. God despises wicked character and evil deeds and therefore not only opposes them but dissociates Himself from them (11:5; Pr 6:16-19); God's people must also totally reject the wicked (Ps 1:1; 139:21-22).

5:10 The prayer of David is that the wicked be banished from God's presence—removed from God's protection and blessing (as in the banishment of Cain in Gn 4:14).

5:12 The word "bless" (*barak*), when used of the Lord's action, means "enrich," whether materially, physically or spiritually. Here the parallel word "favor" clarifies it. This is a metonymy (where the attribute is stated but the effect is meant); it refers to the protection and provisions of life that divine favor bestows on the righteous (Dt 33:23; Ps 30:5).

Ps 6 Psalms in which the speaker deals with his sin are often called penitential psalms. (The seven traditional "Penitential Psalms" are 6; 32; 38; 51; 69; 102; 130.) Here David pleaded with God to bring an end to his suffering at the hands of enemies, a suffering that was the Lord's chastening for his sin.

6:1 The divine discipline was severe; David prayed that God would not unleash all His anger in the rebuke (the word order is: "Not in your anger / rebuke me /O LORD"). During the discipline it seems that God is angry; but this is a temporary state in comparison to the lifetime in His favor (2 Sm 7:14; Ps 30:5; 94:1; Pr 3:12).

6:4 The basis for the worshiper's appeal for help is the Lord's "faithful love." The Hebrew word *hesed* is an important term in the psalms and throughout the OT. It refers to Yahweh's loyalty to His people because of the covenant He has granted them. English versions vary in translation of this word; it may appear as "lovingkindness," "steadfast love," "faithfulness" or simply "love." It is a love based on a commitment that has been made. To be able to appeal to the Lord on the basis if His *hesed*, the worshiper must make a corresponding commitment, calling himself the Lord's "servant" (31:16; 69:17; 143:12) and affirming his loyalty (e.g., "You are my God," 31:14; 63:1; 86:2; 118:28).

6:5 Psalms of petition include a section presenting the reasons why God should answer the worshiper's prayer. These appeals are not crass bargaining; they testify to the believer's covenant faith. If David died, he would not be able to praise God for delivering him from death; if God wanted the king's worship—his first obligation under the covenant—God would have to save him.

6:6-7 It is normal for people who suffer to use hyperbolic language. David did not literally flood his bed with weeping, it just seemed that way. The poetic language reflects his intense feelings of pain and utter despondency.

6:10 The enemies of the king are enemies of the program of God. His prayer that they be "ashamed" was an appeal that they be put to shame or sudden disgrace in a humiliating defeat.

Ps 7 This is a prayer for divine judgment of evil and vindication of the psalmist. Its superscription records a historical context (perhaps 2 Sm 16:5-14 or 20:1-22).

7:8 The verb "judges" can mean condemn, but here the sense is "vindicate" because the appeal is based on righteousness and integrity.

7:9-13 The weapons of God—the sword, the bow, and the flaming arrows—are poetic images that may be interpreted in one of two ways. They are implied comparisons for God's word of judgment (see Rv 19:15), or metonymies—that is, God will use David's armies with their weapons to defeat the enemies.

7:15-16 The psalm writers often followed the principle of *lex talionis* (see Lv 24:19-20) or measure-for-measure justice. The evil that the wicked plan for others will come back on them. The best biblical example is the fate of Haman (Est 7:9-10), who was hanged on the gallows he built for Mordecai.

7:17 In Hebrew culture, "name" refers to the nature or character of the person (see Ex 34:5-7; Is 9:6). This is the meaning in the expression "the name of the LORD," since "LORD" in the Hebrew text is actually the personal name *Yahweh*. In praising Yahweh's "name," the focus will be on his attributes and what they mean to the people of God. Here "the Most High" points not only to Yahweh's supremacy but also possibly to his association with Jerusalem from the time of Melchizedek, priest of "God Most High" (Gn 14:18-20).

8:1 This short hymn praises the excellence of the name (nature) of the Lord as the Creator, and marvels at how He has made human beings to rule over all creation (Gn 1:26-28). English translations follow the practice of using "LORD" for the holy name Yahweh, and "Lord" (not all capitalized) for the ordinary title "lord" (Hb *'adonai*). The Hebrew says literally, "O Yahweh, our LORD" (see also Pss 97:5; 110:1).

8:5 God made humans a little lower than "God." This is an allusion to creation in which humans were made to be the image of God on earth (Gn 1:26-27). The alternate reading "heavenly beings" comes from the Hebrew word *'elohim* commonly used of God, although a plural form. However, it can also be used for false gods (Ps 86:8; 97:7), angels or human judges (Ps 82:1,6-8 could be interpreted either way), and in some cases human rulers who represent God (Ex 7:1). Here the context would suggest either "God" or "angels," for the verb "made less" includes the idea of not quite conferring upon people the abilities of the higher powers, either God or angels.

The Septuagint (Greek OT) translated the word as "angels," the reading followed in Heb 2:7-9. The writer of Heb was applying the passage specifically to Jesus the Messiah, who in His incarnation was "made lower than the angels for a short time." Psalm 8 is not, strictly speaking, a messianic prophecy, but since Jesus Christ was fully human and the second Adam, it had a perfect application to Him. We do not yet see all things under the dominion of mankind, the writer says, but we see Jesus who will have that absolute dominion (1 Co 15:27; Eph 1:22; Heb 2:6-9).

Pss 9–10 These two psalms are evidently one psalm because they follow the acrostic arrangement in Hebrew; each verse or section begins with a letter of the Hebrew alphabet in alphabetical order. In the Greek OT they are one psalm. The superscription "according to Muth-labben" may refer to a song "The Death of a Son" that supplied the tune or pattern used to perform this psalm. This notation reveals the existence of"popular" musical compositions in ancient Israel and Judah that were adapted for more exalted use in worship.

9:5-6 The enemies will be destroyed in such a way that it will be as though they never existed. The metaphorical expression "erased" (or "blotted out") in similar passages has come to signify complete removal. The Hebrew word refers to scraping off (a tablet), wiping something off the record, or wiping something out (as of the wicked at the flood, Gn 6:7). The effect here is that the wicked will never again be a threat.

9:7-8 The Israelites knew that the Lord was the sovereign King of glory; at every victory they could praise Him by declaring "The LORD sits enthroned." Yet they continued to pray for His kingdom to come, knowing that He had yet to establish His righteous kingdom in its fullness. Such acclamations both praise God for immediate acts and express confidence in a future final deliverance.

9:10 To say that the Lord has not abandoned those who seek Him calls for some clarification. The verse does not say that those who seek Him always get what they want. In fact, David could speak as if God had forsaken him when his prayers were not being answered (22:1). But even when God delays in answering prayers, or does not answer, He is still dealing faithfully with His people for their ultimate well-being (e.g., Is 38:17). If God always answered prayer automatically, His worshipers would experience little development of their faith (see Rm 8:24-28).

9:12 The justice of God requires that He avenge the deaths of innocent people—the martyrs in glory appeal to Him on this basis (Rv 6:10). God will, eventually, make everything right by judging the wicked and rewarding the righteous.

9:14 Zion is the mountain on which the city of Jerusalem is built; accordingly, Jerusalem is frequently called the daughter of Zion (see Is 1:8; 10:32). Sometimes the phrase refers to the people in the city of Jerusalem (Mc 4:8). The gates at the entrance of the city were places where business and legal transactions took place. The gates were always crowded, and were therefore ideal places to testify to the Lord's deliverance. However, "within the gates" could also refer to festival gatherings at the Jerusalem sanctuary (Ps 122:1-2).

9:15 The report was put in the past tense because the outcome was certain (using the "prophetic perfect," see note on 3:7)—it was as good as done.

10:2-11 The psalmist used bold language to describe the arrogant wickedness of those who refused to live according to the Lord's righteousness. The language could describe a gang of thugs or foreign oppressors, but it also could apply to ruthless businessmen who took advantage of the poor and the weak as easily as hunters dragged away their prey. The biblical description is generalized, allowing the psalm to be used by worshipers in a variety of difficult settings and situations. But whoever the "wicked" were, their sin was disregard for the law of God, and its effect was injustice.

Ps 11 In this lament David was faced with the temptation to flee for safety because he was surrounded by people who wanted to destroy him. The story of David's life offers many occasions when this psalm could have been composed, such as 1 Sm 26:20.

11:2 The arrows that the wicked shot from the darkness or shadows could be literal, or they could be figura-tive of slanderous and abusive words hurled at him (57:4).

11:3 The "foundations" referred to the stability of the created order, symbolized in the sanctuary of God (46:1-5), but by extension could also refer to the institutions and order of society (75:3; 82:5). The question seems to convey hopelessness, but it is answered in the rest of the psalm—the righteous can trust the Lord who rules from heaven, even if things may appear unsteady on the earthly scene.

11:4-5 The omniscience of God is here described in human terms (anthropomorphic language): God is sitting on His throne in heaven and His eyes are closely examining what everyone is doing (see 2 Ch 16:9).

11:6 The psalmist drew on the language of the destruction of Sodom in Gn 19:24 to anticipate divine judgment on the ungodly. David desired that God would destroy the wicked with such force, for he knew that is what God would do eventually (Ezk 38:22; Hab 2:15-16).

11:7 David may have meant that seeing the face of God was to realize divine favor, for Israelite worshipers did not believe a person could see God and survive(Ex 33:11; Nm 12:8). In this life it would refer to deliverance from adversity and the awareness of the presence of God in the worshiper's experience (Ps 27:4; 42:2; 63:2). In the life to come, it would refer to a greater reality of communion with the living God (perhaps as in Ex 24:9-11; Ps 17:15).

Ps 12 "According to Sheminith" in the superscription may refer to a popular song that was to be used as a pattern for performing this psalm in the sanctuary.

12:5 The figurative expression "I will now rise up" refers to God beginning to act on behalf of the weak and the needy. The Lord will protect the victims of the arrogant and deceitful words of the wicked. For God to "rise up" (Hb *qum*) was an expression used whenever the ark of the covenant set out in the wilderness (Nm 10:35); it conveyed the image of the Lord's leadership and His defeat of the enemies of His people. David's words here bring this picture to mind (Ps 68:1).

12:6 To emphasize the purity and truth of the word of God, David used the simile of a refining fire. It was as if God's words had been purified in the furnace, seven times (the number of perfection). There is no falsehood, deception, or propaganda in God's Word; it is completely trustworthy.

Ps 13 This psalm falls into the category interpreters call the "lament." Its words convey the honest feelings of frustration and abandonment by a believer whose prayer for deliverance has not been answered. His cry is urgent ("how long?") and bold ("will You continually forget me?"). Most believers have felt this way at times; the faithful are not afraid to say it, but they say it to God in prayer and are careful not to express such despair in the presence of weaker believers (73:15).

13:4 David "reminds" the Lord of the reason why He should respond to the king's plea for help: If deliverance did not come, the enemy would gloat over his defeat.

13:6 Lament psalms end with what interpreters call the vow of praise. David promised to sing to the Lord because he trusted that God would be good to him ("He has treated me generously," the "prophetic perfect" of anticipation).

14:1 Of the several words for "fool" in wisdom literature (see Pr), the fool here (*nabal*) is neither a simpleton nor an ignorant dullard, but instead is a practical atheist. His denial of God may not be overt, but in his heart he lives as if God doesn't exist. This psalm is repeated, with minor alterations, as Ps 53.

Ps 15 This psalm is an "entrance rite," a brief ceremony to qualify worshipers for entering the holy precincts of the temple. It lists 10 characteristics (paralleling the Ten Commandments) of the person who is fit to come into the sanctuary and fellowship with the Lord, using the metaphor of "dwelling," (23:6; 27:4). The purpose of such an "entrance rite" was to remind people to examine themselves before worshiping; in so doing they would realize their need of forgiveness through sacrificial atonement. The substance of this psalm is repeated in 24:3-4.

15:5 Lending money at a high interest rate (lit. "with a bite") would disqualify the person from worshiping; no Israelite was to take advantage of others in hard times (Ex 22:25-27; Lv 25:35-36; Dt 23:9). One who is faithful to the Lord's covenant would give to the poor without any plan to have the money repaid, let alone to profit.

16:6 The psalm is a meditation on the Lord's blessings. (The meaning of the designation *miktam* in the superscription is unknown.). This verse compares one's lot in life to an inheritance of land with boundaries (Nm 18:20; Dt 10:9; 18:1).

16:10 David was confident of his deliverance from Sheol and "the Pit"; that is, from death. The Lord will protect his faithful worshiper from it. In its Israelite application, the context could be the struggle against the adherents of false religions, "those who take another god" (v. 4). Still occupying enclaves within Canaan, these peoples ignored the "boundary lines" (v. 6) by which the Lord allocated the promised land to the tribes of Israel (Jos 13–17). Opposition from these polytheistic groups often took the form of open warfare, endangering the king's life. But the psalm has a prophetic application to the coming King, the Messiah ("Faithful One"). At Pentecost, Peter quoted these words with reference to the resurrection of Jesus (Ac 2:8-31); Paul used the psalm the same way in a sermon at Antioch in Pisidia (Ac 13:25). If David's words stopped short of affirming a bodily resurrection, they were certainly consistent with that hope. Because Christian believers participate in Jesus' resurrection (e.g., Rm 6:4,8; 8:29; Col 3:1; Rv 1:5), the words of the psalm apply to the "faithful ones" of all ages—we will not be abandoned to the decay of the grave.

17:15 When the psalmist says he will see God's face, he probably meant a spiritual experience in the sanctuary in which God would reveal Himself more fully (11:7; 27:4; 42:2; 63:2), possibly a visionary experience similar to that of Ezekiel (Ezk 1:1-28). To "see God's face" is to experience the reality of His presence (Ps 24:6). In view of the later revelation of the believers' resurrection in Christ, these words took on greater meaning (1 Jn 3:2; Rv 22:4). But that fuller meaning does not nullify the original reference to a spiritual experience.

18:8 The language of this verse is clearly poetic, not scientific. Verses 7-15 describe a theophany, or manifestation of the Lord, expressed in terms of awesome natural phenomena. To people in ancient cultures, smoke and fire might call to mind a dragon-like or volcanic image evoking a thunder deity. Here it is a description of the God's readiness to avenge His enemies. The language is picturesque, like that of Rv 19:15 depicting a sword coming from the mouth of the exalted Christ. When the Lord comes to deliver His people, He will judge His enemies, and sometimes He will use the elements of nature to do it (see Ex 15:4-6).

18:34 David credited God with giving him the ability to be successful in battle. Warfare was, and is, an unfortunate reality of human life. David, as military leader of the nation, had to secure the land and protect the people. God prepared him for that task in a special way, both physically as a warrior and spiritually as a believer (see 1 Sm 17:34-37). Today Christians find themselves in a spiritual warfare, all the more difficult because the enemy is not visually apparent (Eph 6:12). But God still trains His people for the battle by providing the armor and the weapons we are to use (Eph 6:13-18) to champion righteousness and truth in a fallen world.

19:1 The first few verses form what is called natural revelation (Rm 1:19-20), meaning that the observation of creation calls for an acknowledgment of God's existence. The wisdom and power and glory of God are displayed in what He has made; it is a continuous revelation in the skies (vv. 1-4) dominated by the sun (vv. 4-6).

19:5 The poetic description of the sun as a groom was intended to undermine a false belief in the sun's divinity. In the ancient world the sun god, who was also the god of law (later worshiped in Israel, 2 Kg 23:11), was described in a similar way. The psalm, however, places the sun in a subordinate position within God's creation, as does the Gn account of creation (see Gn 1:14-19, where the heavenly lights appear only on the fourth day). The sun is not a divinity; instead, with its energy it dominates the skies as a testimony to its Creator.

19:7 The second part of the psalm extols specific revelation; that is, revelation in verbal form through divine inspiration (e.g., Ex 20:1; 1 Co 2:9-10; 2 Pt 1:21). The law did not come from a sun god, but from the Lord, the sovereign Creator. His revelation is open to all, to guide them in righteousness; the full revelation of the Godhead will come in Jesus Christ (Heb 1:1-3). Critical interpreters have suggested that this psalm is a composite of two psalms because of the sudden shift here from the realm of nature to the realm of Israelite law. Such a view ignores that God's moral law—His principles for human behavior—are grounded in the structure of the universe (Rm 1:17-25). The creative power of God underlies the integrity of the law. The relationship of the created and moral orders was aptly expressed by Immanuel Kant: "Two things fill themind with ever new and increasing admiration and awe, the oftener and more steadily we reflect on them: the starry heavens above me, and the moral law within me."

20:1-4 The first part of this psalm records the intercession of the people on behalf of David, who was also praying in the sanctuary for victory in the war. They prayed that God would grant him the desires of his heart, i.e., what he was praying for specifically (21:2-6).

20:6 Whereas the people prayed for help from the Jerusalem sanctuary, the localized place of God's presence on Mount Zion, David expected the help to come from heaven—the holy dwelling of God behind the earthly sanctuary. The sanctuary was viewed as a microcosm of the world, the place where heaven and earth met, and where God chose to reveal His presence most dramatically and continually. The NT understanding is that the temple will soon be done away with (Mk 13:2) and worship there will come to an end (Jn 4:21). The body of Christ—the community of believers—will be the new temple of the Spirit (1 Co 3:16; 6:19).

20:7 David was confident of victory because he did not trust in military might (see 33:16-18) but in the "name of the Lord our God." Since the "name" refers to the attributes (see Ex 34:5-7; Is 9:6), the object of David's faith was the person and works of Yahweh. The word translated "take pride" is literally "keep in remembrance, make mention of, ponder"—he built his confidence by meditating on the nature of God.

Ps 22 This was David's prayer for deliverance from his enemies who surrounded him to put him to death, but it was also indirectly prophetic of the prayer of Jesus from the cross. While the words of David may be highly figurative for his experience, they became historically precise in the suffering of the Savior. David's prayer to be delivered from death (22:20) was eventually answered, prompting him to praise God in the assembly (vv. 22,25). Jesus' prayer, using the words of this psalm, was answered in the resurrection, for Heb 2:12 quotes the Davidic words of praise in v. 22 as the word of the risen Lord.

22:1 The most lamentable condition is the feeling of being forsaken by God in the time of suffering or danger. David's cry expressed that sense because of unanswered prayer. For Jesus to cry these words from the cross (Mt 27:46; Mk 15:34) is usually taken to mean that He believed the Father had abandoned Him to die for the sins of the world. However, passages of Scripture were not referenced in ancient times by chapter or verse but by their opening words; the Gospels may be indicating that Jesus recited the entire psalm, which ends on a note of victory. "The Deer of the Dawn" mentioned in the superscription was probably a secular song used as a pattern in performing the psalm.

22:8 The words of this taunt were used by the enemies of Jesus at the crucifixion (Mt 27:43), in a remarkable example of spiritual blindness. They did not realize that in doing this they were fulfilling the Scriptures, as were those responsible for sending Jesus to the cross (see Ac 3:17; 13:27).

22:16 The reading "they pierced my hands and my feet" follows the Greek OT (Septuagint). The Hebrew MT has what appears to be a senseless reading: "like a lion, my hands and my feet." However, grammarians have suggested that the Hebrew reading is an unusual, though possible, form of the verb *kur*, "bore, pierce." By revocalizing (i.e., altering the vowel sounds, which are not written as letters in Hb) the letters *k'ri* could be made to mean "as a lion."

22:18 The garment was the sufferer's one remaining possession; to divide his clothing before he was dead was the last indignity inflicted on him (Jn 19:24).

22:26 In the praise service in Israel's sanctuary, the poor actually could eat when someone offered praise. The law prescribed the peace offering (Lv 3:1-17; 7:11-21) for praise; it was to be a communal meal for all present who heard the testimony.

Ps 23 This well-known psalm is a psalm of confidence. The meditation uses the settings of the shepherd in the field (vv. 1-4), the host in the banquet hall (v. 5), and finally the sanctuary itself (v. 6).

23:1 The metaphor of the shepherd was a common figure for religious and political leaders of antiquity (2:9). It therefore became a powerful image for the coming Messiah (74:1-4; 80:1; Is 40:11; Ezk 34; Mc 7:14). The NT confirms that passages like this point to the ministry of Jesus Christ, the good Shepherd who lays down His life (Jn 10:14), the great Shepherd who equips thesaints (Heb 13:20), and the chief Shepherd who comes in glory (1 Pt 5:4). The descriptions of the shepherd here portray how the Lord teaches, heals, guides, and protects.

23:4 The "darkest valley" (sometimes translated the "valley of the shadow of death") does not mean that the psalmist died, only that he might find himself in a situation where death was a distinct possibility. The phrase "the darkest valley" alludes to the deep canyons in the wilderness into which one might fall and not escape unless God intervened.

23:6 The "house of the LORD" is the sanctuary where people worshiped. (The temple, in the Hebrew OT, is usually called *beth Yahweh*, "the Lord's house.") After his meditations, David desired to return to that holy place where he could avail himself of the blessing of God's presence. In the Christian application of the psalm, the hope is for complete communion with the Lord in the abundance of His blessing. While popular thinking often relates this verse to heaven, the phrase "in the presence of my enemies" (v. 5) suggests an earthly setting, since the believer's enemies are not present in heaven.

24:1-2 The psalm begins as a hymn of praise. God is King by creation and by victory over the forces of evil. The poetry suggests that He tamed the primeval waters and founded the earth (136:6). The language is a disparaging reference to pagan worship; the

Canaanites venerated gods "Sea" and "River," perhaps as forces of chaos. In the biblical perspective the Lord has complete control over the forces of nature.

24:3-5 The psalm incorporates the "entrance rite" found in Ps 15 into a ceremony for a procession entering the gates of the sanctuary. The pilgrim worshipers ask who may enter the sacred area to fellowship with the Lord, and the doorkeeper priests respond that only those who have done no wrong and have pure motives may enter. The ceremony was intended to remind worshipers that they needed not only a sacrifice but also a life of sincere obedience to God to enter His courts.

24:7-8 The triumphal procession made its way through the gates into the sanctuary to offer praise for victory in warfare—as the phrases "mighty in battle" (v. 8) and "the LORD of Hosts" (v. 10) suggest (see Ex 15:2-3; Dt 10:17; Is 10:21). The title "Yahweh of Armies" (usually "the LORD of Hosts" in English) was always associated with the presence of the ark of the covenant, which went before the Israelites in the wilderness and also in warfare to occupy the land of Canaan. This, together with the epithet of "King of glory," suggests that the worshipers were following the ark of the covenant in procession (1 Sm 4:21-22). Apparently the ark was occasionally removed from the sanctuary and then triumphantly returned to Zion, symbolic of Yahweh's enthronement as King (Ps 47:5). (That the ark was carried outside the temple until the time of Josiah seems clear from 2 Ch 35:3.) The psalmist might be addressing the gates themselves, as if to say the King of glory should not have to stoop to go under the gateway. Or he might be addressing the people in the gates, urging them to rejoice and welcome the victors and not be depressed (see Is 14:31).

Ps 25 This is an alphabetic, or acrostic, psalm; each line begins with a letter of the Hebrew alphabet in sequence. At the heart of the psalm is the appeal that God should remember His mercy and not our sins (vv. 6, 7). The verb "remember" includes the idea of acting upon what is remembered.

26:2 The psalmist asked God to test him, try him, and examine him. He wanted to be sure of his loyalties to God so that he might find vindication and blessing.

26:4-5 The use of the word "hate" underscores his intense loyalty to God; the verb includes the idea of rejecting the assembly of the wicked hypocrites (5:5-6).

26:9 Despite his failures, David tried to live a life separated from "men of bloodshed" (see 2 Sm 1:13-16; 4:9-12) and did not want to die in the judgment upon them. He did not see himself as one of them, so he prayed for divine protection (see 1 Sm 15:6; Ps 28:3; 104:29; Zph 1:2-3; 3:8).

27:4 The psalmist hoped to visit the sanctuary on his pilgrimage (84:5); his desire was to gaze on the beauty of the Lord—to seek Him in His temple and experience the favor of His presence.

27:8 Seeking the face of God is seeking His favor. If God hides His face, there is no blessing (22:24; 30:7; 143:7).

Ps 29 This praise psalm extols the power and majesty of the Lord by telling of His powerful control of the weather. The psalm also countered Canaanite beliefs; the location of the storm was Lebanon and Syria, the domains of the storm god Baal. It was Yahweh, not Baal, who "flashes flames of fire" (v. 7). In the Canaanite religious texts, Baal caused the storms with a sevenfold peal of thunder; but in this psalm we are told seven times that it was "the voice of the LORD" (or the voice of Yahweh).
29:1 "You heavenly beings" is literally, "sons of the mighty" or "sons of gods" (Hb *'elim*, a shorter form of *'elohim*). This could be a reference to the angels (see Gn 6:2-4). In the Canaanite religion, these heavenly beings were members of the company of the gods; in Israel, they were angels in the heavenly court (see Ex 15:11; Jb 1–2; Ps 89:6-8; 138:1). David summoned them to praise, just as they did at the creation.

29:5-6 Lebanon and Sirion are mountains north of Israel, the latter being Mount Hermon. The poetic language of skipping refers to earthquakes.

29:9 The Hebrew MT has the word for "deer," referring to premature births caused by the storm. Some modern versions have changed the word slightly to make it read "oaks." There is no manuscript support for such an emendation. The psalm is viewing the world from the perspective of the sanctuary (76:1-9), hence the cry of "Glory!" from the congregation in the temple.

29:10 There is a double meaning to the word "flood." It may refer to the chaotic waters of the ocean that the Lord controls, but it may also form an allusion to the flood in Genesis. In either case, God sits sovereignly enthroned over such things.

Ps 30 The superscription ascribes the psalm to David but calls it a "song for the house"; that is, the temple. David did not build the temple, but he arranged the preparation for it and wrote this dedication psalm as well. The contents of this psalm indicate it was written after David's sin of numbering the people (1 Ch 22:2-19).

30:3 David rejoiced in being brought up from Sheol. Clearly he did not die, and so he was not in the grave or in the realm of departed spirits—the other meanings of Sheol. The word is used here as a poetic expression for deadly danger.

30:4-5 Two attributes of God, His anger and His favor, stand for what they produce: discipline and blessing. Believers always must keep these in perspective, singing their praises to Him (34:1; 84:4; Eph 5:18-20). God's discipline is short compared to a lifetime of enjoying His blessing. That is the point of the psalm.

31:5-6 This is a psalm of trust, in which the psalmist abandons himself to God in contrast to those who trust "worthless idols." Jesus quoted the words "into Your hands I entrust my spirit" when His suffering on the cross was finished (Lk 23:46). Perhaps, in view of the context here, His prayer carried the implication that those responsible for His execution were putting their trust in something "worthless."

Ps 32 In this penitential psalm, the king praises God for forgiveness of sin and warns others not to refuse to confess their sins.

32:1-2 Paul cited this passage (Rm 4:6-8) to show that when God forgives sins He does not "charge" them to our accounts; they are removed from the record. God will never bring them up again. That is why the forgiven worshiper wrote of such joy and happiness (Hb "blessedness"). In the OT as well as the NT, when aperson truly repents and confesses sin, the Lord forgives because He has promised to do so (Ps 103:8-12; 130:4).

32:3 The "bones" are used figuratively for the bony framework that houses the spirit, and so the heavy discipline was felt in the spirit.

32:6 The authors of Scripture exhort people to seek God while He may be found (see Is 55:6). He works through human affairs to convince people of their sin and provide opportunities for them to find His favor. To refuse Him again and again may jeopardize the opportunity as a person becomes more and more hardened in sin; there may come a time when such hardness is part of God's judgment on an individual (see Is 6:8-12; Rm 1:24).

33:3 Several other psalms speak of "a new song" coming forth from the worshipers (40:3; 96:1; 144:9; 149:1). While this could be taken metaphorically to refer to a renewed attitude of joy, it may also refer to singing and instrumental playing (here, "on the strings") by the sanctuary musicians.

33:16-17 A country's leaders may organize military action from time to time to deal with threats to national security, but such efforts do not guarantee ultimate safety and success. Victory comes from the Lord; He may use the instruments of warfare, or He may not, depending on His purposes. Whatever the situation, the people of God must acknowledge that there can be victory only if the Lord wills.

Ps 34 This is an acrostic psalm of confidence, successive lines beginning with the next letter of the Hebrew alphabet. The superscription's mention of Abimelech is a reference to Achish, king of Gath (1 Sm 21:10-15).

34:7 There is protection from the Lord for those who fear Him. The "angel of the LORD" may stand for the Lord Himself, but certainly could refer to one of His angelic messengers who do His bidding. The angel of the Lord guards the faithful so that they can do God's will (see Gn 32:2; 2 Kg 6:17; Ps 91:11; Mt 4:5-6).

34:20 In his Gospel, John saw this passage fulfilled in Christ who, even though dead on the cross, did not have one of His bones broken (Jn 19:33-36). The Father so guarded the death of His Son that He made the perfect sacrifice, that of the unblemished Lamb of God (Jn 1:29).

36:1 The first line of the psalm is difficult to translate, and English versions word it differently. The Hebrew reads, literally, "There is an oracle about the transgression of the ungodly in my heart." The psalmist received a revelation from God about those who disregard Him.

36:7-8 The language is figurative but refers to the believers' fellowship with God in the sanctuary. There they feast on the sacrifice and drink from the "refreshing stream" of His presence. The word translated "refreshing" (Hb *'adaneika*) is related to "Eden" (Gn 2:8,10); the phrase could perhaps be translated "Your Edenic streams." The psalm depicts the restoration of the blessings of the garden of Eden (cp. v. 6, "You preserve man and beast") through the worship of the Lord. The faithful saw the sanctuary, where the wings of the cherubim (v. 7) overshadowed the ark, as a reflection of paradise—the place where God dwelt with His people on earth.

37:1 It is easy to say "do not be agitated," but it takes a strong faith to reach this level of confidence in the Lord. The cause for anxiety in this case is envy of wrongdoers who prosper in the world. A deep trust in the Lord enables people to delight in Him, and He will give them the desires of their hearts. Those desires, however, will be in harmony with God's will.

37:25 The psalmist says that he has never seen the righteous abandoned, nor their children reduced to begging. This is a general observation of God's faithfulness; it does not mean life will be easy or trouble-free for the righteous. Since God will never forsake the righteous, He will ultimately rescue them, but in His time. Through periods of difficulty it will seem as though God has forsaken people (22:1), but in such cases He is calling upon them to exercise a deeper trust and commitment.

40:6-8 The psalms were performed by Levitical singers who did not serve at the altar of sacrifice; the Levites may also have fulfilled the function of "teaching priests" (2 Ch 15:3; cp. Neh 8:7,8). This section may reflect the scope of their activities—not sacrifice but instruction. But all devout worshipers would acknowledge that God made them for obedience; they expressed a desire to live according to His Word. The spirit of sacrifice was surrender, and the Lord was more interested in the worshiper's obedience than the performance of ritual (1 Sm 15:22). Verse 6 in the Hebrew reads literally, "ears you have dug for me," meaning that God gave the speaker the capacity to hear and obey (cp. "Anyone who has ears to hear should listen," Mk 4:9). The Greek OT translators apparently found the idiom obscure and tried to clarify it with the reading, "you prepared a body for me" (perhaps there was some confusion over the Gk letters for "ears" and "body"). The writer to the Hebrews recognized that this reading applied most fully to Jesus, who was more dedicated to do the will of the Father than anyone else (Heb 10:5-7). The Father prepared a body for Him in the womb of the virgin (see Gl 4:4), He came to do the Father's will, and the will of God for Him was prescribed in the Bible in great detail.

41:9 The psalmist was betrayed by a close friend (lit. "a man of my peace") who joined his enemies in speaking evil of him (vv. 5-7). While many people could appropriate these words to their experiences, the greatest act of betrayal was that of Judas (Mt 26:23; Mk 14:18; Lk 22:21; Jn 13:21).

41:13 The book of Ps is divided into five books; this doxology (expression of praise) marks the end of Book I.

Pss 42–43 These were originally one psalm, sharing the repeated refrain (42:5,11; 43:5). These psalms begin a section of the book (Pss 42–83) in which it appears that "God" (*Elohim*) has frequently been substituted, in textual transmission, for the divine name Yahweh. This is evident, for example, in comparing Ps 14 with its repetition in Ps 53. Scholars sometimes call this section the "Elohistic Psalter."

42:2 On seeing God's face, see note on 11:7. The speaker was a priest from the family of Korah (see superscription; Ex 6:24) who for some reason was prevented from leading the people in worship as he formerly did (cp. v. 4).

42:5-6 In meditation the devout speak to themselves concerning the pain they are experiencing. Here the psalmist used a rhetorical question to replace his despair with hope.

42:6-7 The location is in the north of the country, where the waterfalls pour out of the base of Mount Hermon and become the Jordan River. The identification of Mizar in that region is unknown.

43:3-4 Light and truth are metaphors for full redemption (36:9) and covenant faithfulness respectively. The worshiper vowed that if God so restored him to Zion ("Your holy mountain," v. 3), he would joyfully resume his duties as a musician.

Ps 44 This is a national lament over the problem of suffering. The writer, speaking on behalf of the nation, recorded how the Lord abandoned them in a war for no reason—they had not broken faith with Him. Paul quoted from this psalm (v. 22) in Rm 8:36 to affirm, as the psalm does, that such suffering does not separate us from the love of God.

44:20-21 The psalmist knew that if they had sinned to deserve this suffering, the Lord would have sent a prophet to uncover their sin and force them to deal with it. But God did not condemn them at all.

44:23 The command "wake up" is a bold anthropomorphism calling God to action, as if He has been asleep on the job. It is a desperate cry of suffering; rightly did Paul explain this by saying we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit intercedes for us (Rm 8:26). Only a people with a supreme confidence in their God—such as faithful Israel—could use such bold, even demanding, language in prayer, fully confident that He can handle it.

Ps 45 This royal psalm focuses on the wedding of the king. As with all the royal psalms, the apostles saw that they ultimately spoke of Jesus the Messiah; He is the only King who loves righteousness and hates wickedness (Heb 1:8-9). Furthermore, the parallels between the motifs of this song and Rv 19:6-18 are striking.

45:6-7 Varied translations of this section appear in English versions: "Your [Thy] throne, [O] God" (KJV, NIV, HCSB) or "your throne is like God's" (NEB). It was not a problem in the OT to call a king or ruler "god," for he was God's representative (Ex 7:1; Is 9:6). The word *'elohim* conveys the basic meaning of "strength, might" and need not always refer to "divinity" as commonly understood today; it could refer to a powerful person. The phrase "therefore God, your God" sounds redundant, but in the "Elohistic Psalter" (see Pss 42–43) the personal name Yahweh has sometimes been replaced by the title "God."

45:10-12 This section records the pastoral advice the poet (cp. v. 1) gives the bride before her wedding day. In the expression "and the king will desire your beauty," he refers to the beauty of her entire being, which would include her submissive demeanor. (In Hebrew thought the "beautiful" is that which functions properly, not just whatever has a pleasing appearance.) This was not a "normal" marriage but a royal one, and the queen, no matter how important, had to serve the king because he was her lord. In a similar way, the bride of Christ is instructed to make herself ready for the marriage (Rv 19:7).

Ps 46 This psalm, ascribed to the Levitical singers ("sons of Korah"), is called a song of Zion because it focuses on the security of the holy city, the place of God's presence. The theme of "God is with us" recalls "Immanuel" in Is 7:14; 8:8.

46:2-6 The language of these verses seems at first glance to be describing natural phenomena such as an earthquake. But the lines could be: (1) countering pagan mythology in which the forces of nature were thought chaotic; the psalmist declares they have no power against the holy city and the people of God; (2) looking ahead (eschatological) to the end of the age when the world will be in chaos but God's people preserved; (3) referring to warfare and not natural phenomena at all (metaphorical, cp. Is 8), since the second half of the psalm is about warfare. Both parts of the psalm speak of safety in the time of turmoil, whatever its cause.

46:4 There is no river, properly speaking, in Jerusalem; the river mentioned here could be a metaphor for the life-giving influence of worship and service flowing from the sanctuary of God (see Ezk 47:1-12; Rv 22:1-2). Alternatively, the psalmist could have in mind the water flowing from the Gihon spring under the city of David into the pool of Siloam. In a time of warfare such a steady water supply inside the fortified city would certainly make the people glad. The river in the holy city may also allude to the garden (Gn 2:10-14; cp. Ps 36:9). In time of war or natural upheaval, God's presence would guarantee protection and provision.

46:4 God is called "the Most High" (*'el 'elyon*). This may be a reference to the tradition of Melchizedek, the earlier king of Salem (Jerusalem), "priest to God Most High" (Gn 14:18). That ancient tradition influenced the language used to describe the kings who reigned in Jerusalem (Gn 14:18-24; Ps 110:4; Lk 1:32) and the NT description of Jesus' priesthood (Heb 7:1-28).

Ps 47 The writer celebrates the kingship of Yahweh. The language of this and other so-called "enthronement psalms" (Pss 93–98) indicates that the passage is eschatological; it will be fulfilled at the coming of the Lord in judgment (see "the Day of the Lord" in the prophecies of Jl and Am). He will reign as the great King over all the earth (see Mal 1:11,14).

47:5 To say God ascended means that He ascended to the heavenly throne where He reigns as King over all the earth. His ascension (lit. "going up") may have been dramatized in a procession of the ark of the covenant (24:7; 68:18), accompanied by the war cry and battle alarm—"shouts," "sound of trumpets" (Hb *shofar*). The colorful picture painted here, in word or pageantry, was directed against the Canaanite god Baal who was believed to ascend into the heavens.

47:8 To describe God as seated on a throne is to speak of His absolute sovereign rule over all the earth, His footstool (e.g., 103:19; Is 66:1; sometimes the "footstool" appears to be localized in the ark of the covenant, Ps 99:5; 132:7). The language of God's throne, symbolic of His reign, is carried over in the NT (Rv 4:9-10; 5:1,7,13).

48:2 Mount Zion is not in the north (Hb *zaphon)* of the land of Canaan (Palestine), but in the center, close to the tribal area of the southernmost tribe of Judah. This psalm from the Korahite priests may have been intended to counter Canaanite religion, in which a god Baal-zephon was prominent. Worship of Baal-zephon was centered on the coast of northern Syria. The psalmist may have been saying, in effect, that Zion is the mountain of God.

Ps 49 Wisdom psalms often probe the inequities of life. Here the Korahite psalmist wrote of the man who lives for all the pomp and glory this life offers, but dies like everyone else.

49:7 No one can give the necessary price to redeem himself or others from the grave, for everyone dies. The Bible is not opposed to the possession of wealth; the psalm explains, rather, that with regard to destiny beyond the grave such wealth is worthless.

49:12 In the matter of death and decay humans are no better off than beasts, for all die and return to the dust. The writer was not denying the believer goes to be with the Lord; he was contrasting the dust of death with the pomp of this life.

49:14 The psalmist used irony and personification to say that death will feed on the wicked in Sheol. Death leads the sheep to slaughter. In contrast, the upright will triumph "in the morning," after the night of suffering.

Ps 50 Asaph, probably David's chief musician (1 Ch 16:5), portrays the appearance ("in radiance," i.e. shining) of the Lord. He comes in all His glory and beauty to judge the people, particularly with respect to their worship practices. This "prophetic psalm" is cast as a trial; God is the Judge (v. 6), His covenant people are the defendants (v. 5), and the heavens and earth are witnesses(v. 4). God is a devouring fire (v. 3), for He does not tolerate anything that does not meet His standards.

50:7-15 Asaph records the words of a sanctuary prophet declaring God's indictment. The people's worship was merely an outer form that lacked the right spiritual motivation. God declares that He does not need them—they need Him. This declaration of the word of God may be the heart of His "appearing" that is taking place.

50:16-21 The second indictment is for hypocrisy in conduct, the breaking of some of the Ten Commandments (vv. 18-20). The wicked were present in the congregation, speaking the words of Scripture and the covenant (v. 16) as ritual but with no inner commitment. They assumed God's silence about their sin meant His approval—that He was just like them (v. 21; cp. Mal 2:17; 3:14-15).

50:22 To "forget God" is to live as if He had no claims on their lives—no repentance, no obedience, no proper worship. This is the description of fools (14:1).

Ps 51 Often referred to as David's confession of sin, this passage is a meditation on what it means to be aware of sin and the need to be forgiven. The superscription describes it as a sequel to Nathan's confronting the king with taking Uriah's wife, Bathsheba (2 Sm 12:1-15).

51:4 David had sinned against Uriah and Bathsheba, but the confession acknowledged that sin is, first of all, against God; the expression "You alone" simply intensifies that thought.

51:5 David was not saying that his birth was illegitimate, or that his parents sinned when they performed the sexual act at his conception. He was acknowledging that there never was a time when he was without sin. He was born in the state of sin, or rebellion against God, which is common to all humanity until reconciliation with God occurs. David's statement is a poetic expression of the biblical teaching about this pervasive, inborn or "original" sin (see Rm 3:23).

51:8 Because of the seriousness of his sin, David could not go into the sanctuary to join God's praises. Here he asked for forgiveness so that he could do that, with his petition implied: "[Tell me I am forgiven so that I may] hear joy and gladness."

51:10 The heart is the spiritual nature of a person, the center of the will, the capacity for making choices. The prayer is for God to re-create (renew, as the parallelism in the verse shows) that spiritual side, lest he continue to make wrong choices. Forgiveness may not be enough to solve the problem; there must be a complete spiritual renewal. The forgiven worshiper is not the old person cleaned up; he is a new person (Ezk 18:31; 2 Co 5:17).

51:11 At Pentecost the risen and ascended Christ sent His Holy Spirit (Ac 2:32-33) to abide with every believer. But before the incarnation and resurrection of the Son of God, the Spirit appears to function differently in the life of the people of God. The Spirit "came upon" or "indwelt" people responsible for administering the rule of God: prophets, priests, and kings. The presence of God's Spirit set them apart and enabled them to lead (see Is 61:1), but His indwelling was not always permanent as it is in the NT. Thus, when Saul sinned against the Lord and was rejected from kingship, the Spirit left him(1 Sm 16:14). David the king probably had this possibility in mind. His prayer is a typical OT petition that he not be removed from service because of his sin. Christians would not express this thought in the same way; since Jesus Christ lives and reigns, His Holy Spirit indwells them permanently as the seal of eternal life. Still, NT believers can pray the same thing David meant: "Do not remove me from service." (On the Holy Spirit in the OT, see Jdg 3:10; 1 Sm 18:12.)

51:12 David was not praying for his salvation to be restored; he was praying that the joy of that deliverance be restored. Psalm 32 describes the kind of spiritual depression that results from unforgiven sin.

51:15 The request "Lord, open my lips" is a metonymy, or the use of one aspect of an action or thing to represent the whole. The full request would say: "Forgive me so that I can open my mouth and praise."

51:16-17 The psalm is not repudiating sacrifice; the rites of the altar were the heart of Israel's corporate worship. Because of the nature of David's sins, there was no sin offering he could bring—those offerings were for sins of ignorance. Without a sin offering, he could not offer the atoning whole burnt offering. And he certainly could not offer a peace offering because his peace with God had been compromised. He could only plead for mercy with a broken spirit—that is, a will that had been stripped of all rebellion and pride.

51:18-19 If the expression "build the walls of Jerusalem" is understood figuratively, the walls stand for the moral defense of the city and the worshiping nation it represents (the NT also uses words like "edify" in a figurative or spiritual sense). The speaker here was a king, and immorality at the highest level of government weakens a nation's defensive posture.

Ps 53 This psalm repeats Ps 14, substituting "God" for "the Lord" (see Pss 42–43).

54:5 The psalmist declares that God will annihilate his enemies. His words are in line with divine justice; God destroys the wicked by causing their evil to recoil on them.

55:15 This is a psalm of imprecation, or cursing (Pss 69; 94; 109; 139), in which the worshiper calls for God to severely punish his enemies. David had been betrayed by a former friend (vv. 12-14), which made his anguish even deeper. If the sentiments expressed here seem unworthy of a worshiper of a loving God, they are at least honest. God's answer is to "cast your burden on the LORD" (v. 22), and not to take matters into your own hands.

56:8 In the ancient world, people sometimes saved their tears in small bottles as a remembrance of the sorrow. The psalmist wanted God to remember every aspect of his plight.

58:1 The MT reads "will You speak righteousness in silence?" (Hb '*elem*), but other ancient versions differ. Most modern translations emend the text to *'elim*, "rulers" or "judges" (see 82:1,6).

58:10 The imagery of the feet in the blood of enemies is graphic and gruesome, but it is the imagery of certain victory (see Is 63:1-6; Rv 14:19-20; 19:13-14).

59:8 The psalmist used bold anthropomorphic language (God laughing) to stress that evil is utterly ridiculous to God (2:4; 37:13).

59:10 The psalmist was saying that God will let him "look" (*ra'ah*) on his foes, but the force of the Hebrew verb here is stronger: to "look down" (HCSB), "look in triumph" (RSV) or "gloat." God will let him see victory and enjoy it. But since the victory is God's, the praise also must be His. Therefore, the boasting must be in Him and not in oneself (vv. 16-17).

60:6-8 The psalm is describing God's sovereignty over the nations. In that light, Moab becomes a place for the warrior to wash his feet, a sign of its reduction to the status of servitude. All nations must submit to the authority of God, or they will be dispossessed.

63:2 To "gaze" on the Lord in the sanctuary (to "see" Him or "see His face") may be figurative language for the inward vision of God's glory and His help (see 17:15). It may also refer to some specific action of the priests during the sanctuary rites, when the Lord was understood to be "seen" in a special way.

63:4 The physical act of raising the hands was one custom of ancient Israel while praising (141:2); the Apostle Paul commends it for Christian men (1 Tm 2:8). Posture and gestures can intensify prayer and praise if the action is natural and the intent sincere. Ancient Near Eastern monuments depict rulers lifting the hand in supplication before a deity, and Israel followed the same practice toward the Lord.

64:3-4 The psalmist pictured his enemy's words, intended to hurt and destroy, as sharpened swords and swift arrows. Then he turned the image around (vv.7-8); God's arrows will destroy the wicked as their own words turn on them and bring them to ruin (62:12).

68:1 This psalm takes up the cry of Moses during Israel's march through the wilderness (Nm 10:35) whenever the ark of the covenant set out to move forward. The setting may be a procession of the ark up Mount Zion into the sanctuary (vv. 24-27; 24:7).

68:4,33 The picture of God riding on the clouds and across the heavens was directed against Baal, Canaan's storm god, who was said to mount up to the heavens. But it is the Lord who rides victoriously through the heavens (104:3). That Elijah, the great opponent of the worship of the false Baals, was taken up in a whirlwind accompanied by chariots of fire (2 Kg 2:11) would also undermine such pagan beliefs.

68:7-18 The psalm is a prayer for the Lord to come as a warrior. It portrays the divine warrior moving from Sinai in the wilderness to Zion in Jerusalem in a triumphant march. Historically, this occurred in the movement of the holy ark over several generations; the psalm provides a summary picture.

68:11 At the Lord's command, a great company of women (the Hb word is a feminine plural form) celebrated His victory ("brought the good news"). Young women appear later in this psalm in celebration (v. 25; cp. Ex 15:20-21; Jdg 5:1-31; 11:34; 1 Sm 18:6-7). Some Christian interpreters of this psalm see in this verse a foreshadowing of the women who came to the tomb to anoint Jesus' body only to discover that He had risen from death. Portions of this psalm are chanted in the Orthodox celebration of Christ's victory over death.

68:13 The meaning of the verse is uncertain; the text may have been corrupted in transmission. Except for the reference to a "dove," one might visualize the wings of the cherubim on the ark of the covenant. The context of warfare adds to that possibility.

68:16 The poetry describes the great mountains of the land as jealous when God chose Zion for the resting place of the ark of the covenant. Although other mountains are higher, they were not chosen. Possibly there was an intended slight of other elevations that were sites for the worship of pagan gods (48:2).

68:17 "Chariots" represent angelic forces in this poetic imagery (see Dt 33:2; 2 Kg 6:15; Zch 6:5).

68:18 The psalm celebrates how Yahweh ascended on high and received gifts from men, just as a victorious sovereign in the ancient Near East would receive gifts in tribute. The line is appropriate as a description of the Lord's conquest of the land and the ascension of His presence to Zion, represented by the ark. In the NT, Paul used this psalm with reference to Jesus' triumphant ascension to heaven, in which He gave spiritual gifts to His people (Eph 4:8; cp. 2 Co 2:14). When the conquering king received the spoils of war, he distributed them in turn to his loyal subjects. Paul, following the Greek OT reading "gave" (Hb "took"), omitted the thought of receiving the tribute, and went right to the point of the distribution of gifts.

69:2-9 Deep waters ("floodwaters," v. 15) and the other images here are metaphors for trouble. Because the psalms were generalized for the use of the community's worship, the psalmist's particular trouble is difficult to gauge. It appears that he was persecuted by faithless people, including family members (v. 8) because of his zeal for the worship of the Lord (v. 9). The psalmist had a burning passion for the Lord's cause. In the NT, zeal for the house of the Lord consumed Christ, for like the psalmist, He desired to please God above all else (Jn 2:17; Rm 15:3).

69:12 The gate complex with its plaza is best known as the place where the elders of the city sat to make decisions. But everyone going into or out of the city had to pass through it, so it was also a place where drunkards would be found.

69:21 Gall is a poisonous herb; the psalmist used it, with bitter vinegar, as a picture of the treatment he was receiving from his enemies. They made fun of his grief (vv. 10-11) over both his own sinfulness (v. 5) and the godlessness of others. The application of these words to Christ's suffering (Mt 27:34) is more intense in view of the death He died.

69:22-28 These verses form an imprecation, or curse,on the wicked (Pss 55; 94; 109; 139). It was the psalmist's holy zeal that compelled him to call for divinejudgment. In the final analysis, wrongs must be righted.

70:5 The terms "afflicted" (or "poor") and "needy" have both economic and spiritual connotations. Economically poor people will normally be humbled by their condition and more likely to acknowledge their dependence on the Lord. In the psalms, the "poor" were often those most devoted to the Lord, who were therefore despised by the less faithful segments of the community. Similarly in the NT, Paul's mention of "the poor"(Gl 2:10) referred to the persecuted Christians of Jerusalem, for whom he was collecting an offering (Rm 15:26; 1 Co 16:1).

Ps 72 This "Solomonic" psalm recalls the glory of the Davidic kingdom. Its geographical extent is specific (v. 8): "from sea to sea" (i.e., the Mediterranean to the Dead Sea), and from the Euphrates to "the ends of the earth" (lit. "ends of the land"; the word is *'erets,* as in v. 16). Other rulers will bow down to the son of David (v. 11), and through him the Lord will bless all nations (v. 17).

72:4 The rule of the ideal king is righteous and just (v. 1),he will be a champion for the afflicted and the needy, and have pity on the weak and the poor (vv. 12-14). Thus, the psalmist petitioned God for the prosperity of the anointed king and his realm (vv. 15-17).

72:18-20 This passage, with its doxology (ascription of praise), marks the end of Book II of Ps, and also of the collection called "the prayers of David," although Davidic psalms appear later in the book.

Ps 73 The psalmist (Asaph, according to the superscription) reports he had serious doubts (v. 13) about the value of his faith when he saw the prosperity of the wicked all around him (v. 3). But he handled his doubts correctly; he did not publicize them to other people who might have been disillusioned by them. Rather, he went to the sanctuary (v. 17) where, in the presence of God, he saw things in eternal perspective.

73:24 In contrast to the realization that the wicked face the judgment of God, the psalmist was comforted by the hope of his glorious destiny. The words "take me up in glory" could refer to his entrance into glory after this life is over; but the Hebrew word (*kavod*) also means "honor" and could refer to the approval conferred on a life guided by God's counsel. In the broader scope of the Bible, these words certainly harmonize with the doctrines of resurrection and glorification.

Ps 74 The psalm laments the complete destruction of the temple (vv. 4-8) in words that, if taken literally, could only fit the Babylonian invasion in 586 B.C. But the superscription, "A *Maskil* of Asaph," relates the psalm to David's music director. The psalm may have originated among the musicians descended from Asaph, or may have been composed as a "maskil" in his style (the meaning of *maskil* is uncertain).

74:13-14 The psalm uses the language of Canaanite myths to affirm the absolute sovereignty of God. "Leviathan" and the "sea monsters" were the pagan's way of deifying the uncontrollable force of nature in the sea. But God defeated the sea at the exodus (114:1; Is 51:9-10), meaning He controlled the sea to destroy the Egyptian army. In defeating Egypt, and later Assyria and Babylon, He also defeated the gods they worshiped (see Nm 33:4; Jb 26:12; Ps 89:9-10; 104:26; Is 27:1; Ezk 29:3).

75:5 The imagery of the "horn," taken from the animal world, signifies the power and autonomy of the person.

Ps 76 This psalm, like Pss 46 and 48, celebrates God's presence in Jerusalem. It may be a psalm of David commemorating the defeat of the Philistines at Baal-perazim (2 Sm 5:17-21).

76:2 Salem, the ancient name of Jerusalem, first appears in Gn 14:18; Melchizedek was king of Salem and priest of God Most High. It is related to Hebrew *shalom*, "peace."

76:3 The psalmist states that God defeated His enemies and destroyed their weapons, "there"—i.e., in "His dwelling place in Zion" (v. 2). This is a picture of spiritual warfare; God's victory takes place in the sanctuary, which is a microcosm (miniature model) of the world, before it occurs in the earthly battlefield.

Ps 78 This long "historical psalm" is essentially a retelling of Israel's record of disobedience and unbelief in the face of all that God had done for His people. Yet, despite their sin, He "awoke as if from sleep" and defeated their enemies (vv. 65-66).

78:67-72 The psalm pointedly mentions God's choice of Judah, Mount Zion, and David in place of Ephraim, which stood for the northern Israelite tribes. This suggests that it was composed after the breakup of the kingdom, when northern Israel rebelled against the Davidic dynasty and went its own way (1 Kg 12:16).

80:1 The Lord sits enthroned "on the cherubim." The reference is to the presence of the Lord in the most holy place in the sanctuary, where the ark of the covenant was considered the footstool of his invisible throne (see 132:7-8). Molded on the lid of the box at each end were the cherubim, powerful composite figures with both human and animal features (see Ezk 1:5-11). The glory of the Lord hovered above this cover (sometimes called the "mercy seat" in English versions).

80:3 The refrain of the psalm is drawn from the high priestly blessing of Nm 6:22-27. If God's face shines on the people—if He, their Shepherd (Ps 80:1), is gracious to them—they will be saved.

81:1-5 The psalm describes a festival ceremony, or a portion of one. These verses invite the worshipers to gather "on the day of our feast" (v. 3).

81:7 Meribah was the name of the station in the wilderness where the people complained to Moses about the lack of water (Ex 17:1-7; Nm 20:1-13; Ps 95:8). The name means "striving" or "disputation."

81:8-10 A spokesman for the Lord, perhaps a prophet functioning at the sanctuary, reiterated Israel's basic obligation under the covenant: to worship no "god" other than Yahweh. He repeated the beginning of the Ten Commandments (v. 10; cp. Ex 20:2). The invitation, "Open your mouth wide, and I will fill it," may signify that the congregation was to recite the covenant commandments at this point in the ceremony.

82:1,6 To describe the Lord as presiding over the "divine assembly" of the "gods" sounds like a borrowing of Canaanite polytheistic themes. Since the Bible affirms there is only one true God, any such borrowing can only be for the purpose of opposing false religions. The Bible frequently mentions other "gods" the pagans worshiped, but makes it clear that they were lifeless, powerless idols (e.g., 96:5; 115:4-7; Is 46:1-2; 1 Co 10:19; 12:2). The term "gods" (*'elohim*) in this psalm could be taken in its generic sense of "strength, might" to refer to powerful men (see Ex 7:1; Jn 10:35-36), in this case corrupt judges who were not dispensing justice as they ought (Ps 82:2-4). Or it could refer to pagan deities whose false worship was supplanted by the truth of the one God. Such "gods" might have a divine assembly, but Israel's God is sovereign and so they are all subject to Him. Whether these "gods" were powerful men or false deities, their end was certain—they would die like men (vv. 6-7). God, the real Judge (50:6) has condemned them.

Ps 83 This is the last psalm in the 42-psalm "Elohistic Psalter" (Pss 42–83) in which the title "God" often appears where one would expect the divine name Yahweh. Various theories have been proposed to explain this phenomenon, but there is no consensus regarding why it occurs.

84:6 This psalm may have been used by pilgrims on their way to the sanctuary to attend the annual festivals. The location of a "Valley of Baca" is unknown. The word means "weeping." The name could have been given to a valley where balsam trees grew, for they "weep." In this psalm the expression takes on a metaphorical meaning, perhaps describing the sorrows borne by the worshipers or the hardships along their pilgrim way to the holy city. Yahweh takes even our Baca Valleys and transforms them by His presence—the presence experienced at His temple but not limited geographically.

86:8 The expression "among the gods" refers to pagan deities, which usurped the place of the one true God (see note on 82:1,6).

86:16 In this Davidic psalm, the worshiper speaks of himself as "the son of Your female servant," traditionally, "handmaid" (see also 116:16). Since the speaker was the king, the reference was to the "queen mother" who evidently could exercise considerable influence in the Judean and Israelite courts (1 Kg 2:19; 2 Ch 22:3). The records of the reigns of David's descendants on the throne of Judah usually mention the name of the king's mother (e.g., 1 Kg 14:31; 15:10; 22:42). Roman Catholic theologians sometimes point to these facts in support of the attention paid to the mother of Jesus, the Messiah, who also calls herself "the Lord's slave" (Lk 1:38), or handmaid.

87:4-6 There were people from the countries that oppressed Israel, especially Egypt (called here by the mythological name Rahab), who came to faith by acknowledging the Lord. They were therefore recorded as "born" in Zion, and were numbered as citizens of the city of God. This passage is the background for Paul's statement that "the Jerusalem above is free, and she is our mother" (Gl 4:26); it is spiritual birth, not ethnic descent, that determines who belongs to the people of God.

88:10-12 The psalmist (according to the superscription, Heman the Ezrahite) committed himself to giving God the glory for the answer to prayer. Abaddon is synonymous with Sheol, the place of the dead (see Jb 26:6;Pr 15:11; 27:20).

88:15-18 The suffering psalmist attributed his life-long affliction to God ("Your wrath," "Your terrors"). This is the realism of the faith—God is sovereign, even over difficult circumstances His people must endure. Everything has a purpose in the outworking of God's plan, even though in the time of pain it is hard to appreciate this. If the psalm seems to end on a negative note, two considerations apply. First, however much the speaker felt God had deserted him, he was still talking to Him. Second, the psalm, as it is given, may not reproduce the entire scene; when it was used in worship, another speaker not quoted here (e.g., a priest or a prophet) may have responded with an answer affirming the Lord's help. There are many places in Ps that suggest there was an unrecorded response from another speaker, in the Lord's name.

Ps 89 The Davidic covenant of 2 Sm 7 was the basis for this psalm, but the psalmist complained that its promises seem not to be fulfilled (vv. 38-45). In granting the covenant, the Lord had warned David that his descendants' disobedience would result in their chastening(2 Sm 7:14).

89:10 As in 74:14, Rahab may have been the equivalent of Leviathan or a similar mythological figure. It represented opposition from the pagans, primarily Egypt (87:4; Is 30:7). But God crushed Rahab—Egypt was defeated at the Red Sea (Ex 14:28-30; Jb 26:12; Is 51:9-10).

89:26-27 According to the Davidic covenant, the king was designated God's son or firstborn (2 Sm 7:14) because he inherited the kingdom (Ps 2:7-9). The relationship between Jesus the Messiah and the Father is far greater, because He is the divine Son (meaning that He shares the nature of the Father). He alone can be called son of David and Son of God in the full sense.

89:52 This brief doxology brings Book III to a conclusion. Book IV begins with Ps 90.

Ps 90 The superscription attributes this song to Moses, and the contents of it certainly do fit the wilderness experience. The idea that God swept the people away in His anger is a strong way of saying that they died in the wilderness because of their unbelief (95:11; Heb 4:1-5).

90:12 To number our days is to measure the time left in life and make every day count. It is based on the recognition that life is short and God's anger swift. Thus, the goal of such numbering is a heart of wisdom. Conscious of life's brevity, we learn to make choices through which God can establish the work of our hands (v. 17), producing something valuable to those that follow us (v. 16) and honoring to God.

91:1-2 The first two verses use the images of "protection" (Hb *sether*, "hiding place") and "shadow" from the world of birds, and "refuge" and "fortress" from military settings, to express confidence in divine protection. While most of the psalms are either prayers to God or hymns to His praise, this psalm (except v. 2) is entirely God's word of assurance to the worshiper (see Pss 50; 81; 82).

91:4 The idea of God's covering people with His feathers and wings is a figurative way to express divine nurture and protection (see Mt 23:37; Lk 13:34). It may be that the psalmist had in mind the ark of the covenant, and its accompanying winged cherubim, in the sanctuary.

91:11-13 The Lord may permit things to happen in life that are troubling and painful, but nothing is ever out of His control. God dispatches His angels to ensure that His will is safeguarded. In the NT, Satan used this reassuring passage to tempt Jesus to dramatize His identity as the messianic Son of God. Jesus countered this misuse of Scripture with another that warns against putting God to the test (Mt 4:6-7; Lk 4:10-11).

91:16 The promise of long life to the believer must not be taken for an automatic guarantee of longevity in this physical world. Wisdom literature acknowledges that, even among the righteous, life may be cut short. Still, God's purpose is that the righteous live till their life has been "satisfied" in His sight. Ultimately He will fulfill His promise both in this life and in the life to come(1 Tm 4:8-9).

Ps 93 The expression "the LORD reigns," common in the enthronement psalms (47; 93; 95–99), can also be translated "Yahweh has become King." The expression could be taken in several ways. It could express the general truth that, as Creator, He is sovereign over all things. It could be the celebration of some great victory that has revealed His rule. It could be an expression associated with a festival celebrating Yahweh's enthronement. Or it could be eschatological, as in Is 52:7 which refers to the salvation or deliverance to come. The imagery of the Lord's reigning corresponds to phenomena that accompany the coming "Day of the LORD" (Jl, Am), often called the second coming. The psalmist lavishly praised God's sovereignty with poetic language, and all these options could apply simultaneously; it is not necessary to choose between them.

93:3 The reference may be to the victory at the Red Sea; it could also be directed against pagan religions that feared the power of the seas. In Canaanite literature Baal's great victory is over Yam ("Sea"). But in the biblical perspective only the living God can control the chaos of nature, or the nations that the "seas" symbolize (Is 8:7-8; Jr 46:7-8).

94:2 "Pride" in the psalms is rarely, if ever, referring to ordinary pride in appearance or achievement. It is pride that oversteps God's boundaries and acts autonomously against God, His people, and His institutions. This psalm, directed against the "arrogant" and "evildoers" who oppress the faithful (vv. 4-7), belongs to the category of "psalms of imprecation," or cursing.

94:12 The psalm echoes Ps 1, "happy is the man." The Hebrew word here, however, is different: not the generic *'ish* "man," but *gever*, "strong man."

94:14 The Lord will not reject His people, those who have entered into covenant by faith. Thus, the psalm is not entirely about condemnation of the wicked; it is a prayer for God's kingdom.

95:3 The Lord is "a great King above all gods." On "gods" in the psalms, see note on 82:1,6.

95:8-9 Massah means "testing" (on Meribah, see note on 81:7).

95:11 Because of their faithless challenge of God at Meribah, the Israelites were not permitted to enter the rest, i.e., the promised land (Heb 4:7). On the psalm's ending on a negative note, see note on 88:15-18. Jesus gives rest, spiritual rest now and eternal rest in the world to come (Mt 11:28).

96:1 On the "new song," see note on 33:3.

96:4 On "gods" in the psalms, see note on 82:1,6. The Lord God made the heavens and everything in them, even those things the pagans venerate.

97:1-5 Here the declaration that the Lord reigns is followed by the poetic language of theophany or epiphany—descriptions of spectacular natural phenomena in the heavens and on earth that reveal God's presence. Much of the imagery goes back to Sinai (Dt 4:11,24), but it also anticipates the coming "Day of the LORD." Thick, dark clouds (Ps 97:2) usually refer to judgment from the Lord, whose decisions are always right and just. Lightning, fire, and earthquakes all speak of the penetrating nature of divine judgment. The psalm refers, ultimately, to the future coming of the Lord (the verb is prophetic perfect). When He comes to establish His kingdom on earth, generations will see Him and be overwhelmed by the power.

98:8-9 The psalm says that the rivers clap, the mountains sing, and all nature echoes and reverberates in anticipation of the coming of the Lord. In Rm 8:19-22, Paul described the longing of creation to see the fulfillment of God's purpose.

100:1 The "shout" ("make a joyful noise," KJV, RSV) was the war cry; the Hebrew verb is the same as that of the shouting of the Israelites at the capture of Jericho (Jos 6:20). This psalm takes the worshiper into the realm of spiritual warfare.

100:3 Translations of this verse differ ("not we ourselves," KJV, NASB; "we are his," RSV, NIV) because of textual emendation by some translators, supported by a marginal note in the MT. The Hebrew text reads literally, "He made us and not we." However, the negative particle *lo'* is usually used with verbs; another form of negation is used for nouns or pronouns. It is likely that the original reading was *lo* (without the unvoiced final letter *aleph*), meaning "His," which sounds the same as the negative particle. An error could have crept in when a copyist misunderstood what was being dictated to him. The psalm refers to the Lord's covenant loyalty (*hesed*, "love," v. 5) so the worshipers are His; the other reading, of course, is also theologically correct since they did not create themselves.

Ps 101 This Davidic psalm is the charter of the king. He should shun all forms of evil in court and punish the wicked in the land. If the psalm is also prophetic of the reign of Christ, it indicates there will be people to be punished during His reign, suggesting that this is the messianic reign which will in the end be delivered up to the Father (1 Co 15:24).

102:10 The psalmist suffered under divine discipline, which he called God's "indignation and wrath." In the NT the wrath of God is the effect of His judgment on sin (Rm 1:18, 1 Th 1:10). It is this also in the OT, but in this psalm the speaker did not ascribe his suffering to his personal sin. Though he wrote that God had unleashed His anger on him in words that suggest both physical affliction and persecution (vv. 3-9), the psalm may have come out of the experience of the exile in Babylon in which it seemed that God had judged Israel harshly. The writer shared in the punishment due all Israel for its corporate sin against the Lord (see Is 6:5). And yet the writer also knew that God had not rejected His people but had promised a glorious future (Ps 30:5; Is 50–55). The full revelation of the NT reassures believers of their secure relationship with the Lord. But the NT also affirms that God's wrath is poured out on sin, and that divine chastening even of the believer (Heb 12:7) comes from that same attribute of God.

102:25-27 These words praise the Lord as the eternal, unchanging God of creation. Hebrews 1:10-12 quotes them and applies them to Jesus.

103:6 The psalm praises God for the kinds of things He does; the verbs used provide general truths (as with wisdom literature). To say that the Lord "executes acts of righteousness and justice for all the oppressed" does not mean that there are no oppressed people. It means that this is how the Lord consistently acts, so the oppressed who are faithful to His covenant (vv. 17-18) can look to Him to work in their behalf. Deliverance will come—if not in this life, certainly in the life to come. In the meantime, the people of God are to join the hosts of heaven and all God's works of creation (see 19:1) in declaring His praise (Ps 103:20-22).

104:1-9 The psalmist used vivid word pictures to describe the sovereign Lord's work of creation. The imagery was drawn from the making of a palace with tent coverings, private upper stories, and a solid foundation. The Lord uses all the elements recognized in the ancient world—wind, clouds, fire, and water—and controls them for His purpose. The Creator-King is surrounded by His servants, whether they be angels, forces of nature, or creatures of earth.

104:26 Leviathan was the sea creature the Canaanites feared; it was portrayed in myth as a seven-headed dragon (see 74:13-14). Here it was described as merely a large animal that God put in the water to frolic. What to the pagans was a terrifying force is to God a plaything. The Bible typically divests the natural world of its "religious" aura, and ascribes such a quality of awe only to the Lord and those persons and articles specifically dedicated to His service. Such a view of the world, so different from that of paganism, was essential for the development of modern science.

106:48 This doxology brings Book IV to a close; Book V begins with Ps 107.

108:6-13 These verses are parallel to 60:5-12.

109:6 This prayer is a psalm of imprecation, calling for the evil man to be punished. The writer asked that another wicked man would be the accuser who finds him guilty. The word "accuser" translates the Hebrew *satan*, origin of the name Satan, also called the adversary and "the accuser of our brothers" (Rv 12:10; cp. Zch 3:1-2). The psalmist apparently hoped that human institutions of justice, however corrupted, would eventually result in condemnation of the wicked (see Pr 14:32); in the process the righteousness of God would vindicate His faithful one.

109:7 The psalmist asked that the wicked person, now at the mercy of other godless men, should find his last-minute prayer to the Lord to be viewed by the Lord as sin.

109:8 The psalmist had leveled a curse against those who unjustly attacked him (vv. 2-5). The curse was that the attacker's life be shortened and his place taken by another. The apostles used this passage to authorizereplacing Judas among the Twelve (Ac 1:20). The psalm's application was clear to them. Judas was accursed; he had betrayed the Lord and then hung himself, so another must fill his position among the disciples as a witness to Jesus' ministry and resurrection (Ac 1:21-22).

109:8-10 The psalmist's petition sounds unjust—that his attacker's children should suffer because of his sins. In reality, the psalmist was only describing the normal effects of the judgment to be meted out on his evil enemy. When a guilty man was condemned to death, his wife and children would be without the resources they had formerly enjoyed. Under ordinary circumstances widows and orphans were to be cared for by the people of Israel, no matter how they had become destitute (Dt 10:18; 24:17; Ps 82:3; Is 1:17; Jr 7:6; Ezk 22:7). But their welfare depended on their faithfulness to God. The sins of the fathers would be visited on the children who hate the Lord (Ex 20:4-6), but for those who love the Lord, He would extend His loyal love (Ps 103:17-18).

If, in including his attacker's family in his curse, the psalmist seems to be excessively vengeful, his passions were motivated by a desire for God's justice to be fully effected. In OT thinking, a person's life, or "soul," did not end at the surface of his body but extended to his family, his property, his "name" or reputation, and all that pertained to him. The NT teaches believers to have compassion, to forgive, and to pray for their enemies. Jesus prayed, on the cross, "Father, forgive them, because they do not know what they are doing" (Lk 23:34). Christian use of the psalms of imprecation, in corporate worship or personal devotion, is always aimed at the conversion of those who do evil and persecute the faithful. That is the ultimate aim of God's own passion for justice (Ezk 18:23).

109:16-20 These verses show that the imprecation simply called for this man to reap what he had been sowing. The psalmist's attacker had a habit of cursing, or condemning, others; instead of blessing people with his words, he sought to defame and destroy.

Therefore no blessing should come his way, but only cursing. This reciprocity is a principle of God's kingdom; as Jesus told His disciples, "with the measure you use, it will be measured to you" (Mt 7:2).

Ps 110 This Davidic psalm is the one most often quoted in the NT as being prophetic of the coming of Jesus the Messiah. It looks forward to the coming of the King to defeat the wicked and to reign as a royal priest.

110:1 David received an oracle ("The LORD declared to my Lord") about the decree of God. David, being a prophet, foresaw that one of his descendants would be his Lord. That Davidic king would rule over the people of God by divine authority. He pictured Him seated at God's right hand as a co-Ruler, corresponding to ancient royal practice. Daniel would later indicate that this King, the Messiah, would come in clouds of heaven to receive dominion over all nations (Dan 7:13-14), as declared in Ps 2:7-9. David knew his descendant would be truly great (see 2 Sm 23; 1 Kg 2:19, 1 Ch 28:5; 2 Ch 9:8; Ps 72), but he did not foresee that the Lord Himself would come and take on mortal flesh—Immanuel, "God with us." Jesus asked His opponents to explain how the Messiah could be the son of David, since David called Him his Lord (Mk 12:35-37); they had no answer for Him. The implication is that Jesus was calling into question the religious leaders' view of the Christ as a revolutionary leader.

110:1 The psalm pictures the sovereignty of the Messiah in terms of the Middle Eastern culture. Making one's enemies a footstool was a poetic expression for defeat and subjugation (Jos 10:24; 1 Kg 5:3; Is 51:23). The NT relates this passage to Jesus' ascension to the right hand of the Father (Ac 2:33-34; Heb 1:3; 12:2) to await the time of the second coming (Ac 3:19-21). Having subjected all other authorities, He will hand over the kingdom to the Father (1 Co 15:25).

110:3 The translations of this difficult verse vary. The picture is the sudden appearance of the army of the Lord, His willing servants (as with Jdg 5:2,9). The servants will be as numerous as the dew fresh at dawn(2 Sm 17:12). They will be youthful, strong, numerous, and willing to fight. In the fulfillment, the Lord Christ will come with saints and angels to judge the world, but it will be the powerful word of the Lord that will destroy the enemies (see Rv 19).

110:4 The decree of God makes this king a priest, not after the order of Aaron and the Mosaic law but the order of Melchizedek, priest-king of ancient Jerusalem (Salem, Gn 14:18). The Davidic king was from the tribe of Judah and his priesthood, which was not for service in animal sacrifice, was to come from a different origin. Thus David wore the priestly ephod when celebrating the installation of the ark of the covenant in Jerusalem (2 Sm 6:14). Once the sacrifices were fulfilled in the death of Christ (Rm 3:25), the temple rites were no longer required. Only then could another order of priesthood be installed. Melchizedek, priest of God Most High, blessed Abraham—ancestor of all Israel—and received his tithe; he was the ideal pattern for this new priesthood (see the discussion in Heb 5:6-10; 7:22).

110:7 The reference to drinking from the brook may be an allusion to Gideon and his chosen warriors (Jdg 7:6-7)who would crush the enemies of the Lord's people. To have one's head lifted up by a superior was an expression of approval, vindication, and help from that source (Gn 40:13; Ps 3:3).

111:1 Psalms that are hymns of praise often begin, and sometimes end, with "Hallelujah" (106; 113; 135; 146–150). The Hebrew word combines the verb meaning "praise, boast about, celebrate" with a shortened form of the name Yahweh. The verb *hallel* gives the book its name in Hebrew (*tehillim*). The English name comes from the Greek word for a stringed instrument used in worship (*psalterion*; cp. the name "Psalter" for the collection of psalms). The Greek word is a translation of the Hebrew word found in the superscription of many psalms, directing their performance "with stringed instruments" (*mizmor*, e.g., Ps 4).

111:10 The first half of this verse, drawn from Pr 1:7, reminds people that the proper response to all that God has done is reverential fear. To fear the Lord is to trust in Him, obey Him, and worship Him as God and Savior. The word indicates both a shrinking back from something, out of a sense of awe, and an attraction to it in adoration and wonder. The OT has no expression corresponding to our general concept of "being religious," but uses phrases that relate specifically to Yahweh, such as knowing the Lord, being faithful to the Lord, and fearing the Lord.

Ps 112 This psalm continues the wisdom motifs begun in Ps 111 (see Ps 1), pronouncing blessings on the life of the one who fears the Lord. The blessings enumerated flow from the obedient life of the righteous. In other words, the wise man will produce children who will be mighty in the land (v. 2), or who will labor with wisdom and industry to produce wealth (v. 3).

Pss 113–118 These six psalms form a group known as the "Great Hallel," or Great Praise, traditionally sung during the Passover celebration. Psalms 113–116 were sung before the meal, with Pss 117–118 sung afterward.

113:1-3 The psalm, like many hymns of praise in this book, begins with an invitation to the faithful to enter into the celebration of the Lord. The expression "from the rising of the sun to its setting" is a way of saying that praise should be lifted all day long—dawn to dusk—and everywhere, from east to west.

113:7-9 The grace of God is seen in His characteristic actions on behalf of the poor and needy: He raises them up to sit with princes. In God's economy the poor will be exalted and fulfilled (1 Sm 2:8; Jb 36:7). In this life God expects the righteous to meet the needs of the poor on His behalf (Pr 19:17)—this requires moving people from indifference to compassion. Likewise, God is able to resolve the condition of the barren woman (see Gn 16:2; 20:18; 1 Sm 1:6; Lk 1:25). Verses 7-8 are taken from the song of Hannah—who was childless before the birth of Samuel—in 1 Sm 2:8, adapted by Mary in the *Magnificat* (Lk 1:52-53).

114:5-6 The psalmist used sarcasm, addressing the sea, the Jordan River, and the mountains and hills as though they could respond to his question: Why did you recoil before the Lord's action in delivering His people? Of course, the natural phenomena personified here could make no response but were totally under the Lord's control. The crossing of the Jordan is paired with that of the Red Sea as almost a second exodus event. It was just that, in fact, for the new generation born in the wilderness that had not passed out of Egypt with Moses.

115:8-12 The psalmist invited three different groups of worshipers to put their trust in the Lord and receive His blessing. "Israel" was the covenant people as a whole; the "house of Aaron" was the priesthood; "you who fear the LORD" could be non-Israelite worshipers present at the festival. The description "you who fear God" (Ac 13:16,26; cp. 10:2) occurs in the NT as a designation for non-Jewish worshipers of the God of Israel.

116:13 The allusions are to a drink offering (Nm 28:7) and a thank offering (Ps 116:17) that would be given to God as the thankful worshiper proclaimed the name of the Lord in the congregation. To do this was to fulfill the vow of praise that he vowed while praying for deliverance (see 50:14).

116:15 The psalmist confessed that the love of God would not easily permit adversity (4:3) or an early death for His saints (79:11; 102:20). That which is "valuable" is rare and highly treasured. Some scholars argue for a meaning "grievous" for the word *yaqar*, interpreting the line to mean that the deaths of His saints grieves the Lord, but that makes Him into a mere observer. No saints die untimely deaths in God's plan; their deaths are precious to Him.

Ps 117 This, the shortest chapter in the Bible, is a complete hymn of praise. It includes the invitation for all people—not just Israel—to celebrate the Lord. It also gives the reason for praise: the Lord has been faithful to His covenant with His people ("faithful love" translates Hebrew *hesed*, loyalty based on a covenant relationship). Finally, it speaks of His enduring "faithfulness" (Hebrew *'emunah*, "truth" in the sense of reliability, the root of the English word "amen"). All of this is bracketed between the cries of praise, "Hallelujah!"

Ps 118 The psalm has no superscription positing a historical occasion for its composition. In one view, it fits the return from Babylonian captivity. The nation (represented by the speaker) had been severely disciplined for sin, being surrounded almost to extinction by the nations. But the Lord delivered His people, and the nation returned to building God's program and came to praise Him for letting them live. In another view, this psalm was a ceremony celebrating a victory of the king in battle; the flavor is that of the Davidic psalms. The king, who represented the entire nation, had been in great danger, but was delivered from death and vowed to tell of the Lord's great deeds (vv. 10-17). An "entrance rite" followed (see Ps 15) in a dialogue between the sanctuary doorkeepers or choir (vv. 19-20,26) and the speaker and those in procession (v. 27) with him. The worshiper confessed his loyalty to the Lord (v. 28) and reiterated his promise to praise Him. The entire psalm is framed by a traditional hymn celebrating Yahweh's *hesed*, His faithfulness to the covenant (vv. 1-4,29; see 1 Ch 16:34,41; 2 Ch 5:13; 7:3,6; 20:21; Ps 107:1; 136; 138:8). Much of this psalm became part of the liturgy of church worship, and remains so to this day.

The psalm is part of the "Great Hallel" (see Ps 113) designated for use at the festivals of Israel. Pss 117–118 were sung after the Passover meal. These would have been the psalms ("hymn" in many English versions) that Jesus and the disciples sang in the Upper Room after the institution of the Lord's Supper, before they went out to the Mount of Olives (Mt 26:30).

118:2-4 After the opening hymn, the speaker invited the same three groups mentioned in 115:8-12 to confess the Lord's enduring faithfulness to His people.

118:5-12 In recounting his distress, the psalmist reported that all the nations surrounded him (the Israelites, whom he represented), but that he destroyed them in the name of the Lord. The verb in verses 10-11 is literally, "cut off," not a military word but the word meaning "to circumcise." The psalm could refer simply to military action in the Lord's cause. The reference to circumcision could also mean that the enemies were "converted" to a respect for the Lord, in a change of heart, through His powerful intervention (His "name"). Historically, the Jews were released from their captivity by the kindness of the Persians rulers, who supplanted their Babylonian captors.

118:19 The "gates" bring to mind the gates of the temple, through which the righteous would enter to praise the Lord for delivering them from death. The speaker approached the sanctuary voicing the "thanks" of the people he represented. His thanks were not simple gratitude; the Hebrew verb *yadah* signifies the lifting of the hand, in a gesture affirming loyalty to the Lord's covenant.

118:22 This familiar verse is the heart of the worshipers' praise. In one view, the stone was Israel, represented by its king, and the builders were the world empires—Egypt, Assyria, and Babylon—who could move puppet states around at will. Judah, which they considered trivial, had again become the capstone of God's building program. Alternatively, one thinks of David who was not considered a likely candidate for Israel's anointed ruler (1 Sm 16:1-12). Because the psalms were generalized for community use, the language could apply to a variety of situations in which a faithful worshiper had been passed over in the search for leadership. In the NT Jesus expounded on this passage (Mt 21:42; Mk 12:10; Lk 20:17): He, the true Israel, is the stone that the builders—the Judean religious authorities and the Roman occupiers—rejected. Now, in the light of His resurrection and ascension, He is the centerpiece of God's new structure for His kingdom (see Ac 4:11).

118:24 The day the Lord made is the day He granted victory over powerful enemies or brought deliverance from the oppression of the nations (see 126:1-3). In the NT fulfillment, it is the day of God's new creation, the resurrection of Jesus, with its promise of deliverance from "the last enemy," death (1 Co 15:26).

118:25 The prayer of the worshipers entering the sanctuary was that the Lord would bring them full and complete salvation or deliverance. Their words "LORD, save us," in Hebrew, are *hoshi'ah na'*, which came into the liturgy of the church through Greek as "Hosanna."

118:26 The priests in the temple blessed the worshipers, especially the one leading the procession: "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD." In the NT the followers of Jesus applied the words of this psalm to Him as He entered Jerusalem, linking them to the arrival of the Davidic kingdom (Mk 11:9-10). They understood that Jesus was no ordinary worshiper approaching the temple but the Messiah whose coming would change the order of things.

118:27 The Hebrew text reads, "Bind the sacrifice with cords to the horns of the altar." This would have been the text used in the Passover liturgy and by the people at the holy city. The Septuagint rendered it, "with boughs in hand join the festal procession up to the horns of the altar," a reading that fits the Festival of Booths better than other festivals. The issue turns on the meaning of the word *'abotim*, "ropes" or "boughs." The RSV ("branches") and NIV {"boughs") follow the Septuagint.

Ps 119 This, the longest psalm, is a meditation on the word of God in its many forms and functions. The entire psalm is alphabetically arranged (acrostic). The first stanza is labeled *alef* because each of the eight verses starts with a word that begins with that letter, the first of the alphabet. The second stanza follows with the same arrangement using the second letter of the alphabet, *bet*; the rest of the psalm follows the same pattern through the alphabet. This scheme certainly aided in memorizing the meditation (a "mnemonic" device); but it also was a way of ordering the thoughts to provide a complete meditation on the word of God—the "ABCs" about the law of the Lord. Commentators have called the composition of psalms of this type "learned psalmography"; that is, inspiration combined with intense scholarship and literary skill.

Pss 120–134 These 15 psalms have the heading "a song of ascents"; that is, "going up" to Zion for the festivals; hence they are also called "pilgrim psalms" or "psalms of Zion." Older English versions thought of the "ascents" as graduated steps of the sanctuary,

and called the psalm "a song of degrees."

120:5 Meshech is in Asia Minor near the Black Sea; Kedar is a word for the desert area in which Arab tribesmen wander (see Is 21:16-17; Ezk 27:21). How could the psalmist be in both places at the same time, even if they referred to widely scattered areas? The language is figurative; the psalmist lived among people who hated peace (v. 7), and they were like the hostile barbarians in these places.

121:1-2 The psalmist was contemplating ("I raise my eyes") the dangerous journey ("toward the mountains") and was concerned for his safety ("Where will my help come from?"). Alternatively, he thought of the mountains as sites for the worship of pagan deities, who were no help to anyone. He supplied his own answer: The One who made all things, including the hills, was his Protector.

121:3-6 The psalm concludes with a pronouncement of blessing in another voice (note the change in personal pronouns from "my" to "your"). Someone accompanying the pilgrim on the journey, such as a priest, was speaking. Or the setting for the psalm is not the pilgrimage to Zion but the sanctuary itself, once the worshiper reached it; the expression "coming and going" (v. 8) suggests that the speaker was at the site of the festival.

121:6 In a poetic image, the sun and the moon are not the literal heavenly bodies but represent what takes place under them—events occurring during the day and night that could, potentially, be harmful.

121:7-8 These verses could be translated as a "bidding prayer" ("May the Lord protect"). They can also be translated as a promise for the future, "The LORD will protect you from all harm" (most Bibles have a similar rendering). The immediate context was concerned with divine protection for the holy mission to the temple in obedience to the law, but the words in any rendering express a general belief of the faith, only occasionally cast into doubt (Ps 44).

122:1 The pilgrim psalmist reflected on the joy he felt when it was time to go to the holy city to observe the annual festivals. These times of celebration could extend for a week or more. Now the pilgrim found himself standing in the city, marveling at all its features.

122:4 The purpose of the people going to the festivals to worship was "to give thanks," expressing their loyalty to the Lord and reaffirming their gratitude for His covenant blessings (on the meaning of "giving thanks" in the OT, see note on 118:19).

122:5 The mention of "thrones of the house of David" indicates that there was probably a high court of appeals in the royal city. Local elders could handle routine cases, but the most difficult cases had to be brought to the leader of the nation or his representatives (72:2; cp. Ex 18:13-23; 1 Kg 3:16-28).

124:1-2 What appears to be a redundancy is actually a glimpse into the way the psalms may have been performed. First the leader, or choirmaster, announced the title of the psalm (in biblical times, Scripture passages were identified by their opening words). Then, at his invitation, the congregation joined in to recite the entire piece.

124:4-5 The image of water is used for the threat to life (Lm 3:54; Jnh 2:3-4). Such language always brings to remembrance Israel's escape from Egyptian slavery, the great "saving" event that lies at the heart of OT faith.

Ps 125 The security of the true believer is like the security of Mount Zion that is surrounded by mountains; but those who turn aside to sin have no security in the Lord (see Heb 6:4-8; 1 Jn 2:19).

125:3 The scepter is the symbol of rule; "the scepter of the wicked" would refer to a corrupt and unjust rule by either a Gentile or an unrighteous Israelite or Judean king. Either situation was a threat to the righteous.

126:1 Any occasion when Jerusalem was restored to a position of peace and prominence would be a time for great celebration and recognition of what the Lord had done for his people. This could have occurred after some foreign threat had diminished (e.g., 2 Kg 18:9–19:36) or at the restoration of the Judeans to their homeland after the Babylonian exile. An alternate reading of the clause "we were like those who dream" occurs in the Greek OT and the Dead Sea Scrolls: "we were greatly comforted."

126:4-6 The psalmist prayed for the restoration of the land to its fruitfulness; "watercourses in the Negev" could refer to irrigation that made agriculture possible in southern Judah. A foreign invasion would force all local residents into the fortified cities, and a siege might last for several years during which time the land could not be worked. This would also have been the case during the Babylonian exile when depopulation of Judah meant that much of its farmland lay fallow. Getting it back into productivity required great effort; the psalmist described the labor of sowing and reaping and the joy of a successful harvest. In the context of return from exile, by "sowing" the psalmist could mean the effort to convince people still in the East to return and join in God's program to restore the community centered in Zion. "Reaping" would then refer to their response to this appeal. This figure of sowing and reaping was well known when Jesus used it in His parable of the sower, a picture of spreading the message of the kingdom (Mt 13:1-23). In many ways, Jesus was calling Israel back to the Lord from an "exile" of false religious hopes that centered on throwing off Roman domination.

127:2 It is not necessarily pointless, or vain, to rise early or stay up late. The key to understanding this verse is the phrase "eating food earned by hard work." The expression "hard work" translates the same word that is rendered "painful labor" in Gn 3:17; it stresses anxieties as well as painful experiences. The Bible commends the diligent worker (Pr 24:33-34; 2 Th 3:10-13; cp. Col 3:17), but to lengthen the day with anxious toil and stress only leads to greater problems of body and spirit. By contrast, the Lord gives sleep to the person He loves—the one who trusts Him (Ps 4:8). The psalm's words may apply equally to literal sleep and to the rest and peace of mind that sleep symbolizes. Anxious toil burns the candle at both ends. One can work hard at worthwhile projects (e.g., building a house—cp. v. 1, where "house" could even referto the place of worship), but it is the Lord's involvement that makes the effort worthwhile and successful.

127:3-5 The verse reminds parents of their duties. Children are the Lord's gift, to be sure, but also a heritage that must be developed and improved. Having a strong family, with many sons, gives a man influence in the community—"at the city gate" (v. 5), the place of business and legal transactions. Before Israel had arrived at an understanding of the resurrection of the dead, a man's children were viewed as the instruments ("arrows," v. 4) of the continuing influence of his life.

129:3 The agricultural analogy of plowing is applied to the painful oppression of the psalmist's enemies: they plow his back. The image stresses their persecution and his suffering. Perhaps the speaker is referring to wrongful flogging because of the testimony of false accusers (Dt 25:1-3).

129:6 The roofs of houses in antiquity were often made of branches packed with mud, layer upon layer. In the spring, as people rolled the roof flat and packed more mud on new branches to repair it from winter damage, grass would immediately grow on the roof. But as soon as the summer heat bore down, with no rain forthcoming, the grass died as quickly as it sprang up. The psalmist uses this image to voice his hope that the wicked would be quickly removed.

130:3-4 This penitential psalm stresses God's forgiveness apart from our deserving (103:10-12). If God took our sins into account, no one could withstand His judgment. But the good news of the Bible, throughout, is that there is forgiveness with God. When He forgives sins, He no longer remembers them (Jr 31:34) and will never bring them up again—not in this life, nor the life to come.

130:6 The psalmist waited eagerly for the word from the Lord, most likely the word of forgiveness through the prophet or the priest (2 Sm 12:12-15). In the OT God often communicated forgiveness through an oracle; such a word may have been uttered in this case, but not recorded, between verses 6 and 7. In the NT believers do not have to wait for a specific word from the Lord, for the word stands once and for all that if we confess our sins He is both faithful and righteous to forgive (1 Jn 1:9).

Ps 131 This short psalm contains an implicit warning not to become too involved in trying to understand the mystery of God (see Dt 29:29; Ps 139:6). It is enough to rely on Him as His child—the psalmist dared to use the picture of a mother to convey his thought

(see Hs 11:1-4; Lk 12:34). The speaker saw himself as a member of his larger worshiping community (Ps 131:3).

132:1-5 This psalm is constructed around two vows: David's vow to find a resting-place for the ark (vv. 2-5; see 2 Sm 7:1-2; 1 Ch 28:2), and the Lord's vow that David's family line would rule forever (vv. 11-12; see2 Sm 7:11-13). The psalm's language is hyperbole, or exaggeration; it does not mean that David literally never slept until he had provided for the Lord's dwelling, but that the project constantly occupied his mind. This poetic passage is an inference from the historical record, or is based on annals now lost; David's specific vow, as quoted here, does not appear elsewhere.

132:6-8 Verse 8 quotes Nm 10:35, words used whenever the ark of the covenant set out during Israel's march through the wilderness. This passage may reflect a ceremony reenacting the ark's transfer from the fields to the tent David had set up for it in Jerusalem ("we found it in the fields . . . let us go," see 2 Sm 6:1-17). The ark is the footstool of the Lord's invisible throne; the people wanted to go to its "resting place," where they might worship in the Lord's presence.

132:17 The psalmist looked to the fulfillment of the Davidic covenant. Messiah is compared to a horn (power) and a lamp (guidance) and will flourish (grow) in Zion ("there," v. 13).

134:1-2 The psalmist invited worshipers to praise the Lord, using the word *barak*, which means "bless" or "enrich." If God is in possession of all, how can a worshiper further enrich Him? Yet the psalms are full of such expressions (e.g., 34:1; 63:4; 68:26; 96:2; 103:1-2,20-22; 104:1,35; 135:19-20). Praise is the worshiper's obligation under the covenant, his expression of homage to the great King. By praising Him, people extend His reputation in the world and open themselves to receiving His blessing in return. The worshipers in this psalm were priests, offering their praise in the sanctuary continuously ("at night"), as David instructed Asaph and his musicians to do (1 Ch 16:5-7).

Ps 135 This psalm has been called "an anthology of praise" because it is based entirely on material rearranged from other psalms or Scripture passages. Among the most obvious: verses 1-2 = Ps 134:1-2; verse 4 = Dt 7:6; verse 5 = Ex 18:11; verse 6 = Ps 115:3; verse 7 = Jr 10:13; verses 8-12 = Ps 136:10,18-22; verse 13 = Ex 3:15; verse 14 = Dt 32:36; verses 15-21 = Ps 115:4-6,8-11.

Ps 136 This psalm develops as a recitation of Israel's history of deliverance, with each statement answered by the refrain "His love is eternal." The Hebrew word is *hesed*, which refers to God's faithfulness to His covenant. His loyalty to His people is seen in what He has done for them in delivering them from their oppressors and sustaining His creation (v. 25). The response of the worshiping community is to pledge its faithfulness to the Lord in return, as seen in verses 1 and 26 (on the meaning of "giving thanks" in the OT, see note on 118:19).

Ps 137 The setting for this psalm is the exile in Babylon, the greatest judgment upon Israel in the OT. In 586 B.C. the Babylonians under Nebuchadnezzar destroyed Jerusalem and its temple and carried tens of thousands of people into captivity in Mesopotamia (modern Iraq). Those who remained alive could only lament the devastation.

137:2-3 The image of hanging their stringed instruments on the trees dramatically captures the feeling of the speakers. They saw no point of singing the "songs of Zion"—the music associated with worship in the sanctuary—on foreign soil. Their pagan audience in Babylon considered these songs mere entertainment (see Ezk 33:32), and to perform them would have been degrading and humiliating. While older English translations used "willow" trees, perhaps to capture the idea of weeping, the trees in the region were probably poplars.

137:5-6 The captives swore an oath never to forget Jerusalem. Such an oath bound them to plan for the restoration, because the covenant promises made by the prophets held out the hope of a re-gathering to the land (see Is 54; Jr 31; Ezk 36 among others). The terms of the oath, which mentions the skill of the "right hand" and the "tongue," would apply especially to the Levitical musicians of the sanctuary, with their instruments.

137:7-9 The language of these verses jars the sensitivities of the modern reader, especially one who has never seen war. The captives of Israel had suffered such grief at the cruelty of the Babylonians (see Hab 1:6-11) that they called on God to visit the wicked with divine judgment in the only way that they would understand—to inflict upon them the horrors that they had inflicted on the Israelites. This God had said He would do (Hab 2:6-20), so they were simply praying for His word to be fulfilled. The severity of the expression brings to mind the complete annihilation of the pagan enemies that was commanded for the Israelites' occupation of Canaan. There are people in today's world—not Christians—who hold this same view regarding "infidels," but the NT gives the Christian a different way of praying for enemies. But the NT also declares that God will avenge His people when He judges the world.

138:1 On the "heavenly beings," see note on 82:1,6.

Ps 139 This is a profound meditation on how the Lord knows everything about His human creation (vv. 1-6) and how He is present everywhere in His creation (vv. 7-12). It was the Lord who made us and planned for our lives (vv. 13-18). The meditation prompts the immediate response of loyalty to God (vv. 19-24).

139:2 God knows not only every move we make in our daily routines, but also the motives behind our actions. The expression "from far away" can be temporal or spatial; in this context it is probably temporal—beforehand, and not from a distance (see v. 4).

139:5-6 David felt trapped by this knowledge: God placed His hand (*kaph*, the palm) on him, so to speak, and so besieged him with "extraordinary knowledge" beyond his reach.

139:7-12 The speaker's first impulse was to flee—but where? God is present everywhere. There was no place he could go to get away from this penetrating knowledge—not even to the abode of the dead (v. 8). But he began to see that God's "hand," which formerly seemed to entrap him, was really leading him (v. 10) into His presence. Wherever he went—even to remote places of the earth or to Sheol, where it seemed God would not follow him—he did not want to be there without the light of His presence.

139:15 The psalmist used "the depths of the earth" poetically to describe the womb because it is similarly hidden from the eye. The reference to being hidden ties this stanza back to the previous one (vv. 8-9).

139:16 The verse declares that, even in the womb, the child was being formed under the supervision and by the active involvement of God who already had planned the course of his life. This statement has much to say about how people must give human life in the womb the same loving care that God—whose Spirit gives life (2 Co 3:3)—bestows upon it. The passage is poetry, but is still revealed truth. The passage also stresses the sovereignty of God more than any other psalm; people are not the masters of their own destiny, but are in the hand of the Lord.

139:21-22 David affirmed his complete loyalty to the Lord and His cause. The psalmist's "hate" was not a violent, self-centered attitude; it referred to the complete rejection and detestation of the ways of those who disregard God. The psalmist could not be loyal to God and still associate with His enemies.

Ps 142 The historical superscription says that David wrote this psalm when he was in the cave. David was in a cave on two occasions when he fled Saul (1 Sm 24; 26).

143:12 The translation sounds contradictory: "in Your faithful love destroy my enemies." This is the word *hesed,* meaning God's faithfulness or loyalty to His covenant with Israel. Under the covenant, which is like a treaty, the Lord has "contracted" to defend His people and destroy the wicked. His *hesed* is the basis on which the worshiper, faithful in turn to the Lord, can appeal for His help.

Ps 146 This psalm praises the Lord for His wonderful deeds, offering a catalog of the kinds of things God does. But the history of the faith revealed in the Bible shows that these are not absolutes—He has not vindicated all who are oppressed, or fed all who are hungry, or given sight to all who are blind. But it is His intent to do all these things, and He will; the Bible affirms that all the promises of God will be fulfilled, if not in this life, surely in the life to come. Everything will be put right. But the fact is that God has done these things again and again, and His greatest fulfillment has been in the work of Christ (2 Co 1:20). The mighty works of Jesus show that He is able, and willing, to do the things listed here (see Lk 7:22; Ac 10:38). Moreover, a psalm like this summons the people of God to be active in doing the work of God on earth—what He wants done. Too often believers fail to understand what God can do, and how He does many of His works through them.

147:14 The psalmist extolled the Lord, who brought peace and prosperity to His people. The passage is saying that whatever peace and prosperity the people of God enjoyed came from God. These blessings may not be fully realized in this life, but the fact that God is their source leads the faithful to pray for them and to expect them. When they do not occur, wisdom literature will probe the possible reasons (e.g., Ps 44, and the book of Jb).

148:4-5 How do the sun, moon, and waters praise the Lord? Their very existence attests to the glory and majesty and power of God (19:1-5; Rm 1:20). To call on natural phenomena using the device of personification (Ps 114:5-6) is a way of drawing attention to their witness to God's greater power.

149:3 For the Israelite it was natural to celebrate before the Lord with dancing (150:4), as well as singing and praising. In a culture where dance has become associated with immorality, it requires discretion for this art to be brought into the praise of God. The dance of Israelite worship was of the type called "folk dance" today, involving groups of worshipers in procession (68:25). Such dancing was never meant to call attention to the individual dancer, but was part of the colorful pageantry of a community festival.

149:6-9 The psalmist called for the Lord's people to employ dual weapons of spiritual warfare: the praise ("exaltation," often translated "high praises") of God and the "two-edged sword." The passage brings to mind the events that occurred when the Judean King Jehoshaphat was attacked by several foreign armies; he sent singers out ahead of his forces lifting a hymn of praise to the Lord, and the enemy armies fell into confusion and destroyed themselves (2 Ch 20:18-26). In the hands of OT warriors, the sword was a literal weapon; in the hands of Christians, it is the Word of God (Eph 6:17; Heb 4:12; Rv 1:16). The praise of God, combined with the proclamation of the Word, make up the believers' dual weapon in carrying out the Lord's decree of judgment against evil authorities (Ps 149:7-9).

Ps 150 This hymn, which invokes all the instruments of the sanctuary in the praise of the Lord, is the doxology that brings Book V, and the entire collection of psalms, to its conclusion.

Proverbs Articles

What is a Worldview?

by Ronald H. Nash

Worldview thinking has become an important tool to help Christians understand, explain, and defend the Christian faith. Every human being has a worldview, even though many are uninformed about what a worldview is and the power that worldviews have over the way we think and behave. A worldview is the total of answers people give to the most important questions in life. According to some, the five most important elements in any worldview are what people believe about God, ultimate reality, knowledge, ethics, and human nature.

Worldview thinking has important links to religious belief. Instead of viewing Christianity as a collection of theological bits and pieces to be believed or debated, people should approach it as a conceptual system, as a total world-and-life view. Once people understand that Christianity and its competitors are worldviews, they will be in a better position to judge the relative merits of the competing systems.

The case for or against Christian theism, then, should be made and evaluated in terms of total systems. Some people reject Christianity not because of their problems with one or two isolated issues, such as the virgin birth, but because their worldview encompasses beliefs that are the opposite of Christian thinking. Opponents of the Christian worldview disagree with Christianity because they hold to competing worldviews.

People can and do change their worldviews. Saul of Tarsus was one of early Christianity's greatest enemies. He was fanatically committed to a system that seemed to rule out any possibility of his change or conversion to the Christian faith. Saul's conversion encourages us with the confidence that even those with the most opposing worldviews to Christianity may be capable of total change. People who used to be humanists, naturalists, atheists, or followers of competing religious faiths have found reasons to turn away from their former worldviews and embrace Christianity. Conversely, people who used to profess allegiance to Christianity sometimes reach a point where they feel they can no longer believe.

It seems unlikely that a single set of conditions will always be present when people change a worldview. After all, many people remain unaware that they have a worldview, even though the sudden change in their lives and thoughts resulted from their exchanging one worldview for another. In many cases the actual change is triggered by a significant event, often a crisis of some kind. But in other instances an event or piece of new information led them to think in ways that were totally different for them. Quite unexpectedly, these people saw things they had overlooked before, or they suddenly saw matters fit together in a pattern that brought meaning where none had been discernible before.

People change their minds on important subjects for a bewildering variety of reasons (or for no reason at all). When faced with a choice among competing worldviews, we should choose the one that, when applied to the whole of reality, gives us the most coherent picture of the world. And that most coherent worldview is the Christian worldview. Helping people see the importance of their worldview and leading them to realize the coherence in the Christian worldview is one of the most important tasks of apologetics.

Is Logic Arbitrary?

by David K. Clark

Logic involves principles that govern how humans should think and speak. Studying logic means investigating correct reasoning. Traditionally, logic is said to begin with three basic laws: identity, noncontradiction, and the excluded middle. According to the law of identity, if a statement is true, then it's true. Noncontradiction says that if a statement is true, then it can't be false. The excluded middle asserts that a statement is either true or false. Logic includes such laws, but there is more to it as well.

People observe various kinds of laws—moral, natural, mathematical, legal, and logical laws. Some laws declare *what ought to be*. Moral and legal laws say what a person should do, although it is possible to violate them. (For instance, people should tell the truth but often don't.) Other laws describe *what actually is*. Natural laws assert what does happen under certain natural conditions. Theoretically, natural laws are consistent and reliable (although it's possible for a stronger opposite force to overcome a weaker force as in a tug-of-war.)

Logic has an *ought* component. This makes logic somewhat like math. If a shopkeeper wants to make a profit and regularly gives $50 in change to customers who pay with $20 bills, she violates logic. But this isn't a moral transgression; it's a logical blunder. She's not acting immorally but irrationally. It's wise to think logically.

What is the ground or foundation of logic? Human logic is patterned after reality. The Creator built logic into the structures of the physical and spiritual worlds. The principles of logic reflect a deep reasonableness that characterizes both God and God's creation. Because the logic of human thought and speech is grounded in God and God's work, logic is not arbitrary.

People suggest in several ways that logic is arbitrary. Some say logic isn't a discovery of the human mind detected in reality but an invention of the human mind imposed on reality. They claim that logic is arbitrary because it's grounded in how humans choose to think.

This position yields a problematic consequence: it disconnects human thought from reality. It implies that human interaction with the real world fundamentally distorts that world. The human mind recalibrates the input of the real world to fit its own inward configuration. So there's no telling whether human thinking has any connection with reality. That is troubling, for life and action require knowledge of the real world. (In addition, someone stating this position is likely refuting himself. He is probably saying that the truth about the real world is that human thinking is imposed on reality.)

Others say that logic is grounded in culture, not in objective reality. Different cultures have different logics. For example, people commonly say logic is a Western invention that Asians successfully ignore. Logic is arbitrary because it's rooted in random cultural habits.

This is a misunderstanding. While people of various cultures may think about different content and begin at varied starting points, the deep reasonableness that governs human thinking is the same. Consider an analogy. An African tribesman counts lions. An Eskimo with no knowledge of lions counts seals. Both count according to mathematical principles. Similarly, the content of thought obviously differs from place to place, but the underlying reasonableness built into the creation will govern human thought regardless of culture.

How Should a Christian Relate to a Scientific Naturalist?

by J. P. Moreland

I"'m too scientific for religious superstition. Science is the only way of gaining knowledge of reality, and it tells us the physical world is all there is." This claim, espoused by scientific naturalists, is called *scientism*, the view that science is the paradigm of truth and rationality.

There are two forms of scientism: strong and weak. *Strong scientism* implies that something is true if and only if it is a scientific claim that has been successfully tested and used according to appropriate scientific methodology. Within this view there are no truths apart from scientific truths, and even if there were, there would be no reason to believe them.

Weak scientism allows for truths to exist apart from science and grants them some minimal rational status without scientific support. Still, weak scientism implies that science is the most authoritative sector of human learning.

If either form is true, drastic implications result for theology. If strong scientism is true, then theology is not a cognitive enterprise at all and there is no such thing as theological knowledge. If weak scientism is true, then the conversation between theology and science will be a monologue, with theology listening to science and waiting for its support.

What, then, should we say about scientism, and what should Christians say to those who hold this belief?

Note first that strong scientism is self-refuting. Strong scientism is not itself a proposition *of* science but a proposition of philosophy *about* science to the effect that only scientific propositions are true and/or rational. And strong scientism is itself offered as a true, rationally justified position. Propositions that are self-refuting do not just happen to be false; they are necessarily false—it is not possible for them to be true. No future progress will have the slightest effect on making strong scientism more acceptable.

Two more problems count equally against strong and weak scientism. First, scientism does not adequately allow for the task of stating and defending the necessary presuppositions for science itself to be practiced. Thus scientism shows itself to be a foe and not a friend of science. Science cannot be practiced in thin air. Scientism has many assumptions, each has been challenged, and the task of stating and defending these assumptions is a philosophical one. The conclusions of science cannot be more certain than the presuppositions it rests upon and uses to reach those conclusions.

Strong scientism rules out these presuppositions altogether because neither the presuppositions themselves nor their defense are scientific matters. Weak scientism misconstrues its strength because it believes that scientific propositions have greater intellectual authority than those of other fields, such as philosophy. This would mean that the conclusions of science are more certain than the philosophical presuppositions used to justify and reach those conclusions, and that is absurd.

Here are some of the philosophical presuppositions of science:

- the existence of a theory of an independent, external world
- the orderly nature of the external world
- the knowability of the external world
- the existence of truth
- the existence of the laws of logic
- the reliability of our cognitive and sensory faculties to serve as truth gatherers and as a source of justified beliefs in our intellectual environment
- the adequacy of language to describe the world
- the existence of values used in science (e.g., "Test theories fairly and report test results honestly")

Second, there are true, rational beliefs in fields outside science. Strong scientism does not allow for this fact, and it is therefore to be rejected as an account of our intellectual enterprise.

Moreover, some claims outside science (for instance, "Torturing babies is wrong" or "I am now thinking about science") are better justified than some believed within science (for example, "Evolution takes place through a series of very small steps"). It is not hard to believe that many of our currently held scientific beliefs will and should be revised or abandoned in a hundred years, but it would be hard to see how the same could be said of the nonscientific propositions just cited. Weak scientism does not account for this fact.

In sum, scientism in both forms is inadequate, and it is important for Christians to integrate science and theology with genuine respect for both.

Notable Christian Apologist: Thomas Aquinas

by David A. Horner

Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274), one of the most influential thinkers of all time, was a medieval theologian, philosopher, professor, priest, poet, adviser to popes and kings—and apologist. Because he is considered a doctor of the Roman Catholic Church, his influence has at times been largely limited to Catholic circles. In recent decades, however, there has been a revival of interest in Aquinas's thoughts, among Protestant philosophers and apologists as well as among secular thinkers.

Some theologians have criticized Aquinas for dividing faith and reason and thus unwittingly planting the seeds of modern religious irrationalism. Yet most Aquinas scholars see this as a misunderstanding of his thought, which actually emphasizes the opposite—the unity of truth, knowledge, faith, and reason. Apologists can learn much from Aquinas in both attitude and approach.

Aquinas wrote over 100 titles on a wide variety of subjects. Only a few were specifically apologetic works, the best known being *Summa Contra Gentiles*, which was written to equip Christian missionaries evangelizing Muslims. However, all that Aquinas wrote was broadly apologetic. His vision was to think out a fully Christian worldview, in all of its aspects, and to articulate and defend it rationally against alternative views.

In his writing Aquinas considered some 10,000 objections against his own positions. He knew what others believed and why they believed it, especially the most influential views of his day. He treated these other positions accurately and fairly, and he responded with gracious but rigorous reasoning and argument. Above all he was interested in truth. (In this regard he appealed to Pr 27:17, saying that "iron sharpens iron.") He had no room for apologetic arguments that used cheap shots, caricatures, or shoddy reasoning, which are unfair and unloving to people and do not serve the truth.

Some of Aquinas's opponents appeared to hold to a two-truth view, believing in truth arrived at by philosophical reasoning and religious truth arrived at by faith. To them, these truths were independent and could be incompatible with each other. Aquinas passionately opposed this wedge between faith and reason as being incoherent, destructive, and unbiblical. Since God is the Creator of all that exists apart from Himself, all truth—however and wherever it is discovered—is from God. It is unified and consistent and ultimately points back to God Himself. Aquinas was ready to accept genuine truths discovered by non-Christian (Jewish, Muslim, pagan Greek) thinkers, and he sought to show them to be ultimately rooted in and best explained within a Christian worldview.

According to Aquinas, some truths about God (e.g., that God exists) can be known by anyone who carefully reflects on the natural order, while other truths about God (e.g., that He is triune) are known only because God has disclosed them to humanity by special revelation. But all of these are truths—they correspond to reality (who God really is and what He really is like). Although the latter truths cannot be philosophically demonstrated from nature, for Aquinas they can and should be rationally defended against objections to their truth. Truth is unified, knowable, and defensible, which makes apologetics both possible and crucial.

Aquinas did not deny the distorting effects of the fall on human thinking, but he emphasized that the fallen creation is a fallen *creation*. That is, fallen creation still bears the rational and moral marks of its Creator, and it still reflects, though in marred form, His creative intentions. Because all people are created in the image of God and live in a God-created world, believers and unbelievers share considerable common ground. And on that basis we can articulate reasons to believe in God that non-Christians are able to grasp, thus building bridges for the gospel.

Introduction to Proverbs

AUTHOR

Proverbs consists of different collections of wisdom sayings. While several of these collections are associated with King Solomon, his exact role in their preparation is uncertain. Solomon's interest in wisdom is clear from 1 Kings 4:29-34, which indicates that he authored 3,000 proverbs. It is likely that many of the proverbs in the book originated with Solomon, but given his interest in wisdom and the similarities between Proverbs 22:17–23:14 and a collection of proverbs from Egypt, it is also likely that some of the material in the book was collected by Solomon rather than authored by him. According to the statement in Proverbs 25:1, one of these collections was copied by the scribes of Hezekiah, and so our present book could not have been put into its present form until after 700 B.C. Certain literary features make it likely that the book was compiled prior to the Babylonian exile.

A BOOK OF WISDOM

The literary forms designated by the Hebrew word translated "proverb" are considerably broader than what is conveyed by the English word *proverb.* They include concise sayings and riddles as well as longer poems such as the alphabet acrostic describing the excellent woman in Proverbs 31:10-31. Similar literary forms are found throughout the history of civilization and in virtually every culture. Apart from some explicitly theological material (for example, Pr 1:7; 2:5-8; 3:5-12; chap. 8; and 16:1-11,20), the material in Proverbs seems to reflect the conclusions of people as they carefully observed the world in an attempt to identify the basic patterns that operate in life.

According to Israelite thinking, the basis for such observations is the fact that God created the world and designed order into it, as Proverbs 3:19-20 and 8:22-31 make clear. Thus the Israelites were able to recognize the legitimacy of wisdom that came from sources outside Israel, as is clear from passages such as 1 Kings 4:30-31 and from references to non-Israelites noted for their wisdom. The Israelites would have had no innate objection to accepting the observations of non-Israelites into their wisdom tradition.

At the same time there are two qualifications Israel would have affirmed as essential. First, some "wisdom" that came from other cultures was derived from their religion and from practices we would describe as occult. Such activity was prohibited by the law, and Israel rejected the "wisdom" that resulted from such methods. Second, the fundamental context for the pursuit of wisdom is established by verses such as Proverbs 9:10: "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding." The fear of the Lord involves recognizing who God is (the sovereign Creator of all things) and who we are (creatures made by God and accountable to Him) and then living all of life with that awareness.

Israel also believed that the order designed into the world by Yahweh (God) extended to the theological, moral, and ethical realms, and a failure to acknowledge God and His revelation in such matters had the potential for leading to significant error. Yahweh had revealed Himself to Israel through the Law and the Prophets, and Israel's search for wisdom was set in the context of that special revelation and faith. Thus the seeker of wisdom must at the beginning recognize God as the Creator and Designer of the order in the world and acknowledge God's authority over him. It is knowledge about God known through God's self-revelation to Israel that puts a person into a right relationship with the reality he is trying to understand. It is also the wisdom, knowledge, and understanding that come through God's revelation in the Law and the Prophets that allow people to

know important aspects of God's order, especially as it pertains to truth about God, morals, and the like. Thus wisdom, whatever its origin, had to be consistent with God's special revelation to Israel.

INTERPRETING PROVERBS

Some have raised objections to material in Proverbs because it seems to command a certain behavior but then commands a different, incompatible behavior elsewhere or because it makes a general promise that the Bible appears to contradict or qualify elsewhere. Proverbs also makes what appear to be comprehensive statements that seem to be contradicted by the realities of life (for example, proverbs that promise long life to the wise and righteous but a premature death for the wicked). An interpreter must be careful to interpret this material in a way that appropriately considers the nature of a proverb and the way its original audience would have understood it. Many objections reflect a failure to understand what a proverb is and how proverbs function in cultures that use them regularly.

The types of sayings found in Proverbs reflect a way of thinking and teaching that has been largely abandoned in modern Western culture. Proverbs are general statements of truth rather than invariable promises or laws, and an individual proverb normally captures a tiny cross-section of truth rather than making a comprehensive statement about a topic. For example, "A gentle answer turns away anger" (15:1) constitutes one component of the broader topics of using words wisely and dealing with angry people. This single principle is one small piece of a much larger mosaic, and the task of the student is not only to put together the broader mosaic piece by piece but also to learn to apply these principles skillfully to the complexities that one encounters in life. The goal of the wisdom in Proverbs is to develop skill in living according to the order that is embedded in God's creation.

Most proverbs state a single general truth with little attempt to note exceptions and qualifications. Such an approach effectively emphasizes the principle taught by avoiding the distraction of qualifications. The authors of proverbs also emphasized the points they wanted to make through the use of idealized examples and hyperbole. While the sluggard, for example, is a real character, he is described in exaggerated terms that set his basic characteristics in clear relief. One would probably never find someone who perfectly fits the descriptions of a sluggard, because the person whose picture emerges from putting together the various pieces of the sluggard mosaic in the book is a stereotypical character. The same is also true for the excellent woman in Proverbs 31 and for the wise man and for the fool described throughout the book.

When a pair of proverbs seems conflicting or even contradictory, the first proverb moves the reader in a certain direction, then the contrasting proverb provides a balancing principle to point the reader toward another dimension of the skill of living in a complex world. For example, Proverbs 26:4 says, "Don't answer a fool according to his foolishness or you'll be like him yourself," while the next verse says, "Answer a fool according to his foolishness, or he'll become wise in his own eyes." The student of wisdom recognizes that encounters with a fool require responses appropriate to that particular situation. The student also recognizes that a variety of other approaches between those extremes may be the wise response, and the student's goal is to become the kind of wisdom craftsman who can frame the appropriate response no matter the situation he faces.

Likewise, the ambiguity that often characterizes proverbs reflects the same pedagogy and goals. The student of wisdom is challenged by the ambiguity to explore the possibilities for understanding the proverb along with the variety of situations in which the principle appropriately applies. The ambiguity also promotes ongoing reflection as to the legitimate limits for applying the principle.

While the book addresses a wide variety of issues, it gives considerable attention to matters such as the contrast between the wise person and the fool, the importance of virtues such as diligence and self-control, the importance of using words wisely, warnings about sexual immorality, the responsible use of money, priorities, and advice about proper behavior in a variety of social settings. Most

proverbs deal with the general and the typical, but their goal is to equip people with the skills to apply wisdom to the particular experiences of life.

Proverbs Study Notes

1:1-6 Proverbs promises practical benefits that include skill in living, insight, the ability to plan wisely, common sense, and guidance. Verse 3 makes it clear that the wisdom in view is not just pragmatic but includes ethical and moral dimensions.

1:7 This is the central theme of Pr. The "fear of the LORD" involves worship of the Lord and respectful submission to His authority in every area of life. It is this reverence of the Lord, according to Pr, that constitutes the only sure foundation for the pursuit of knowledge.

1:8 The teaching in chapters 1–9 is regularly presented as instruction from a parent to a child, and this shows that obedience is one important aspect of honoring one's father and mother (Ex 20:12; Lv 19:3; Dt 5:16). Proverbs sees parents as agents through which God's wisdom comes to a child. These exhortations presuppose that the parents' instruction reflects God's truth.

1:10-19 Young people will sometimes receive input that conflicts with the instruction of parents, and they must choose which advice to follow. Frequently "sinners" (v. 10) may claim that benefits can be achieved more easily and quickly by following their way. But Pr tells us that the way of "sinners" is not all it promises to be. That way actually leads to destruction and death.

1:19 Critics claim that statements such as v. 19 are not actually true. But these critiques reflect a failure to understand ancient proverbs and the world in which they functioned. Proverbial material deals with the general and usual principles of life, rather than presenting invariable laws. Careful observation of life, both ancient and modern, supports the general truth of statements such as verse 19. Though it is not the focus of OT wisdom literature, it should also be noted that God's justice will ultimately prevail, and the inequities that are a part of life in a fallen world will be finally rectified.

1:20-33 Wisdom is available to anyone who seeks it, as 2:1-5 and 8:17 make clear. To get wisdom the disciple must choose wisdom and the fear of the Lord (vv. 23,33). Those who reject wisdom and refuse her invitation (vv. 24-25,29-30) will reach a point of no return where the consequences of their folly are inevitable and inescapable. Wisdom's response in vv. 26 and 28 does not conflict with the idea that those who seek wisdom will find it. The context makes it clear that the difficulties described here result from peoples' failure to seek wisdom and their rejection of it.

These verses reflect the wisdom doctrine of retribution: people reap what they sow, and often in proportion to what they sow. In v. 26 wisdom responds in kind to those who mocked her when she spoke from the entrance of the city gates. Her response in verse 28 reflects the reality that there are consequences to behaviors that are not turned aside, even by repentance. While clearly recognizing the sovereign providence of God (16:9), Pr also describes people as able to make genuine choices and as being responsible for the outcomes of those choices.

2:1-4 While wisdom is readily available to all, the active words such as "accept," "store up," "call out," "search for" make it clear that the disciple must be focused and diligent in the quest for it.

2:5-6 The search for wisdom begins with an attitude of reverent submission to God ("the fear of the LORD"). It continues with the disciple's persistence and diligence, and it actually leads to the knowledge of God. This outcome is assured because God reveals Himself to those who diligently seek Him. The rest of chapter 2 describes the benefits and outcomes that result from this serious pursuit of wisdom.

2:12-19 Wisdom delivers the disciple from both men and women whose ways are evil.

3:3 The goal of wisdom is not external adherence to a body of rules; rather, it is to internalize the principles in a way that produces character. In the OT the "heart" is the central core of a person, and it controls the thoughts, words, and actions of an individual much as a computer controls a system. A heart programmed with wisdom's values produces thoughts and behaviors consistent with God's order.

3:5-7 This statement of trust is set in the context of a book that both implicitly and explicitly affirms the importance of carefully studying the world and society to discover elements of God's order. The book also presupposes that people have the insight and rational abilities to succeed in those endeavors. These verses do not stand in tension with those endeavors; rather, the statement is a call to live life in the fear of the Lord. We are to do our work of discovery always mindful of who God is and bowing to His legitimate authority over us. When God has clearly spoken in His special revelation to us (the Bible) and our conclusions (or the results of the most respected scholarship) seem to stand at variance to that revelation, we are to defer to God's special revelation and submit to God's authority in our thinking and behavior.

3:9 Proverbs suggests that one practical test of whether one is trusting the Lord or one's own judgment can be found in how we view our possessions and finances. In the ancient agrarian society, the "first produce" would have meant the choicest and best portions of the harvest. Today, this might mean giving to God the "first produce" of your paycheck, rather than waiting to give after all the bills have been paid.

3:10-12 By including v. 12 in this context, Solomon makes it clear that honoring the Lord with the first of the produce is not simply a way to become rich. Outcomes in life are complex and unpredictable and may cover a broad continuum from great prosperity to discipline. God's purpose for us is not to make us rich, but rather to develop in us godly character, and His responses are designed with that goal in mind.

3:13-18 This section begins and ends with the happiness that wisdom brings. The Hebrew word translated "happy" normally reflects a quality in a person that observers of his life find commendable and even desirable. This term has a similar range of meaning as *makarios,* the Greek word translated "blessed" or "happy" and found in the Beatitudes of Jesus (Mt 5:3-10). The idea is that the person who embraces wisdom and lives by it will, in both good and bad times, experience the kind of obvious benefits and blessings that will cause others to consider him happy, blessed, or fortunate.

3:17 Many people view God's instruction as restrictive and burdensome, but this verse claims that wisdom's ways are pleasant and freeing. The paths of wisdom are peaceful, and the Hebrew word *shalom* suggests not just the absence of hostility, but rather whole-ness and well-being. The claim is that life lived according to Yahweh's order brings delight.

3:21-26 Critics claim that wise people do not always experience the benefits that this section promises, but the intention of the author is to emphasize the fact that wisdom enables a person to avoid many difficulties that foolish people frequently encounter in life. Diligence, careful planning, self-control, and the like allow people to avoid many obstacles that they otherwise might experience. The book of Ec, as well as our personal experience, make it clear that the picture presented here is only one tiny cross section of truth about the reality of living in a fallen world, and that difficulties arise for many reasons other than personal folly. Even so, responding to circumstances based on wisdom will provide safety and protection and minimize the difficulties we experience in life.

4:1-19 The key to gaining understanding is a focused determination to get wisdom. The disciple must be open to the teaching and respond to it obediently, as is suggested by the phrases used here, "get wisdom," "don't turn away," "don't abandon," "love her," "hold on to instruction," "guard it," and so on.

4:23-27 The values that are programmed into the heart determine how it will control the individual, and thus, it is essential to guard the heart to ensure that God's truth is inscribed there. In addition, every faculty (eyes, feet, mouth) must be focused on the goal of wisdom and God's truth. There is no place for compromise; all one's energy must be focused on attaining the goal.

5:1-14 This is the first of three major sections in Pr that warn young men about the dangers of sexual immorality. Critics sometimes claim that these passages are demeaning to women and depict them negatively. However, the specific woman described in these passages is a prostitute or an immoral woman. While the passages are gender specific, the principles taught here are not. Sexual immorality and marital infidelity often lead to disaster and are to be judiciously avoided by both men and women. There are also men who tempt young women and try to lead them into sexual immorality, and the principles presented in these chapters must be equally applied by women. In this first section the young man is warned of the power and subtlety of the temptation ("lips . . . drip honey"; "words are smoother than oil," v. 3) and the disaster that can result from this kind of involvement. He is instructed to stay far away from her house. Openness to instruction is a basic characteristic of the wise person, and failure to listen to instruction about proper behavior in this realm can lead to disgrace and disaster.

5:15-19 Critics sometimes argue that passages extolling the pleasures of sex are inappropriate and should not be in the Bible. The book of Pr, though, sees sex as a gift from God that is to be enjoyed in the context of the commitment of marriage. An intimate relationship with one's spouse and the physical delight such a relationship can bring is commended by Pr and is seen as a powerful antidote to the temptations that can lead to unfaithfulness and immorality.

6:1-5 Becoming responsible for someone else's debt is the epitome of folly because the person does not know how much such a commitment may cost him. Given the serious risk that this involves, Pr exhorts the person who has made this mistake to do whatever he can to extricate himself from the unwise commitment. It is unlikely that Pr means this as an absolute prohibition against ever cosigning for another person's loan, but given the risks, it should always be entered into with extreme care.

6:15 One of the themes of OT, beginning with Noah, is that sudden and quick judgment will come on the wicked. Sometimes the evil person, characterized by the qualities listed in vv. 12-14, is so consumed by his own arrogance that he does not see the danger clearly evident to those wiser than he. There are exceptions to this quick retribution. This caused great distress for the righteous (for example, Jr 12:1-4; Pss 37; 73; and the book of Hab).

6:20-22 Some claim that the statement of protection in verse 22 is not true, but that claim is absurd. Verse 23 makes it clear that the parents' teaching involves God's commandments. The point here is that the person who receives God's truth and is immersed in it, will find that it provides guidance and protection in all of life's activities.

6:28 The fact that there are people who can walk on coals without burning their feet does not negate the truth of the proverb but rather reflects a lack of understanding of what a proverb is. The point of the statement is that certain behaviors, such as holding fire against one's body (v. 27) or walking on hot coals, involve innate and significant risks, and wisdom dictates that such behaviors should be avoided. Clearly adultery and sexual immorality belong in that category, and as verse 32 points out, they are self-destructive.

7:1-5 Again the point is made that treasuring God's truth, reflecting on it, and regularly putting it into practice helps a person internalize wisdom and build godly character. What we think about regularly affects what we do, and what we do regularly produces habits, and ultimately determines our character. A regular focus on God's truth provides protection against adultery and sexual immorality, while a regular focus on sexual images leads a person closer to the behaviors that Pr condemns.

8:17 Wisdom is available to all. See note on 1:20-33.

8:22 Throughout history critics have denied the deity of Christ, arguing from this verse that Jesus (identified as "God's wisdom" in 1 Co 1:24, and as the Creator of all things in Jn 1:3 and Col 1:15-17) is a created being Himself. This is based on a possible translation of the verse, "The Lord created me at the beginning of His creation," found in some ancient and modern translations. However, the basic meaning of the Hebrew word for "made," *qanah,* means "to possess" or "acquire" rather than "to create." Of even greater significance is the fact that the context suggests that the passage about wisdom is not a description of Jesus, but rather a personification of the wisdom by which the Lord created the universe. (This is common in the early chaps. of Pr and is something that will again occur in chap. 9, where both Wisdom and Folly are personified.)

Wisdom is the application of knowledge in order to accomplish one's goals or purposes, and God brings forth His wisdom as He applies His omnipotence to the task of creating the world. The point of the passage is that if God used wisdom to create the world, then success in all our endeavors is greatly enhanced if we also choose wisdom and live according to God's order. The NT authors see Jesus as the embodiment of God's wisdom both in terms of who He is, and in terms of His ministry in successfully accomplishing God's redemptive purpose.

8:32-34 Again the author, King Solomon, affirms that the person who keeps God's ways and lives according to God's order will be blessed in ways that will cause others to declare, "How fortunate (or happy) is that person." See note on 3:13-18.

9:7-9 According to Pr, the basic difference between the fool and the wise person has far more to do with attitude than with intelligence. The wise person is open to advice and correction and welcomes it, while the foolish person rejects counsel, even to the point of directing anger and hostility toward anyone who offers advice.

9:11 Proverbs makes the point that, in general, wise people will live longer than foolish ones. This is in part because they are careful and refuse to take inappropriate risks, while the foolish person rushes into danger with little thought about consequences. Books such as Jb and Ec, along with careful observation of how things work in the world, make it clear, however, that the length of a person's life involves more variables than just wisdom or fear of the Lord (see 11:27).

9:13-18 These verses are not demeaning to women in general, but apply to a certain type of woman, the foolish and immoral woman.

10:3 This is a typical proverbial statement affirming the doctrine of retribution. The point of the proverb seems to go beyond food and provision for one's physical needs, to also include satisfaction and fulfillment in life. The books of Jb and Ec present the other side of this proverb (that sometimes the wicked flourish and the righteous suffer), revealing that life is more complex than this single proverb might suggest. God's purposes are sometimes best fulfilled through means other than physical abundance. Even in the presence of such difficulties God's people regularly testify to peace, fulfillment, and satisfaction that God gives them even in trying experiences.

10:6,11 Because of the concise and cryptic nature of proverbs, it is not unusual to have difficulties in understanding and translating a proverb. That is the case here and accounts for differences among English translations of these verses. Verses 6 and 11 are similar, and both proverbs contrast the "mouth" (words) of both righteous and wicked people. The righteous and their words bring blessing and refreshment to themselves and others; they can be trusted. They are a fountain of life. The wicked and their words cover or conceal violence; they cannot be trusted. The violence intended by the wicked is often concealed by deceptive words and is not always apparent on the surface.

10:18 Proverbs often refers to people as "fools." The basis for this has to do with how these people think and live. They behave foolishly rather than wisely, and their behavior shows disregard for Yahweh's order. Proverbs identifies a person as a fool without reflecting contempt for that individual. The context of Jesus' warning in Mt 5:22 about calling another person a fool makes it clear that He is warning us about viewing others with contempt. All people, even those who behave foolishly and badly, are people made in the image of God, and they have value and worth. The way we view others and treat them should reflect their innate worth.

10:27 See note on 9:11.

10:30 This proverb probably reflects the teaching of Lv and Dt that says the righteous will flourish in the promised land while the wicked will be taken away into exile.

11:19 This proverb is somewhat ambiguous in that the meaning of "life" and "death" are not spelled out. On one level, these terms have to do with quality of life here and now. On another level they have to do with length of life (see note on 9:11). While the afterlife as seen more clearly in the teachings of the NT is normally not in view in Pr, the NT (Lk 16:19-31) makes it clear that the principle expressed in this proverb is also true in terms of what happens beyond the grave.

11:22 This proverb is not an insult to women, but is rather a statement about priorities and what is to be valued in a woman. Proverbs values "good sense" (literally, "taste" or "discretion") above beauty, and according to this proverb a beautiful woman who lacks good sense is as bizarre and ludicrous as a pig wearing a piece of valuable jewelry in its nose.

12:21 This typical proverbial statement emphatically affirms that, in general, things go better for the righteous than for the wicked. The balance to this truth is found in Ec, where the author (perhaps also Solomon) observed that in a fallen world righteous people sometimes suffer difficulty because of injustice. Job also suffered because of his righteousness. Job's friends failed to understand the intention and limits of proverbial statements like this and inflicted great pain on their friend.

13:24 Critics often point to verses like this as examples of cruelty and abuse of children. Such verses must be understood in the broader context of wisdom's teaching about discipline. The Hebrew word for "discipline" (*musar*) is also used for "instruction," "rebuke," and "physical punishment." The goal of *musar* is always to change attitudes or behavior, and the methods for accomplishing this goal range from giving gifts and providing for needs to offering instruction, rebuke, and even corporal punishment. When God's discipline of His people is taken as the model, it becomes clear that discipline should begin with the least painful and severe methods and escalate to harsher ones, only when the more gentle methods fail to bring about the desired changes. Wisdom also recognizes that children do not, by nature, gravitate toward wisdom and God's order, and that left to themselves children will move toward folly and self-destruction. Discipline is seen as a good and necessary thing in order to move children toward God's truth. Thus appropriate, not abusive, discipline is seen as an act of kindness and love. Only a parent who does not love his child will allow him to destroy himself through folly.

13:25 In a way typical of proverbial literature, this verse states in an unequivocal way the general truth that the righteous prosper while the wicked do not. That the wisdom tradition recognized that there were other cross sections of truth besides this one is clear fromv. 22, where people's produce is lost through injustice. All the cross sections of teaching must be brought together to construct a balanced picture of truth and reality.

14:15 The inexperienced person in Pr is gullible and naïve. He believes whatever anyone tells him. Unlike the sensible or prudent person, this person rashly commits himself to things without sufficient knowledge of what is involved or the limits to his own abilities and resources. The sensible person is deliberate and careful to acquire sufficient information, and then make wise decisions that take into account the reality of the situation.

15:29 The worship and prayers of the wicked are unacceptable to God while those of the righteous are His delight. The one exception is when a wicked person turns to God in genuine repentance.

16:4 This proverb does not contradict the idea that those who turn to God in repentance will be welcomed by him. Rather, the proverb makes two points: God is sovereign and His purposes are not thwarted by the wicked. The verse also affirms that deeds have consequences, and the sovereign God sees to it that there is just retribution. Every act of the wicked has its appropriate consequences.

16:7 This is a proverb and thus it does not constitute a comprehensive statement about human relationships. The NT teaching and life-experience make it clear that people who follow God are sometimes persecuted precisely because their ways are pleasing to the Lord. This proverb recognizes that a life lived according to Yahweh's order will commend itself to others. It will be characterized by compassion, forgiveness, kindness, and civility. Such virtues have the power to restore broken relationships.

16:9 While the book of Pr clearly shows the importance of human responsibility and choice, this proverb recognizes that outcomes are determined by God's sovereign providence. Proverbs makes no attempt to resolve the tension between the two ideas. Both human responsibility and God's sovereignty are affirmed, and the mystery of their interaction is allowed to remain.

16:32 Self control, especially control of one's temper, is an important characteristic of wisdom in Pr. Here it is commended above physical power.

16:33 For discussion on God's sovereignty, see note on 16:9.

18:22 While the proverb does not say, "He who finds a *good* wife," that is clearly presupposed, since Pr contains many proverbs that illustrate the benefits of having a good wife and the consequences of having a foolish or bad one. The good wife is wise and she fears the Lord. Thus she is able to function as the appropriate or complementary helper that Gn 2:18 says man needs. A wise husband and a wise wife can function together in the way this "one flesh" relationship was designed to work.

19:5,9 These are general statements not universal ones, unless we take into account God's final judgment.

19:18 For more on discipline, see note on 13:24.

19:21 For more on God's sovereignty, see note on 16:9.

19:23 This proverb makes the same point as 3:23-26 or 14:26-27. Those who live in the "fear of the LORD" can live securely because they are confident of God's protection and guidance. The NT offers the further assurance that nothing that happens can separate a righteous person from God's love or thwart God's purposes for them.

20:1 This proverb warns against the dangers of drunkenness, which Pr views as folly. Under the influence of alcohol, a person loses the ability to make wise and carefully considered decisions. While wine was seen as one of God's benefits to man (Ps 104:15), warnings about the dangers of intoxication were an important part of Israel's wisdom tradition (Pr 23:20-21,29-35). In certain instances it appears that the better course of wisdom was to refrain from alcohol entirely (31:4-7).

20:9 The book of Proverbs clearly recognizes human depravity.

20:24 This verse recognizes what Ec affirms as well. The work of God in human affairs is beyond human understanding. The implication of this is that people should recognize their dependence on God and trust Him. See note on 16:9.

20:30 Proverbs recognizes that whether the context is the family, society, or one's relationship with God, painful methods of discipline are sometimes the only thing that will get a person's attention and get them moving along the path of wisdom. Presupposed in this is that the discipline is wisely and appropriately administered. See note on 13:24.

21:12 There is an ambiguity in the proverb in that it is unclear whether the "Righteous One" is God or a person. Such ambiguities are a reflection on our interpretive ability rather than a reflection on the truth of God's Word or its authority. No one argues that our ability to interpret Scripture is inerrant, and the inerrancy of the Bible is in no way undermined by the ambiguity of a proverb or by interpretive difficulties.

22:6 This is a general statement about an important aspect of raising children. Children who grow up in an environment where God's truth is modeled and where they are encouraged to live according to God's order will likely end up embracing those values and living by them. There will be exceptions to the general rule. Proverbs recognizes that there are other important variables besides the parents' teaching. Young people will often receive input from their peers (1:8-19) that can lead them away from God's truth. The early chapters of Pr regularly exhort the young person to choose the parents' teaching. This makes it clear that the will of the child and his ability to choose also play decisive roles in how the child turns out.

22:10 The "mocker" or scoffer is the most deliberate and intentional of the fools described in Pr. While there is more to dealing with strife than this, it is often the case that a divisive and disruptive person must be removed from the group before any real progress can be made.

22:15 See note on 13:24 about discipline.

22:17–24:22 Similarities exist between this section of Pr and an Egyptian composition called the *Instructions of Amenemope*, and the similarities suggest some sort of literary influence. Present evidence seems to indicate that the Egyptian piece is older than Pr, and it may well be that the biblical material was influenced by the Egyptian composition. The theology of this biblical section is thoroughly Israelite, and it is clear that the influence did not extend into that area. People made in the image of God have the ability to discover some of God's order, and no theological problem is created if sages in Israel were influenced by Egyptian observations about wisdom. In this case the divine inspiration of the biblical material relates to the way the material was selected and modified for inclusion into inspired Scripture.

23:13 For more on discipline, see note on 13:24.

23:29-35 See note on 20:1 about drunkenness.

24:11-12 God expects His people to respond to those who are in mortal danger. These verses apply to situations where a person has a casual awareness of a situation where a brother or sister is in danger or in great need and dismisses the need. It may also apply to situations where one should have known of the need. Responsibility for failing to help cannot be escaped by claiming that one did not know.

26:3 Some people refuse to respond to gentler means of discipline, and as 27:22 makes clear, some refuse to respond to even the harshest discipline. See note on 20:30.

26:10 This is another proverb that is very difficult to translate and interpret. See note on 21:12.

28:3 This is another difficult proverb whose translation and meaning are not certain. See notes on 10:6,11 and 21:12.

28:16 The proverb states the general principle that the oppression of his people sometimes practiced by an unwise ruler often has in it the seeds of destruction for his reign. Rehoboam is an example of the principle at work (1 Kg 12:12-14).

28:21 Far from being absurd, as some critics claim, this proverb shows the extent to which some people will take injustice, and how little it takes to buy some people's favor. They will allow the favoritism and injustice to continue for no more than a piece of bread. Greed and lust for power drive people to amazing injustice.

29:15 This restates the importance of parental guidance. See note on 13:24.

29:19 For more on effects of discipline, see notes on 20:30 and 26:3.

30:21-23 The point of riddles like this is to determine the thing that ties all the examples together. The "three things . . . four" formula reflects a Semitic poetic convention when numbers are used in parallel poetic lines. The first line uses a certain number and then the second parallel line uses that number plus one. The examples given here involve individuals who have experienced a significant reversal in their fortunes. The thing they have in common is that in each instance they forget their previous circumstances and become unbearable in their new situations. Verse 23 is sometimes taken by critics as illustrating a demeaning attitude of the OT toward women. It should be noted, however, that of the four examples given in the riddle, two involve men and two involve women.

31:6 Perhaps the verse recognizes a medicinal use for alcohol. See note on 20:1.

31:12 The verse, in typical proverbial language, describes a woman who brings benefit to her husband throughout their married life. To suggest, as some have, that the verse claims that she never makes a mistake or does anything that works to her husband's disadvantage flies in the face of what the author intended and reflects a misunderstanding of the characteristics of a proverb.

Ecclesiastes Articles

Intellectuals Who Found God

by Chad Owen Brand

C. S. Lewis (1898–1963)

Lewis's parents taught him the proper faith and religious life of an Englishman, but troubles awaited the young man. His mother died when he was a boy, after which his father sent him to boarding schools. Though early on he tried to be a good Christian, he came to resent religion and developed instead a fascination with myth and fantasy literature. His great concerns were with whether Christianity was unique and how it could solve (or not solve) the problem of evil. When he entered Oxford in 1917, Lewis was a convinced agnostic. He had sought through logic to debunk religion in general and Christianity in particular. Yet his favorite authors—Dante, MacDonald, Herbert, Plato, Milton, and Virgil—were all people who held some sort of religious understanding of the world. In reading George MacDonald, and through personal acquaintance with J. R. R. Tolkien and Owen Barfield, Lewis eventually abandoned his nontheistic view of the world. In 1929 he threw in the towel, conceding that "God was God," and he knelt and prayed—perhaps the "most reluctant convert in all England."

Aurelius Augustine (354–430)

Augustine was born at a time when Christianity was just beginning to become a dominant faith in the Roman empire. Though his mother was a strong Christian, she did not have him baptized as an infant. By age 15, Augustine had abandoned the faith of his childhood and had adopted the cult known as Manicheeism as his own.

His biggest problem with Christianity was its failure to deal adequately with the problem of evil. If God is all powerful and all good, how can evil exist—and exist so prevalently and powerfully in the world? The Manichees taught that two spirit beings exist, the one good and the other evil. They believed this explains how one can find a mixture of both good and evil in the world. For a decade or so, the young Augustine, eventually a professor of rhetoric at several Roman universities, believed this to be a better solution. But eventually the young intellectual came to realize that this "solution" was unsatisfactory.

Augustine despaired and began reading skeptical philosophers, such as Cicero and Porphyry, who taught that everything is a matter of doubt. Perhaps there is no solution, he thought. Yet here, at the end of hope, Augustine was transformed. He heard the preaching of the famous Ambrose and began reading Scripture. Ambrose's apologetics helped Augustine understand that the Bible really does present the solution to the problem of evil.

Though his intellect was satisfied, his heart, filled with sin and with no answer to the problem of sin, was still empty. One day Augustine read Paul's words in Romans 13:14: "Put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no plans to satisfy the fleshly desires." The key to life lay not in trying to live the moral life but in putting on Christ, who satisfies both the intellectual and existential dilemmas humans face. Augustine's writings went on to lay the foundation for the political and intellectual developments of the next 1,500 years in the Western church.

Alexander Solzhenitsyn (1918–)

olzhenitsyn was born into the new Russian Revolutionary system. In 1945 he was arrested for writing disparaging comments about Stalin in his letters and was sentenced to a "mild" eight years in the

S Soviet Gulags (labor camps). Upon his release, he was exiled to the desert in Kazakhstan and then in 1974 was exiled to the West. During this period, Solzhenitsyn became an orthodox Christian. He came to recognize that only Christianity provides both a realistic understanding of the human condition of sin and the one solution to the human condition that makes any sense. His works on the Soviet Gulags and on Russian history have become classics that have given the West a clear picture of life in the repressive Soviet system.

Francis Schaeffer (1912–84)

Schaeffer grew up in a liberal Protestant home. As a teenager, he began to read the Bible and was surprised to find that it contained answers to life's greatest problems. He gave his life to Christ and, contrary to his family's wishes, determined to enter Christian ministry. In 1948 he and his wife, Edith, moved to Switzerland. There they gave their lives to talking to and witnessing to young people, mostly disaffected youth from America and Western Europe.

Schaeffer was never afraid to confront modernity and postmodernity on their own grounds. His writings demonstrate a dialogue with the key intellectual and cultural developments of the last two centuries. If there is one important thing to be learned from Schaeffer, it is that a person can face the best (and worst) that the nontheistic world can offer and still have confidence that God is there and that He is not silent.

J. S. Bach (1685–1750)

Bach entered the world as one of the most gifted musicians of all time. The sheer amount of work he turned out is almost unbelievable, amounting to nearly a thousand compositions, many of which have since been lost. He set the Christian faith to music in a way that no one before or since has done. He read the Bible faithfully and sought to give accurate presentations of its truths not only in lyrics but in musical composition as well. Bach also demonstrated that one could serve God by producing music that was not specifically Christian in orientation, such as his *Brandenburg Concerti*, but which, by their very structure, still demonstrate a conviction that God has made a well-ordered universe. Bach's commitment to Christ can be seen in his telling his students that unless they committed their talents to Jesus they would never become great musicians.

Lewis Wallace (1827–1905)

Wallace was a Union general during the Civil War. Later he sat on the court-martial that dealt with the Lincoln assassination conspirators, then became governor of the territory of New Mexico. His life began to change when he had an extensive conversation with the well-known infidel scholar Robert Ingersoll. In the conversation he was unable to refute Ingersoll's arguments. So he set himself to learn everything he could about the life, setting, and historical context of Jesus Christ. Wallace was not overawed by the reputation of Ingersoll, but he believed that investigation of the facts of the gospel message could lead one to the truth about Jesus. Wallace's investigations led to his writing the novel *Ben-Hur*.

In the novel a Jewish man named Judah Ben-Hur encounters Jesus and hears him say, "I am the resurrection and the life." Later Ben-Hur returns to Rome and gives all his wealth to promote the Christian faith.

Introduction to Ecclesiastes

AUTHOR AND RELIABILITY

Two basic apologetics-related questions arise from the book of Ecclesiastes: first, whether the book was written by Solomon; and second, whether the book is orthodox. Regarding the first question, many scholars consider Ecclesiastes to be a late book, written between 400 and 100 B.C., and therefore obviously not by Solomon who lived in the tenth century B.C. Regarding the second question, many readers are troubled by the book's apparently cynical attitude ("Everything is futile," says 1:2), by its apparent denial of afterlife (e.g., 3:19-20), by its recommendations to eat, drink, and enjoy life (e.g., 5:18; 10:19), and by its seemingly indifferent attitude about morality (e.g., 7:16-17). This second question will be addressed in the notes on Ecclesiastes.

The main argument against Solomonic authorship of Ecclesiastes is that the book contains a few words that do not appear in any other texts until several hundred years after the time of Solomon. This is not insignificant, but arguments based on linguistic evidence are notoriously difficult to make. Since we have a limited number of texts from the ancient Near East, it is hard to say when a given word may have entered the common speech.

We do have evidence that the author of Ecclesiastes was familiar with certain classic texts from Mesopotamia and Egypt that were written before the time of Solomon (see note at 9:8-9). But the book shows no familiarity with later literature, such as the classic Greek texts from the fifth century B.C. and following. This lends weight to Solomon's being author of Ecclesiastes and creates problems for the position that Ecclesiastes was written between 400–100 B.C.

Ecclesiastes Study Notes

1:2 The word translated "futile" could be rendered "fleeting." It literally means "breath," and implies that something only has fleeting value and then evaporates, like a puff of air. In Hebrew the word appears five times in this verse, twice in a construction that is translated into English as an intensification ("breath of breaths," or "absolute futility"). This is not the same word used for the "breath of life" (Gn 2:7). The verse is not saying that everything is worthless, but that everything is short-lived and quickly passing. Nothing under the sun lasts forever. This passage illustrates the unique character of OT language; where Western writers would use an abstraction ("futility"), the biblical author uses a more concrete expression.

1:8 We long for truth and knowledge but are never satisfied with the explanations given us. We are unable to voice what we cannot comprehend. Taken in its full context, this is not an expression of cynical distrust in all belief systems. It is, rather, a humble recognition of our limitations as mortals. Unable to explain the world, we can only turn to God Himself as the source of truth (Pr 30:1-4). Again, the concreteness of Hebrew thought is seen in the way the writer expressed our inability to understand; it is the eye and ear that fail, not the invisible intellect (see Mk 9:43-45).

2:3 It seems absurd that the author claimed to have sought out "how to grasp folly" while asserting that his mind was still guiding him "with wisdom." He was saying that he experimented in pleasure but never lost his perspective. In the process he came to a clear understanding that a life of refined self-gratification did not satisfy.

3:19-20 Ecclesiastes appears to be rejecting the idea of an afterlife. What the author was questioning, however, may have been the materialistic notions of afterlife that predominated in ancient Egypt, where people thought that after death a powerful man could continue to enjoy his possessions, his women, and the services of his slaves. In short, this theology did not take seriously the finality of physical death (the great pyramids of the pharaohs were expressions of this view). The Egyptian "Harpers' Songs," written about 1,000 years before the time of Solomon, criticized this refusal to face the significance of death, and reveals some striking parallels to Ec. (Solomon had cultural ties with Egypt, being married to the daughter of an Egyptian ruler, 1 Kg 3:1.) Biblical theology, by contrast, takes death seriously as "the last enemy" (1 Co 15:26); it is only by an act of God, the resurrection of Jesus, that we can overcome its finality (1 Co 15:55-57).

4:2-3 The author expressed his dissatisfaction with the wretched human situation in extreme terms, using hyperbole (exaggeration) to drive home his point. Statements such as "better than either of them is the one who has not yet existed" are not to be taken as literal assertions that the world would be a better place if people were never born. Nor are such declarations an indication of a depressed or suicidal state on Solomon's part. Hebrew wisdom literature operates by encircling an issue and approaching it from a variety of viewpoints (cp. the dialogues of the book of Jb). Later, Solomon came to a clear affirmation of the value of life (9:4-5).

4:5-6 These two proverbs illustrate the dialogue-like method of Hebrew wisdom literature (cp. Pr 26:4-5). Verse 5 attacks the fool for his laziness (cp. Pr 24:33-34), and verse 6 teaches that a life of vexation through overwork is miserable (cp. Ps 127:2). The proverbs are set side by side to force the reader to consider the folly both of laziness and of working to exhaustion. Instead of going straight toward his point, the writer moved toward it from one direction, then another. The proverbs are not contradictory, but complementary.

5:8-9 The translation of these verses varies considerably among English versions because the Hebrew is obscure, especially in verse 9. Verse 8 suggests that when governing officials (Solomon had appointed such officials, 1 Kg 4:7) conspire with one another up the chain of command, it is not surprising that the commonpeople are treated unjustly. Verse 9 appears to continue the thought, extending the corruption to the king himself. But that passage could be translated differently: "An advantage for the land in every respect is a king for a cultivated field," see footnote). This could imply that a strong central authority is able to hold regional corruption in check, even in the agricultural areas. In any case, these verses neither advocate passive acceptance of bad government nor the overthrow of all governmental authority.

5:18 In saying that it is appropriate for a person to eat, drink, and find enjoyment in life "because that is his reward," the author did not mean these are life's only rewards because there is no afterlife (see 3:19-20). These are the rewards of a person's labor, and one should not neglect to take time out for some simple pleasures.

6:4-5 In verses 1-6, Ec says that a wealthy man who never learns to enjoy life is no better off than a "stillborn child." The description of the stillborn child is bleak: The child will have no experiences, no identity, and no place in the world. This was a rhetorical comparison to make the point that a life without joy is futile; the promise of the unborn child's life is frustrated by his premature death in the same way that an outwardly successful man might never come to experience the benefits of living. This is not a teaching about the nature of life in the womb or a statement that abortion is morally insignificant because the fetus has no personhood. To the contrary, it is the futility of a stillbirth—in which the child at least has "more rest"—that exposes the equal absurdity of the man who has received life's benefits but "aborts" his enjoyment of them.

7:16-17 The text explicitly tells us not to be "excessively righteous" or "overly wise," just as it tells us not to be "excessively wicked." This would seem to say that a little wickedness and folly are acceptable, and even preferable. Ecclesiastes is concerned with the wise man's efforts to gain control of life. Diligence is generally rewarded with prosperity and health, whereas those who are carefree or careless can quickly lose both. But the quest for prudence can go too far; a severely austere life can be joyless. By the same token, turning away from the constraints of a disciplined life can bring trouble—even premature death. No one can avoid sinning to some degree in this life; it is part of our human condition (v. 20; Rm 3:23), but the wise person will avoid such foolishness where possible, just as he or she will avoid carrying supposedly prudent behavior to a ridiculous extreme. The discussion here is not about God's final judgment upon our lives, but about our daily conduct; in typical wisdom style the writer played one pole of behavior against another. If part of the book's advice here seems to question what Jesus would later say about the need to "be perfect" (Mt 5:48), it is well to recall how Jesus illustrated that perfection in even-handed treatment of others reflected God's love for all people. Nothing Ecclesiastes says in these verses contradicts that teaching; if anything, in its balanced approach to living, it reinforces it.

7:26 Solomon wrote here out of his bitter personal experience with marriage. As a Near Eastern potentate he had a large harem, and his foreign wives led him astray (1 Kg 11:4). He was not a hater of women, but realized that an unwise marriage can become a trap. Like most Israelite wisdom literature, Ec was written for a male audience of educated elite, young men being trained for government service. Solomon viewed marriage from that perspective. Had the book been written for women, it would have spoken of the misery of the woman married to a cruel and brutal man. Much of Ec is taken up with reflections on Gn 3, the account of the first sin, which is one reason that the book is so concerned with death and the brevity of life (see Gn 3:19). It was the woman's being deceived—in which her husband, standing by ("with her," Gn 3:6), failed to intervene—that brought sin to the human scene, a condition in which all people now participate (Ec 7:20-29). In effect, Solomon urged his readers not to repeat Adam's mistake. But he was not devaluing marriage as such; indeed, a good, lifelong marriage is one of the great joys of life (9:9).

9:2 This verse does not deny that righteousness is important. It asserts that right living cannot free us from mortality (see Heb 9:27). Seen from the Christian perspective, this verse drives us to the grace of God, since nothing we can do will save us from the power of death.

9:8-9 These verses resemble passages in the Babylonian *Epic of Gilgamesh* and the "Harpers' Song" from Egypt. Both were composed long before the time of Solomon, and it seems clear that he knew them. It is not troubling to find that a biblical text reflects knowledge of other well-known literature of antiquity; this international character is a feature of Israelite wisdom. Because of Solomon's extensive international contacts we would expect him to be familiar with such literature, and the similarities to these other passages reinforce the Solomonic authorship of Ec.

10:7 Some would say that this verse shows prejudice in favor of the aristocracy and against people of humbler backgrounds. But 4:13 shows respect for a lowborn person who has drive and ability. The "slaves" in this verse were people who had neither dignity nor competence and yet were in a position of authority (see Pr 19:10). They may be highborn, but in their character they were fit only for menial service. Another possibility is to view this verse against the background of Israel's military ventures, in which the king's servant might be mounted while a defeated and captured prince of some subjugated nation must walk.

10:19 "Money is the answer for everything" looks like the ultimate expression of cynical greed. In reality, it only makes the point that people do need some mon-ey in order to get along in life. Ecclesiastes 2:1-11 and 6:1-6 have already shown that wealth is not

the answer. But this verse gives balance to this picture: Affluence is not the source of happiness, but abject poverty is not a blissful condition (see Pr 30:8-9).

12:13 Some argue that these words, "fear God and keep His commands," are inconsistent with the rest of the book and that they must have been added by a later editor who wanted to make Ec appear more "orthodox." This view requires the interpreter to see the bulk of the book as the work of a cynical skeptic. In reality, Ec is not "cynical" at all. It calls on us to face the significance of mortality: We will die, and all our accomplishments will die with us. Because life is short and we are weak, we should enjoy the time we have. But we should also abandon excessive and prideful efforts to control life; it is in the hands of God, not our own, and ultimately our mortality drives us to Him as "the spirit returns to God who gave it" (v. 7).

Song of Songs Articles

Is the Bible Sexually Oppressive?

by Josh D. McDowell

Let's clear up one misconception. God is pro-sex! He invented sex and thinks it's beautiful when enjoyed within the correct framework.

Proverbs tells us, "**Take pleasure in the wife of your youth . . . let her breasts always satisfy you; be lost in her love forever"** (Pr 5:18-19). The context here is speaking of sex within the parameters of a lifelong marriage commitment (i.e., "the wife of your youth"). Another example of God's perspective on sex is the Song of Songs, an OT book that uses the beauty of the sexual experience to express one's spiritual experience.

I haven't been able to locate a single verse in the Bible that decries sex as sinful, dirty, or wrong. It's only the *misuse* of sex (when it is experienced outside a loving, intimate commitment between a husband and wife) that is so often spoken against in the Scriptures. Sex as God intended it is a beautiful thing.

So, why the limits? Simply put, it's because God loves us. Love is described in Eph 5:28-29 as providing and caring, which suggests the ideas of nurturing and protecting. God's motivation behind every command in the Bible is to protect us and provide us with His best. Even in the "do nots" (commandments that may, at first glance, seem imposing and prohibitive), we can know that God has our best interests at heart. How can we be sure of His loving intentions? We need only look at the life of Christ as recorded in the Gospels. Everything He did—from healing the sick and teaching the multitudes to giving His life on the cross to pay for our sins—was a clear picture of God's love in action.

True to His loving nature, God gave His instruction to reserve sex for marriage out of love for us. In this case His boundaries protect us from unwanted pregnancies, agonizing and even deadly diseases, unhealthy emotional attachments, feelings of guilt, and many other dangers. They provide us with good health and safety, freedom from fear, true intimacy and trust in marriage, and many other benefits.

Just as the lanes in a swimming pool protect swimmers from running into one another and give them every opportunity to win a swimming race, so God's laws are intended for our good. They are not there to frustrate us but to reflect the freedom we have in Christ. Without the parameters, one cannot experience sex in the way God intended. And when we recognize His loving plan for us—a positive plan for our good and not a negative plan to limit us unfairly or frustrate us—our response should be one of loving obedience.

Introduction to Song of Songs

AUTHOR

Although Song of Songs (otherwise known as Song of Solomon or Canticles) is one of the shortest books in the OT, no biblical text has produced more controversy throughout the history of interpretation. The majority of scholars agree that the Song, comprised of several love poems woven together to form a unit, describes conjugal love between a bridegroom and a bride. The underlying marriage metaphor plays an important role in various interpretive models of the text.

Traditional scholars affirm Solomon as the author of the Song based on 1 Kings 4:29-34, dating the text to approximately 900 B.C. In the OT, Solomon is commonly associated with poetry, wisdom, and horticulture, further supporting the traditional view of authorship. Yet, although Solomon's name occurs six times in the book, the question of the authorship of the Song remains uncertain.

INTERPRETATION OF SONG OF SONGS

Three interpretive strategies stand out from the wide and often eclectic variety of approaches to the Song: the allegorical, typological, and literal approaches.

Allegorical approach. Throughout the first half of the first millennium A.D., religious leaders in Judaism and the early church questioned the religious value of the book, noting the absence of theological themes or references to Yahweh (God) in the Song. Furthermore, the extensive use of figurative language, often erotic, prompted both early Jewish scholars and the church fathers to adopt an allegorical approach to the interpretation of the Song.

In order to compensate for the explicit, often sensual language of the text, the Talmud, Targums, and Midrashim (Jewish rabbinical writings) responded by claiming that the bride represents Israel, while the groom represents Yahweh. In this view, the context of the Song describes the love of Yahweh for Israel, using imagery normally reserved for the intimate conversations between marriage partners.

Similarly, Christian scholars such as Hippolytus, Origen, and Jerome argued that the Song of Songs depicts the love of Christ for His church. The church thus sought to interpret the text in a way that would deflect or eliminate the focus on natural desires, transforming the message through allegory to extol celibacy as the ultimate expression of holiness and purity. Origen argued that the Song illustrates the union of the earthly and physical with the divine and spiritual. The allegorical interpretation helped to give rise to the mysticism of monks and celibate scholars of the twelfth century. Later, Luther attempted to revise this view somewhat by proposing that the Song figuratively describes Solomon's monarchical rule over Israel. Other early attempts to correct an allegorical approach met with resistance in Jewish and Christian circles.

What are we to make of this interpretive approach? Allegory relies on extensive symbolism, and only those privy to the code language of the book can understand the theological meaning of the imagery. Yet the book itself reveals no deliberate attempt by the author to create an allegory, and the terminology contained in the text is not specific enough to warrant allegorical interpretation. The often inscrutable figures of speech open many sections of the book to the uncontrolled imagination of the reader, who may be unfamiliar with euphemistic phrases and the culture of ancient Palestine.

Typological approach. The second approach finds correspondence between Yahweh's intimate relationship with Israel (as in the book of Hosea) and the marriage analogy. It also finds affinities with NT texts that portray the church as the bride of Christ (Eph 5). This approach recognizes the

legitimate interpretation of the work in its original context as a series of love poems celebrating matrimony while maintaining the propriety of the marriage metaphor and the application of conjugal imagery in describing the relationship between God and His people

Literal approach. A strictly literal interpretation to the Song became prominent under historical criticism in the late nineteenth century and remains the predominant view in contemporary times. A number of literary studies produced on the Song understand the book as a celebration of a blissful, healthy marriage, adopting a positive attitude toward human sexuality within the confines of the nuptial relationship blessed by God. Robert Lowth, Bishop of London and Oxford professor, proposed that the Song describes an actual wedding feast of Solomon. A comparison with ancient Near Eastern documents reveals several wedding compositions, which compel some commentators to suggest the Song belongs to a well-established genre of matrimonial poems.

The apologist who seeks to interpret the Song in light of its theological significance and contributions to the biblical text must address the problem of conflicting interpretation strategies as the reader encounters unusual imagery and distinctive language. The writer frequently used rare words that occur only once in the Song. Furthermore, almost all scholars disagree concerning the structural divisions of the Song. Any accurate interpretation of the text must take into consideration stylistic features common in biblical Hebrew poetry, such as parallelism, brevity, and wordplay.

Song of Songs Study Notes

1:4 The reader cannot take for granted the identity of the "king." Some commentators suggest the epithet referred to Solomon, while others propose that the royal title "king" reflected wedding festival language, in which the bridegroom was accorded the status of "king." The "king" could have been an unidentified third party, although this option seems unlikely. An allegorical reading correlates the "king" with God, or Jesus. In a literal reading, the Song is a celebration of the tenderness of marriage which is, after all, a serious biblical concern (e.g., Eph 5:21-33).

1:5 The uncertain meaning of the Hebrew term *shechorah*, "dark" yields several opinions. The word could have reflected the natural pigment of the bride's skin, or referred to skin overexposed to the sun as a result of outdoor labor (v. 6). It remains unclear whether the bride was uncomfortable with her darkened complexion or whether she associated the color of her skin with beauty. Most translators render the conjunction as "but," suggesting that the bride, self-conscious that her skin color identified her with the lower class, affirmed her attractive appearance despite outdoor work. Eager to avoid any racial misunderstandings, other scholars translate the simple conjunction "dark, *and* beautiful." Later in the book (5:10), health and beauty are described as white and ruddy skin, further substantiating the possibility that the term *shechorah* designated a sunburn or tan.

1:5 Controversy surrounds the identity of the "Daughters of Jerusalem," mentioned several times in the Song (elsewhere, "young women," 2:7; 3:5,10; 5:8,16; 8:4). Those who maintain an allegorical approach associate the daughters with followers of the church, the population of Jerusalem, the nations of the world as enemies, or members of the synagogue. The "daughters" could refer to the female members of Israel, to friends of the bride, or, as contemporary scholars suggest, the sheltered, pampered, curious young women of aristocracy. But the Song is a drama, with various spoken (or chanted) parts, and the "daughters" may have been included simply as dramatic foil for the other speakers, especially the bride.

2:7 The phrase in this verse recurs in 3:5 and 8:4. Each refrain follows a description of the consummation of the marital relationship. The bride sought to discourage the young women from engaging in a sexual relationship prematurely. The admonition promotes chastity and self-control. It seems strange that the bride swore by the gazelles and the wild does of the field. The word for "gazelles" resembles the Hebrew word *tseva'ot* "armies" which was used in the traditional identifier "Yahweh of Hosts." Perhaps this was a circumlocution to avoid swearing by the name of the Lord.

2:14 The bridegroom referred to his bride affectionately as "my dove." The gentle characteristics of the dove make the white bird a universal symbol of peace, prosperity, and love. In other ancient Near Eastern cultures, the dove represented the goddess of love. Classical Judaism equated the "dove" with Israel, while early Christianity understood the reference to "my dove" as a picture of the church as a bride "in Christ," innocent and without blame. The inaccessibility of the dove as it hides in the rocks also allegorically depicts the church hiding in "the Rock" of Christ, or the eager pursuit of Christ as he seeks out the church and draws her to Himself. A literal reading takes the phrase "my dove" as simply a term of endearment expressing the perfection of the bride.

2:15 Commentators disagree over the identity of the "little foxes" that ruin the vineyards. Traditional Jewish interpretation understands "foxes" as the enemies of Israel. Christian allegorical interpreters argue that the "foxes" represent pagan people, who, once seized, make good candidates for conversion. Other opinions suggest that the raiding of the vineyard by the foxes figuratively describes obstacles that threaten to interfere with the development of love.

2:16 The phrase "my love is mine and I am his," closely resembles the covenant formula, "They will be My people, and I will be their God" (Jr 24:7; cp. 11:4; Ezk 34:30).

3:7 Solomon is mentioned three times in this chapter alone, compelling some scholars to associate the bridegroom with the king of Israel. A dramatic interpretation sees the character of Solomon as a poetic symbol of the groom, celebrated as a "king" on his wedding day. Allegorists claim that Solomon represents the Messiah or God.

3:10-11 The parallelism of Hebrew poetry suggests that the "young women of Zion" and the "young women of Jerusalem" are identical groups.

4:1-7 If this word-picture of the bride's beauty is taken as a visual image, the effect is grotesque—hair like goats' hair, teeth like shorn sheep, lips like string or rope, brow (or cheek) like sliced fruit, neck like a tower strung with shields, breasts like immature gazelles. But Hebrew word-pictures are not static photographic images; they attempt to convey the impression of dynamism, or strength and movement, in what is being described. It was the rich flow of the bride's hair that the poet compared to a flock of goats streaming down the pastures of prosperous Gilead. The uniformity and cleanliness of her teeth and the richness of her lips were what those images sought to convey. The symmetry and smoothness of pomegranate halves made a fitting analogy for the bride's cheeks; the pomegranate was used to decorate the robes of the high priest (Ex 28:33-34) and the capitals of the temple's pillars (1 Kg 7:18-20). The bride wore an elaborate necklace that reminded the poet of the shields hung on the battlements of Jerusalem—a symbol of her pride and strength of character, and perhaps of her inviolable virginity. Her breasts were not obtrusive, but shyly hid themselves like fawns feeding under the watchful eye of their mother.

4:5 The explicit reference to "breasts" prompted early interpreters to treat the term as symbolic. The Targum (Aramaic translation and explanation of the OT) correlated two breasts with two Messiahs, or with Moses and Aaron. Historically, Christian interpreters offered a variety of explanations. Some argued that the two breasts referred to the two Testaments, spiritually nourishing the church. Another perspective correlated the breasts with the dual commands to love God and to love one another. A third view believed the breasts symbolized Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim (Dt 27:11-13), located north of Jerusalem, from which the Israelite tribes proclaimed the curses, or sanctions, of the covenant. It is not likely that mention of the breasts is especially intended to suggest the bride's sexual appeal to the male, even in a literal reading; they were listed here along with other features of the bride that equally impressed the poet (4:1-7). It is only in modern times that women's breasts have a "suggestive" connotation in Western culture. In ancient and medieval times they were symbols of their function: providing nourishment or nurture. Medieval illustrations exist, for example, of the Virgin Mary supplying milk from her breasts to the baby Jesus.

4:12 Clearly, "garden" (v. 15; 5:1; 6:2) is a euphemism, a polite expression used to refer to delicate subjects. The fertility and lushness of the garden figuratively illustrates the woman's most intimate physical characteristics. Significantly, the garden is "locked," emphasizing chastity and therefore, inaccessible to anyone except her husband.

6:8 While many scholars understand the three categories of women, "queens," "concubines," and "young women" as status distinctions within the structure of Solomon's harem (1 Kg 11:3), the text offers no evidence to support the view. One example of an allegorical reading proposes that they represented states of holiness; the queens were "perfected souls," the concubines symbolized "those who are progressing in their sanctification," and the young women represented "those who are seeking God." This interpretation depends on reading the Hebrew *'almah* as "virgin," in the restrictive sense (cp. Is 7:14); normally it simply means a young woman up to the age of marriage. The groom mentioned three classes of women for comparative purposes, drawing on the images of stateliness, royalty, and beauty to describe his beloved.

6:11 "Walnut grove" is literally "garden of nuts" (or "nut orchard"). The word "nut" (Hb *'egoz*) may here be a euphemistic term denoting either male or female sexual organs. The context, in the words of the bride, suggests that the verse referred to the male's private parts in a subtle description of sexual intimacy. The wording prompted the early church fathers to suggest that the hard outer covering of the nut signified the Mosaic law, and the wholesome, nutritious center Jesus Christ. In considering passages of this sort, it is well to recall that the composer of the Song discreetly substituted colorful poetic images for any explicit sexual language that may be inferred, allowing for interpretation at a variety of levels.

6:12 In what is perhaps the most enigmatic verse in the book, the wide variety of interpretations and suggested emendations fail to yield a scholarly consensus. The mention of chariots seems awkward in the broader context, and the structure of the last phrase (Hb *ammi-nadib*) makes it unclear to whom the chariots belong. The Greek OT and Vg read the proper name Ammin-adab. However, the biblical text does not establish any connection with love and a character named Amminadab. Possible translations include "like the chariots of Amminadib" (KJV), "among the chariots of my people of a prince" (footnote), or "in a chariot beside my prince" (RSV). The word translated "my noble people" can be vocalized as the preposition "with me," contributing to the uncertainty of the rendering.

8:6 A mention of death may seem out of place, but in the context of Hebrew wisdom literature issues of life and death are never far from the writer's concern. The comparison between the permanence and the inevitable force of death and the bride's love for her mate emphasized the intensity and transcendence of her emotions, and characterized her love as an irresistible power. The affirmation that "love is as strong as death" looks forward to the love of Christ, from which even death cannot separate those who belong to Him (Rm 8:35-39).

Isaiah Articles

Does the Bible Support a Just War?

by Norman L. Geisler

While the Bible doesn't approve of war for every cause, and while it encourages peace with all persons (Rm 12:18), it nonetheless indicates that peace and justice sometimes require war (Mt 24:6). This is made clear from many considerations. First, the Bible does not prohibit all taking of life. For instance, killing in self-defense is justified (Ex 22:2), as is killing in capital punishment (Gn 9:6). Government is divinely authorized to use "the sword" (Rm 13:4), as Jesus Himself recognized (Jn 19:11). Second, under the law, God spelled out the rules of warfare for Israel (Dt 20). Third, while Jesus forbade His disciples from using a sword for spiritual purposes (Mt 26:52), He urged His disciples to buy a sword if necessary for protection (Lk 22:36-38). Fourth, John the Baptist did not say that armies should be abolished and did not call for repentance from serving in the office of soldier (Lk 3:14).

The Bible commands Christians to obey their government (Rm 13:1-7; Ti 3:1; 1 Pt 2:13-14). However, there are limitations to such obedience. When the government commands worship of idols or a king (Dn 3:6), forbids preaching the gospel (Ac 4-5), or orders the killing of children (Ex 1), then it is a believer's duty to disobey. Likewise, if government engages in unjust warfare, believers may dissent. However, like Daniel (Dn 6), the three Hebrew young men (Dn 3), and Peter (Ac 4–5), those who disobey government must accept the consequences meted out by the state.

Several conditions for just war are given in the Bible. First, it must be declared by one's government (Rm 13:4). Second, it must be in defense of the innocent and/or against an evil aggressor (e.g., Gn. 14). Third, it must be fought by just means (Dt 20:19).

In addition to the above reasons for a just war policy, biblical arguments for total pacifism are flawed. For example, Jesus' command to turn the other cheek (Mt 5:39) refers to a personal insult (like a slap in the face), not to bodily harm. Indeed, even Jesus refused to turn His cheek when smitten unjustly (Jn 18:22-23). The exhortation to love our enemies does not preclude the use of force to restrain them from killing us (cp. Paul's instigation of government intervention for his protection in Ac 23).

Can God's Actions Be Detected Scientifically?

by C. John Collins

I"'ll believe in God if you can prove scientifically that He does things!" How can we respond to such a challenge?

The first thing we must do is disentangle the questions involved here. First, what do we mean by "God's actions"? Second, what do we mean by "science"? And third, can science detect events as *God's* actions? Let's take them one at a time.

To begin with, we recognize that, after the creation, God works in two ways. First, He maintains the things He created, along with their powers to cause things. Apples keep on tasting good and nourishing us because God keeps maintaining their properties. A soccer goalie deflects the ball because God maintains the properties of the ball, the air, and the goalie's body. Second, God is not limited by the powers of created things. Sometimes He goes beyond their powers if it suits His purpose. We can call the first kind of action the *natural* (since it works with created natures) and the second the *supernatural* (since it goes beyond natural powers). Let's be clear about this: *Both* kinds are God's actions and both serve His purpose.

The sciences study aspects of the world around us in hopes of understanding how they work. Some scientists study the regularities of the world (such as "the angle of incidence equals the angle of reflection"), while others study specific events, trying to reason backward from effect to cause (like Sherlock Holmes, the "scientific detective").

Can God's actions be detected scientifically? It depends on which ones. Because God made His world "very good" (Gn 1:31), it needs no tinkering to keep in operation, so we don't expect that the sciences will "detect" God's natural actions. The reason that an atom's electrons don't crash into the nucleus is not that God holds them apart by a miracle but that He made their properties so that they don't crash.

On the other hand, the sciences may sometimes help us detect a supernatural event because in knowing the properties of natural things, we can tell when these have been transcended. For example, the more we know about how babies come about, the more clearly supernatural becomes the conception of Jesus: There is no natural explanation for it. As C. S. Lewis put it, "No doubt a modern gynecologist knows several things about birth and begetting which St. Joseph did not know. But these things do not concern the main point—that a virgin birth is contrary to the course of nature. And St. Joseph obviously knew *that*." Advances in medical science have only sharpened the point. We could say the same about Jesus' resurrection: Dead bodies stay dead unless someone with extraordinary power interferes.

This kind of detection works best when it's based on knowledge, not ignorance. It's not just that we don't know how it could happen; rather, we have every reason to believe that it *can't* happen unless something else is added. The sciences can help us to know better the natures of the things involved and thus to know when "something else" is needed to explain what we see.

How Can the Bible Affirm Both Divine Sovereignty and Human Freedom?

by Bruce A. Ware

God is the sovereign ruler over the universe and all human affairs, and human beings are responsible before God for the moral choices and actions they make. Yes, the Bible teaches both divine sovereignty and human freedom, and both are true.

What does the Bible teach about God's sovereign rulership?

Consider Daniel 4:35, where we are instructed that God "does what He wants with the army of heaven and the inhabitants of earth. There is no one who can hold back His hand or say to Him, 'What have You done?' " In light of this verse, three observations are needed. First, God's rulership is the exercise of "His will." That is, He decides in advance what He wants to happen, so that His will precedes and directs all that occurs. Second, He exercises His will universally—over those in heaven and all the inhabitants of earth. There is no place where His will does not pertain or is not exercised. And third, no creature of God can thwart the fulfillment of God's will or charge God with wrongdoing. In short, God's rulership by His will is absolute, universal, and effectual.

Consider further the kinds of reality over which God reigns. The Bible contains a number of "spectrum texts" that display God's ultimate control of both good and evil, light and darkness, life and death. In Is 45:6-7, God announced, "I am the LORD, and there is no other. I form light and create darkness, I make success and create disaster; I the LORD do all these things" (see Ex 4:11; Dt 32:39; 1 Sm 2:6-7; Ec 7:13-14; Lm 3:37-38). And, while we gladly affirm that God is good (only!), and that God neither approves evil nor has any evil residing in Himself (Ps 5:4), yet we must affirm with Scripture that He reigns over all of life, both its good and evil, and that in all that occurs "the decision of His will" (Eph 1:11) is fulfilled.

What does Scripture teach about human moral responsibility?

From page 1 of the Bible, all humans are put on notice that God holds us accountable for the moral choices we make and actions we take. The law of God—whether the simple law not to eat of one tree in the garden (Gn 2:16-17), the law given on Sinai (Ex 20), or the law of Christ (1 Co 9:21; Gl 6:2)—establishes the moral framework within which human lives are to be lived. God will "repay each one according to his works" (Rm 2:6), and this judgment will be based on whether we persevere in doing good (Rm 2:7) or whether we do not obey the truth but obey unrighteousness (Rm 2:8). There is no denying that God considers humans as being responsible for the choices and actions we make, and the final judgment day will bear testimony to how we have chosen to live our lives.

So God is the sovereign ruler over all, and human beings are responsible before Him. But just how can both be true?

We cannot understand fully how both are true together, but that they must work together is demanded by Scripture's clear teaching. Consider one illustration from Scripture where both are seen—namely, a lesson from Joseph's story (Gn 37–45).

Joseph's brothers were deeply jealous of him and grew to despise him. When the opportunity presented itself, they sold him into Egypt (Gn 37:25-36), where Joseph was misunderstood and mistreated. Despite this, God's hand was on Joseph and he was elevated to second in command in Egypt (Gn 41). During a famine, his brothers traveled to Egypt to purchase grain, and there Joseph made himself known to his brothers. What Joseph told them is as incredible as it is instructive: "It was not you who sent me here, but God" (Gn 45:8).

"Wait!" we might protest. "Surely they *did* send Joseph to Egypt!"

So they did, and so Joseph previously acknowledged (Gn 45:4). But to get at the full reason he was sent to Egypt requires looking not just to the brothers but also, and more importantly, to God.

So it is clear: *Both* God and the brothers were responsible for sending Joseph to Egypt. *Both* God's sovereign rulership and the brother's moral actions were active. As Joseph put it later in speaking to his brothers, "You planned evil against me; God planned it for good" (Gn 50:20). The brothers acted for evil, and God acted in the same events for good.

Not every question is here answered, but we see that we must affirm both the sovereign rulership of God and the genuineness of our moral responsibility. Both are joined together in Scripture, and what Scripture has joined together, let no man separate.

(For another perspective, see the article in 1 Peter 1, page 1850.)

How Does Christianity Relate to Hinduism?

by Ravi Zacharias

I often think back with nostalgia to growing up in India and the late-night conversations we would have about a Hindu play or some event that featured Hindu thought. Now, through the lens of Jesus Christ, I have learned to see how deep-seated culture and religion can be and how only the power of the Holy Spirit can reveal the error of an ingrained way of thinking. Consequently, whenever we speak with someone from another faith, it is essential to remember that we must not attempt to tear down another's belief system but rather to reveal the hungers of the human heart and the unique way in which Christ addresses them.

For the Hindu, *karma*—the moral law of cause-and-effect—is a life-defining concept. Life carries its moral bills, and they are paid in the cyclical pattern of rebirth until all dues are paid in full. Hinduism here conveys an inherited sense of wrong, which is lived out in the next life, in vegetable, animal, or human form. This doctrine is nonnegotiable in Hindu philosophy. Repercussions of fatalism (that is, whatever happens will happen) and the indifference to the plight of others are inescapable but are dismissed by philosophical platitudes that do not weigh out the consequences of such reasoning. Thus it is key to bear in mind that although *karma* is seen as a way of paying back, this payback is never complete; hence life is lived out paying back a debt that one cannot know in total but that must be paid in total. That is why the cross of Christ is so definitive and so complete. It offers forgiveness without minimizing the debt. When we truly understand that forgiveness, we develop a loving heart of gratitude. There is a full restoration—in this life and for eternity.

The Christian should also understand the attraction of pantheism, the Hindu view of seeing the divine in everything. It superficially appears more compatible with scientific theorizing because it presents no definitive theory of origins. Life is cyclical, without a first cause. Pantheism also gives one a moral reasoning, through karmic fatalism, that one is trapped in the cycle until one escapes, without the need to invoke God. But in the final analysis, it is without answers when one needs to talk about the deepest struggles of the soul. Hindu scholars even admit this in their creation of a path of *bhakti* (love, devotion) to satisfy the inescapable human hunger for worship.

It is here that a keen understanding is needed. Krishna's coming to earth as an avatar—that is, one of the incarnations of the Hindu god Vishnu—in a way brings "God to man." But a huge chasm still remains. How does one bring man to God? For this, there is only one way—the way of the cross. A profound and studied presentation of the cross, and what it means, is still the most distinctive aspect of the Christian faith. Even Gandhi said it was the most unexplainable thing to him and was unparalleled. For the Christian, the cross of Jesus Christ is the message "first to the Jew, and also to the Greek" (Rm 2:9)—to the moralist and the pantheist, to the religious and the irreligious. We can communicate this message with a Hindu acquaintance or friend only through a loving relationship. The love of Christ, a patient listening and friendship, and the message of forgiveness provide the path to evangelism.

Introduction to Isaiah

AUTHOR

Despite claims to the contrary, the book of Isaiah contains many indications that it was written by the prophet Isaiah, who ministered in Judah during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah and during the early years when Manasseh was a co-regent with Hezekiah (1:1). The introductions to chapters 1, 2–12, and 13–24 all begin with superscriptions that identify the content of these chapters as the words, visions, or oracles of Isaiah. In addition, these chapters describe events in Isaiah's life: his call to ministry (6:1-8); his interaction with Ahaz at the pool in Jerusalem (7:3-9); the events surrounding the birth of a child to Isaiah and his wife (8:1-4); a three-year period of functioning as a sign by walking around nearly naked (20:1-6); and his encouragement of Hezekiah during Sennacherib's siege of Jerusalem in 701 B.C. (36:1–39:8).

However, some commentators suggest two or three different "Isaiahs" wrote these messages. They provide three primary arguments for their position: (1) the theology of chapters 1–39 differs from the theology of chapters 40–66; (2) the style of writing and vocabulary shows considerable variation across the book; (3) chapters 1–39 predict the fall of Jerusalem sometime in the future, while chapters 40–66 assume Jerusalem was already in ruins and the people were getting ready to return from the exile. Some use these different historical circumstances and theological emphases to argue that another prophet (called Deutero-Isaiah) wrote chapters 40–55 in the exilic period and that a third prophet (called Trito-Isaiah) wrote chapters 56–66 in the postexilic era.

In response to these concerns, recent studies have shown a significant thematic unity throughout Isaiah. Furthermore, we now know that an ancient author might use all sorts of different styles according to the point he was trying to make. The main point of contention, then, remains the historical setting of the prophet. However, if one believes that a prophet can predict events in the distant future (such as the ruin of Jerusalem and the return from exile) without actually living in that time period, then the historical problems with the book of Isaiah do not require additional authors writing in the exilic and postexilic eras.

The prophet Isaiah probably wrote his book in sections over several years and may have used source material, such as in his account of Sennacherib's attack on Jerusalem (cp. 2 Kg 18–20 with Is 36–39). Most messages are not easily dated, but chapters 2–5 appear to record Isaiah's sermons during the prosperous reign of Uzziah; chapters 6–12 relate to the Syro-Ephraimite war during the reign of Ahaz; and many of the oracles against the nations in chapters 13–39 are connected to Sennacherib's attack on Jerusalem during the reign of Hezekiah. Stories connecting chapters 40–66 with the reign of a specific king are missing, thus it is impossible to give an exact date for them. It would appear they were spoken in the years after Isaiah's announcement that Judah would be defeated by Babylon (39:1-8).

THEOLOGICAL THEMES

Numerous important theological themes in Isaiah's preaching set his messages apart from those of other prophets. One of the key themes in Isaiah is the call for people to trust God. During the era of Uzziah, Judah was rich and powerful, so there was a temptation to trust in the nation's military power and economic strength (2:7-8) rather than trust in God. Later, during the time of Ahaz (chaps. 7–11; cp.
2 Ch 28) and Hezekiah (chaps. 28–39; cp. 2 Kg 18–19), Judah was not as strong and the Assyrians were exerting their sovereignty over all the nations in the Near East. In these circumstances there was

a temptation to trust in political alliances with Assyria (2 Ch 28), Egypt (Is 30:1-6; 31:1-9), or the Babylonians (39:1-8) rather than trust in God. So, to encourage his audience to trust God, Isaiah recorded a hymn proclaiming that he would trust in God (12:2). And an opportunity to model this trust came later when the Assyrian general questioned Hezekiah's trust in God (36:7). Although facing great difficulties, Isaiah and Hezekiah asked Him to deliver them (37:16-20). Rather than surrendering, they put their trust in God.

This theme stands in tension with its opposite: the tendency of Israel and the nations to rebel against God and not trust Him. From the first chapter, God's people are pictured as rebellious sons (1:2-4) who sinned against God, did not offer sacrifices that pleased Him (1:11-15), were unfaithful, were murderers, oppressed the weak, and worshiped pagan gods (1:21-23,29-31). Isaiah taught that everything proud and exalted will be humbled and brought low and that God alone will be exalted (2:9-17). Pride will lead to divine judgment, so Isaiah exhorted his readers to humble themselves.

What God wants are servants who exalt God and follow his instructions. Ahaz was not willing to bend his knee and serve God (7:1-12). Even the righteous King Hezekiah struggled with serving God completely and not leaning on other nations (chaps. 30–31). The rationale for serving God involves His sovereignty over the affairs of the world. His exaltation above all other gods and nations is confirmed in the many passages about wooden idols that cannot talk, walk, speak, or predict the future. God was vastly superior to these pieces of wood (44:6-20). He is the first and the last; there is no other God beside Him (45:5-7,14,18,21). Even the Babylonian gods would be powerless to protect the Babylonian people (46:1-11). Also, the people of Israel were blind servants who did not follow God (42:18-22), but God would raise up a true Servant who would establish justice in the earth (42:1-4; just like the Messiah in 9:6-7) and serve as a light and covenant to the nations (42:6-7; 49:6-7). This servant would be abused and suffer for the sins of others (50:4-9; 53:1-9), bearing their sins in order to bring forgiveness for many others (53:5,10-12). Later, through God's transforming grace, Israel and the other nations will join to worship God and function as His faithful servants (60:1-9; 65:1-16) in God's glorious kingdom.

Throughout this book the pagan nations of this world are seen as rebellious and proud opponents of God (chaps. 13–23). But Isaiah proclaimed that there will be a future day when the nations will come to Zion to worship God (2:2-4; 14:1-3; 19:18-25). They will come with gifts to praise God (60:4-14), and some of them will even serve as priests and Levites (66:18-20). Those nations that do not submit to God and worship Him will experience the terrible effects of God's wrath (34:1-15; 63:1-6), and instead of enjoying the new heavens and the new earth, they will endure the torments of a place where fire and worm never die (66:22-24). These themes inform the reader about God's ways, motivate the trusting soul to exalt God, and warn the sinner to turn from pride. God's kingdom plans are established, so everyone must choose whom they will serve.

Isaiah Study Notes

1:11-15 The Lord directed the people of Israel to build the tabernacle (Ex 26–31), established the theological significance of the sacrifices (Lv 1–6), and appointed the nation's festivals (Ex 34:18-26; Lv 23). But here Isaiah, speaking in the Lord's name, appears to condemn these God-ordained institutions. Israelite prophets typically expressed themselves in extreme language, so attuned were they to the Lord's sense of betrayal by the people He had chosen. The institutions of Israelite worship were designed so that the people could sense God's presence in their midst, confess their sins, and renew their covenant relationship. They were to participate in these feasts in a heart-felt celebration of His past acts of grace. But the nation had grown careless; its worship had become shallow, carried out as popular custom—a casual "trampling" (v. 12) of the courts of the Lord. There was a profound disparity between the people's professed loyalty to the covenant and the "iniquity" (v. 13) and injustice (v. 15) they tolerated in violation of that very covenant's precepts. Under such conditions, it is hardly surprising that the Lord found their offerings "useless" (v. 13) and was disgusted by their prayer, incense, festivals, and other religious practices. God does not condemn the practices of worship He, Himself, has instituted, only the false motivation that distorts them. He welcomes worship from those who repent of their sins and come to His house to glorify His name.

1:16-20 Isaiah provided God's list of correctives for the social evil and inequality that rendered Israel's worship repugnant to him. These admonitions about just relationships do not imply that following them, alone, would bring God's blessing. The scarlet stain of sin can only be made "white as snow" (v. 18) through divine forgiveness. This happens when people have "willing and obedient" hearts and do not "refuse and rebel" against God (vv. 19-20).

2:2-5 Isaiah declared that war between nations would end "in the last days" (v. 2); the Lord would bring about that peaceful situation among nations through His arbitration (vv. 3-4). A precondition for peace is worldwide acceptance of God's instruction (v. 3), as His Word would prepare people to follow His path of justice and forgiveness. Peace will never result from the efforts of sinful humanity. Apart from the Lord's doing it is only the political slogan of anti-war protestors, the optimistic dream of national diplomats, or a nebulous religious ideal.

2:9 Why would the prophet pray, "Do not forgive them"? First, Isaiah may have been aligning himself with God's holy hatred of sin; divine justice would require that sinners not be excused without suffering the consequences of their disobedience. Second, the verb "forgive/bear" (*nasa'*) is often translated "lift up." The prophet might simply have been asking God to humble these proud people.

2:22 God created humanity in His image (Gn 1:26), and the psalmist affirmed that God crowned man with glory (Ps 8:5). Isaiah was not speaking about a person's intrinsic worth or importance in God's eyes. The issue here was reliance on other people who might not be realizing the dignity God had conferred on the human race. Isaiah was only reminding people that they should not trust in gold, armies, idols (vv. 7-8), other proud people (vv. 11,12,17), or the structures people erect to give them security (vv. 15-16). God alone is worthy of trust; relying on human devices is a waste of time.

3:10-11 God's covenant with Israel established a broad relationship between obedience and blessing, disobedience and curse (Lv 26:1-45; Dt 27–28). The book of Proverbs is based on this fundamental relationship between right actions and beneficial consequences, and the converse. Isaiah reaffirmed this principle, that "it will go well" for the righteous but badly for the wicked. This does not mean that righteousness or innocence, even when consistent, bring an immediate earthly reward—as the Bible's examples of Joseph (Gn 37–45), Job (Jb 1–2), the man blind from birth (Jn 9:1-4) and Jesus' own unjust execution (Mt 27) make clear. But the long-term biblical view (in those instances, and many others) affirms that the principle is valid. In the end, the righteous person is vindicated, in the resurrection (see Ac 10:36-41) if not before.

3:16-24 Isaiah portrayed the judgment of the proud women of Jerusalem in graphic and gruesome word pictures. His description was a realistic portrayal of what would happen should the army of another ancient Near Eastern nation conquer Jerusalem. The enemy would respect neither men, women, nor children, but would savagely abuse and slaughter them. Such would be the Lord's judgment if the wealthy women of Jerusalem, with the leaders of Judah, failed to repent of their pride and oppression of the poor

(cp. vv. 13-15). In seeking to move them to repentance, the prophet did not gloss over the possible consequence of continuing disregard for the ways of the Lord. Jerusalem's women would not be excused from punishment, for they participated with their husbands in the corruption of the culture (cp. the women of Samaria, Am 4:1). God will humble the proud and He alone will be exalted (Is 2:12,17).

4:1 So many men in Jerusalem would be killed in battle (3:25) that there will be no husbands left for these rich women. In their desperation to avoid the disgrace of not having husbands, they will stoop to the shameful state of sharing a man with other wives. Isaiah's words were no endorsement of polygamy or multiple sexual partners; he was warning these people of the dire consequences of maintaining their evil ways. His word picture was intended to motivate the people to repentance before this sad condition befell them.

4:2 Some interpreters view the phrase "branch [*tsemach*] of the LORD will be beautiful and glorious" as a sign of the land's fertility. They view it as a parallel to the next phrase, "the fruit of the land will be the pride and glory of Israel's survivors." Others take the "branch of the LORD" as a messianic title based on other occurrences of the word, used in the sense of the springing forth of salvation (2 Sm 23:5) or "a horn" (Ps 132:17) for David. These passages, because they speak of the continuing line of David, carry a messianic implication. Isaiah, a prophet of Jerusalem close to the royal court, likely knew these songs. Later he called the Messiah "a shoot" (*choter*) that will come up from the stump of Jesse, even a "branch" (*netser*) that will bear fruit (Is 11:1). Jeremiah referred to the "righteous Branch" or "Branch of righteousness" from David (Jr 23:5; 33:15) and Zechariah (Zch 3:8; 6:12) used the term "Branch" with a messianic meaning.

5:12,19 Isaiah identified a person who is blind to spiritual realities as one who cannot "perceive the LORD'S actions" or has refused to "see the work of His hands." While claiming to welcome the Lord's redemptive action (v. 19), they are unable to understand what He is already doing to enact His judgments. They insist on seeing the Lord at work, according to their own idea of what He is supposed to do, before they will believe in Him. Jesus rejected the idea of doing another miracle, or sign, to prove who He was (Mt 16:1-4). The people already had the Law and the Prophets (Lk 16:29-31). Isaiah understood that, eventually, God would blind the eyes of persistent unbelievers so that they would not be able to see the truth (Is 6:9-10; see Mk 4:11-12; Ac 28:27).

6:1,5 In Ex 33:20 the Lord told Moses that no man could see His face and live; Jn 1:18 confirms that no one has seen God. His eternal essence is invisible (1 Tm 1:17; 6:16); He is Spirit (Jn 4:23-24). Yet Isaiah claimed to have seen "the Lord seated on a high and lofty throne. . . the King, the LORD of Hosts." There are other places in Scripture where people see the Lord; for example, He revealed Himself to Moses and the elders of Israel on Mount Sinai (Ex 24:9-18), and to Ezekiel and John in glorious and mysterious visions (Ezk 1; 10; Rv 4:1-11). These "theophanies" (appearances of God) were typically accompanied by features drawn from the world of nature, such as storm or volcanic activity, and often included the manifestation of God's "glory," an awesome weight or radiance that both revealed and hid His presence. They could be internal visions—experiences of one person not shared by bystanders. Or they could be "literary visions," poetic expressions of the Lord's appearance composed in order to add force to the words of His spokesman. Isaiah's vision occurred in the temple (Is 6:4) and was described in terms of the worship conducted there. The chanting (v. 3) of the seraphim (lit. "burning ones") mirrored the antiphonal singing of the Levitical choirs, while the smoke of the altar (vv. 4,6) filled the air, suggesting a sacrificial ceremony in progress. Whatever the particular nature of Isaiah's vision, it was a pivotal event in his prophetic ministry.

6:9-10 The Lord summoned Isaiah to preach to the people so that they *could not* hear and see the truth and repent. Negating the possibility of their repentance seems to contradict Isaiah's call for the people to repent in 1:18-20, or his appeal to Ahaz to trust God in 7:9. The prophetic summons to repent had a double function; it invited people to return to the Lord, but also exposed those who, having hardened their hearts to God's appeal, were destined for judgment. Moses, similarly, was told to deliver his message to Pharaoh (Ex 3:1-10) although he would not listen to it (Ex 3:19). The Lord, through Isaiah, gave Ahaz the opportunity to follow His will (Is 7:3-9), but like Pharaoh, Ahaz hardened his heart and refused to follow the Lord's instructions (Is 7:10-13). The Lord is glorified not only by the response of those who heed His call to repent, but also by the consequences that follow for those who ignore His appeal. The NT writers saw the same principle at work in the response to the gospel of Jesus Christ (Mk 4:11-12; Jn 12:37-40; Ac 28:25-28).

7:3-9 Isaiah promised that Ahaz, king of Judah, had nothing to fear even though the armies of Rezin of Aram (Syria) and Pekah of Israel were attacking Judah. On the other hand, 2 Ch 28:5-8 indicates that Judah was defeated, losing 120,000 soldiers with 200,000 people taken captive. Isaiah's prophecy was based on the condition that Ahaz would trust God (Is 7:9), which he failed to

do. Thus the consequences of the war were more serious than what they would have been if Ahaz had acted in faith. Consideration of the Syro-Ephraimite War, on the whole, shows that while Judah lost some battles, it did not lose the war. Ahaz foolishly called on the king of Assyria, Tiglath-pileser III (2 Ch 28:16,20).

7:14 The Hebrew word *'almah* refers to a young woman before the age of marriage, and is sometimes translated "virgin." Some interpreters claim that Matthew misappropriated this verse (Mt 1:23) in applying it to the birth of Jesus. They believe Isaiah was referring to a woman in the time of Ahaz—either a son born to an *'almah* in Ahaz's harem or a son to Isaiah's wife (8:1-4), and that this "Immanuel" was a sign of hope for the future when "God will be with us." Others accept this immediate application, but also view the passage as prophetic of Christ (a "double fulfillment" approach). But Ahaz's good son Hezekiah was already born at this time; and Isaiah already had children, so his wife would not be called a "virgin" at this point in her life. Thus, many believe this prophecy only referred to the future birth of the Messiah. If so, this messianic application was expanded and verified through progressive revelation in 9:6-7, which announced that "a child will be born for us . . . He will reign on the throne of David."

8:6 Why would the people of Judah have "rejoiced with Rezin," the Syrian king who was attacking Jerusalem and whom God had promised to destroy (v. 4)? Some hypothesize that this referred to a group who wanted to join Rezin's revolt against Assyria, and were therefore happy to see the invader's military progress. Other translations emend the text to read "melt in fear" (RSV), picturing the fearful people of Judah terrorized before the Syrian onslaught. The best option is to interpret the people rejoicing over the announcement in verse 4 that the "wealth of Damascus . . . will be carried off," implying Rezin's defeat.

8:14 Paul (Rm 9:32-33) and Peter (1 Pt 2:6-8) applied this verse, together with Is 28:16, to Jesus Christ, who was rejected as Messiah by many of those to whom He came. Some interpreters object that their use of these passages is not consistent with what Isaiah meant when he spoke to his Jerusalem audience. Isaiah was speaking about Israel's attitude toward the Lord. If, in the NT perspective, Jesus is the revelation of the Father and His activity (e.g., Jn 1:1; 14:9; 2 Co 5:19; Php 2:6), then what Isaiah said about God could also be taken in a messianic sense, as applicable to Jesus.

9:6 Although Mt 4:16 applies the passage as a whole (vv. 2-7) to Jesus Christ by implication, the NT does not specifically apply to Him the names, or titles, listed in this verse. Some commentators believe Isaiah was describing a Judean ruler to come during his own time; thus, these names were applied to the reigns of Hezekiah, Josiah, and even Ahaz. But even if the names do not recur, as such, in the NT, they fit the ministry and messianic role of Jesus. As a "Wonderful Counselor," He is a doer of "miracles, wonders, and signs" (Ac 2:22) who sends the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, to continue His work (Jn 14:26). Hailed as "My Lord and my God" (Jn 20:28) in His resurrection, Jesus has been given "all authority . . . in heaven and on earth" (Mt 28:18). As one with the Father (Jn 10:30), He is eternal—"alive forever and ever" (Rv 1:18). As a member of David's royal line (Rm 1:3) He is the Prince who brings peace between Jew and non-Jew (Eph 2:14), whose rule over all kingdoms (Rv 1:5) brings an end to wars.

10:5-7 The Lord summoned the Assyrians to perform His work of judgment against Judah during the Syro-Ephraimite War, while at the same time proclaiming His "woe" upon the northern enemy, whom He will punish for its arrogant acts (v. 12) in despoiling Judah. God appointed Assyria to a specific task, but that nation failed to follow His plan (v. 7), became proud (vv. 8-14), and boasted about its false gods (v. 10). Therefore, even the instrument of the Lord's judgment came under that judgment.

11:6-7 Some interpreters view this prophecy as an exaggeration of the peaceful times under the rule of "the stump of Jesse" (v. 1), meaning the rule of Hezekiah. Since nothing close to these conditions ever characterized Hezekiah's reign, these critics allege that Isaiah's prophecy failed. But it was not uncommon in the ancient Near East to expect the rise of a new political leader to produce an idyllic time of peace (e.g., the Egyptian Prophecy of Nefer-Rohu, and certain Mesopotamian documents) and a return to Garden-of-Eden like conditions. Such a vision for an eventual restoration of paradise is consistent with Hosea's claim that in the last days God will make a covenant with the animals (Hs 2:18), or with the original covenant blessings predicting peace with animals (Lv 26:6). Psalm 36:6-9 speaks of the Lord's preserving both "man and beast" in the context of the "refreshing stream" of God's presence, a phrase that could be translated "Your Edenic streams." Similar promises of restored Eden-like conditions appear in Is 51:3; Ezk 34:25; 36:35.

13:8-16 Isaiah presented a picture of "the day of the LORD" that is coming for the destruction of sinners (v. 9). Although the context was the warfare of Isaiah's time, the prophet described it in cosmic word-pictures: darkness of the sun and stars (v. 10), the shaking of the earth (v. 13). Equally extreme, in typical prophetic rhetoric, is the description of the cruelty to be inflicted upon men, women, and children (vv. 15-16). In reality, such horror was typical of ancient warfare, as ancient Assyrian war records illustrate, and is not unknown in medieval and modern times as well. To describe these pitiless acts, even in the name of the Lord, is not to claim that He approves of them. The prophet merely predicted what sinful people will do to each other.

13:17 Isaiah predicted that the Medes would defeat Babylon, while the historical records indicate that the demise of the Babylonians was not the doing of the Medes alone. Isaiah was not claiming that the Medes were the sole conquerors. The exact date of this conquest is unknown, and some commentators hypothesize that Isaiah was referring to the defeat of the Babylonians by the Assyrian king Tiglath-pileser III (in 729 B.C.), who had Median soldiers in his army. Some point to Sennacherib's attack on Babylon in 689 B.C., while others believe this passage refers to Cyrus's defeat of Babylon in 539 B.C. If Isaiah delivered this prophecy around 701 B.C. when Babylon was tempting Hezekiah to rebel and form an alliance with them, then Isaiah would be condemning the Babylonian kingdom of Merodach-baladan that Hezekiah was trusting. That kingdom fell in 689 B.C. when the Assyrian King Sennacherib besieged Babylon (23:13), tore down its walls, depopulated the city, and made the location into a meadow. The Medes may have joined the Assyrian army in defeating Babylon.

14:4-21 Isaiah offered a "song of contempt," or taunt, against the king of Babylon. Because the king's name was omitted, commentators have speculated that this passages refers to (1) Tiglath-pileser III, the Assyrian king who declared himself king of Babylon; (2) Nebuchadnezzar or Nabonidus, the last king of Babylon (Dn 5); (3) Merodach-baladan, the Babylonian king who made a treaty with Hezekiah (Is 39); or (4) a symbolic representation of any tyrant, not a specific king. If Isaiah was trying to dissuade Hezekiah from trusting the Babylonians (Is 39), Merodach-baladan is the most likely candidate. This passage has also been taken as a metaphorical reference to the fall of Satan (Lucifer), the "shining morning star" (v. 12). This interpretation is suggested by the Latin translation of "shining star" as Lucifer (lit. "light-bearer"). This later Latin identification has nothing to do with Isaiah's original reference to a real king who would die and be powerless in Sheol, the place of the deceased spirits (v. 15). Calling the Babylonian ruler the "morning star" may have been a sarcastic reference to his pretense and arrogance.

15:1-5 Isaiah's laments in chapters 13–23 were most likely uttered before a Judean audience, not in the lands to which they referred. It may seem that Isaiah laments the demise of Judah's enemies, and some interpreters have suggested that parts or all of chapters 15–16 were ironic laments intended to taunt or mock Moab, Judah's long-time enemy. That view is probably incorrect in light of Isaiah's personal declaration of deep sorrow in verse 5 and 16:9. Isaiah lamented that the Moabites had rejected the possibility of finding refuge from their enemies in Judah's hope, the enduring throne of David (16:4-5). It is worth noting that the Davidic royal family had, in Ruth the wife of Boaz, a Moabite ancestry (Ru 4:13-22). Perhaps the prophet reflected God's sorrow over Moab so the Judeans would recognize the hopelessness of following Moab's path.

16:5 Some commentators assert that the judge who will sit on the throne "in the tent of David" was Hezekiah, who would come to the aid of the Moabites during their time of oppression by the Assyrians. Since this Davidic ruler will "execute justice" and "will sit on the throne forever," his characteristics coincide with those of the Davidic Messiah in 9:6-7 (see 2 Sm 7:12-16). Thus, Isaiah was pointing to someone much greater than Hezekiah.

17:1 Damascus continued to be a city in the OT era (Ezk 27:18), the NT (Ac 9:19-27), and today. This does not negate Isaiah's prophecy, which referred to the destruction of Damascus as the powerful capital of Syria during the Syro-Ephraimite War. His words were consistent with his prophecy about the fall of Damascus in 7:7-8 and 8:4, and the announcement that Assyria defeated Damascus and exiled its inhabitants to Kir (2 Kg 16:9). After many years in ruins, it later became a small city in the Assyrian province of Hamath. Isaiah was not claiming that it would remain a ruin for all time.

18:7 This prophecy came to Isaiah approximately 705–701 B.C. when the Cushite dynasty of Shabaka was in control of Egypt. Isaiah gave a word for the Cushite messengers to relay to their leaders about God's plan to defeat their enemy (compared to pruning branches in v. 5) and leave their dead soldiers for the birds to eat (v. 6). Although the enemy was not identified, the context of this section and historical sources pointed to Assyria. This was the nation that would "roar like the roaring of the sea" (17:12) and then be suddenly gone (17:14), a prophecy that pointed to God's destruction of the Assyrian army that surrounded Jerusalem in one night (37:36). Although no historical documents relate the Cushites' coming to Jerusalem to give gifts to the Lord, this idea is consistent with other prophecies about all nations coming to worship God in Zion (2:2-4), and the specific prophecy that the Egyptians would worship God (19:18-25).

19:18-25 Were there ever five cities in Egypt that swore allegiance to Israel's God, was there ever a Jewish altar in Egypt for worship, did God miraculously send a Savior to deliver the Egyptians, and was there ever a highway connecting Jerusalem, Egypt, and Assyria? Some suggest that the prophecy was fulfilled after the exile when a group of Hebrews fled to Egypt, settled in four Egyptian cities (Jr 44:1) and later built a temple in Leontopolis around 170 B.C. This approach is problematic since most of those who fled to Egypt rejected the Lord or worshiped Him along with pagan deities. Another approach sees these words fulfilled after

the spread of Christianity to Egypt during the Byzantine era. A third view is that this prophecy awaits fulfillment during the future eschatological period (Is 2:2-4).

20:2-4 Around 711 B.C. the Assyrians captured Ashdod, the Philistine city that depended on Egypt for help. Isaiah's symbolic act of nakedness was a warning to the people of Judah not to trust Egypt, as the people of Ashdod had done, because before long Egyptians also would be taken away naked as prisoners to Nineveh. The term "naked" can mean one has no clothes on at all (Gn 2:25; 3:7; Jb 1:21), but can also be used in situations where one is almost, but not totally, naked (Is 58:7;Jb 22:6; 24:7). This instruction did not require Isaiah to be "naked" the entire day, but at various times during those three years his dramatic presence would communicate a vivid warning that was more powerful than a verbal message. The text does not reveal what Isaiah said to people as he went about naked.

21:2-9 Some critics who admit that the feasting at the fall of Babylon (v. 5) may coincide with Belshazzar's feast (Dn 5) still see a contradiction between the anguishing battle for Babylon described in Is 21:2-5 and the Cyrus Cylinder that indicates that Babylon fell without a fight in one evening. These contradictory pictures of the fall of Babylon suggest that Isaiah was not prophesying about the future fall of Babylon in 539 B.C. mentioned in Dn 5. Isaiah's mourning over the fall of Babylon also does not fit the 539 B.C. events, for the Jews at that time would be glad to hear that Babylon was being punished. It seems more appropriate to relate this prophecy to Hezekiah's intent to form a coalition with the Babylonian ruler Merodach-baladan (39:1-8). This prophecy about the near fall of Babylon would demonstrate that Babylon was not a trustworthy treaty partner; so Hezekiah should put his trust in the Lord instead. This prophecy fits these events because (1) Merodach-baladan was from the marshy lowland (cp. "desert by the sea," v. 1); (2) Babylon was an ally of Judah at this time, and its defeat would explain the anguish Isaiah expressed in verses 3-4,10; and (3) the Elamites and Medes (v. 2) were allies of Babylon, fighting against the Assyrian King Sennacherib to save it. Thus Isaiah was looking ahead to the conquest of Babylon in 689 B.C. at the hands of the Assyrians.

22:12-14 Why would the people of Jerusalem celebrate (vv. 2,13) when the city of Jerusalem was in danger of being destroyed? Isaiah's description fits the events connected with Sennacherib's attack on Judah in 701 B.C., not the fall of Jerusalem to Nebuchadnezzar in 586 B.C. The people in Jerusalem had prepared their weapons, repaired the walls, and dug a tunnel from the Gihon spring, outside the wall, to the Pool of Siloam within (vv. 8-11; 2 Ch 32:3-4). Now they were celebrating the completion of their preparations for siege (Is 22:2,13). Instead of trusting in God their Creator (v. 11), they were depending on their own efforts to save them. Isaiah found this false confidence appalling. Many people outside Jerusalem had already died, fled, or been taken captive (v. 3) and the land was still occupied by foreign troops (vv. 6-7). Isaiah wept in despair over those who had already lost their lives (v. 4), and those who would soon lose their lives on the day of the Lord (v. 12). If there were no change in the people's trust, God would hold them accountable. Their sin would not be "wiped out" (v. 14), but they would be.

22:15-20 When Sennacherib was about to attack Jerusalem (36:3), Shebna was scribe and Eliakim was steward of the palace, but in this passage Shebna is named as steward. Accordingly, some believe this Shebna is a different man. But in verse 19 Isaiah predicted that Shebna would be demoted. It appears that Shebna was the king's steward during the preparations for Sennacherib's attack, but that Eliakim replaced him before the attack.

23:8-9 The city of Tyre was situated on an almost impregnable island in the Mediterranean Sea (v. 4). It was wealthy (v. 3) and had many colonies to trade with (v. 8). It considered itself invincible. But God's plan was to destroy Tyre (v. 9), and this occurred when Sennacherib overcame Sidon in his third year and put Tyre under siege for five years. An unbeliever may attribute defeat in warfare to poor judgment by leaders, a weaker military, inferior equipment, freak accidents of nature, or the superior strategy of an opposing general. But the believer credits God with planning the defeat of evil nations.

23:15-18 Many doubt that Tyre suddenly reappeared as an important power in exactly 70 years or that the people of Tyre ever dedicated their wages to the Lord. It is impossible to say exactly when this 70-year period began or ended, but if the Assyrians humbled the Phoenicians around 702 B.C. the 70 years would extend to around 630 B.C., when the Assyrian Empire collapsed after the death of Ashurbanipal. Since there are few historical documents about Tyre, no one knows if the city ever sent gifts to Jerusalem. Shortly after the end of the 70 years (630 B.C.), the Judean King Josiah rebuilt the temple in 621 B.C. (2 Kg 22; 2 Ch 34). While there is no specific mention that Tyre assisted in this project, Phoenicia was the normal source for the timber used in the temple's reconstruction (2 Kg 22:6; 2 Ch 34:11), and it is possible that Josiah depended on masons from Tyre, as had Solomon (1 Kg 5).

24:14-18 Some interpreters see an inconsistency between the rejoicing described in verses 14-16 and the context, which pictures the devastation and treachery of war. As a result, they assume Isaiah was mocking those who were praising the Lord. Isaiah was moved to weeping because he foresaw that "terror, pit, and snare" (v. 17) were awaiting the people of Jerusalem because of Sennacherib's attack. But there is nothing in Isaiah's words that would condemn people from the east and west for extolling the Lord's majesty. Though Judah was in dire straits in the present circumstance (vv. 16-18), a day of victory and joy would come.

25:6 Some commentators find Isaiah drawing on ancient Near Eastern mythology when he mentioned a worldwide pilgrimage to Zion (2:2-3) where people will present gifts to God (60:1-22) and celebrate God's kingship at a coronation banquet. This event is not similar to the enthronement of Baal at a feast of the gods on Mount Zaphon or the coronation feast for the Babylonian god Marduk, for these verses in Isaiah make no reference to a pilgrimage, bringing gifts, offering sacrifice, or the crowning of a king.

25:7-8 The theological doctrine about the end of death is often relegated to late postexilic texts (e.g. Dn 12:1-2) and reinterpreted as a simple way of saying that death resulting from warfare will end. If the shroud people wear to mourn their loved ones will be taken away(2 Sam 15:30; 19:5), this implies that death will not happen. Since death is the punishment the enemies of God justly deserve because of sin, once His enemies in heaven and earth are vanquished no one will deserve to die. Other early eschatological passages refer to the life God will provide for His people forever (2 Sm 7:16; Is 51:6; 60:21; Mc 4:7). The complete removal of death will be a central sign of God's reign.

26:14,19 In verse 14 Isaiah declared that "the dead do not live, departed spirits do not rise up." Then, in verse 19 he stated that "your dead will live; their bodies will rise." This apparent conflict vanishes when the statements are placed in context. He referred to past oppressors of Israel, the "wicked" who act "unjustly" (v. 10), the "other lords" who had ruled over God's people and whom God had already "visited and destroyed" (vv. 13-14). These oppressors could no longer attack God's people. The situation changed with verse 19; in the future God's people who die will live. Some interpret this to refer to the revival of Israel after the exile, similar to Ezekiel's description of God's revival of the dry bones (Ezk 37:1-14). The lack of any supporting background in this passage—such as a return from Bab-ylon, reconstruction of ruined cities, or restoration of Davidic rule—renders this interpretation less likely. It is possible to see this as deliverance from Sheol (Ps 16:10-11; 18:5-6; 49:14-15), or never having to experience death. A third approach understands this passage to mean that a person can have life after death. The fact that Elijah and Elisha brought to life two boys who had died (1 Kg 17:17-24; 2 Kg 4:18-37), and that a dead man came back to life when his body touched the bones of Elisha (2 Kg 13:20-21), indicates that individual resurrection from the dead was known and experienced long before the time of Isaiah.

27:1 The name Leviathan is found elsewhere in the Bible (Jb 3:8; 41:1-32; Ps 74:14; 104:26) and appears to refer to a sea creature parallel to Rahab, which symbolized Egypt (Jb 26:12; Ps 87:4; 89:10; Is 30:7; 51:9). The Israelites and the prophet Isaiah were well aware of ancient Near Eastern beliefs about monsters that battle one another (Baal and Mot; Marduk and Tiamat). Biblical use of these mythological creatures as literary symbols does not indicate that the inspired authors believed in them. To the contrary, Isaiah's use of Leviathan as a metaphor for the strong nation of Assyria amounts to divesting the name of any mythological or religious significance attached to it.

28:7-13 Verse 10, often cited favorably in support of the value of consistent teaching, has a virtually opposite meaning. In Hebrew it has the repetitive, monosyllabic tone of baby talk, as the preceding verse ("infants . . . babies," v. 9) suggests. It mimics the babbling of drunken priests and prophets (v. 7) who were mouthing useless instructions to the people. When the word of the Lord came back with the same babbling message (v. 13), the reference was to the undecipherable words of the would-be Assyrian conquerors ("stammering speech and in a foreign language," v. 11). Isaiah was warning the Judeans that if they were receiving only the most infantile, incoherent teaching from their spiritual leaders, they would fall into the hands of an equally incoherent enemy. Paul cited verses 11-12 with reference to speaking in tongues (1 Co 14:21), indicating that while the practice may be beneficial for believers, it is repellent to unbelievers, for whom a direct prophetic word is more convicting.

28:15,18 It makes little sense for anyone to "cut a deal with Death" (lit. "make [cut] a covenant with death") or to say "we have made falsehood our refuge." Isaiah was mockingly putting words in the mouths of his audience. Hezekiah's ill-considered political agreement with Egypt to gain protection from the Assyrian attack of Sennacherib in 701 B.C. was stylized as a "deal with death" because the rulers of Judah were hoping that Egypt would rescue them from Assyria. It was a false and deceptive hope, because historically Egypt was always an unreliable ally. The phrase "deal with Death" may be the background for Paul's phrase "ministry

of death" in 2 Co 3:7, where he applied it to a false reliance on the old covenant, or law of Moses, which cannot give life (see 1 Co 15:56-57).

28:16 Paul (Rm 9:33) and Peter (1 Pt 2:6-8) applied this text in the Greek version, together with Is 8:14, to Jesus Christ. Isaiah, here, said that God and His promises are a sure foundation for the believer, who "will be unshakable." The Greek translation takes the Hebrew verb *yachish* "have haste, anxiety" in a different sense; the NT texts, following the Greek, have "will not [*or* never] be put to shame" and apply the idea of the "cornerstone" to Christ. Hebrew verbs are typically rich in their range of meanings, depending on their forms, and translators into another language (e.g., English or Greek) often have to choose words that may not incorporate the same nuances. On the application of the "precious cornerstone" to Jesus, see Ps 118:22.

29:9-10 Although people shut themselves off from God's truth, in the larger perspective the understanding of God's sovereignty required the prophet to recognize their refusal to hear as the action of God Himself for purposes of judgment. Isaiah was confronted with the same issue in 6:9-10. When people, even supposed prophets and seers, blind themselves to the genuine message from the Lord and fall into a drunken-like stupor, eventually God will shut their eyes to the truth and judge them (see Rm 1:21-25).

29:15-16 The ancient Israelite skeptics were people who tried to hide from God, imagining that God did not really see what they were doing (v. 15). They set themselves up as equal to God, the master creative Potter, denying that God made them and rejecting His sovereign knowledge and control over their world.

30:7 On references to ancient Near Eastern mythological monsters in the Bible, see note on 27:1.

30:18 The prophet clearly indicated that Judah was sinful in relying on Egypt (30:1-5) and in rejecting God's message to them (30:12-14). In view of this, it did not seem "just" for the Lord to have compassion on these sinful people (30:18). God's justice, in the OT, is not an abstraction, but an aspect of His covenant with His people. First, the nation will experience God's judgment through the attack of the Assyrians, pictured as the collapse of a wall and the shattering of a jar (30:13-14). But once the people had suffered the consequences of their lack of faith, the Lord would "show you mercy" because the covenant, grounded not in their obedience but in His grace, still stood.

30:26 If the sun were, literally, to burn seven times brighter than at present, everything on earth would be burned up. The prophet was using a poetic image to affirm that instead of darkness, destruction, and lack of fertility, there would be abundant water (v. 25) and light for the healing of the land (see Mal 4:2).

30:28 How is it just for God to deceive people? The Assyrians were brought by God to carry out His judgment against Judah (10:5); they were likened to a destructive torrent of roaring flooding water from God's mouth (cp. 8:8; 28:2,15,17 where Assyria was pictured as a mass of water). But the Assyrians did not follow God's plan; instead, they acted in pride (36:4-20; 37:21-29). In a picturesque image, Isaiah compared the results of God's action against the people of Assyria to putting a bridle in the mouth of a horse to lead it astray. This implied that God was leading Assyria on a path that would result in its own destruction because of its sins (see1 Kg 22:22-24).

31:8-9 The event that caused the withdrawal of the Assyrian king and his army was not military action byJudah or Egypt, but the intervention of angel of the Lord who slew 185,000 fighters in one night (37:36). It was fear that motivated the Assyrians' "rock" (their king) to flee back to Nineveh with his forces.

32:1-20 The description of a coming righteous king fit Hezekiah, but it would be an exaggeration to claim that features described in verses 15-20 were fulfilled in Hezekiah's time. The promise of God opening the eyes of the blind (v. 3; 35:5; 42:18), pouring out His Spirit (11:1), transforming nature (30:23-26), and inaugurating a new age of security and peace (2:2-4; 9:6; 28:12) are all associated with the time when the Messiah will reign in Zion. These features indicate the messianic thrust of this passage.

34:1-17 The prophet was one who had been admitted to the counsels of God, to whom the Lord had opened His heart. He saw that, while the Lord was grieved over His people's lack of trust in Him, He was equally incensed at the hostility pagan nations—in this instance, Edom—had displayed toward Zion (v. 8). Isaiah painted a vivid word picture of the wrath to come upon the enemies of Judah because of the Lord's anger. His poetic imagery extended even to cosmic phenomena ("the heavenly bodies will dissolve," v. 4). Once the Lord's sword had "drunk its fill in the heavens" (v. 5) it would move on to a "slaughter" in Edom, whose land would be "soaked with blood" (vv. 6-7). Isaiah drew on the mineral resources of the adjacent Dead Sea region to portray the land as "burning pitch" (v. 9). So great would be the devastation that Edom's territory itself would become barren, fit only for a catalog of desert creatures (vv. 11-15). Only such highly charged language could begin to hint at God's wrath in store for those who reject the truth (Rm 1:18; 2:5). New Testament writers (e.g., the book of Rv) borrow OT prophetic imagery of this sort to portray the destiny of sinful people and cultures. God loves the world (Jn 3:16) and, through Christ, has made it possible for those who have rejected His way to be reconciled to Him (2 Co 5:19). But persistent opposition to His program of redemption will eventuate in judgment, whether in the literal terms described in this passage or in some other, but no less devastating, form.

35:1-10 A shift of scene occurs here. The desert that Edom had become (34:8-15) was no longer in view; this passage was a poetic image of the wilderness of Judah coming to life again, with the return of "the ransomed of the Lord" to Zion (v. 10). Jerusalem did not fall during Isaiah's time, so a "return" did not occur then; therefore, many interpreters consider that, in this passage, Isaiah was looking ahead to the time of the Jews' return from exile in Babylon more than a century and a half later. Some commentators consider this passage the work of an inspired, but unnamed, disciple of Isaiah (his disciples were mentioned in 8:16) who wrote during the exile, though there is nothing here that specifically points to a later date of composition. Other interpreters view this passage as a picture of the time when God will establish His kingdom (2:2-4), and His people "will see the glory of the Lord" (35:2). The promise that "God Himself will be with them" (Rv 21:3) and "they will see His face" (Rv 22:4) is reinforced at the end of the NT; the same writer also affirmed that, in Christ, "we observed His glory" (Jn 1:14).

36:1 Chapters 36–39 duplicate 2 Kg 18:13–20:19, with variations. Isaiah 36:1 says that Sennacherib captured all the fortified cities of Judah, while verse 2 indicates that the fortified city of Jerusalem was not yet captured. The verb *taphas* means to "lay hold of, seize." Although Sennacherib's forces had surrounded Jerusalem and seized control of its surrounding territory, they never entered the city itself to capture it.

36:7 The Rabshakeh, Sennacherib's representative, claimed that Hezekiah had removed the high places (rural sanctuaries) and destroyed the altars of Yahweh. Being ignorant of the religious history of Canaan, he was unaware that the altars of the high places were pagan altars, not places where Yahweh was worshiped. Hezekiah had removed the high places (2 Kg 18:4) but had not destroyed altars of the Lord.

37:7,38 Isaiah's prediction of the elimination of Sennacherib by the sword did not have immediate fulfillment, but eventually two of his own sons killed him (v. 38). The Babylonian Chronicle records that this occurred about 20 years later, in 681 B.C., when Sennacherib's son Arad-ninlil assassinated him and Esarhaddon became king of Assyria.

37:9 Two historical problems exist in this verse: (1) Tirhakah did not become king of Egypt until 690 B.C., more than ten years later than this event; (2) Sennacherib's Assyrian records indicate a battle with the Egyptians at Eltekeh before the siege of Jerusalem, not after it started. It is true that Tirhakah was only the military commander of Egyptian forces in 701 B.C., but since he later became king the prophet refers to him by this better-known title. As to the second problem, possibly there was a second Egyptian conflict with the Assyrians; or perhaps Tirhakah threatened war, but the two armies never actually fought.

37:26,28 Some question whether God knows the future and doubt that He has planned what will happen in history. The Lord revealed to Isaiah the comforting news that all of Sennacherib's past and future actions were known and planned, so that He is sovereignly in control of history, not Sennacherib (vv. 24-25).

37:36 Some find the claim that 185,000 fighters died in one night unbelievable, particularly since it is unconfirmed by any Assyrian document. But it was standard practice for Assyrian rulers like Sennacherib to omit mention of embarrassing defeats in their annals. This was a large number of soldiers, so some prefer to interpret the word *'eleph* not as a numeral but a term for a military unit, not necessarily equaling a thousand men in strength. Whatever the case, the incident was a clear demonstration of the Lord's power over the Assyrians.

38:1 The introductory phrase "in those days" was probably a general time marker covering the earlier reign of Hezekiah; verse 6 seems to indicate that Hezekiah's illness occurred shortly after Sennacherib's attack on Jerusalem, although the text had already narrated the Assyrian withdrawal (37:37). Isaiah's narrative followed the same order as 2 Kg.

38:1,5 The Lord's word to Hezekiah, that "you are about to die; you will not recover," was modified by His later word, "I am going to add 15 years to your life." It is not always easy in Scripture to distinguish between conditional and unconditional predictions or promises. However, Jr 18 indicates (as does the story of Jonah) that God will sometimes have compassion and not carry out His threats if people repent and intercede for divine mercy. A prophet's announcement of judgment was often intended to motivate people to avoid that judgment by correcting their disobedient behavior.

38:8 The text does not say that the sign involved the stopping of the sun or the interruption of the earth's rotation. The sign involved the reversing of the shadow on the sundial built onto the palace steps. No explanation is given for how this occurred. Today one can only speculate about a miraculous interference in the refraction of the sun's rays, or the introduction of a new source of light in a location different from that of the sun. Whatever the cause, that which seems physically impossible is not so for God.

38:21 Was Hezekiah's healing from this sickness real-ly a miracle or was it just the result of some common ancient medicinal practices? Both Isaiah and Hezekiah understood that it was the Lord who spared the king's life. The application of a common remedy to healthe skin did not undercut the miraculous nature of the deed any more than Jesus' application of mud on the eyes of the blind man (Jn 9:6) reduced the nature of that miracle.

39:1 This verse comes after the Assyrian threats against Jerusalem were resolved through God's miraculous defeat of the Assyrian army in chapters 36–37. The phrase "at that time" appears to place these events after 701 B.C., but Merodach-baladan was king only from 721–710 and 704–703 B.C., so a date after 701 is unlikely. Some suggest that Hezekiah's sickness should be dated as early as 711 B.C. while others maintain a date around 703 B.C. All that is certain is that the events of chapter 39 occurred after those related in chapter 38, for the letter and gift came after the Babylonian king heard that Hezekiah had recovered from his sickness. The same order of events occurs in 2 Kg.

39:7 The defeat of Judah and exile in Babylon took place in 605, 597, and 586 B.C., so how could Hezekiah's son go into exile? Manasseh, Hezekiah's son, was taken to Babylon (2 Ch 33:11), but the term "son" can also refer to grandsons and subsequent descendants.

39:8 Hezekiah seems to be saying that since God's judgment did not affect him personally, the future consequences for his actions were acceptable to him. Such an attitude seems self-centered and uncaring about those who would follow him. It is possible to take his words this way, but some interpreters understand them as Hezekiah's submissive and a reluctant acceptance of the long-term results of his mistake.

40:2 Some interpreters view Jerusalem's "time of servitude" that would end as the 70 years of the Babylonian exile, a century and a half after the time of Isaiah. Accordingly, they conclude that the following chapters were the work of one or more later disciples (8:16), whom critics sometimes call Deutero-Isaiah or Trito-Isaiah. Nevertheless, since Isaiah was a prophet, God could reveal to him that the nation's exile would end long before it occurred (see Am 3:7). On the other hand, the word *tsava'* can mean "warfare," a translation that relates the prophecy to the end of Sennacherib's attack on Judah.

40:3 The writers of the NT Gospels (Mt 3:3; Mk 1:3; Lk 3:4) connect these words with the ministry of John the Baptist. Isaiah saw a general picture of someone making preparation for the Lord's coming (v. 5), while Malachi later specified that this person would be "My messenger" (Mal 3:1). Although Isaiah and Malachi were not given the messenger's name, John the Baptist fulfilled the role in preparing the way for Jesus, the Son of God. The announcement that "all humanity will see" God's glory (v. 5) suggests that Isaiah was talking about an event of greater scope than the Jews' return from exile—that is, an event of universal significance for the coming of the kingdom of God.

40:3-11 Comparisons between Isaiah's call in these verses and in 6:1-8 have convinced some that another prophet, perhaps a later unnamed disciple of Isaiah (8:16), was here relating his call to proclaim the Lord's message. There are verbal similarities: a voice was calling (the seraphim in 6:3, unspecified in 40:3); all flesh would see the glory of the Lord, similar to His glory filling the earth (6:3; 40:5); and the "good news" (v. 9) reversed the terrible news in Isaiah's call (6:9-10). Although someone was instructed to speak "good news," this message was not contrary to what Isaiah had already spoken (2:2-5; 4:2-6; 9:1-7; 11:1-6; 14:1-3; 19:18-25; 32; 35). There is no indication that a different prophet was being called to ministry in this passage, and the oldest Isaiah manuscripts (from the Dead Sea Scrolls) show no break between chapters 39 and 40. Those who were summoned to proclaim the good news were the people of Zion and Jerusalem (v. 9), not a new prophet.

40:10-11 Isaiah depicted the salvation to come for Jerusalem with two metaphors for the Lord's action: the warrior-king bringing gifts to his people, and the shepherd who cares tenderly for his flock. This is not a mixed metaphor; in the ancient Near East kings were often compared to shepherds, a connection made in the original prophecy of David's enduring dynasty(2 Sm 7:7-8). The NT saw this prophecy realized in Jesus Christ, who is both the good shepherd (Jn 10:11-15) and the mighty warrior King (Rv 19:11-16).

40:12-26 In a passage celebrating the surpassing power and wisdom of the Creator God, Isaiah ridiculed man-made objects of worship (vv. 19-20). In pagan religions the idol was a symbol of a divinity—not the deity itself. The image stood for the mythological qualities and abilities of the "god" it was supposed to represent. In their critique of idolatrous religions, Israelite writers never mention that fact. Instead, as in this passage, they focus on the idol itself as a product of human artifice and imagination (see Ps 115:4-8; Is 41:7; 44:9-19; 46:1-2,6-7). It is a way of pointing out that the whole polytheistic religious system —like the block of stone or of wood overlaid with precious metal—is only a human creation. The sincerity of the idol-maker cannot make his religion valid, for no real divinity is behind it. Only the God *who has revealed Himself* in His creation, and His redemptive acts in the history of His people, is worthy of trust and worship.

40:22 Isaiah spoke of God who "is enthroned above the circle of the earth." Some commentators have cited this as evidence that biblical writers were aware that the earth is a globe, not a flat surface. While the shape of the planet was not Isaiah's concern here, his phrase is a reminder that modern critics should be cautious about ascribing a "primitive" or "pre-scientific" outlook to Scripture, as a way of discounting its relevance to contemporary cultures.

41:8-9 Although God's choice of one nation to be His special people may seem unfair to other nations, that choice came with the heavy responsibility for the people in that chosen nation to live holy lives and function as God's servants in this sinful world. It was through the seed of Abram that God would bless the rest of mankind (Gn 12:3). The people of Israel frequently failed to be God's servants, for they were not always faithful to His calling to be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation—one that would obey Him and keep His covenant (Ex 19:5-6). Israel's past failures did not nullify God's love (Dt 7:6-8), nor did His judgments for their disobedience nullify God's plans for His people.

41:14 Genesis 1:28 and Ps 8:5-8 present a picture of mankind as created in God's image and given charge of the management of the earth. Calling Jacob (Israel) a "worm" appears to negate humanity's exalted status. In this poetic context, the prophet was not stating that people are worthless; he was merely comparing a weak and fearful people to the glory and power of their holy God, who is able to redeem them. Some interpreters have suggested that "worm" was not a belittling expression, but a term of endearment.

41:17-20 On the surface, these words appear to promise a topographical transformation of the land, either of the Judean wilderness or the Arabian desert through which the returning exiles would travel. (Since no location is specified, Isaiah may have been speaking of a world transformed in the kingdom of God.) Warfare and depopulation turned much of the land of Palestine (ancient Israel and Judah) into unproductive wilderness, but—as modern Israeli reforestation and agriculture have demonstrated—the land is capable of greater productivity when well managed. Nevertheless, Isaiah may have been speaking metaphorically about the effect of the "water" of renewed worship of the Lord on the spiritual productivity of His people (cp. Ezk 47:1-12; Jn 4:10; 7:37-39; Rv 22:1-2).

41:22-26 The Lord gives insight to His prophets, who in His name are able to interpret the past and see into that which is to come. Israel's God has declared from the beginning what would happen. Other "gods" are powerless; they can neither describe the distant past nor predict the distant future. Those who choose to worship them are as "detestable" as they are (v. 24).

42:1-7 The chosen "Servant" was identified as Israel in 41:8; therefore, many commentators would identify Israel as the "Servant" in this passage also. There are similarities between God's servants as Isaiah described them, and the prophet may have been purposely leaving his hearers with some ambiguity (he was called to preach in such a way that they might not understand, 6:10). But in contrast to Israel, God's blind servant (42:19), this Servant will establish justice in the earth, a theme associated with the role of the Messiah (9:7; 11:3-5; 32:1). In addition, the role of this Servant does not fit what Israel did. In Mt 12:18-21 Jesus applied these words to Himself.

42:21 The future glorification of God's "instruction" in the law (*torah*) does not contradict NT reference to the limited value of the law of Moses (e.g., 1 Co 15:54; Gl 3:1-23). The instruction of God is not limited to what He revealed on Mount Sinai. In this context God's people were blind to what God said to them (Is 42:18-20), but in the future the righteousness and justice of God's way of dealing with people will be understood, as the deeper meaning of His instruction becomes clear (Mt 5:17-20). Even the NT upholds the "law of Christ" (Gl 6:2) and the "royal law" (Jms 2:8).

43:2 These promises were metaphors of God's protection and help as His people passed through times of difficulty. In the same way, God had helped their ancestors pass through the waters of the Red Sea when they were suffering oppression in Egypt.

43:3-4 There is no record of a time when God gave Egypt, Cush, and Seba as a ransom for Israel—and surely God does not need to pay off anyone to redeem His people. Some believe this verse referred to the Persian defeat of Egypt, but this occurred in the reign of Cambyses, after Cyrus had already decreed that the Israelites could return home (Ezr 1:1-3). This passage can be taken as a symbolic affirmation that, because of God's great love for His people (Is 43:4), He will do anything to redeem them.

43:11-13 The Lord offers a clear statement of His oneness; Judah has no other Savior, because He alone is God. The theme is reminiscent of the Ten Commandments: "I am the LORD your God . . . Do not have other gods besides Me" (Ex 20:2-3). Some critics have suggested that the Ten Commandments and the Sinai covenant were traditions associated more with northern Israel than with Judah. A passage of this type reveals how even a Judean prophet stood firmly on the covenant commandments given to Israel. Reference to the people as "witnesses" (see Jos 24:22) strengthens the association of this passage with covenant language.

43:14 Was this prophecy ever fulfilled? Since Cyrus was welcomed into Babylon without much resistance when he defeated the nation, why would the Persians need to take away defeated Babylonians as fugitives in ships? There is no record in the Bible or secular history of this taking place when Cyrus defeated Babylon, so one could: (1) take this as symbolic picture language of defeat that was applied to the future situation of Babylon; or (2) conclude that the prophet was predicting a different defeat of Babylon, not the Persian conquest of the area in 539 B.C.

43:20 While wild animals would not be aware of honoring God, Scripture in several places mentions them in connection with the created order's testimony to His greatness (e.g., Jb 38:39–39:30; 40:15–41:24; Ps 104:10-30; cp. the "living creatures" of Ezk 1:5-11; Rv 4:6-8).

43:23-24 It was not literally the case that the people never brought the Lord sacrifices; Isaiah had earlier indicated that, from the Lord's standpoint, they had brought too many (1:11-14). But a right sacrifice requires a pure heart, repentance of sin (see Mal 3:3), and devotion to the Lord alone (see Am 5:25), or it is no sacrifice. Isaiah was saying that, because these were lacking, all God saw in their sacrifice was their sin.

44:6-8 On the covenant associations of this passage, see 43:11-13.

44:9-19 Worshipers of idols bow down to artifacts of their own making because the Lord "has shut their eyes so they cannot see" (v. 18). Of course, the makers of images can see perfectly well to perform their craft; what they cannot "see" is its futility, because their idols represent false religious concepts. On the Lord's being responsible for their lack of understanding, see 6:9-10; on the OT critique of idols, see 40:12-26.

44:28–45:1 Because this prophecy refers expressly to the Persian ruler Cyrus, some interpreters argue for its composition by a later disciple of Isaiah (8:16) who was active at the time of the return from Babylonian exile. It is possible that God would give specific information about distant events to one of His prophets (40:2). This phenomenon is unusual in Scripture, but not unknown. Other instances in the Bible include the specific prophecy about Josiah more than 300 years before he was born (1 Kg 13:2) and the prophecy of the Messiah being born in the city of Bethlehem (Mc5:2-3).

45:1 Ordinarily the OT reserves the idea of being "anointed" for Israelite leaders—priests, kings, and prophets (Isaiah himself, 61:1). Anointing, however, was the Lord's commissioning for a special task. In this case Cyrus, though a pagan ruler, was "His anointed" for the purpose of releasing the Lord's servant people ("Jacob," v. 4) from exile.

45:7 The Hebrew word for "evil" (translated "disaster") represents natural calamity as well as moral evil. God, in His perfection, does nothing morally evil. But, since all events are subject to His control, He is ultimately responsible for all events in history and nature. Moral evil derives from the choices of human beings and angels.

45:15,19 The claim that God hides Himself is the opinion of the nations (v. 14) before their conversion. The Lord corrected their false understanding: "I have not spoken in secret" (v. 19). Warped worldviews and false beliefs cause people to misunderstand what is really happening in the events of history; God's activity is hidden from them and misunderstood until they are exposed to His word of truth.

45:20-23 Isaiah returned to his expression of the basic principles of Yahweh's covenant with Israel (43:11-13; 44:6-8). Here, he added the treaty-like aspect of swearing allegiance in the form of an oath and of bowing down in homage to the great King. Paul borrowed this language in speaking of Jesus' exaltation after His humiliation on the cross (Php 2:9-11). The affirmation of covenant loyalty and obedience is the fundamental theme of biblical worship.

46:1-2 History records that when Cyrus subjugated Babylon without a battle, the Babylonian people welcomed him because he reestablished their traditional worship of Marduk (Bel). When Isaiah spoke of the Babylonian gods' going into captivity, this should be seen as a general picture of defeated gods that could not protect Babylon; being subject to a foreign power, they were still in "captivity" even if not removed from the territory. In any case, the Babylonian deities eventually dropped from the scene.

47:6 For the Lord's chosen people, Israel and Judah, to be defeated might be taken as evidence that the Lord is powerless to protect His own, or even that He does not exist. In this passage, the Lord explains that He allowed the Babylonians to destroy them because He, Himself, was angry with them. In so doing He showed no approval of Babylon. That nation, steeped in pride and false religion, was not the judge of Judah but would itself be overthrown because of its sin. God, alone, controls the historical circumstance of His people and of all nations.

47:13 The tendency to look to astrology—interpreting the movements of heavenly bodies—for advice is a rejection of God's revelation in His Word. Astrology had a long history in Babylon; the Tower of Babel, "with its top in the sky" (Gn 11:4), may have been planned as an elevated map of the heavens for the purpose of seeking advice from the stars. Isaiah reaffirmed the biblical view, that prophecies and predictions based on astrology are useless (see Dt 4:19).

48:8 Isaiah used the metaphor of birth to describe Israel's rebellion against the Lord from its earliest days. His reference was to the complaining of the people soon after they left Egypt (Ex 15:24; 16:2; 17:2) and the sin of making the idolatrous golden calf at

Mount Sinai (Ex 32). The prophet was not speaking of the Judeans as individuals, or suggesting that newborn infants can make moral choices.

49:1-7 In this passage, Isaiah seems to be using the word "servant" with several simultaneous meanings. Verse 3 identifies the servant with Israel (41:8; 44:1,21), which was called in Abraham to bring blessing to all nations (v. 6; cp. Gn 12:3). Yet this servant has been called, even before birth, to bring Israel back to God (v. 5); the prophet here spoke of his own role as the spokesman of the Lord (see Jr 1:5). Then, like the messianic Servant of Is 42:1-7, this servant will experience rejection and suffering, and in the end the servant will be honored (49:7). All these meanings overlap in Jesus Christ. As the Servant who suffers for the redemption of Israel, He is also a prophet seeking Israel's return to the Lord, and in His resurrection He incorporates the true, renewed Israel into Himself. In this sense, Isaiah's words here were a messianic prophecy. Nevertheless, in Ac 13:47 Paul and Barnabas applied Is 49:6 to themselves, as proclaimers of the gospel to the Gentiles.

49:19-21 Isaiah suggested that the land would be "too small for the inhabitants," with an abundance of children seeking land for themselves. Ezra 2 indicates that only about 50,000 people returned from the Babylonian exile, so the land of Palestine (Judah) was hardly overpopulated at that time. It is not clear from the context when Isaiah expected this prophecy to be fulfilled, but it need not apply exclusively to the period of the return from exile. The dramatic changes in nature and in people's hearts, and the inclusion of foreigners (vv. 22-23), suggest that this was a prophecy about some future fulfillment of the kingdom of God. Another possibility was the use of a dramatic, exaggerated word-picture on the prophet's part to underscore the certainty of the Lord's redemptive action in days to come.

49:26 In a vivid metaphor, God declared that He would cause Judah's oppressors to eat their own flesh and drink their own blood. The meaning seems to be that the oppressive, vile, and vicious enemies who slaughtered the people of Israel would end up expending their bloodthirsty savagery upon each other. This statement does not approve of brutality, cannibalism, or the drinking of blood. It was a graphic description of the destiny of Judah's enemies, intended to encourage those who were feeling hopeless.

50:1 The Lord asked His people, rhetorically, to produce the legal evidence that He had divorced them and sent them away; then He declared that they "were sold for [their] iniquities." This appears to be a contradiction, yet the context of the passage makes clear that any such breach of the covenant was not the Lord's purpose ("Do I have no power to deliver?" v. 2). The Lord demanded to be shown the hypothetical certificate in order to verify that it was not He who was to blame for this divorce; the separation was the result of Israel's own rebellion, acting as an unfaithful "wife."

50:4-11 As in 49:1-7, the prophet spoke of the servant of the Lord in language capable of more than one simultaneous interpretation. In verses 10-11, the servant could be viewed as the people of Israel who suffered by being sent into exile. Yet in the earlier verses, this servant's obedience stood in contrast to Israel ("I was not rebellious," v. 5), and the suffering is consistent with the picture of the "messianic" servant in 49:7 and 53:1-10. The description in verse 6 resembles what happened to Jesus during his crucifixion (Mt 26:67; 27:30).

51:3 The land of Israel, though capable of outstanding productivity when well managed and supplied with water, has never seen anything close to the fertile and lush topography ascribed to the Garden of Eden. This promise appears to apply not the period when the Jews' return from captivity in Babylon, but to a later time in the future fulfillment of the kingdom of God. A Christian interpretation must take into account that in the NT, the territory of Canaan had been replaced, as the inheritance of God's people, by the life of resurrection power (Eph 1:18-23), of which the Holy Spirit is the earnest or guarantee (Eph 1:14). This new life is the Edenic "restoration of all things" (Ac 3:21) which Christ brings; it will be experienced in "Zion," the assembly of Christian believers (Heb 12:22). Isaiah's words can be taken as a geographic description of a spiritual reality.

51:9-10 On references to ancient Near Eastern mythological monsters in the Bible, see note on 27:1.

51:22-23 The final line of verse 22 claims that the people of God will never drink the cup of God's fury again. History is filled with occasions when the Jews suffered greatly at their enemies' hands after the return from Babylonian exile, from the time of the Syrian ruler Antiochus IV Epiphanes (second century B.C.) onward. Christians, likewise, as "the Israel of God"(Gl 6:16), have seen

repeated persecution. The prophetic statement can be viewed in several ways. (1) God was indicating that they would not drink any longer from the Babylonian cup of God's wrath, since He would remove that cup from their hands. (2) This promise could be seen as a promise for God's fulfillment of His kingdom. (3) The statement could be interpreted to mean that the Judeans did not need to drink from this cup again, implying that a close walk with God would prevent it from ever happening again. That, indeed, was the thrust of Jesus' warning, "Unless you repent, you will all perish" (Lk 13:3).

52:3 To be "sold for nothing" (see Ps 44:12) is an expression of the people's utter worthlessness, as to their ability to consistently obey the Lord. Isaiah used it to show the Lord's grace in redeeming them at no cost to themselves.

52:13–53:12 Some commentators have identified this servant with personified Israel, with Moses, or with one of the prophets who suffered (Jeremiah, or Isaiah himself). But the servant's acts of suffering were in behalf of God's sinful people, similar to His role in 42:1-7, 49:1-7, and 50:4-11. Philip, one of the seven (Ac 6:5), applied this prophecy to the death of Jesus in Ac 8:30-35, and that has been the usual Christian understanding of the passage. Isaiah's "suffering servant" concept has little or no follow-up in later Jewish interpretation; only the understanding that "God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah" (Ac 2:36) could bring clarity to these words.

52:13,15 If this passage refers to Jesus, when was He "greatly exalted," and when did kings "shut their mouths because of Him" or ever really understand who Jesus was? Jesus was not exalted during His earthly ministry, but after His death and resurrection He was exalted to the right hand of God (Mt 22:41-45; Ac 2:33-35; Php 2:9; Heb 1:3). Revelation calls Him "ruler of the kings of the earth" (Rv 1:5). Scripture often speaks "proleptically," or in anticipation, of things yet to be fulfilled.

53:3 In the Gospel narratives, Jesus was not "despised and rejected" by everyone; until the events just before His crucifixion He was regarded by many as a popular teacher and miracle worker, and even as the "Son of David" (Mk 10:47-48). It was the religious leaders of the community—the scribes, Pharisees, and priests—who, on the whole, despised Him (Mt 12:14; Mk 14:1; Jn 11:53) as well as those who beat and crucified Him (Mk 14:65; 15:15,19).

53:7 Jesus did not always remain silent before His accusers, for He did answer Pilate's questions (Mk 14:62; Lk 23:2; Jn 18:33-37). But Jesus was silent when the chief priest made accusations against Him (Mt 27:12-14; Mk 15:1-4) and His few words to Pilate did not refute His accusers. The silence was concerning those who would accuse Him (see 1 Pt 2:23).

53:9a Isaiah saw, in generalities, what would be more precisely revealed in the circumstances of Jesus' death. The two clauses of this half-verse should be understood as poetically parallel phrases, intended to suggest the same idea about the servant's death. In the view of the prophets of Israel, the rich were often equated withthe wicked. The authorities no doubt intended to dispose of Jesus' body in a common pit with criminals. But, though He died with "the wicked" (two brigands or revolutionaries, often erroneously called mere "thieves"), His burial was in the tomb of a rich man, Joseph of Arimathea (Mk 15:45-46).

53:9b The servant "had done no violence," although Jesus drove the money changers from the temple (Mt 21:12-13; Mk 11:15-18; Jn 2:14-16). The two clauses of this verse are in poetic parallel; the "violence" of the first line is defined as speaking "deceitfully" in the second. Jesus was stern with those who defiled the temple, but His words on that occasion—being a quotation, in fact, from the books of Is (Is 56:7) and Jr (Jr 7:11)—were anything but deceitful. But since the temple was a major financial institution under watchful Roman supervision, Jesus' disturbance of its activities was perceived as "violence" and a threat to an already unstable political situation. In Roman eyes it might have been enough to justify His execution, even without the accusations brought by the Jewish authorities.

53:10 Isaiah declared of the servant that the Lord "will prolong His days." Clearly, the servant of this passage was being persecuted to His death (v. 9). His days could be prolonged only through being raised from the dead. Isaiah's words describe the outcome of Jesus' passion, His vindication by the Father (Ac 2:23-24).

54:1-3 On the spread of the Judean population through the land of Israel, see note on 49:19-21.

55:8-9 The statement that God's ways and thoughts are different from those of human beings does not mean that people can never expect to understand anything about Him or follow His ways. He reveals what His people need to know to return to Him (vv. 6-7) and to obey Him (see Dt 29:29), and what He has in store for those who love Him (1 Co 2:9-10). The statement needs to be understood in the light of where Isaiah was carrying this thought: Unlike human ways and thoughts, God's will produce the results He desires in the restoration of His people (Is 55:12-13). It is through His word that He will accomplish His purpose; it will "return to Me" (v. 11). God's word does not coincide with human worldviews which are all off center. But when His people return God's word to Him, they are changed people. They have received God's word and it has done its work within them. It has transformed both heart and mind.

56:3-7 The Lord's word to Isaiah here in effect canceled the directives of Dt 23:1-8, which excluded eunuchs, Ammonites, and Moabites from the congregation of Israel. The law of Moses was given when Israel was about to occupy the land of Canaan, a time when strict separation from pagan religious practices and from anything symbolic of spiritual imperfection or rebellion against the Lord, was of highest priority. The law (*torah*) is "instruction" or "teaching," not legislation in the modern sense. It was given through a prophet, and while its commandments were in general "holy and just and good" (Rm 7:12) the Lord can reinterpret the specifics of the law through a word to a later prophet. (In the NT, Paul cited the book of Is as "the law," 1 Co 14:21.) What God originally sought of His people, through the law, was purity of heart and righteous behavior, Now, hundreds of years later, He graciously allows anyone who loves Him, regardless of physical or ethnic characteristics, to enter the temple and worship Him.

56:9-12 Isaiah leveled a general indictment of Judean political leaders (shepherds, v. 11) and religious leaders (watchmen, v. 10) as selfish, lazy, and greedy. Some interpreters consider these words a later prophet's criticism of corrupt leaders in the postexilic Jewish community. While Ezr 1–6 and the prophecies of Hg and Zch reveal that Zerubabbel the governor and Joshua the high priest were not the most effective leaders, their evaluations of them do not fit the accusations of this passage. This text is not sufficient evidence to support the "Trito-Isaiah" hypothesis of some modern commentators.

57:1-2 How can the righteous perish because of evil leaders in verse 1 and then the righteous be at peace in verse 2? Isaiah said that they were "swept away from the presence of evil." This change could refer to a future hope of peace when God establishes His kingdom (2:2-4;57:13,19), or to the peaceful sleep of death that the righteous will enjoy.

57:17-18 On the one hand God was angry and wanted to punish His people for their disobedience (v. 17), but on the other hand He wanted to heal and comfort them (v. 18). The prophet was sensitive to the "pathos" or deep feelings of the Lord; His people's rebellion grieved Him to the point that He spoke of judging them, yet because of His love for them He recoiled from that judgment (see Hs 11:1-9; Am 7:1-5). The context brings out that God's purpose was to revive His oppressed and humble people (Is 57:15), judge the wicked who did not repent (vv. 20-21), and transform and heal those who would return to Him through His grace (vv. 18-19). That God seemed to act alternately out of love and wrath reveals the extent to which He had revealed His "feelings" to the prophet.

58:1-8 The people who had been fasting questioned its value since it seemed to have brought no result (v. 3). In spite of their supposed "delight" to know God's ways (v. 2) and their desire for His righteous judgments, He had not responded. The prophet's explanation suggested that their fasting was a religious ritual that made no difference in how they conducted their lives; they continued to quarrel and to oppress the weaker members of their community (vv. 3-4). The "fast" the Lord wanted, and to which He would respond, was to deal with the inequities that had broken the solidarity of the covenant community (vv. 6-7). God is not to be coerced by rituals that seek to bend His will to that of the worshiper, as pagan rites were intended to do. He responds to heartfelt commitment to His purposes, as defined in the covenant. The law had said, "There will be no poor among you" (Dt 15:4).

59:1-3 The Bible encourages people to seek God in prayer, but also explains that some prayers go unheard because of barriers people erect (see 1 Pt 3:7). God does not listen to the prayers of sinful, unrepentant people (Is 59:2-3), because their trust is not truly in Him but in their own empty words (v. 4).

59:16 In context (vv. 1-15), the description of sinfulness in the land shows how depraved the nation had become and how far it had strayed from God. Isaiah did not excuse himself from this picture (6:5); "no man," not even the prophet, was standing up against injustice and ungodliness and interceding for the sinful community. The "man" God looked for, but did not find, could be (1) a righteous king like Hezekiah, (2) some other leader, besides Isaiah, who might respond to His messages through the prophet, or (3) no "man" at all, since the nation's problems were beyond human solution and God must bring salvation Himself (vv. 16-21).

60:1-3 It is difficult to see this passage as reflective of conditions in the postexilic era, as some interpreters hold. The period after the return from Babylon was not a time of great glory but of difficulty. The people struggled economically, and did not finish rebuilding the temple until about 22 years later (Ezr 1–6; Hg 1–2). The nations did not flow to Jerusalem; in fact, only a small group of Israelites returned from captivity in Babylon. Because of these factors, it is best to see this chapter as descriptive of eschatological (2:2-4; 14:1-3), rather than postexilic, events. The NT understands the coming of the "light" to be fulfilled in Jesus Christ and His followers (e.g., Mt 5:14; Lk 1:79; Jn 1:5; 3:19; 8:12; Ac 13:47; 26:23; 2 Co 4:6; 1 Th 5:5; 1 Jn 2:8-10; Rv 22:5). The popular tradition that the wise men from the East who visited the infant Jesus were kings riding camels probably owes its origin to verse 3, which mentions kings coming to the light, together with verse 6 which mentions caravans of camels carrying gold and frankincense. There is no mention of eastern kings or of camels in the Gospel text (Mt 2:1-12).

60:14 Bowing down, in the OT, was not necessarily a gesture of worshiping a deity; it was an act symbolizing respect and humility before a superior authority, which may have been a human agency. Bowing in worship was borrowed from secular practice, because the deity was a "king" or greater authority. For the descendants of Judah's oppressors to bow to the Judeans would not be worship. It will be the recognition that those who are faithful to God, whom their enemies had dishonored or afflicted, had now been vindicated. Further, those who come to submit to God's people are fundamentally coming to God's light (vv. 1-2), coming to honor the Lord with the tribute due a King (vv. 6,9). They are really submitting to God, for Zion is His holy city.

60:16 In a metaphor for receiving sustenance and support from a nurturing authority, Isaiah spoke of God's people nursing on "the milk of nations" and "the breast of kings." The help the people will receive was compared to the care of a nursing mother, even if the kings and their regimes were not feminine. Whereas kings and foreign nations formerly destroyed God's people, one day they will look out for their needs. It is possible to see some historical fulfillment in the provisions Cyrus, and other Medo-Persian rulers, made for the community of returned Jews.

60:19-20 Taking this expression literally, Isaiah would be picturing a major disruption of the solar system in which life on the planet would not survive. The sun, moon, and other heavenly bodies often have a symbolic function in Scripture. Isaiah was comparing God's light and the light of these bodies; their radiance, in the physical sense, cannot compare with the holy radiance of the presence of the Lord. The same thought recurs in the Bible's final pages, where the Jerusalem from heaven is illuminated not by the sun and moon but by "God's glory" (Rv 21:23). Isaiah was looking ahead to that time.

61:1-3 This song has many similarities to other "servant songs," though it does not use the word "servant." The one spoken of here and in 42:1 were both filled with the Spirit to bring a message of hope, justice, and restoration (42:7; 49:6; 11:2-5). It is not necessary to attribute this passage to a hypothetical "Trito-Isaiah," as do some commentators. Jesus took this passage as referring to Himself in a declaration that "the year of the Lord's favor" had finally arrived (Lk 4:16-21).

62:6-7 Isaiah used a figure of speech calling on the city's watchmen to remind the Lord of His promise to restore Jerusalem. It was a poet's colorful way of communicating the assurance that God would never forget to do what He had promised. Jesus used similar literary devices. Although He taught that the Father knows our needs before we ask Him (Mt 6:8), He still told a parable comparing God to a judge who grants a widow' pleading because of her persistence (Lk 18:1-8). Such comparisons in the Bible are not intended to answer questions about the nature of God, apart from His relationship with His people; they are given for the purpose of encouraging faith in God as it operates at the human level.

63:1-6 If God is a God of love (1 Jn 4:8,16), it seems out of character for Him to express such anger and wrath against people, in this case the Edomites. In raising this issue, what tends to be overlooked is what the Bible means by "love." In Scripture this is a covenant-related concept; God's love (Hb *hesed* is the most important word for it) is His faithfulness to a relationship He has granted to those who have pledged themselves to Him. The NT concept of *agape* love depends on this covenantal idea (e.g., 1 Jn

4:20-21). God loves His world in a general way (Jn 3:16) but His faithful love extends especially toward those who belong to His covenant; because of His faithfulness to them, His judgment falls upon their enemies. Edom was a long-term enemy of Israel, and all such enemies (Edom represents them here) need to know that God's wrath is real and will come upon those who reject His truth and stubbornly refuse to repent (see Rm 2:5). God's anger flares precisely because of His love, not in spite of it.

63:9 Interpreters have had difficulty with the idea that God suffers, which seems to contradict His divinity. The Hebrew text is difficult, so several solutions have arisen. (1) The written Hebrew text has "He did not (*lo'*) afflict." (2) The Targum (Aramaic translation) has "He did not (*lo'*) afflict him/them." (3) The Hebrew text was read, with a marginal scribal note, to say "there was affliction for him (*lo'*)" (HCSB follows this reading). This refers not to the suffering of the Servant of the Lord (chap. 53) but to God's own tender identification with His people's troubles and sorrows during their oppressive slavery in Egypt (Ex 2:22-25; 3:7; 6:5). The Lord cares for His people, and the prophet was sensitive to His grief when they suffer.

63:10 Jesus told His disciples that the Holy Spirit would be given after He left them in bodily form (Jn 14:16; 15:26; 16:7-13) and promised a special outpouring of the Spirit that was fulfilled at Pentecost (Ac 2). This does not mean the Holy Spirit was inactive before that time. The NT mentions His activity in relation to John the Baptist before his birth (Lk 1:15), Mary's virginal conception of Jesus (Mt 1:18), Zechariah's prophecy (Lk 1:67) and the song of Simeon (Lk 2:25). Jesus' ministry was a ministry of the Holy Spirit from His baptism onward (Mt 3:16; Lk 4:18; Ac 10:38). In the OT, Bezalel was given the ability to make the tabernacle through the Spirit (Ex 31:3), the Spirit caused Balaam to prophesy good things for Israel (Nm 24:2), and Samuel anointed David to be king and he was filled with the Spirit (1 Sm 16:13). The Spirit of God was active throughout the OT period, even from the creation (Gn 1:2), though there is a limited amount of revelation about His work in OT texts.

63:11,14 The account of the exodus contains no reference to the Holy Spirit under that name, but apparently Isaiah understood the "Angel of God" (Ex 13:21; 14:19) who was in the pillar of fire and cloud to be the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit that guided them may refer to the "Angel" that went before them (Ex 23:20; 32:34; 33:2); the Angel was identical to "My presence" (Ex 33:14). Paul stated, expressly, that "the Lord is the Spirit" (2 Co 3:17), so such exchange of terminology should not be considered problematic.

63:17 Isaiah apparently quoted a prayer of the people—or ascribed it to them as a literary device—who complained that the Lord caused them to stray and hardened their hearts. It is possible to interpret this complaint in several ways: (1) God eventually hardens the hearts of those who continually reject Him through their own choice (see 6:9-10). (2) The people, in their prayer, were inappropriately blaming God rather than taking responsibility for their poor choices. (3) The verb could be translated in a tolerative sense, "Why do you allow us to stray?" rather than in a causative sense. God gives people freedom to obey or disobey Him; when humans choose to ignore Him and run counter to His directives, it is not primarily God's doing. But God may eventually give them over to their own sinful inclinations simply by withdrawing His hand from the situation (Rm 1:18-25).

64:6 Isaiah strikingly compared the "righteous acts" of the people to a "polluted garment"; that is, a cloth used by women to receive their menstrual discharge. Ritual uncleanness kept a person from entering the place of worship or from beholding the face of the Lord (cp. "You have hidden Your face from us," v. 7). Even despicable human beings can do a few good things for people they care about, but God does not look on their good deeds with favor because their motivation is corrupt and self-centered. In this passage, the people were confessing their sins, admitting they did not listen to God (v. 4) or call on his name (v. 7). They realized that the good things they did—their own righteousness—could never compare with the righteousness of a holy God, which is infinitely greater.

65:5 God wants people to be holy, separated from evil and dedicated to Him, but these people who claimed to be holy were involved with pagan religious practices (vv. 3-4,7). They considered themselves holier than others. In reality, however, they were not separated from falsehood and dedicated to the Lord, but dedicated to pagan practices and separated from the true worship of the Lord.

65:17-25 Isaiah presented a word picture of the restoration of God's creation, with some features drawn from the Bible's description of conditions in Eden and humanity's early history—long lifetimes, animals living together without being carnivorous (Gn 1:30; cp. 2:19), the serpent crawling in the dust (Gn 3:14). At the same time, the prophet incorporated terminology from Israel's covenant structure. He referred to a new heaven and a new earth—the witnesses to the covenant (Dt 4:26; 30:19; 31:28).

He described the undoing of the covenant curses—such as building a house but never living in it (Dt 28:30), planting vineyards but not enjoying the fruit (Dt 28:39), begetting children who will be taken as prisoners (Dt 28:41). This renewal of both creation and covenant centers in Jerusalem, to be created anew (Is 65:18), the site of God's "holy mountain" (v. 25). Elements of Isaiah's vision for the future are taken up in the NT, especially in the description of the Jerusalem from heaven, as "a new heaven and a new earth" (Rv 21:1-2).

66:21 According to the law, only Israelites could serve in the temple, but Isaiah envisioned people from a list of pagan nations (v. 19) becoming priests and Levites in the Lord's house. These people could be understood as faithful Israelites who had lived dispersed among the nations for many years (see Ac 2:5-11). More likely, Isaiah saw God giving the non-Israelites in His kingdom equality with Israelite believers. That is certainly what the apostles believed and taught in the NT; Paul celebrated how Christ has broken down the division between Jew and non-Jew (Eph 2:13-16), who together make up the new temple of the Lord (Eph 2:19-21). Just as God took the Levites from among the Israelites and gave them as gifts to the Israelites (Nm 8:6-19; 18:6) so God will choose non-Israelite believers in the future, taking them "into captivity" in Christ (see Eph 4:7-8).

Jeremiah Articles

How Does Christianity Relate to the Baha'i Faith?

by Douglas R. Groothuis

The Baha'i religion began when a Persian man calling himself Baha'u'lah (Arabic for "the glory of God") declared in 1863 that he was the latest revelation of God. Indeed, today several million Baha'is worldwide believe that Baha'u'lah (1817–1892) was the latest in a long line of "manifestations" of God and that he fulfilled prophecies from the world's religions, including the biblical prophecies concerning the second coming of Christ.

Baha'is assert the unknowability and oneness of God, the unity of all religions, the unity of humanity, and the unity of science and religion. They believe that Baha'is will eventually lead the world into a state of global harmony. Baha'is claim that all major religions were inspired by God and that they develop in a progressive manner. Baha'u'lah, they say, will not be succeeded by another manifestation until a thousand years after his death.

The Baha'i religion, despite its lofty goals, is incompatible with biblical Christianity and lacks evidence to support its claims. All religions cannot be from God, since they contradict each other on essential truth claims. The teachings of Buddha, for example, exclude a personal God. But Judaism, Christianity, and Islam all believe in a personal deity. Baha'is attempt to account for these discrepancies in two ways.

First, they claim that religious truth is relative to historical periods. This argument fails because it makes God unable to reveal even the most basic divine truths consistently. Moreover, if God is unknowable, as Baha'is claim, then there is no basis for any divine revelation (knowledge), Baha'i or otherwise.

Second, they argue that the original teachings of the world religions (except the Baha'i religion) have been corrupted. For example, Christianity never taught that Jesus was uniquely divine and that He physically rose from the dead. These were later distortions. Baha'is deny these well-attested facts because the facts would place Jesus in a position far beyond what Baha'is allows for a manifestation of God (Rm 1:4; 1 Tm 2:5). But neither history nor logic supports these revisionist claims.

Christians should challenge Baha'is to read the New Testament for themselves and to investigate the many reasons for its reliability. They should also challenge Baha'is to consider that their doctrine of the progressive unity of all religions has no logical or factual basis and can be held only on the purported authority of Baha'u'lah, who, unlike the resurrected Jesus, died and remains dead.

How Has Archaeology Corroborated the Bible?

by Walter C. Kaiser Jr.

The past century or so has witnessed some of the most remarkable archaeological discoveries of the Christian era. No single discipline has contributed as much as archaeology to the interpretation and delight of reading the Bible.

However, the discipline has had its embarrassing moments as well. For example, in 1929 Sir Leonard Wooley declared while excavating in Mesopotamia, "I have found the flood!" Unfortunately for him and for the discipline of archaeology, there were embarrassed faces when other layers of flood sediment turned up at various strata throughout the area. Others have claimed to have found the location of the garden of Eden, the ark of the covenant and the like, but such claims must not be confused with real and legitimate discoveries throughout the ancient Near East.

The real role of archaeology is not to "prove" the Bible, for that kind of "proof" is available only in certain deductive sciences such as mathematics and logic. On the contrary, the role of archaeology is: (1) to supply cultural, epigraphic, and artifactual materials that provide the background for accurately interpreting the Bible,
(2) to anchor the events of the biblical text in the history and geography of the times, and (3) to build confidence in the revelation of God where the truths of Scripture impinge on historical events.

Over the last century or so, archaeology has strengthened the case for biblical reliability. Missing individuals, peoples, places, and obscure customs, historical, and political settings have been helpfully identified.

Missing Individuals

It had been fashionable in some circles for many years to ridicule Isaiah 20:1 for its allusion to "Sargon king of Assyria." Excavations of Nineveh had seemingly revealed all the kings of Assyria, but there was no Sargon. The Bible must have gotten it wrong. However, in 1843, Paul Emile Botta found a virgin site northeast of Nineveh, later excavated by the University of Chicago with details published in the 1930s. Sargon had built his own capital there in 717 B.C. His son, however, moved the capital back to Nineveh, so the site was lost as was Sargon's name. Now Sargon is one of the best known Assyrian monarchs.

Likewise, the Bible contended that King Belshazzar was the final ruler of Babylon (Dn 5:1,30), but until A.D. 1929 the extra-biblical evidence pointed to Nabonidus as king at the fall of Babylon in 539 B.C. This apparent conflict was solved when documents were discovered revealing that Nabonidus spent his time in Arabia, leaving the affairs of the kingdom to his eldest son Belshazzar, who reigned as co-regent for a decade or so.

Discoveries of other biblical names have confirmed biblical reliability, including King Jehoiachin's presence in Babylon, Sanballat as governor of Samaria along with some of Nehemiah's adversaries such as Tobiah the Ammonite, and Geshem the Arab (Neh 2:19). Other discoveries confirm well-known biblical individuals such as Balaam, David, Ahab, Jehu, Hezekiah, Menahem and others.

Missing Peoples

Until Hugo Winckler discovered the Hittite Empire in 1906, many unbelievers doubted the Bible's insistence that the Hittites were part of the land of Canaan (Gn 10:15; Jos 1:4). Now they are so well documented that a score of volumes has been necessary to build a Hittite dictionary based on the tablets left in their civilization.

Another mystery group were the Horites, descendants of Esau from Edom (Gn 36:20; Dt 2:12,22). But in 1995 Giorgio Buccellati discovered the Horite capital city beneath the modern Syrian city of Tell Mozan.

Missing Places

First Kings 9:28 claimed King Solomon brought back 16 tons of gold from Ophir. But where was Ophir and did it really exist? In 1956 at Tell Qasile in Israel, broken pottery was found with an inscription referring to a shipment of "gold of Ophir for Beth-Horon, thirty shekels." Thus, Ophir was confirmed as known in the world of commerce with its trade in gold. Ophir is identified today as a port some 60 miles north of Bombay.

Another example is the disputed list of sites along the route of the exodus in Numbers 33. But Charles Krahmalkov noted three ancient Egyptian maps of the road from Arabah to the Plains of Moab, with the earliest of the three maps inscribed on the walls of Karnak in the reign of Thutmosis III (c. 1504–1450 B.C.). According to this list, the route from south to north follows precisely the way the Israelites listed in Numbers 33 with four stations especially noted: Iyyim, Dibon, Abel, and Jordan.

Other Sensational Finds

Discovered by Grenfeld in Egypt in 1920, the "John Rylands Papyrus" yielded the oldest known fragment of a NT manuscript. This small scrap from John's Gospel (Jn 18:31-33,37-38) was dated by papyrologists to 125 A.D., but since it was so far south into Egypt, it successfully put an end to the then-popular attempt to late-date John's Gospel to the second century rather than to the traditional first century date of A.D. 85–90.

The Dead Sea Scrolls, found in 1948 in caves at Qumran, near the northwest end of the Dead Sea, gave us some 800 manuscripts of every book (in part or the whole) of the OT except for Esther. Prior to that, the earliest Hebrew texts dated to around A.D. 1000, but the scrolls at Qumran are generally more than one thousand years older! These Hebrew texts illustrate that a thousand years of copying had provided us with an amazingly pure text, with one of the best examples being the book of Isaiah where only three words had slight modifications.

In 1990, a bone chest was discovered accidentally during work in Jerusalem's Peace Forest. This "Caiaphas Ossuary" belonged to the high priest from A.D. 18–36 (see his cynical words in Jn 11:49-53). The inscription, found in two places, read: "Caiaphas" and "Joseph, son of Caiaphas." First-century Jewish historian Josephus provided the full name, "Joseph, who is called Caiaphas of the high priesthood."

Space precludes discussion of the many more archaeological corroborations, such as the Pontius Pilate Inscription, the Pool of Siloam excavated in 2004, and the amazing Ketef Hinnom Amulets discovered in 1979 (with inscriptions of Nm 6:24-26 and Dt 7:9 perfectly matching the biblical Hebrew text—amazing since these seventh to sixth century B.C. amulets contain OT texts skeptics argued could not have been written until the 400s B.C.).

Archaeology, then, has illuminated and corroborated the Bible in numerous ways. The interpreter finds in archaeology a good friend for understanding and substantiating Scripture.

Introduction to Jeremiah

AUTHOR

Jeremiah is the second longest book of the Bible, next to the Psalms. It is the only book of the OT that tells us some details of its origin. According to 36:1-26, Baruch had written a first version at the dictation of Jeremiah. The scroll was read first in public and then again for the state officials and for the king. Because the words in the scroll angered the King Jehoiakim, he cut up the scroll and burnt it piece by piece. Jeremiah therefore dictated a second and enlarged edition of the first book to Baruch (36:32). Additional references to Jeremiah's own writing activity (30:2; 51:60; cp. 25:13) suggest that the scroll of 36:32 is not identical to the present form of the biblical book. Third person references to Jeremiah after chapter 25 suggest that perhaps the scroll of 36:32 may be confined to chapters 1–25.

STRUCTURE AND CONTENT

Biblical scholars have struggled to explain the arrangement of Jeremiah's prophecies. The book is not arranged chronologically as a whole, although some chronological arrangement is apparent. No theory has achieved a consensus, but various devices (such as theme, style, audience, and rhetoric) are summoned to explain certain connections. The book is often considered an anthology of prophetic units that were collected and combined at various times with little intentionality.

A useful proposal recently made by Richard Patterson is that the prophecies were arranged according to the prophet's divine call to be a prophet to the nations (1:4-19) and to Judah in particular (1:13-19). He identifies a twofold structure to the book that reverses those emphases: chapters 2–24 focus on Jeremiah and his people; chapters 25–51 focus on Jeremiah and the nations. On either end are the description of the prophetic call and commission in chapter 1 and the historical appendix in chapter 52. The two main sections each begin with a subsection that sets forth the theme (2:1–3:5 and 25:1-38), followed by a subsection that develops the theme (3:6–23:40 and 26:1–51:58), and concluding with a sign (24:1-10 and 51:59-64).

The so-called confessions of Jeremiah (11:18-23; 12:1-4; 15:10-21; 17:14-18; 18:19-23; 20:7-18) are scattered through chapters 11–20. Oracles of hope (chaps. 30–31) interrupt the stories about Jeremiah (chaps. 26–45). Words against kings (21:11–22:30) and against prophets (23:9-40) appear to be independent collections.

TEXT OF THE BOOK

The earliest Greek version of Jeremiah, dating back to pre-Christian centuries, is more than 12.5 percent shorter than the Hebrew text (although it adds about a hundred verses not found in the Hebrew). Only a few longer sections are missing (33:14-26; 39:4-13). The Greek text rather uses less titles and epithets, and single words and verses are missing throughout the book. More than 2,700 words of the Hebrew text do not have Greek equivalents. Fragments of Hebrew manuscripts from Qumran show that a longer and a shorter Hebrew text existed side-by-side in the time of Jesus.

THE RELIABILITY OF JEREMIAH

It is common these days for critical scholars to dismiss the idea that God might speak directly to someone. They consider prophetic utterances to be mere literary devices, and they assume predictions are impossible. They don't even consider the possibility that what Jeremiah had to say might be true.

Such accusations, however, are nothing new. Jeremiah himself faced significant opposition during his time as a prophet of God, and he saw little or no fruit for any of his labors. His words were discounted by everyone almost as soon as he said them. And yet, despite everything, he persisted in his ministry.

Jeremiah strongly believed that he was delivering a message from God (1:2-3; 2:5; 34:1). When he was imprisoned (32:2; 37:15) and even threatened with death (26:8), he did not recant his prophecies nor reverse his claim that they were messages from God (26:12). A man may be willing to die for something he mistakenly thinks is true, but one will seldom die for something he knows to be a sham. Jeremiah was in a unique position to know whether or not his words were a revelation from God. Given the way he lived his life in the face of such opposition, we can be sure that these words are not the rantings of a madman.

The words about Jeremiah's call to ministry—"I chose you before I formed you in the womb; I set you apart before you were born. I appointed you a prophet to the nations" (1:5)—have caused some to think that the date of Jeremiah's call and birth is one and the same. However, this is not likely to have been the case. The plain sense of the text is that God was thinking about Jeremiah and planning his life before he was born, and He had already designated Jeremiah as a prophet, but Jeremiah's commissioning took place when he was "a youth" (see v. 6; this Hb word most commonly refers to men in their teens). The important points to note are that God alone chose Jeremiah and that God spoke through His chosen prophet.

Jeremiah Study Notes

1:1-3 This introduction is in the third person and mentions the beginning and end of Jeremiah's ministry. It was probably written by the later compiler of the book. That would not diminish the authority of this paragraph as part of the inspired word of God. The book of Jeremiah was both inspired and inerrant in its final, canonical form as Baruch or others wrote it, whether under Jeremiah's direct oversight or subsequently. For other third-person references to authors within their books written mostly in the first person, see Dt 1:1-5; 34:5-12; Ec 12:9-10; Am 7:12,14. Other biblical authors refer to disciples or scribes who actually wrote, or preserved, their words (Is 8:16; Rm 16:22).

1:5 This passage could be understood to mean that God interacted with Jeremiah before he was born (see Ps 139:16) as an affirmation of the personhood of the pre-born. More likely, it means that God determined to make Jeremiah His spokesman before he ever existed, and brought about that design after he was born. These words can also be taken as Jeremiah's expression of the fact that he could never get away from his calling as a prophet—it was "inborn" in him—even though he sometimes wanted to (20:6-9,14-18).

2:11 The Bible occasionally refers to the gods of pagan peoples, but it is clear that they are not really gods, only images or idols (Dt 32:21; Ps 96:5; 115:4-8; Is 40:12-26; 41:7; 44:9-19; 46:1-2,6-7; Jr 10:5,14; 1 Co 8:5; 2 Th 2:4). In spite of this, Jeremiah was contrasting the loyalty of other nations to their false deities with the Israelites' lack of loyalty to the true God. On other "gods" in the Bible, see Ps 82:1,6.

3:1 Jeremiah referred to the provision in the law of Moses that forbids a man from taking back a wife he has divorced if she has married another man in the interim (Dt 24:1-3). His question implied that Israel (the "wife") was asking to return to the Lord (her first "husband") after being espoused to false gods. But the first husband, in such a case, would not be likely to take the wife back. This passage does not issue a teaching about divorce and remarriage, but is using the Mosaic instruction to make a point about Israel's status with the Lord.

3:7 The Lord's rhetorical question did not imply that He lacked foreknowledge of Israel's refusal to return. God knows when people will refuse to repent (see Ex 4:21). His question simply built on the question of verse 1. For God to speak to Himself is a literary device found elsewhere in Scripture, from Gn onward ("Let Us make man in Our image," Gn 1:26).

3:18 The kingdom of Israel had fallen to the Assyrians a century and a half earlier, yet Jeremiah's prophecy referred to the "house of Israel" as a current entity although only the kingdom of Judah remained at the time. "Israel" is the name for the covenant community of the Lord, which includes Judah; its use for the northern kingdom, as a political entity, was a secondary application. The prophet was concerned with his people as a religious community, so he used the name Israel. An additional factor is that Josiah had restored to Judah much of the territory that had formerly been part of northern Israel, so the kingdom's extent had come to approximate that of David and Solomon's united Israel.

3:19-20 The Lord's words suggest that His plans for Israel did not materialize as He expected because the people turned from Him. A totally programmed response of obedience from His people would have brought Him no honor or pleasure; God "took the risk" of allowing them a choice, as He did in creation with man and woman in the garden. Scripture looks at the question of humanity's response to God realistically, from the human side of the equation. To ask whether God could have ordered events differently, compelling Israel to remain loyal, is to introduce a hypothetical concern foreign to the biblical perspective. On "I thought," see note on verse 7.

4:2 Some people believe the Bible forbids the taking of oaths. Scripture permits oaths in certain cases and explains how they should be taken (Dt 6:13; 10:20). Paul often emphasized his statements with oaths (Rm 1:9; 2 Co 1:23; Gl 1:20; Php 1:8; 1 Tm 5:21; 2 Tm 2:14; 4:1). The Bible does warn against misuse and abuse of oaths, however. Some passages caution against taking

oaths because, once uttered, they cannot be taken back (Lv 19:12; Nm 30; Dt 23:21-23; Pr 20:25; Ec 5:4-5), but these texts do not prohibit oaths entirely. Jesus dismissed the idea that different oaths carry different standards for truthfulness (Mt 23:16-22); no believer should have to swear an oath to authenticate his or her truthful testimony (Mt 5:33-37; cp. Jms 5:12). Here Jeremiah declared that the Lord is to be the only God in the hearts and minds of the people. He does not want them to turn to other gods for any reason: for inquiry (2 Kg 1:3), for prayer (1 Kg 8:48; Is 45:20), or for oaths.

4:10 See note on 6:21.

4:28 God said He would not relent in His devastating judgment, but later in the prophecy (26:3; 42:10) He indicated a willingness to relent if the people would return to Him. Where God's own people are concerned, the prophetic announcement of God's judgment is always conditional; upon their genuine repentance, He will relent. Here this possibility of forgiveness is raised in 5:1.

5:1 The Lord promised to forgive Jerusalem if the prophet could find one faithful person in the city. The terms are reminiscent of those given to Abraham in the case of Sodom (Gn 18:32), when ten righteous people would have spared the city. Jerusalem was given more generous terms yet could not meet them.

5:22 Some commentators hold that the Lord restraining the sea was an idea borrowed from ancient Near Eastern mythology. According to this view, the Jews adapted a Babylonian myth about the god Marduk's defeat of the chaotic sea-god Tiamat, incorporating it into the Hebrew monotheistic perspective. This theory presupposes that the Babylonian story is older than the biblical account of the creation of the world by the one true God. It is more probable that the biblical account was originally widely known, passed down orally from generation to generation in many cultures. Eventually, through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, Israel committed the account to writing and it became Scripture, but in other cultures it became distorted, under Satanic influence, into pagan myths. The narratives have points of similarity, but the biblical version preserves the original.

5:30-31 Jeremiah saw a "terrible thing" in the land. The sources of divine revelation had become corrupted; neither prophets nor priests were giving words that come from the Lord, but only their own ideas. Even worse, the people liked it that way and shared in the guilt of their leaders. They would have no recourse when the Lord's judgment came "at the end of it" (6:16-17; 29:31-32; see note on Lm 1:5).

6:6 God commanded Jerusalem's attackers to cut down trees to build siege works. In Dt 20:19, He commanded that trees not be cut down during a siege, but Dt 20:20 makes it clear that this applied to fruit trees; others could be used to construct siege works. In any case, the directive of Dt was addressed to Israel, not to her enemies.

6:20 In the Pentateuch, the Lord gave instructions for sacrifices and offerings, but in other places He said that sacrifices and offerings were not pleasing or acceptable (see Is 1:11-15). The consistent teaching of Scripture is that nothing done to please God —whether deeds of right living or acts of worship—is effective unless it is motivated by genuine faith (Rm 9:31-32; Eph 2:8-10; Heb 11:6; Jms 2:22). In 1 Sm 15:22-23 Samuel explained that the Lord had rejected Saul, in spite of Saul's offering, because what was most important to the Lord was heartfelt obedience and paying attention to Him—the opposite of rebellion and rejection. David, confessing his sin with Bathsheba, acknowledged that burnt offerings would not please God unless a humbled heart preceded them (Ps 51:16-19; cp. Hs 6:6; Mc 6:6-8).

God did not request the offerings mentioned here because He needed spices or food. God does not need anything people can supply (Ps 50:9,12; Ac 17:24-25) since He has made all things to begin with. He prescribed sacrifices as a means through which His people could publicly demonstrate and commemorate their faith and trust in Him. But the OT sacrificial system did no good for those who merely went through its motions without exercising faith (Heb 10:4). In the same way, Christ's sacrifice does not benefit those who make a pretense of being Christians (2 Tm 3:5) but do not come to Him in faith.

6:21 The Lord said He would place "stumbling blocks" before the people, a metaphor for situations in which they were likely to choose an unwise course of action with damaging consequences. When God places stumbling blocks, deceives (4:10; 10:7; 2 Th 2:11), or sends false prophets (1 Kg 22:19-23), He is merely letting people follow their own disobedient inclinations, even though He has clearly revealed His will for them. If we stumble, it is our own fault; if we do not, it is because in His mercy God has kept us from unwise choices. Jerusalem had, in effect, rejected God and His mercy, so God announced He would withhold His sustaining mercy and allow Judah to fall.

7:1-11 Jeremiah was preaching in the temple, countering Judah's false trust that its religious institutions would protect it from defeat (v. 4). The people's words were deceptive because, while they professed loyalty to the Lord, they were violating His covenant. The prophet referred specifically to several of the Ten Commandments (v. 9), and pointed out the disparity between the people's professed loyalty to the Lord and their disregard for His commands. Jesus quoted Jeremiah's words (v. 11) when He cleansed the temple (Mt 21:13; Mk 11:17; Lk 19:46).

7:16 Jeremiah was told not to pray for the people. This is not a generalized command that leaders should refrain from intercessory prayer for those committed to their charge. The Lord was telling Jeremiah that it was too late for Judah in this particular situation; judgment was at hand (v. 20). God knew their hearts and saw that they would not repent (v. 27). Under normal circumstances it is right for a spiritual leader to pray for his people (29:7; see also 1 Sm 12:23; Dn 9; 2 Co 13:9; Eph 1:17).

7:21-23 It was not literally the case that the Lord said nothing about sacrifices and offerings when He brought Israel out of Egypt; His words here were meant as sarcasm. At Mount Sinai, God did prescribe the method for sacrificing to Him. Jeremiah's point was that He did not request sacrifice for its own sake (see Hs 6:6) but as a sign of a deeper relationship that involved a total walk in the ways of God. Verse 23 repeats the summary of God's covenant agreement with His people that occurs frequently in Scripture (Ex 6:7; Dt 29:13; Jr 31:1,33; Ezk 11:20; 13:11; 36:28; 37:23,27; Heb 8:10; Rv 21:3). The people had broken this agreement. See note on 6:20.

10:5 On the Israelite prophets' critique of the worship of other "gods," see Is 40:12-26; Jr 2:11.

10:11 This verse is in Aramaic, the language the Jews adopted after the Babylonian exile. Portions of other OT books (Ezr 4:8–6:18, 7:12-26; Dn 2:4b–7:28) are in Aramaic, but this is the only example of a single Aramaic verse in an otherwise Hebrew book. Critical scholars suggest that an editor added this verse. If so, it would not invalidate this passage as part of the canon of Scripture; editors and compilers also worked under the Holy Spirit's guidance (see note on 1:1-3). Other possible examples of editorial additions include Nm 12:3; Ru 4:7; 1 Sm 9:9; Mk 7:19; Rm 16:22.

10:23 This statement of God's sovereignty is consistent with Pr 16:9; 20:24.

11:10-11 The biblical worshiper can appeal to the Lord for help on the basis of the covenant (e.g., Ps 25:7-10). When the covenant is broken through the people's unfaithfulness, there is no longer any basis for appeal even if they "cry out" to God. If this had been a sincere appeal based on genuine repentance, the Lord would have been open to hearing it (2 Ch 6:37-39; 7:14). But since the Judeans were still appealing to other gods, it was clear that the covenant remained broken.

11:14 On the prophet being told not to pray for the people, see note on 7:16.

12:1 The prosperity and success of evil and treacherous people has long been an impediment to faith in God. If God is just, it seems He would not permit that situation to continue. Other biblical writers have voiced the concern Jeremiah raises here (e.g., Ps 73:1-14; Ec 7:15; Hab 1:13). But Jeremiah applied a wider perspective, useful in apologetics: Because God is who He is, His righteousness is not measured by the complaints people bring against Him out of their personal circumstances. We might not understand *how* God is righteous, and we can even "bring a case" or demand an explanation (Jb 13:3) from Him. But since God is in charge of the universe, and not us, it is useless to suppose that any case we bring against Him will prove Him unjust.

12:7 See note on Lm 1:10.

12:8 How could the Lord say He hated His chosen people? The prophet used strong language to communicate that God's attitude toward Judah had changed as a result of the Judeans' disdain for Him; they could expect His actions to reflect that change. It is

typical of biblical writers to express emphasis with extremes, or polar opposites, leaving no "gray area" between them (Mal 1:2-3; Lk 14:26); such expressions are sometimes called "rhetorical Hebraisms." Other passages, however, including Jr 12:15, make it clear that God continued to love His chosen people in spite of their unfaithfulness (e.g., Ezr 3:11; Jr 3:12; Hs 11:7-9; Mt 23:37).

12:16 On swearing oaths in the Lord's name, see note on 4:2.

13:4 Commentators are uncertain whether Jeremiah traveled all the way to the Euphrates River for the sake of an illustration, a distance in excess of 400 miles. Such a journey would have taken about four months each way, and the prophet also had to go there again to retrieve the garment (v. 6). Some interpreters suggest that Jeremiah went to the spring called Perath (the name is similar to "Euphrates" in Hb) near Anathoth, his family home. If Jeremiah in fact went to the Euphrates, this act would have made a greater impression on his hearers and it would have been a fitting analogy: Just as Jeremiah's garment was ruined at the Euphrates, so Judah's pride would be ruined in exile in Babylon by the Euphrates.

13:14 The thrust of these words is that judgment was so near at hand that it was virtually too late to ward it off through repentance (36:31). In typical prophetic style, the prophet declared the Lord's word in extremes. God may have been using such emphatic language to warn the people that they should not expect a reprieve unless the situation changed. Although God knew that the people would not repent, He offered the possibility of repentance to make clear that Judah's judgment was justified (18:6-12; 26:3). Other passages in Scripture make it clear that it is never too late to repent (Jl 2:11-14; Lk 23:43); see note on 7:16.

14:7-9 Although the prophet is ordinarily the spokesman for the Lord, uttering His words of judgment (and sometimes comfort), he is also an intercessor with the Lord on the people's behalf (see Am 7:1-6). Here Jeremiah filled this intercessory role, in words given to him by the Lord Himself.

14:11 On the prophet being told not to pray for the people, see note on 7:16.

14:14 This passage does not say that God was deceiving these prophets, but that they were lying and attributing it to God. Perhaps they were saying, "This is the Lord's declaration." See notes on Lm 2:9, 2:14.

14:16 The people were to be punished because they listened to the false prophets. It was their responsibility to test the prophets (Dt 18:21-22), not just to accept whatever they said without question, but they failed to do so. They may have known that what the prophets said was not in line with God's will, but because they liked what they heard, they condoned it (5:31; 23:16; 29:8; 2 Co 11:4; 2 Tm 4:3). We are also obligated to test the messages we hear and reject those who preach a false message in God's name (Ac 17:11; Gl 1:6-9; 1 Jn 4:1). See notes on Lm 1:5; 2:14.

16:6 That God mentioned people cutting themselves and shaving their heads in mourning does not mean that He condones it. These were pagan practices (41:5; 47:5) that are condemned in Scripture (Dt 14:1).

17:10 Many passages of Scripture teach that God judges people by their deeds, while others indicate that He judges people by their motives. There is no inconsistency, as this verse points out, because one's "heart" and "actions" are closely connected. Other passages clearly teach that God evaluates people based on their hearts (1 Sm 16:7; 1 Kg 8:39; Lk 16:15), but actions reveal what is in people's hearts (1 Sm 2:3; Mt 7:15-16; 12:33-35; 15:18-19; Jms 2:18). Whether one is judged by inward motivation or outward acts makes no difference. What a person actually does reveals where his or her heart lies (Mt 21:28-31).

17:21-24 Here the Lord called for observance of the Sabbath restriction on work and promised blessings if the people would keep the commandment. Their observance would be evidence that they were listening to the Lord and obeying Him. The first-century Pharisees observed the Sabbath restrictions in detail, yet Jesus did not commend them in this because their motivation was

hypocritical. They were observing the minutiae of the law not because they wanted to obey God—though they may have thought they did—but because they wanted to separate themselves from "sinners" and non-Jews (the term "Pharisee" was probably derived from a word meaning "separated"). In this passage, God was not calling for works of the law of the Pharisaic type; He was asking the people to listen to Him. Observing the Sabbath is an indicator of a right relationship with God. The Judeans' ancestors were not condemned for their Sabbath practices but because they refused to accept the Lord's instruction and discipline (v. 23; cp. 26:4). That is, they did not have a right relationship with God.

18:6 In a parable, or illustrative story, the Lord says that he can deal with Israel, or any other people, the same way a potter handles a lump of clay: If it does not turn out to his liking, the potter can destroy it and start over. The biblical account of God forming man out of dust (Gn 2:7; cp. 3:19; Jb 10:9; Ps 90:3; Ec 3:20; 12:7) is not a parable; unlike this passage in Jeremiah, it makes no analogy to the realm of human activity. One should not confuse the two passages and insist either that God literally formed Israel out of clay or that Gn 2:7 is merely a parable.

18:8 See note on 13:14.

18:18 Some interpreters see in this verse a reference to the three sections of the Hebrew canon: the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings ("counsel from the wise"). If so, this is an indication that the three-part canon was already a recognized entity even while portions of it (e.g., Jeremiah's prophecy and that of later prophets) were still in process of formation. The Hebrew order of books differs from that of the Greek OT (followed by the English Bible), which places the Latter Prophets (Isaiah through Malachi) at the end. Interestingly, this verse follows the Greek order (cp. Ezk 7:26, which has the order Prophets, Law, counsel, i.e. Writings).

19:8-9 God does not condone cannibalism. The extreme situation described here would be the result of a prolonged siege of Jerusalem, the judgment to come because of Judah's faithlessness. Under such conditions the people would be forced to choose among options that are equally repugnant—in this case, cannibalism or slow death by starvation (2 Kg 6:28-30; Is 9:20; Lm 4:9-10; Ezk 5:10). The state into which Jerusalem will fall reflected the curses taking effect: The city will be an object of scorn (Dt 28:37) and its inhabitants reduced to eating their own young (Lv 26:29; Dt 28:53-55).

20:7 This is the language of prophetic exaggeration. God did not deceive Jeremiah; He had warned him that he would be opposed (1:8,19; 12:5).

20:8-9 Jeremiah is known for his "confessions," his honest expression of personal discouragement and distress because of his prophetic vocation. When he spoke a word from God, the people made fun of him and held him in contempt. Yet, if he tried to refrain from prophesying, he could not (v. 9); his call to prophesy was "inborn," part of who he was (1:5). He was frustrated, but in the end the Lord's power to deliver encouraged him (vv. 11-13).

20:11-13 Jeremiah's book reflects his internal struggle; the tone of these verses is a positive contrast to the dejected utterances of verses 7-10 and 14-18. Some critics believe these verses were added at a later time when Jeremiah was no longer so depressed, but given the course of his life as recorded in Scripture, it is not easy to identify when such a time might have arrived. Other scholars point out that such a mood swing could be a result of trying to understand what was happening: Jeremiah's prophecy reflected his ongoing internal struggle. In any case, his book was the result of an ongoing process of composition, in both oral and written form. His prophecy was composed orally and committed to memory so that when it was destroyed he could dictate it over again to his scribe, with additions (36:32). Today it is impossible to know, with any certainty, which verses might belong to the earlier stages of composition and which to the latter.

21:10 See note on Lm 3:37-38.

22:3-4 These stipulations were not a complete list of the just actions the Lord required of His people; they were emblematic of the whole law. The works, in themselves, would not deliver the Judeans, but they were indicators of a right attitude toward God

(17:21-24).

22:11-12 Shallum was another name for Jehoahaz (1 Ch 3:15). The fulfillment of this prophecy is reported in 2 Kg 23:31-33.

22:28-30 Why was Coniah (Jehoiachin) to be recorded as childless, when in fact he had seven sons and several grandchildren (he is called Jeconiah in 1 Ch 3:16-18)? He was effectively childless, as a king, because no son succeeded to his throne after his death. The last king of Judah was Coniah's brother Zedekiah (596–586 B.C.); when the Babylonians deposed him, they executed his sons. As the Messiah, Jesus was a "descendant of David" (Rm 1:3). His descent was reckoned through Joseph, who was legally considered His father (Lk 3:23; cp. Mt 1:16), but Jesus was not Joseph's biological son. (In a way Jeremiah's prophecy—that Coniah would be reckoned as "childless"—supports the virgin birth.) This passage, in any case, did not look ahead to a messianic era but had only Coniah's lifetime in view.

23:1-3 The Lord declared that the leaders ("shepherds") of Judah banished the flock (v. 2), but in the next verse He indicated that the banishment was His own doing. No contradiction is involved. The text views the same event from human and divine perspectives. God banished Judah for her sinfulness, but used her leaders to accomplish His will. See notes on Lm 1:5; 3:37-38.

23:6 Jeremiah prophesied that Judah and Israel would be saved during the days of the Branch, but most of the Jews rejected Christ (Mt 21:42-45; Ac 13:46). Paul pointed out that, in fact, the true Israel had been saved (Rm 2:28-29; 11:1,7; Gl 3:7; 6:16) in the faithful Christian community. In the NT, several major OT themes—the promised land, the temple, Zion or Jerusalem, the Messiah—receive a new interpretation, and Israel is another of these themes. It was not given to the OT prophets to see the fulfillment of their words in Christ and His church (see Heb 11:39-40). Paul also held out hope that in the future the "full number" of Israel would come to Christ (Rm 11:11-15,26; cp. Ezk 37).

23:16-18 The test for a true prophet is whether his prophecy comes to pass (Dt 13:1-3). The history of Israel reveals that the true prophets were those who proclaimed the Lord's judgment, not those who ignored the people's sin and prophesied well being. Those prophets had not "stood in the council of the LORD" (v. 18; cp. v. 22), and their message was not from Him. If the people listened to them anyway, they would be "worthless" and come under judgment. See notes on 14:16; 27:14; Lm 1:5; 2:14.

23:23-24 Some critics say this passage does not belong here; they do not see a connection with the context, which is concerned with false prophets. These three declarations all have to do with how a person is given access to the mind of the Lord; He is not "near"—i.e., not within the mind of the self-appointed prophet—but "far away," filling the whole world. The second declaration, or question, could mean that God is able to find the person through whom He chooses to speak, or else that the false prophet will not be able to escape being found out by Him.

23:28 Jeremiah said, in what may have been a piece of sarcasm—that the prophet who had a dream should tell it. He was not conceding that the false prophets' dreams were from God. On the contrary, they would be exposed as worthless straw compared to wholesome grain. In some cases, a dream is a valid way to hear from God (Nm 12:6; Jl 2:28; Mt 2:12,13,19,22; Ac 18:9-10).

23:39 How is it possible for God to expel someone from His presence (see Gn 4:16)? To be in God's presence in this sense is not merely to be where God exists—which is everywhere (Jr 23:24; Ps 139:7-10)—but to have an audience with God, to interact with Him. Thus in Jb 1:12 and 2:7, after Satan finished his audience with God, he left God's presence. And in 2 Kg 23:27, as in this passage, God refused to interact further with Judah.

25:11 See note on 29:10.

25:13 The Septuagint (Greek translation of the OT) inserts chapters 46–51 here. Because many surviving Greek OT manuscripts are as old as, or older than, those of the Hebrew text, it is uncertain which order of the chapters is original and which textual tradition has become corrupted. This question should cast no doubt on the reliability of the text since it does not affect important issues. While the differing context of those chapters may put a slightly different nuance on their meaning, the core message and theology of Jeremiah are clear: the nation of Judah went into exile because of its sinfulness, and God is sovereign over all nations.

26:1-6 This passage repeated the substance of the first part of Jeremiah's sermon in the temple (7:1-15), and the continuation narrated the Judean leaders' response to it. Since the book of Jeremiah was compiled by a later editor, this may be the compiler's third-person account of the incident that was reflected, in Jeremiah's own words, in chapter 7.

26:2 This passage presents one process of inspiration of a prophetic message: God gives the message to the prophet (vv. 4-6), and the prophet delivers the message publicly to the people (v. 7).

26:3 God appeared to be ready to change His mind, but it is not God who changes. The situation changed while God remained the same. God is consistently opposed to the one who does evil. If that person ceases to do evil, God will no longer oppose him (18:8; Ezk 18:21; 33:19). The Hebrew text may actually present a more positive possibility than the English translation ("perhaps") implies; the word *'ulai* has the sense of "it may very well be."

26:4-6 See note on 17:21-24.

26:18 Here the elders of Judah quoted Mc 3:12, providing validation for the canonicity of Mc. The quotation shows that the words of the prophets were preserved and circulated during the pre-exilic period. This is the only place where an OT text quotes another OT passage verbatim and names the author.

27:8 The Lord used one nation to punish another; He is sovereign over all nations, not just Israel (27:5-6; Am 9:7). See note on Lm 3:37-38.

27:14 The Lord was warning the king not to listen to the false prophets. If he listened to them anyway, he would be held responsible for the consequences. See notes on 14:16; 23:16-18; Lm 1:5; 2:14.

27:15 Sometimes the Lord indicated that He sent deceptions to the prophets (6:21; cp. 1 Kg 22:19-23). But in this case, the Lord made it clear that He did not send these false prophets, even though they invoked His name in their sayings.

27:22 Here Jeremiah uttered a prophecy that would come true in the near future (52:17; see 2 Kg 25:13). The people could test him in this to determine if he was a true prophet (Dt 18:21-22; Jr 28:9; 32:7; 44:29-30). When this prophecy was fulfilled, they could conclude that he was a true prophet of Yahweh and that his long-term prophecies would also come true. Indeed, the temple articles were eventually returned (Ezr 1:7-11; 5:13-15). Some critics assume that this prophecy was written down after the fulfillment had already occurred (*vaticinium ex eventu*, a prophecy after the event). Such skepticism is grounded on the assumption that prophecy is impossible, either because God does not know the future, or because He cannot communicate with humans, or even that He does not exist. In these cases, one's worldview or presuppositions exclude fulfilled prophecy. No amount of evidence to the contrary will be convincing.

28:2 Hananiah contradicted Jeremiah's prophecies (cp. 28:3 and 25:11; 29:10). Though Hananiah represented himself as speaking in the name of the Lord of Hosts, he was a false prophet. Not everyone who claimed to be speaking in the name of God had truly heard from Him. The Lord made this point in 14:14 and 27:15.

29:6 Jeremiah was not advocating intermarriage with other cultural groups, in contradiction to Dt 7:3 and Jos 23:12-13. In fact, this admonition agreed with what he said in 16:2-4 and 29:28: Do not stay in Judah and try to raise a family; instead, go into exile in Babylon and make that your home.

29:10 The Neo-Babylonian Empire lasted somewhat less than 70 years (605–539 B.C.). Consequently, some critics contend that Jeremiah's prediction cannot be made to fit any literal 70-year period. Some interpreters consider this a symbolic number representing the "complete" period of Judah's punishment, or a round number representing the span of a lifetime or some period shorter than might be expected. But it is also possible that the number 70 refers precisely to the time from the fall of Jerusalem to the rebuilding of the second temple (587–516 B.C.) or from the establishment of the Neo-Babylonian Empire to the first return of exiles (605–536 B.C.). When some critics are shown that there are fitting events 70 years apart, they conclude that this is a "prophecy" written after the event (see note on 27:22). However, when Daniel referred to Jeremiah's prediction, he clearly referred to the date at which he thought of it (Dn 9:2). So Scripture says that Jeremiah wrote it, Daniel read about it, and then it happened. The prophecy was given before the event.

30:1-3 Some scholars contend that chapters 30–33 were written by another author, not Jeremiah. They argue that Jeremiah was a prophet of doom and judgment, not hope and reconciliation. However, such speculation ignores the clear intent of Scripture: Verse 1 attributes this prophecy to Jeremiah. Certainly it is not impossible for a prophet to speak of both judgment and hope—in this case, judgment in the near future and hope for the long term. Jeremiah had previously offered hope (2:1-3; 3:14-18; 23:1-8; 24:4-7). In fact, in calling him, the Lord acknowledged that Jeremiah was to be a prophet who would both "uproot and tear down" and "build and plant" (1:10; see also 31:38). Other prophets also offered messages of hope along with predictions of doom. Ezekiel spoke of God deserting Jerusalem but returning in the future (Ezk 10:18-19; 11:23; 43:4-5). Hosea said that in the near future Israel would be "Not My People" but in the far future once again "My people" (Hs 1:9; 2:23). Joel said that the Day of the Lord would be devastation, but in the future the Lord would bless His people and send them the Holy Spirit (Jl 1:15; 2:26-28). Amos juxtaposed judgment for sinners with the future restoration of Israel (Am 9:9-10; 9:11-15). The prophets' proclamations of judgment were always intended to move the people to repentance and their words rang with confidence in the Lord's ultimate faithfulness to His covenant.

31:4 Jeremiah appears to be contradicting Am 5:2, which says that Virgin Israel will never rise again. Several considerations suggest that no contradiction is involved. First, the verse in Amos was a lament, not a prophecy (it is in what some scholars identify as a "lament" meter). Second, the context in Am 5:4-7 was an appeal to Israel to return to the Lord, indicating that repentance remained a possibility. Finally, Jeremiah was taking the long-range view. Although Ephraim (Israel, the northern kingdom) had been defeated and overrun—and though Judah would also be defeated and go into exile—in the future the Jews will repent and be restored to the land, including territory formerly part of Ephraim (Jr 31:18-21).

31:15 According to Mt 2:17, this prophecy was "fulfilled" when Herod had the infants killed after the birth ofJesus. Jeremiah was not writing about the Messiah, but about the exile. This does not mean that Matthew did not understand Jeremiah's meaning. Rather, it has to do with Matthew's understanding of what it was to "fulfill" Scripture.

31:26 Critics propose that a later scribe accidentally inserted this verse, or that it was a fragment of a longer description of how these speeches came about, the rest of which has dropped out. However, there is no valid reason to doubt that the verse belongs here. Jeremiah would have found this message of hope "pleasant" after his other messages of judgment. And it indicated the method of revelation for the preceding material, either the previous three verses or the whole prophecy from 30:1. A dream was one method of hearing from God (see 23:28), even though Jeremiah prophesied against those who falsified the method.

31:29 The proverb Jeremiah quoted would be popular in the exile because the people would think they were being punished for their forefathers' sins. But the prophet was looking beyond, to the restoration of the Jews to their homeland. When that occurs, people will no longer view the proverb as appropriate. In that new situation, they will understand that God blesses those who trust Him and punishes those who do not, regardless of what their forefathers have done, in accordance with His word in Dt 24:16.

31:32-33 God said the new covenant will not be like the old one. This does not imply that the old covenant was inadequate, for the new covenant would involve the same core stipulation of full allegiance to God. Jeremiah used the same summary description for the "new" covenant ("I will be their God, and they will be My people") that the Lord gave for the "old" covenant (cp. Ex 6:7).

While the Bible speaks of a "new covenant," it is worth noting that the nuance, in English, between "new" and "renewed" may not be a feature of biblical languages; something that is "renewed" is simply called "new." What is different with this "new" covenant is that its law is written on the "hearts" of the people (v. 33). Keeping the covenant will not be through actions in conformity to an external standard but will arise from the inner motivation of a people bonded to their God. This agrees with Jl 2:28, where the prophet declared that the Spirit of God will dwell in people. The people generally failed to keep the old covenant, so in the new covenant God will, even more than in the past, take the initiative (31:18; 32:40; Ezk 36:24-27; Eph 2:4-5). Ultimately, He did this through the death and resurrection of Jesus (Lk 22:20; 1 Co 11:25).

31:34 That a just God would "never again remember" the sins that His people have committed may not seem right. But biblical language and thought are concrete; to "remember" something does not mean to entertain an exclusively "mental" process; it means to take action in accord with the memory. This is what the Lord declares He will not do. It is no injustice that He will not allow His people's past sins to influence His current and future relationship with them; it is the mystery of substitutionary atonement.

Scripture is consistent in its teaching. The sacrificial system of the OT was based on the premise that there is forgiveness of sins through the shedding of blood (Lv 17:11). But such sacrifices, involving the deaths of animals, were inadequate in and of themselves. They were to be fulfilled in Christ, the perfect sacrifice (Heb 10:1-10) which God Himself provided (Rm 3:24-25; Heb 13:11-12; 1 Jn 2:1-2). Thus, all who relied on blood for atonement in the OT were ultimately looking forward to Jesus the Messiah. Because of the sacrifice of Jesus, God is righteous in passing over the sins of people—past, present, and future (Rm 3:24-26). He removes our sin far from us (Ps 103:12; Jr 33:8; 50:20; Mc 7:18; Rm 11:27) and remembers it no more (Is 43:25; Heb 10:17).

32:7 This is another example of a short-term prophecy that validated Jeremiah's credentials as a prophet (Dt 18:22; see Jr 27:22; 44:29-30).

32:35 Though the Lord "never entertained the thought" that Judah's leaders would introduce Baal worship and child sacrifice, this does not mean He had no foreknowledge of their detestable actions. The statement is a way of emphasizing that such practices were never part of His plan for Israel. God is too holy to contemplate condoning evil (Hab 1:13; Jms 1:13).

33:16-18 This passage promises that there will always be a descendant of David on the throne in Israel (see 2 Sm 7:12-16) and a descendant of Levi as priest. God's promises are always conditional in some way, whether or not the condition is stated. Although the original promise of the endurance of David's dynasty was not contingent upon the obedience of his descendants (2 Sm 7:14), it was contingent upon there being an entity over which the dynasty would rule. In the same way, the endurance of the Levitical priesthood depended on the existence of an entity in which the priests would serve. Because of the community's unfaithfulness and resistance to the Lord, both entities ceased to exist. The kingdom came to an end with the exile, and any leadership role for the Davidic dynasty drops from the historical record after Zerubbabel (Hg 2:23). In the same way, the Levitical priesthood ended with the destruction of the temple in A.D. 70 and the cessation of its ceremonies. This text does not promise an unbroken line from the time ofDavid and Aaron until eternity; it says that "in those days" there will be an enduring king and priest. The time of which Jeremiah spoke need not be a continuation of the time period during which he was prophesying; it may well refer to the time when the faithful community of Israel will be restored. The NT sees this taking place in the appearance of Jesus Christ, the King in David's line (Rm 1:3) whose kingdom will never end. Moreover, Jesus Christ is the High Priest—though in the line of Melchizedek, rather than Levi (Heb 7:11-17)—who will never fail to serve.

34:4-5 Did Zedekiah die in peace? Technically, he did not die by the sword, but he was forced to witness the slaughter of his family. Then his eyes were put out and he was exiled to Babylon where he died in prison (52:8-11).He probably had no ceremonial burial as described here. The promise did not fail, but Zedekiah failed. The promise was conditional (38:17), but since he did not meet its conditions, he suffered the consequences.

35:2 When the Lord told Jeremiah to offer wine to the Rechabites, He was not tempting them (Jms 1:13 says that God does not tempt anyone) because He knew they would not accept the wine (Jr 35:6). The Lord used the Rechabites' faithfulness to a dead ancestor to illustrate Judah's contrasting unfaithfulness to the living God (v. 14). He blessed the Rechabites for their faithfulness (vv. 18-19). The Rechabites were a fitting subject for Jeremiah's illustration. They used no wine because they had remained nomadic, avoiding both permanent buildings and cultivated fields (vv. 8-10). They adopted this lifestyle as a symbol of Israel's faithful wilderness period, the time before the people took up the settled life of Canaan and became corrupted by its polytheistic religious practices.

It was not for their abstaining from wine or their nomadic lifestyle that the Lord blessed the Rechabites, but for their obedience. When a characteristic of a person or group is used as an illustration, it is that characteristic that is to be emulated (or avoided, in negative examples), not necessarily the entire lifestyle. For example, Jesus spoke favorably of a man who woke up his neighbor at

midnight and persistently asked for bread to serve a guest (Lk 11:5-8). That does not mean that we should all wake up our neighbors at midnight; it means we should emulate his persistence, and perhaps his hospitality.

36:2 Even though God did not preserve this particular scroll as Scripture (the king destroyed it, v. 23), its contents were evidently preserved as Scripture within the book of Jr. What God communicated to His people (v. 3) as His revelation through the prophet (v. 2) was first committed to memory before being dictated to Baruch (v. 4). Therefore, Jeremiah could replace the text after the scroll was lost, and, in the meantime, the Lord gave him additional revelation (v. 32). This is an example of one process of revelation—how God communicates His word to His people through inspired spokesmen (2 Pt 1:21).

The scarcity of writing skills and materials in the ancient Near East required people to rely upon memory to a degree that is difficult to envision today within the technology of the modern Western world. As long as a culture remains stable, texts can be preserved through oral recitation and memorization with a high degree of reliability, especially if there is a group of people who share the tradition and can act as a check on errors that might creep in. The prophets of Israel did not work in isolation; they had disciples (Is 8:16)—in Jeremiah's case, Baruch at least—to help preserve their words (see Lk 1:1-2). Some portions of Scripture may have existed in oral form for long periods of time, being committed to writing only when it appeared that the community that preserved them was in danger of being disrupted. Jeremiah's scroll gives a glimpse of how this process operated in the short term.

36:12 The writer recorded the names of those involved in this event (vv. 10,14,20,25-26; cp. Mk 5:22; 15:21; Lk 23:50; Jn 3:1; 18:10). From this we can draw two conclusions. First, the writer was an eyewitness to the event or had contact with eyewitnesses. Second, the event must have been recorded correctly, since there is a record of people who could have corrected any errors (Ac 26:26; 1 Co 15:6). These facts support the reliability of this record as an example of the general reliability of the historical accounts in Scripture.

36:26 Jeremiah and Baruch hid themselves at the suggestion of court officials (v. 19), but when the king ordered them to be seized, the text says it was the Lord who had hidden them. There is no discrepancy here since God operates through human agents under His control (10:23; see Pr 16:9; 19:21; 20:24). The Lord told Jeremiah to hide, then hid his location from the eyes of those searching for him.

36:30 Jehoiakim's son held the throne for only three months, which by all reasonable measures would be considered a failure (2 Kg 24:8-15). Then Jehoiakim's brother ruled in Jerusalem, but only as a puppet of Babylon (24:18). The Bible does not expressly state that Jehoiakim's corpse was exposed, but while the account of the death of a king often includes a record of his burial (1 Kg 2:10; 11:43; 14:31; 15:8,24; 16:6,28; 22:50), Jehoiakim's does not (2 Kg 24:6; 2 Ch 36:8). There is no substantive reason to doubt that Jeremiah's prophecy about him was fulfilled.

36:31 The Lord's warnings about bringing disaster upon Judah were conditional: If they had listened to Him, He would not have done so. But here He was saying that there was virtually no time for Him to change His course of action; the judgment was immanent. There is no awkward redundancy in what the Lord was declaring through Jeremiah.

38:27 Although it appears that the king told Jeremiah to lie, and he did so, it is not certain that what he told the officials was a lie (though it was only a partial truth). It is possible that Jeremiah did make the request the king mentioned, but that it was unrecorded. Israelite culture held to a different view of the purpose of the spoken word. It was not only to give information (i.e., to state facts verifiable by some external standard), but also to establish a perception of a situation and thereby to motivate people to a certain type of behavior. The preservation of innocent human life is a value God upholds. Therefore He commands His people not to give false testimony that would put the innocent in jeopardy (Ex 20:16). But His word also records, without condemnation, instances where people gave misleading information to protect the innocent (e.g., the Hebrew midwives, Ex 1:19; Rahab, Jos 2:3-6). Jeremiah's "lie" comes under the latter category; if he had told the entire truth, the king would have had him killed or the officials might have turned the king over to the Babylonians to be tortured. In either case, a human life was in jeopardy, so Jeremiah acted in a way that, at least temporarily, spared it.

The Bible does not say that what Jeremiah did was commendable, or that God blessed him for it. In fact, Jeremiah remained in custody until the fall of the city (v. 28). But Scripture, in this episode, records a reality of life in a sinful world, just as it reveals Jeremiah's human weakness in his "confessions" (chaps. 11–20). When he remembered the suffering he had gone through in the cistern and when he faced the possibility of more suffering, he complied with the king's request. Jeremiah's compliance, in the face of death and suffering, contrasts with Jesus' determination in the garden of Gethsemene (Lk 22:42). Jesus resolved to continue to carry out God's will regardless of the painful consequences to Himself (Php 2:8). But Jeremiah was not the Messiah; his death, unlike that of Christ, would not have brought redemption to sinful humanity. It is hard to fault him for what he did.

39:2 Jerusalem did not fall because the Lord was not strong enough to protect it. As long as the people honored God, He promised to bless them and allow them to stay in the land (Dt 4:1; 20:4; 30:20; 32:47; Ps 37:3; see Nm 20:12). Jeremiah had told the people that they could not depend on the Lord defending them simply because His temple was in the city; they needed to show, by their actions, that they trusted in God (7:3-8). Their actions showed the opposite, however (17:24). Ezekiel saw in his visions that the glory of God had departed from the temple and was no longer protecting the city (Ezk 10:18-19; 11:23; see Jr 12:7). When God left Jerusalem, Babylon conquered Judah.

39:15 This account of the prophecy to Ebed-melech is given out of sequence; it belongs after 38:13. This is not a textual corruption; a compiler sometimes rearranged the order of material for effect. Here the editor may have wanted to show that God could allow the enemy to destroy Jerusalem and torture the king because of Judah's disobedience, yet He could spare Jeremiah and Ebed-melech because of their trust in Him.

39:16 How could Jeremiah "go" when he was confined in the guard's courtyard? The answer lies in the meaning of the Hebrew word translated "go": It functions to strengthen the command. It could be translated, "Be sure to tell Ebed-melech . . ."

40:1-5 The text has already related Nebuzaradan's release of Jeremiah from the guard's courtyard in Jerusalem (39:14); in this passage, he was releasing him at Ramah, where he had been chained with others awaiting deportation to Babylon. If Jeremiah was released only once, the first account summarized events from Jeremiah's imprisonment in Jerusalem until his release into the custody of Gedaliah, while this account provided the details of his final release at Ramah. Or Jeremiah was freed in Jerusalem, then in the general confusion, was taken captive again and finally released at Ramah.

40:2-3 It seems unlikely that a worshiper of the god Marduk would speak of the outcome of a battle in terms of the God of Judah. One possibility is that Nebuzaradan was willing to ascribe the outcome to Judah's God because Judah was defeated (see Jdg 11:24; Is 36:18-20). Another possibility is that he was quoting Jeremiah's own words that had been reported to him during the siege of Jerusalem.

41:5 Though the narrative relates that these pilgrims had "shaved their beards . . . and gashed themselves," that does not mean those practices were condoned; they were, in fact, forbidden (Lv 19:27-28; 21:5; Dt 14:1). In the chaotic conditions that prevailed in Judah, it is not surprising that some worshipers of the Lord were confused about what was acceptable as a sign of mourning.

42:10 The Lord declared, through Jeremiah, that He relented concerning what had befallen Judah. This does not mean that He changed His mind about the judgment He permitted. Now that the people's disobedience had been punished and a new situation existed. The remnant of the people had turned from disobedience and pledged to obey the Lord (v. 6); if they followed through on their promise, the Lord would reestablish them in the land (26:3). His requirement of faithfulness had not changed.

42:17 See note on 44:28.

43:8 Jeremiah had told the people of Judah not to go to Egypt (42:9-17), but when they did not listen to him, he went to Egypt with them. He may have felt it was his duty to help them, even though they had made the wrong decision, or he may have been taken to Egypt against his will (see vv. 5-6).

44:14 See note on v. 28.

44:25 Scripture consistently condemns the worship of false gods (e.g,, Dt 5:8-9; 2 Kg 17:35). In saying, "Go ahead, confirm your vows! Pay your vows!" Jeremiah was speaking sarcastically (cp. 25:28).

44:28 This is the third time Jeremiah prophesied that no Judeans would return from Egypt (42:17; 44:14). He had also predicted that Nebuchadnezzar would invade and destroy Egypt (43:11). History records that Nebuchadnezzar's invasion occurred in 568–567 B.C. while Egypt remained independent, but it is possible that the Judean population was decimated in the warfare. When the exiles return from Babylon (Ezr 2:1), there is no mention of a group returning from Egypt.

Both here in verses 27-28 and in verse 14 Jeremiah said that there would be no fugitives, then added that there would be a few fugitives. Some critics contend that a later editor added the mitigating statement. However, it is more likely that this is a Hebrew idiom (Jos 11:21-22; 1 Sm 30:17; cp. Gn 39:6; Dt 2:34-35,36-37; Jos 11:19; 2 Kg 24:14). Jeremiah did not intend for the existence of a few stragglers to weaken his strong oracle of judgment. The survivors would be virtually annihilated, their small number would even emphasize the extent of the devastation, and they would serve as witnesses to the power of God's word to bring about that which it declares.

44:29-30 Jeremiah offered a "sign" to demonstrate that what he said would come true. This sign was to confirm Jeremiah's status as God's spokesman (see Dt 18:22). When the first thing predicted took place, it could be assumed that the remainder of the prophecy would also come true. Hophra was indeed killed by his enemies; his general, Amasis, was made king by popular acclaim, and he assassinated Hophra around 570 B.C.

45:1 This episode is chronologically out of place; it belongs at chapter 36. Verse 4 implies that the destruction of Jerusalem was still in the future, which would not have been the case by the time Baruch was in Egypt. It fits the situation in the days of Jehoiakim, when Baruch might well have been in "misery" (v. 3) over the impending destruction of the city that Jeremiah had prophesied (35:17). But because this incident contains a message of hope after a dark message of doom—at least for one person—the compiler placed it here. In 39:16-18, the prophet offered a similar message to Ebed-melech. It might also be here to remind Baruch that, despite the disaster that that had just been pronounced against all the Jews in Egypt (44:27), the Lord had already promised an exemption for him and his life would be spared. The reference to Baruch's "[writing] these words on a scroll" might function as a literary device to conclude this section of oracles (25:13; 36:2-3,32).

Critical commentators have contended that a later editor put this episode in the wrong place, or that he mistakenly assigned the wrong date to the episode. But if the editor's purposes were the same as Jeremiah's (or Baruch's), the reliability of Scripture is not affected. God is the ultimate Author, whether He inspired Jeremiah, Baruch, or a later editor to put this episode here (2 Pt 1:21). It is not likely that an editor or compiler would have assigned an incorrect date; if the oracle was delivered in Egypt, he would have mentioned that or omitted the date entirely.

46:1 Certain critics argue that Jeremiah did not write the prophecies against the nations (see note on 25:13). But Jeremiah was called to be a prophet to the nations (1:5), and other prophets also announced judgments against other nations (Is 13–23; Ezk 25–32; Am 1–2). Such messages, preached in Israel to Israelites, made the point that God is the God of all nations, not just Israel, and no nation will escape His judgment, not even Israel. One argument against Jeremiah's authorship is that he would not call for Judah's submission to Babylon (38:17) and also announce judgment against Babylon (chaps. 50–51). However, there is no conflict in the two messages. Babylon was God's instrument of judgment on Judah but would be held accountable for its own sins (see 50:1; Lm 3:37-38; cp. Is 10:12-16; Hab 1:6; 2:16-17).

46:2 The battle of Carchemish occurred in 605–604 B.C. The reliability of the narrative in Jeremiah receives support from extra-biblical evidence, the "Chronicles of the Chaldaean Kings" edited by D. J. Wiseman.

46:13 Some scholars deny that Jeremiah wrote this section because Babylon did not invade Egypt until 568–567 B.C. when Jeremiah would no longer have been living. However, Nebuchadnezzar also threatened Egypt in 604, and fought a battle with Pharaoh Neco in 601. Also, the poem implies that its author had accurate knowledge of the geography of Egypt, which Jeremiah would have had.

46:26 This prophecy was fulfilled: Nebuchadnezzar's conquest of Egypt was only temporary, the destruction was minimal, and he soon withdrew without making it part of his empire.

47:1 Scholars disagree over when this defeat took place. Some deny that Egypt ever fought and defeated Gaza; they attribute the defeat to the Babylonians, known to have defeated Ashkelon in 604 B.C. However, the Greek historian Herodotus reported that after Pharaoh Neco defeated Josiah at Megiddo in 609, he conquered the city of Kadytis, generally believed to be Gaza. Neco had

other occasions to defeat Gaza, in either 605 or 601 Those dates and occasions are speculative, but it is also speculative to contradict the text as it reads and suggest that something entirely different took place.

48:10 Some scholars contend that this verse is an editorial insertion. However, since the nation that destroyed Moab was doing the Lord's work (see note on Lm 3:37-38), this curse was fitting.

48:13 There is some question regarding what "Bethel" referred to. It could refer to the sanctuary in Israel where calf worship was practiced (2 Kg 10:29). Some scholars claim it could refer to a god worshiped by Jewish people in Syria, a suggestion that draws support from a passage in the Elephantine Papyri. Even if this ambiguity is allowed to stand, the impact of the verse remains: Whoever trusts in anything other than God will be put to shame.

48:21-24 Many of the cities mentioned here are also mentioned on the Moabite Stone (a monument set up by Mesha, king of Moab, in the ninth century B.C.), which provides outside verification of the reliability of Scripture.

48:29 Jeremiah 48:29-47 repeats material from Nm 21:27-29; Is 15–16; and other passages in Is. Critics contend that this means the writer was not a composer but a mere editor who needed to borrow material. However, changes and additions as well as the arrangement of borrowed material make it a new composition. The reuse of other passages of the Bible, with variations, is a well-known technique of biblical writers; it is a testimony to the authority and reliability ascribed to the inspired Scriptures even during the period of their formation. One could view this author as one intimately familiar with the Torah and the writings of Isaiah, who used those words to express a new thought the Lord revealed to him. This did not make the writer, or compiler, any less a creator of literature—perhaps more. The sayings of Isaiah were available to Jeremiah, or his editor, who considered them worth learning, repeating, and adapting as authoritative Scripture. Since God inspired both Isaiah's and Jeremiah's oracles against Moab, it is not surprising that they include overlapping material.

48:47 Some critics note that this verse is missing from the Septuagint (LXX) text and therefore argue that it was added to the Hebrew text after the LXX was translated. However, the LXX includes a similar message about Elam's restoration in 49:39. It is harder to explain how a copyist in the Hebrew tradition would add such a verse than to explain why one of the Greek translators might drop it. Only a true prophet is likely to prophesy welfare for the enemies of Judah, and only a faithful copyist would preserve such a statement. The presence of this verse supports the reliability of the Hebrew text.

Critics also contend that this message of Moab's restoration was out of character for Jeremiah. However, those who proclaim only good concerning their homeland and only bad about their enemies were likely to be false prophets (1 Kg 22:11-18). A prophet who had truly heard from the Lord would proclaim the truth, even if it was judgment for his own country and well being for his enemies (22:14,17; cp. Nm 22:38; Jr 1:7). At Jeremiah's commissioning (1:10), God told him he was "to uproot and tear down, to destroy and demolish, to build and plant," so it was not outside Jeremiah's job description to "build and plant," that is, to proclaim welfare. His messages of doom for Israel and Judah were also followed by proclamations of future restoration (30:3), as were his messages against Egypt (46:26), Ammon (49:6) and Elam (49:39). Further, words concerning the destiny of other peoples were consistent with what Jeremiah was teaching throughout the book and especially in this section: God is sovereign over all nations (27:5-6; cp. 23:23-24; 27:8; 46:13).

49:6 See note on 48:47.

49:9 This verse and v. 10 are very similar to Ob 5-6. Some critics suggest that editors gathered anonymous sayings and added them to Jeremiah's (and Obadiah's) prophecies. However, it is not hard to imagine Jeremiah being inspired to use existing sayings, whether from an anonymous source or from his contemporary, Obadiah (Jr 48:29).

49:10 During the exile and into the postexilic period, Arabs overran the land of Edom (descendants of Esau) and the Edomites retreated into Judah, where they became known as Idumeans. At the time of the Maccabees, John Hyrcanus compelled the Idumeans to become Jews and to submit to circumcision. Herod the Great, ruler at Judea at the time of Jesus' birth, was an Idumean. When the Romans subdued the Judeans in A.D. 70, the Idumeans ceased to exist although the Herodian dynasty ruled

elsewhere until the death of Herod Agrippa II in A.D. 100. Jeremiah's prophecy that Esau would "exist no longer" was eventually fulfilled.

49:14 Verses 14-16 are similar to Ob 1-4 (Jr 49:9).

49:16-17 Petra in Edom is indeed still deserted except for tourists and passersby.

49:33 Did this prophecy come true? Hazor in Galilee was destroyed in 732 B.C. (2 Kg 15:29) and never again became a fortified city, but people did live there. This prophecy may refer to another city of the same name; there were several (Jos 15:23-25).

49:34-35 Zedekiah began his rule in 597 B.C., and the defeat of Elam occurred in 596–594 B.C. The text gives the date for Jeremiah's prediction of the demise of Elam, not for the event itself which occurred a few years later. In any case, Zedekiah was king for ten years so the "beginning" of his reign need not be restricted to the immediate period of his accession to the throne.

50:1 Critics argue that this message could not have been delivered until just before 540 B.C. when it became inevitable that Babylon would capitulate to the Persians; therefore, it was written not by Jeremiah but by a later writer in his tradition. However, this verse clearly attributes this prophecy to Jeremiah, and 51:64 indicates that Jeremiah's prophecy extended all the way through to that point. The critics' argument is based on the assumption that a prophet does not really hear from the Lord and, therefore, cannot tell the future.

Some critics question the consistency of Jeremiah. How could he recommend capitulation to Babylonian rule at one point (27:11-12) and prophesy the destruction of Babylon at another (50:2), or preach the judgment of Judah in one place (27:15) and restoration in another (50:19)? It appears that Jeremiah was taking a new direction here. All along he had proclaimed that the nation of Judah was being judged by God for her sinfulness (1:16), and that Babylon was God's instrument for her punishment (1:14-15; 27:6). But the Babylonians would in turn be punished for their wickedness (27:7; cp. Is 10:12-16; Jr 46:1; Lm 3:37-38), and when the Lord had dealt with the sin of the people of Judah, they would be restored (Jr 29:10; 48:47).

50:3 Babylon became a desolate place, though not immediately. When Cyrus arrived in 539 B.C., the city capitulated without resistance, and was not destroyed. But the last mention of Babylon as a city comes from 10 B.C., by which time it had become a ruin, and it has remained so. (For the nation from the "north" see note on v. 41.)

50:9 See note on verse 41.

50:29 Some critics point out that the use of the rare phrase "Holy One of Israel" (Jeremiah only used it here and in 51:5) shows a dependence on Isaiah, who used it frequently. It would not be impossible for Jeremiah to be familiar with Isaiah, and the phrase also occurs in some of the psalms as well as 2 Kg 19:22. On the biblical writers' reuse of material from other inspired authors, see note on 48:29.

50:41 Previously, the nation from the north was Babylon (1:14-15), but here Jeremiah employed an ironic twist. The nation that was once the feared enemy from the north was now threatened by another enemy from the north. Although Persia was east of Babylon, a strategic attack on the city may well have come from the north, down the Tigris-Euphrates basin. The mention of "many kings" reinforces this possibility; these would have been vassal kings of the Persian ruler, many of whose forces would have come from north of Babylon. In any case, from the geographic standpoint of Judah (or Egypt, where Jeremiah could have been when he uttered these words), both Babylon and Persia would be considered nations from the north. That is the direction from which their forces would have approached the region, and not from the east across the Arabian Desert.

Mention of "many kings" gives further insight into the nature of the biblical covenant, which is like an ancient treaty (see Dt 11:26; 13:5). In the ancient world a "great king," or emperor, did not make a treaty with common people or peasants but with other subordinate rulers or kings. Their main treaty obligation was to maintain unswerving loyalty to the overlord and to support him in warfare (Jr 51:27-28). By analogy, to be in covenant with the Lord was not to be in a position of abject servitude; it was, in a sense, a mark of high status (Ps 147:19-20) accorded people made in God's own image (Gn 1:26-27). Thus, those who belong to the new covenant are not commoners but "royalty" (1 Co 4:8;1 Pt 2:9; Rv 5:10).

51:11 Critics argue that this reference to the Medes must be a later insertion, since Jeremiah (writing in 594 B.C., see v. 59) could not have known that the Medes would arise as a major power in the ancient Near East. It was not until around 550 that the king of the Medes controlled many client rulers, but the Medes in turn were subject to Cyrus of Persia. Cyrus led an army of Medes and Persians when he conquered Babylon in 539. The last historical event reported in the book of Jeremiah is the release of Jehoiachin, which took place around 561. At that time Jeremiah, if still living, would have been about 90 years old (he was probably born around 650), though Baruch could have recorded the event after Jeremiah's death.

Some critics might define prophecy only as the prophet's God-given ability to predict future events based on a wise evaluation of current trends. Certainly such insight is a factor in biblical prophecy, but it cannot explain every prediction recorded in Scripture. Prophecy also comes into being as God reveals something that would otherwise be unknowable (27:22; Am 3:7; Ac 21:10-11; 1 Co 14:24-25; 2 Pt 1:21). God is able to reveal specific details of future events to His prophets, including names (Is 44:28; 45:1) and dates (Jr 25:12; 29:10). Those who deny the possibility that Jeremiah could have been given knowledge of events beyond his own time operate within a worldview for whom supernatural realities and actions are an impossibility. Evidence has no bearing on their view.

51:15 Verses 15-19 repeat 10:12-16. They were not placed here by mistake, for the same words in a different context can have a different literary effect. In chapter 10, these words were a treatise on the power of God and the impotence of idols; they served to shame Judah for having trusted in idols. In this passage, the same theological point was applied against Babylon: her idols were impotent to stop God, who would accomplish His will through His power.

51:27 Critics contend that the names of these nations, vassals to the Medes, were inserted later because Jeremiah could not have known that these particular nations would be involved in Babylon's downfall. However, see note on verse 11.

51:36 Babylon was not located on a seacoast, but Jeremiah's reference to "her sea" does not mean he was ignorant of geography (thus calling into question the inerrant inspiration of his writings). The term "sea" in Scripture does not always mean what the term designates in modern English (cp. the "bronze reservoir" of the temple, 52:17, where the Hb word is *yam*, "sea"). The language in these chapters is often figurative; Jeremiah was making a metaphorical reference in terms of Babylonian myth. Babylon prided itself in its "many waters" (v. 13). Besides the Euphrates River that supplied the city with its needs, there were marshes (v. 32) and moats that could be flooded in the event of attack. Babylonian myth taught that the waters arose from a subterranean sea. In this passage, God was speaking to the Babylonians in terms that they would understand: God would metaphorically dry up their "sea," cutting the city off from its precious source of water. Additionally, Babylonian creation myth taught that their god Marduk defeated the god Tiamat, who represented the chaos of the unrestrained sea (5:22). In Scripture, the "sea" can also stand for the pagan nations of the world (e.g., Is 23:11; Rv 21:1). The Lord God of Israel was about to show that He is the One who is in control of the sea. In effect, He would cause the "sea," with its turbulent, chaotic waves, to engulf Babylon and destroy it (Jr 51:42).

51:39,57 Some take this to teach annihilationism (that there is no resurrection). However, permanent sleep is merely a metaphor or euphemism for physical death (Ps 76:5). This verse does not teach about what happens after death; that is taught in passages such as Is 66:24 and Heb 9:27.

51:60 If this refers to "all these words" of chapters 50–51, according to this reference to the reign of Zedekiah they were written by 594 B.C. Some commentators cannot accept that date because they believe Jeremiah could not have known ahead of time the facts about how Babylon would fall, but see note on verse 11.

52:1 The similarity of certain portions of Jeremiah to the parallels in 1 and 2 Kg (cp. Jr 40:5–41:3 and 2 Kg 25:22-26; Jr 52 and 2 Kg 24:18–25:21,27-30) shows that the history recorded has not been substantially altered. This, in turn, supports the historical reliability of both books. One version is probably dependent on the other, or else they had a common source. In either case, they represent two affirmations of the same sequence of events. Critics attribute any differences to editors of subsequent editions, but an apologist could argue that the differences were intentional. Each version includes or excludes details, or otherwise shapes the accounts, to fit the historical context of the audience and the different purposes of the authors.

52:12 The record in 2 Kg 25:8 recorded that Nebuzaradan entered Jerusalem on the seventh day of the month, but Jeremiah stated that he entered on the tenth day. Such an apparent discrepancy would not affect the theological teachings of Scripture but might call into question its factual reliability. These passages do not need to be seen as conflicting. The Hebrew word translated

"entered" could also be translated "came," meaning that Nebuzaradan left Riblah on the seventh day and entered Jerusalem on the tenth. The Hebrew text provides an additional option; Jeremiah had a prefix on the word Jerusalem that means "in" or "into," but 1 Kg does not. So the apologist could also argue that Nebuzaradan came *to* Jerusalem on the seventh, waited for a time, and then came *into* the city on the tenth. This text indicates that Nebuzaradan conquered Jerusalem in the nineteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar, but verse 29 gives the time of the deportation from Jerusalem as the eighteenth year. This difference can be ascribed to the use of two methods of reckoning. This passage counts from Nebuchadnezzar's actual accession to power in 605 B.C., but verse 29 reckons from the following new year, the time of his coronation.

52:14 Archaeological excavations on the east side of Jerusalem overlooking the Kidron Valley verify this destruction.

52:18-19 According to 1 Kg 14:26; 2 Kg 24:13; and Jr 27:16, the articles of the temple had already been carried off, more than once. It appears that replacements had been made during the intervening years, and these were what Nebuzaradan's forces carried off (see 1 Kg 14:27).

52:28 Jeremiah recorded that 3,023 were exiled in the first group, but 2 Kg 12:14-16 give the total as 18,000. Probably the number in Jeremiah included only the men, while the round number in Kg included women and children (cp. Ex 12:37; 38:26; Mt 14:21; 15:38).

52:31 Independent archaeological evidence supports the imprisonment of Jehoiachin in Babylon. An inscription references Ya'ukinu, king of the land of Yahudi, and it lists the rations provided for him and his five sons.

52:33 If Jeremiah was still alive, he would have been about 90 years old when Jehoiachin was released. It is not unreasonable for a compiler or an editor to add a comment at the end of a book by, or about, some important person (see Dt 34). This does not affect the reliability of Scripture since God could inspire and superintend an editor just as He did the author of the main part of the book (see 1:1-3). The editor added this section to show that Jeremiah's prophecies regarding the restoration of Judah and Israel were moving toward fulfillment.

Introduction to Lamentations

AUTHOR

The place of the book of Lamentations in the Bible has never been in dispute. The Talmud (an ancient commentary on the Old Testament), the Septuagint (the early Greek translation of the Old Testament), the writings of the first-century Jewish historian Josephus, and the Latin Vulgate (an early translation of the Bible from Hebrew into Latin), all recognize Lamentations as part of the canon. Lamentations is found in the Writings section of the Jewish Scriptures, as part of the Megilloth—the five books of Ruth, Song of Songs, Ecclesiastes, Lamentations, and Esther, which are read during certain Jewish festivals. Lamentations is read during the ninth of Ab, a fast that commemorates the destruction of the first and second temples.

The book itself is anonymous, but the tradition for Jeremiah as its author is ancient. The Talmud and Josephus's writings both attribute the book to him, as do the writings of the church fathers. The Septuagint and Vulgate both have subtitles attributing the book to him. Further, the book appears to have been written by an eyewitness to the destruction of Jerusalem (2:6-12), and Jeremiah was such an eyewitness (Jr 39:1-14).

There are also three arguments for Jeremiah's authorship based on similarities to the book of Jeremiah. (1) There are similarities between the two books in tone, theology, themes, language, and imagery (cp. Lm 1:15 with Jr 8:21; Lm 1:2 with Jr 30:14). (2) Both books assert that, while Judah should have submitted because the exile was deserved (Lm 1:5; 3:27-28; Jr 29:4-10), there was hope for restoration (Lm 3:21-33; 4:22; 5:19-22; Jr 29:11-14). (3) Both books suggest the prophets and priests shared the blame with the people (Lm 2:14; 4:13; Jr 5:31; 14:14; 23:16).

So, on the one hand, there is no good reason to doubt that Jeremiah wrote the book. But on the other hand, the arguments in his favor are not absolutely conclusive. In any case, we can surmise that the author was an eyewitness to the destruction of Jerusalem, a skillful poet, and a person who deeply felt the distress of his people. The inspiration and canonicity of the book do not depend on the certain identification of its human author or authors.

Because of the highly emotional character of the book, it likely was written soon after the fall of Jerusalem in 587 B.C. Some critical scholars, however, date it much later—up to the second century B.C. But it is unlikely that a person so far removed from the event could have captured its mood as the author of this book did. The grief expressed in Lamentations also argues for a date before the release of Judah's King Jehoiachin in 562 B.C. (2 Kg 25:27-30) and certainly before the return of the exiles in 539 B.C. The evidence for Jeremiah as author also argues against a date beyond his time.

THE RELIABILITY OF LAMENTATIONS

One of the main arguments against an early date for Lamentations is its poetic style. Chapters 1–4 of Lamentations are alphabetic acrostics. That is, the first word of each verse starts with successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet (chap. 3 has three verses for each letter). Those who argue for a much later date question whether the people of Jeremiah's time were capable of such sophisticated formal poetry. They also question whether a person actually experiencing such emotions could force his words into such a restricted form (many scholars also perceive a poetic rhythm in Lm). For these reasons, they conclude that it was composed long after the events depicted. Further, since the last chapter is not an acrostic, skeptics question its inclusion.

Some scholars argue that there was not enough time between the invention of alphabetic writing early in the second millennium B.C. and the writing of this book for such sophisticated literary forms to develop. That is not necessarily the case. Sophisticated forms of literature and poetry would likely develop when stories and traditions were passed along orally. These forms would have been incorporated in writing.

Certainly the alphabetic acrostic is not a form that would have developed in an oral society, yet it would have been one of the first forms to arise as writing spread. Just as our books that teach the alphabet have an apple, a boy, and a cat, so the ancient writing lessons would have had an ox, a house, and a camel. Later lessons might feature sentences starting with each successive letter. From these lessons could arise alphabetic acrostic poetry, which appears frequently in the Bible (Pss 9–10; 25; 34; 37; 111–112; 119; 145; Pr 31:10-31).

But would a person overcome with grief express his feelings in such formal verse? One might expect a heart cry to come out in sentence fragments or free verse. However, deep emotions and formal poetry are compatible. Indeed, people turn to poetry precisely for its ability to express emotion. Consider Shakespeare's sonnets. Also, the form itself sometimes contributes to meaning: the acrostic may have been employed to express the completeness of the destruction and despair—from A to Z, as it were. This also suggests an explanation for why chapter 5 is not an acrostic (nor does it have the rhythm perceived in the other chapters): the lack of form expresses the chaos and despair of the time.

Lamentations Study Notes

1:1 Lamentations is written in the lament meter (three-beat lines alternating with two-beat lines); the first four chapters are in acrostic format, each unit beginning with a successive letter of the Hebrew alphabet. In the Hebrew Bible, Lm is not in the Prophets section but the Writings section, as the fourth of the five "Scrolls" or megillot (Ru, Sg, Ec, Lm, Est).

1:5 The people had rebelled against the Lord (v. 18) and He had warned them of the impending destruction of their city (Dt 28:36,63-68; 2 Kg 17:13-14; Jr 3:6-11). The verse refers to "children" being taken captive; the Hebrew *'olal* can refer to small children, but here it seems to mean all the people of Jerusalem who had acted childishly in refusing the Lord's appeal. Under the OT concept of corporate solidarity (see Dt 2:34; 5:9), all members of a community participated in the sin of its leaders, including the children. If they turned away from their parents' sins, they would in the end be forgiven by God (Jr 31:29-30; Ezk 18:19-20; see also Dt 24:16; 1 Kg 15:11-13).

1:10 Unauthorized persons were not to enter the sanctuary, under penalty of death (Nm 3:10). The god of a shrine was expected to defend that shrine (Jdg 6:32), so, for example, when Uzzah touched the ark of the covenant, he died instantly (2 Sm 6:6-7). But this passage referred to non-Israelites entering the temple with impunity because the Lord was no longer defending His city and sanctuary (Lm 2:7; 4:12-13). Jeremiah told the people that they could not depend on the Lord's defending Jerusalem just because His temple was there; instead, they needed to show by their actions that they trusted in God (Jr 7:3-8). Ezekiel saw in his visions that the glory of God had abandoned the temple (Ezk 10:18-19; 11:23; see also Jr 12:7).

2:9 How could Jeremiah say that prophetic visions had stopped, when he was still prophesying? This poetic language only meant that most of Judah's prophets had failed to receive and pass on a word from God at that time. This corresponded with Jeremiah's observations that there were false prophets who spoke words that did not come from God (Jr 14:14; 23:16). It did not mean that true prophets, such as Jeremiah himself, did not receive revelation during that period. Other prophets also wrote of a scarcity of words from the Lord (Ezk 7:26; Am 8:11).

2:14 The existence of false prophets raises questions about the truthfulness of genuine prophets; some critics even question whether prophecy is possible, or even real. The Bible has clear guidelines to tell a true from a false prophet. If the prophet's short-term prediction came true, he was a genuine spokesman for the Lord; if not, he was a false prophet (Dt 18:21-22). Jeremiah offered short-term prophecies so the people could test him in this way (Jr 27:22; 32:7; 44:29-30; 52:17). Further, false prophets generally know that they are false. In 1 Kg 22:13 one of the "prophets" of Ahab told Micaiah how he should prophesy without regard for what the Lord said. However, in the same passage Micaiah revealed that God had determined to deceive the prophets (1 Kg 22:22). Ezekiel 14:6-9 gives an example in which the leaders, the people, and the prophets were corrupt before they were deceived (see Jr 5:31), and indeed in 1 Kg 22 it seems clear that the false prophets were not truly convinced they were speaking God's message. This demonstrates the principle that God's punishment is a result, not a cause, of corruption (Jdg 9:4-5,23; 1 Sm 15:13-19; 16:14; Rm 1:21-24).

2:20 The existence of cannibalism does not mean that God condones it (see Jr 19:8-9).

3:8 See note on verse 44.

3:37-38 The point of this passage is that there is no other god who can decree anything and make it come to pass. If anything at all happens, it is because the Lord has commanded and orchestrated it (Is 45:7; Jr 32:42; Am 3:6). But even if biblical figures implied that God brought adversity (Jb 2:10), to say that God is helpless to stop adversity would be to misread the Bible and destroy hope. God is all-powerful; if He can control adversity, it follows that any adversity that comes occurs only at His decree (Jb 2:10; Lm 1:5,12,21; 3:1-16) for the purpose of judgment or discipline.

But God is not the author of evil that comes as the result of poor choices people make. This passage was written against the background of the demise of Judah and Jerusalem, which Jeremiah saw as the consequence of the breaking of the Lord's covenant with His people. In giving the covenant, the Lord pronounced both blessings and curses (Lv 26; Dt 28), so that "both adversity and good come" from His mouth. God had not caused the enemies of His people to be evil; it was their own choice to refuse the Lord and His ways that made them so; God then channeled their evil (Ps 76:10) to accomplish His purposes of judgment against those who were unfaithful to His covenant. But His aim, all along, had been to move them to repentance (Jr 36:3; Lm 3:31-33; Am 4:10-11; cp. Heb 12:9-11). Jeremiah was dealing with a specific historical situation in which the covenant sanctions had been applied, not with the general question of where evil comes from. As to the Bible's answer to that question, it is clear that evil comes from Satan, "the evil one," and that people—made in God's image—have the ability to resist that evil if they are willing to do so (Eph 6:16; Jms 4:7; 1 Pt 5:8).

3:44 This outburst was not a denial of God's willingness to hear prayer; it was an emotional appeal from one to whom it *seemed* that God had turned a deaf ear (3:8; Ps 13:1). In the end, the Lord did hear him (Lm 3:55-58). However, it is the case that the Lord may refuse to acknowledge the prayers of the unrepentant (v. 42; Pr 1:24-28; Is 1:15; Jr 11:11; Zch 7:13; cp. 1 Pt 3:7).

4:4 See note on 1:5.

4:6 On the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, see Gn 19:24-25,27-29. Even if a "natural" explanation is proposed, this verse affirms that the Lord was the source of these events.

4:10 See notes on 2:20 and Jr 19:8-9.

4:12 See note on 1:10.

4:20 "Anointed" could refer to the king, who was ceremonially anointed when he became king (1 Sm 10:1; 16:13; 24:6; 1 Kg 1:39) or to the future Messiah (Ps 2:2; Jn 1:41). Here it referred to the current king, Zedekiah (2 Kg 25:7).

5:7 See note on 1:5.

5:13 See note on 1:5.

Ezekiel Articles

Don't Religious Beliefs Just Reflect Where One Was Raised?

by Paul Copan

B. F. Skinner declared, "My behavior at any given moment has been nothing more than the product of my genetic endowment, my personal history, and the current setting." If correct, then Skinner's philosophy, too, was the product of his genes and background—a purely accidental (rather than reasoned-out) conclusion.

Many apply this viewpoint to religion. "If you grew up in Saudi Arabia, you'd probably be a Muslim," claims the religious pluralist (who believes all religions are capable of saving or liberating). "Therefore, particular religious beliefs are just the arbitrary product of one's environment."

But the pluralist is in the same fix. One growing up in a pluralistic culture will likely believe in pluralism. Presumably, the religious pluralist's belief is just the product of his upbringing and is just as arbitrary as another's. What's more, if he'd grown up in medieval Italy, he likely *wouldn't* have been a pluralist. But the pluralist would have us believe his views are rationally concluded, not the accidents of history or geography!

If you'd grown up in the Soviet Union, chances are that you'd have been part of the Communist Youth. But should we therefore conclude that all political systems are morally equivalent (Communism vs. democracy, for instance)? Certainly not! Similarly, the diversity of religious systems doesn't mean that (1) all belief systems are equally plausible or (2) one religion can't be true vis-à-vis the others. Our ability to step back and reflect upon cultural influences, and even resist them, indicates that we are thinking, choosing beings made to seek truth, whatever our limitations. In both creation and conscience, God has not left human beings without a witness of Himself (Ps 19:1-6; Ac 14:17; Rm 1:20; 2:14-15). And if anyone is separated from God, it's because he freely resists God's grace, not because of his location.

If a good God exists, it's likely He would cut through the mire of sin and the haze of religious ambiguity by revealing Himself in human history. Jesus of Nazareth made radical claims of divinity that other world religious leaders never made. And He rose from the dead, confirming those claims. These are further reasons to reject pluralism.

Appealing to geographical statistics doesn't settle anything. History, philosophy, experience, and revelation are some important reasons for considering a religion to be true.

Is God a Male?

by Chad Owen Brand

When Scripture speaks about God, it invariably uses masculine imagery. God is King, not Queen. God is Father, not Mother. When Scripture uses pronouns in reference to God, it always uses male pronouns—*He, Him, His*. God is never "she" or "it." Even though the NT term for the Spirit, *pneuma*, is a neuter noun, the writers of the NT always used masculine pronouns to refer to the Spirit. It is "the Spirit, He," not "it" (e.g., Jn 15:26). In addition, the church is represented as the wife or bride of Christ, who is Husband (Eph 5:22-33). This is similar to OT imagery in which Israel was the wife of God (Hs 1–3; Ezk 16).

It is also important to recognize that this is not merely functional terminology. That is, it is not just language that is designed for us to use in our relationship to God, without reference to real conditions. God the Father actually is the Father of God the Son (Jn 17:1-5). Even in the internal relationships within God's being, the relationship between these two persons is that of a father to a son. Furthermore, we are not intended to use the human standard of a father or husband to interpret God's fatherliness or Christ's husband character, but rather we are to see God as the epitome of what those ought to be and then to measure our experience by the standard of the Father and Christ.

Is this patriarchal? Yes, it is. But as Christians, we are bound to take our theology from Scripture, not from the cultural standards around us. Most of the cultures surrounding ancient Israel had goddess figures, as did the Roman culture of NT times. But the writers of Scripture always treated this as among the most heinous kinds of idolatry. If we are to be faithful to our Christian heritage, we must stick to Scripture.

Does this patriarchalism mean that the Bible holds women to be inferior? Not at all. Scripture often depicts God as treating His people in the way a caregiver would treat a child. Jesus said, "Jerusalem, Jerusalem . . . How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings" (Lk 13:34-35). Further, the Bible elevates women in ways contrary to the pagan cultures of the day. They are equal partners of the grace of God given in Christ (Gl 3:28).

But Scripture still speaks of God in a masculine manner. God is Father, and we ought to be eternally grateful for the fact that He is the ultimate model of what a father ought to be. Christ is Husband, and as such He reveals what a husband ought to do for his wife. Both women and men in our time ought to be grateful for the fact that God is the perfect example of what these roles entail. This enables both men and women to know the Father and Christ in ways that are life transforming.

Notable Christian Apologist: Blaise Pascal

by Ted Cabal

The mathematician, scientist, and philosopher Blaise Pascal (1623–1662) was born in Clermont-Ferrand, France. Though battling poor health his entire life, Pascal labored in intellectual pursuits from the precocious mathematical ability of his youth, to the scientific genius of his early adulthood, and on to the brilliant religious and philosophical twilight of his cancer-shortened life. As a young man he sought satisfaction in the things of the world, but he found himself unable to fill the "God-sized vacuum" in his heart. The awesome presence of God that he experienced in conversion to Christ profoundly impacted him. He wrote of the experience and sewed the note into the lining of his favorite coat, where it was discovered after his death.

Pascal's comprehensive Christian apologetic is outlined in the notes he was working on at his death. These "thoughts" (French title, *Pensées*), though fragmentary, reveal his strategy to counter the rationalism and skepticism of his age. Pascal championed the deep satisfaction obtained when the Christian heart and mind are at peace. Waging war between faith and reason, as did the secularists, can never gratify human longing: "The heart has its reasons which reason does not know." Harmony between Christian head and heart, however, did not mean that Pascal thought Christianity rationally indefensible. His notes revealed preparations to present the miracles and fulfilled prophecies of the Bible as a positive apologetic.

He also planned his now-famous wager argument. A person reaps infinite gain in wagering life on God should He exist but experiences no loss if He doesn't. On the other hand, a person suffers infinite loss in not wagering on God should He exist, yet reaps no real gain if He doesn't. Therefore, Pascal urged, wager on God. Only this wager obtains the heart fulfillment—even in this life—of knowing God personally.

Introducion to Ezekiel

AUTHOR

The last years of the kingdom of Judah were filled with all the tragedy and intrigue of a nation distintegrating. Josiah (640–609 B.C.) was Judah's last godly ruler. After Hilkiah the priest discovered the Book of the Law in the temple, Josiah instituted religious reforms in an attempt to bring revival (2 Kg 22:8,11-13). Upon his untimely death in 609 B.C., he was succeeded by his son Jehoahaz, who immediately set out to reverse the spiritual progress made by his father. After only three months, Pharaoh Neco took him captive (2 Kg 23:31-35; Jr 22:10-12) and replaced him with Eliakim, another son of Josiah, to whom he gave the throne name Jehoiakim. This son continued his brother's policy of reversing the religious reforms their father had initiated.

With Nebuchadnezzar's defeat of Pharaoh Neco in 605 B.C., Babylon became the dominant power in the region. In the same year Nebuchadnezzar brought Judah under his control and took captives from Jerusalem, signaling the beginning of the end of the nation. Among the captives was a young man named Daniel, who (along with Ezekiel) became one of the two great prophets of the exile. For the next seven years Jehoiakim remained publicly loyal to Babylon while privately plotting to ally with Egypt in hope of gaining independence for Judah. In 598 B.C., Nebuchadnezzar returned to Judah to overthrow Jehoiakim, replacing him with his 18-year-old son, Jehoiachin. After only three months, it was clear Jehoiachin wanted to follow his father's dream of independence. So in 597 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar replaced him
with his uncle, Mattaniah, whom Nebuchadnezzar gave the throne name of Zed-ekiah.

Early in this second siege of Jerusalem (598 B.C.), Nebuchadnezzar took a second group of captives to Babylon. Among them was a young man named Ezekiel, who was from the priestly family of Buzi, a Zadokite priest (1 Kg 1:32; 2 Kg 24:17; Ezk 1:3; 44:15). Expectations were high that Zedekiah's reign would usher in a new era of peace, prosperity, and stability (Jr 28:1-9). It soon became evident, however, this would not be the case. In 598 B.C., Ezekiel was 25 years old and was just five years from beginning his priestly service in the temple.

Even after these first two groups were taken captive, strong crosscurrents of rebellion continued to flow in Judah. Egypt formed a coalition with Edom, Moab, Ammon, Tyre, Sidon, and Judah. They planned to cast off the control of Babylon. Hopes were high both in Judah and among the captives in Babylon that the exile would be short-lived. They dreamed of an early return to Jerusalem and were convinced God would never allow the city to fall or the temple to be desecrated. But it was not to be so. Nebuchadnezzar returned for a third and final campaign that resulted in the fall of Jerusalem, the destruction of the temple, and the carrying off of the temple treasures to Babylon in 587 or 586 B.C. (2 Kg 25:1-21).

In 593 B.C., six years before the fall of Jerusalem, Ezekiel received the first of a series of 14 visions that comprise the 48 chapters of his book. His ministry continued for at least 22 years, until his last prophetic vision in 571 B.C. (29:17). Ezekiel was married, but no children are mentioned. In the midst of his ministry his wife died—a tragic loss that was the basis for one of his messages on the death throes of the nation (24:15-27). His name means "God strengthens." Indeed, he sought to be a source of strength to both warn and encourage the people of their need for repentance and faith. His 14 messages are arranged chronologically and each is dated, giving the year, month, and day. The messages commence with his call in 1:1, dated July 31, 593 B.C., and continue until his vision in chapter 40 of the new temple, new Jerusalem, and reunified Israel, dated October 22, 573 B.C.

The authorship of the book of Ezekiel has never been widely challenged. Even though Ezekiel's name is mentioned only at 1:3 and 24:24, there has always been a general consensus that the prophet wrote the book. It is autobiographical throughout, with a uniformity of language and style. Its chronological arrangement also attests to its uniformity and structural balance.

THEMES IN EZEKIEL

Growing up in a priestly family impacted Ezekiel's theological perspective. We can easily identify at least six themes in the book. Each theme builds on the previous ones as the message progresses.

1. Ezekiel's message opens with a vision of God's holiness and transcendence, which had been violated by Israel and Judah.

2. Yahweh's holy character demanded justice and judgment, which would bring about the imminent destruction of Jerusalem.

3. The transcendent God was concerned about and would judge the sinfulness of humanity. Earlier, Amos (c. 760 B.C.) had stressed the social injustices of the nation. Ezekiel took Amos's view of sin a step further and identified the spiritual root of sin as violation of God's holy character and commandments.

4. Growing out of Ezekiel's view of sin was his call for individual responsibility. He presented one of the clearest statements of personal responsibility found in the Bible in his message of 18:1-32.

5. When he had fully developed the idea of accountability and judgment, he balanced it with wonderful messages of hope and restoration, especially in chapters 33–37 and 40–48.

6. The theme that pervades all the other theological perspectives of the book is the prophet's consciousness of God's redemptive purposes in light of His nature and man's great need.

The eschatological (end times) perspective of Ezekiel has been a matter of much discussion. We must look at this perspective in its relationship to other biblical eschatological works, especially Daniel and Zechariah in the OT and Revelation in the NT.

Obviously, one's eschatological position will determine in large measure how one interprets the messages of Ezekiel. The view reflected in these notes follows the dispensational premillennial framework, which views the return of Christ as inaugurating a visible earthly kingdom for a thousand years. This view best complements the exegesis of the text and best correlates with the theology of Ezekiel and his understanding of the kingdom of God.

The message of the book is well organized and proceeds logically. The first section of the book begins with the reality of God's presence in the midst of days of turmoil in 1:1–3:27 by addressing the theological question, where is God in the midst of life's storms? Second, Ezekiel addressed the reality of judgment both for Israel and for the nations in 4:1–32:32. Third, Ezekiel revealed the reality of restoration and final defeat of Israel's enemies in 33:1–39:29. Fourth, the prophet's final message turned to the redemption and restoration that await all of God's people in 40:1–48:35.

Ezekiel Study Notes

1:1 Ezekiel "saw visions of God," a clue that he is about to relate a theophany, or an appearance of God. This one begins by introducing the attendant beings that surrounded Him.

1:2 Critics differ on the meaning of the "fifth year." Most likely this is a reference to the fifth year of the exile of Jehoiakim, who was taken captive in 597 B.C. He had been allowed to remain on the throne as a vassal to Nebuchadnezzar after the siege of Jerusalem in 605 B.C. This date would indicate that Ezekiel's ministry began in 593 B.C.

1:3 The Hebrew text uses an emphatic form of the formula "the word of the LORD [indeed] came," indicating that the prophet received a direct divine call that became the compulsion for his ministry to the exiles.

1:4 Many theological questions arose from the first attacks on Jerusalem and the subjugation of Jerusalem in 605 B.C. and 597 B.C. Why would God allow such an atrocity to be inflicted on His chosen people? The Judeans could not reconcile the thought of the impending destruction of the city where God had enshrined His name (Ps 48; cp. Jr 7:4). The thought that a pagan nation should gain control of, or utterly destroy, Jerusalem and plunder the temple presented a theological dilemma for the Judeans (see Dn 1:2; 5:1-4). Jerusalem was considered inviolable. That pagans could overthrow the nation was tantamount to admitting that their gods were greater than Yahweh. These issues also called their faith into question. It was to this time and to these circumstances Ezekiel was called to be God's prophetic spokesman.

Some would deny that Ezk 1 describes a theophany. Windstorms are common occurrences for desert dwellers. But this windstorm also displayed flashes of lightning, fire, and smoke—all elements associated with a theophany (see e.g. Ex 19:16-18; 1 Kg 19:11-13; Jb 38:1; 40:6; Ps 29:3-5). The description of spiritual beings and the vision of God that followed confirm that this was not a "natural" occurrence but a theophany. But the "model" for this theophany was clearly the "holy of holies," the inner sanctuary of the temple (Ezekiel was a priest, Ezk 1:3).

1:5 Spiritual beings, especially angels, often are presented as having a human form (e.g., Gn 18:1; Jos 5:13-15; Jdg 13:6) and here these unique creatures also are said to have the "form" (Hb *demuth*) of a human being. The verses that follow provide various descriptive details, including the appearance of their legs (v. 7), their hands (v. 8), their movements (vv. 8-9), their wings(v. 11), their relation to the "Spirit" (vv. 12,20), their color (v. 13), their swiftness (v. 14) and their sound (vv. 23-24).

1:10 Each creature had four faces: those of a human, a lion, an ox and an eagle. These creatures represent four major categories of life forms: human life, undomesticated animal life, domesticated animals, and winged creatures. A similar vision appears in Ezk 10, where the creatures are called "cherubim" (Hb *cherub*, sing. or *cherubim,* pl.) probably from an Akkadian root *karabu* which means "intercede," "be gracious," or "bless." These creatures appear elsewhere in the Bible as guardians of the holiness of God (Gn 3:24; Ex 36:35; 1 Kg 6:23-29; cp. Rv 4:6-7).

1:15-16 Each of the cherubim was associated with wheels described both in terms of their appearance and function. Their appearance was like beryl, a precious stone. The outer rims of these high and awesome wheels were inset with "eyes," a symbol suggesting God's omniscience (v. 18). The Spirit supplied both power and guidance for the wheels to allow the platform and throne-chariot to move anywhere at lightning speed, suggesting God's omnipresence. In fact everything in the vision is intimately related to the platform and throne-chariot described in verses 22-27.

1:22 The "expanse" is the same word as in Gn 1:6. Here it describes a platform located above the living creatures as the support for God's throne.

1:26-27 This theophany, in which God's visible attributes are described in terms of human characteristics, provided assurance to Ezekiel and the captives that God had not abandoned them, but was with them even in Babylon. Scholars usually classify such

comparisons as "anthropomorphic accommodations," meaning that God accommodated people by describing Himself in human terms, but the "accommodation" theory does not conform to the biblical record.

According to Gn 1:26-28, human beings were created in the "image" (Hb *tselem)* and "likeness" (Hb *demuth)* of God (Gn 1:26). These two words are always used to refer to the physical appearance of an object. The same words are used in Gn 5:3 in relating that Adam had a son named Seth that looked just like him. These words appear in passages describing the appearance of idols (see Ex 20:4; Dt 4:16,23,25; 5:8). While God is a spiritual, and not a physical, being, it also is true that He and every spiritual being (e.g., angels) in the Bible have certain attributes or a "form" that is shared in common (see Gn 18:2; Jos 5:13-14; Dn 8:16; 9:21; 10:6; Lk 1:19,26).

In reply to the request to "show us the Father," Jesus said, "The one who has seen Me has seen the Father" (Jn 14:8-9). Hebrews 1:1-4 states unequivocally thatJesus is the "exact expression" of God the Father (see Col 1:15,19). Human physical form has the same form or appearance as God Himself. The image of God defines the dignity and worth of human life and explains why He intends to resurrect and glorify the human body (1 Co 6:19; 15:14).

1:28 The mention of the rainbow is an echo of God's covenant with Noah (Gn 9:11-13). Just as God restored the world after the flood, He promised to restore fallen Israel. This vision is an early hint that the message of Ezekiel would be one not only of judgment but also of hope and restoration. It was this message of hope that answered a crucial theological question for Ezekiel and every exile in Babylon—and Judeans still left in Jerusalem—namely: Is there any hope of restoration?

2:1 This is the first of 93 places where the name "son of man" was applied to Ezekiel. The Lord never called Ezekiel by his proper name as He did other prophets and leaders (e.g., Ex 3:4; 1 Sm 3:4,6,10; 1 Kg 19:9,13; Jr 1:11; Am 7:8; 8:2). In the Hebrew language the prefix "son of," was often used to mean "having the characteristics of" someone or something, or belonging to a certain class of things. "Son of man" in Ezekiel probably means "member of the human family" (i.e. the human race), pointing especially to the prophet's human frailty and mortality that made him dependent on God's power and wisdom.

2:3-5 What did Ezekiel's message reveal about the rebellious human heart? The Hebrew *marad* means "to rebel," "to revolt," related to a noun *meri*, "bitterness." A bitter spirit that is disgruntled produces a rebellious spirit, like Absalom (2 Sm 13:22). Other terms for rebellion include *pasha*' "to revolt," *qeshe* "obstinate" (lit. "hard of face") and *chiqze* "stubborn" or "hard-hearted." In addition the verb for "rebelled" is used six times in Ezekiel (2:3; 17:15; 20:8,13,21,38). The prophet's assignment was to preach to the exiles in Babylon who were bitter, rebellious, obstinate, hard-hearted, and hard-headed.

3:3 Did Ezekiel literally eat the scroll? He did in the visionary experience. By eating the scroll he consumed the unwelcome message of judgment he was to proclaim to those in captivity and in Jerusalem (see Ps 19:10; 119:103). John was given a similar command (Rv 10:8-11). The Lord commanded Ezekiel to eat a scroll four times in 2:8–3:3. Some rabbinic interpretations view this as a visionary experience or an allegory, while others take it as a literal but symbolic act. In either case the lesson is the same: The prophet was to consume the message, digest it, and proclaim its contents.

3:8-11 The Lord directed Ezekiel to deliver messages of judgment even though the people would be unresponsive. God's answer to the rebellious, obstinate, hard-hearted, stubborn attitude of the Judeans was to set the face of the prophet "like a diamond" (Hb *shamir*). His assignment was to present the message and leave the results to God, even if that meant certain judgment because of their unresponsiveness (see Is 6:10). He did not share the same level of compassion for the people as Jeremiah, who openly lamented the judgment of Judah (see Lm 1:1–5:22), but it would be incorrect to conclude that Ezekiel totally lacked compassion.

3:16-21 While the role of the watchman was well known in ancient Near Eastern culture (Is 21:6; 52:8; 62:6; Jr 6:17; Hab 2:1), Ezekiel's divine appointment was unique. The watchman was charged with the safety of the community; he was to warn the people of impending danger, especially enemy attack. Any watchman that failed in his duty was held personally responsible. Negligence resulting in loss of life was punishable by death. The prophet, therefore, was held responsible and accountable for bringing messages of judgment to the rebellious people.

4:1-8 Chapters 4–7 contain five messages of judgment against Jerusalem in which Ezekiel used dramatizations. This was not a new prophetic method. Earlier prophets also used dramatic methods (1 Sm 15:27-31; 1 Kg 11:29-33; 2 Kg 13:14-19), as did Isaiah (Is 20:2-3) and Jeremiah (Jr 13:1-11; 13:12-27; 19:1-13; 27:1-22). Ezekiel drew a recognizable map of Jerusalem on a clay brick or tile and then "played war," as a young child might do. He laid siege to the city using a siege wall, an earthen ramp to scale the walls, military camps around the city, battering rams and an iron plate that probably represented the unstoppable advancing army. With these implements he prophetically acted out the fall of Jerusalem, which was to occur in 586 B.C.

4:9 Ezekiel was told to mix six grains to make bread. This was unusual but did not violate any dietary laws. The resulting flour would be inferior to pure wheat or barley flour; it signaled a desperate circumstance that called for austere measures. Under conditions of siege, the people would be forced to mix anything edible due to the scarcity of food.

4:12-17 Ezekiel, a priest, was scrupulous about conforming to the dietary laws such as those in Lv 11:1-47. Preparation of food using animal manure was not uncommon or prohibited, and is still practiced in the Middle East among nomadic tribesmen since wood for fire is a scarce commodity in the region. However, to use human waste for fuel was considered defilement, especially for a priest (see Dt 23:9-14). The horror of violating biblical dietary law prompted the prophet's appeal in Ezk 4:14 not to be forced to defile himself in this manner. The Lord granted this request, but the incident was recorded to underscore the depth of defilement that characterized those to whom the prophet was called to deliver his messages. The use of human excrement in food preparation would further emphasize the crisis conditions to come at the time of the fall of Jerusalem.

5:1,12 Shaving one's head and beard was a serious matter for a priest or a Nazirite because one's hair was a sign of consecration to God (Lv 19:27; 21:5; Nm 6:5). Samson, a Nazirite from birth, allowed his head to be shorn by a harlot; his disregard for his vow resulted in the loss of his physical strength and spiritual power (Jdg 16:17). Shaving one's head was a sign of humiliation(Is 3:17) or mourning (Is 15:2; Jr 41:5-6; 48:37). Ezk 5:12 gives the interpretation of this dramatic message; it emphasizes the severity of judgment and shows how Israel had frustrated its missionary purpose as a witness to the nations.

5:10 This was unthinkable for any Israelite to practice cannibalism; that this should occur would be the enactment of the curses that sanctioned the Lord's covenant (Lv 26:29; Dt 28:53-55; see Jr 19:8-9). Priests and Nazirites were not even allowed to touch a corpse (Lv 21:1-2; Nm 6:7). Ezekiel's prophecy underscores the severity of the crisis conditions predicted for the fall of Jerusalem. These same conditions were encountered at the siege of Samaria (2 Kg 6:24-33, especially v. 29).

5:12,17 Ezekiel's three-part judgment formula ("famine," "plague," and "sword") appears here for the first time, and recurs in 6:11,12; 7:15; 12:16; 14:21. Jeremiah frequently used the same formula (Jr 14:12; 21:7,9; 24:10; 27:8,13; 29:17-18; 32:24,36; 34:17; 38:2; 42:17,22; 44:13). Both prophets used the formula to indicate that judgment would be severe and extensive; the conditions were based on the curses of the Mosaic covenant (Lv 26:29; Dt 28:53-55).

6:1-3 At God's command, the prophet turned his face against the mountains and preached a sermon against them. These mountains were centers for idolatrous worship in shrines and groves of trees in the high places. Such shrines were dedicated to Canaanite gods. Elijah (1 Kg 18:1-40), Hosea (Hs 4:12-13) and Amos (Am 7:9) all condemned them. These high places, called *bamot*, consisted of an altar for offering sacrifices, a wooden pole to represent the female goddess Asherah, a stone pillar called a *masseba* to represent the male deity, a small incense altar and tent for use in eating sacral meals and practicing sacred prostitution (1 Kg 14:24; 2 Kg 21:3; Is 57:3-12). They were popular places of worship in the last days of both Israel and Judah.

6:4 Josiah, the last good king of Judah (640–609 B.C.), led a revival of Israelite faith that was a valiant attempt to eradicate idolatry and restore true worship (2 Kg 23:4-23; 2 Ch 34:3-34). The revival began when Hilkiah, the high priest, found the Book of the Law in the temple where they had been forgotten and neglected. Because neither the priests nor people cooperated, Josiah's reforms were largely superficial. Pharaoh Neco killed him in 609 B.C. on his way to confront the Babylonians. After Josiah died, the people openly returned to idolatry.

Ezekiel's favorite word for idols is *gillulim*, which means "dung pellets." The term is first used in chap-ter 6 where it appears five times (vv. 4,5,6,9,13), andit recurs 39 times in the rest of the prophecy (8:10; 14:3-7; 16:36; 18:6,12,15; 20:7-8,16,18,24,31,39; 22:3-4;23:7,30,37,39,49; 30:13; 33:25; 36:18,25; 37:23; 44:10,12). The extensive evidence of idolatry was a somber testimony of how firmly it was entrenched, despite Josiah's best efforts.

6:11-14 No conclusive identification has been made of Diblah in verse 14. The close similarity between the Hebrew letters *daleth* and *resh* suggests that the name Riblah may have been intended. Ezekiel did not mention Riblah elsewhere, but it was a border city during this time and the place where Zedekiah, Judah's last king, was sentenced, blinded, and bound over to be taken to Babylon (2 Kg 25:66-67). The purpose of this judgment was that they/you "will know that I am the LORD," a phrase that recurs in Ezk 6:7,10,13-14 (5:13,17).

7:1-4 Using emphatic language, Ezekiel announced the impending "day" of Yahweh's judgment (vv. 1-2,7-10,19; cp. Am 5:18; 8:3). He also used a grammatical device called the "prophetic perfect" (of the verb *bo'*), speaking of a future event as though it had already occurred. In this way he declared the absolute certainty of his prophecy against the "four corners of the land," which included the entire nation (Ezk 7:2).

7:5-7,10 Repetition of the phrase "the end has come" (vv. 5-6; cp. "the time has come," v. 7; "the day is coming," v. 10) emphatically underscored certain judgment and indicated the prophet's highly agitated state of mind in making this announcement. His sad duty was to inform them when judgment came; they would know it was the Lord "who strikes" (v. 9).

7:15 For the judgment formula of famine, plague, and sword, see note on 5:12,17.

7:18-22 Shaved heads and sackcloth were ordinarily signs of mourning (as in 5:1,12). In this passage they were not signs of repentance but of sorrow for the discomfort of judgment and invasion by a foreign enemy. Silver, gold, jewelry, and other physical resources were objects of plunder for invading armies.

7:23-27 How did the Judeans regard the news of the fall of Jerusalem? It was not a welcome thought. The Judeans considered Jerusalem to be inviolable, for theological reasons. It was beyond belief to think that the city and temple could be destroyed, and the temple treasures displayed in a pagan temple in Babylon.

8:1 When Ezekiel said, "The hand of the Lord GOD came down on me," this was a visionary experience. Physically Ezekiel was in Babylon, but in "visions of God" he was transported to Jerusalem to see the abominations in the temple (v. 3). This vision occurred 14 months after his first two visions of recorded at 1:1 and 3:16.

8:5-6 This passage provides no description of "the offensive statue" (*semel*, v. 3) in the temple courtyard. The word was also used to describe the image set up by Manasseh (2 Kg 21:7; 2 Ch 33:7,15). The people violated the commandments (Ex 20:4) by bringing an idol into the temple area. All Ezekiel saw was great, or terrible, "abominations" (Ezk 8:6,9,13,15,17), detestable especially to a priest.

8:7-13 The 70 men behind the wall at the entrance to the temple court were leaders in Jerusalem who were worshiping the animal gods of Egypt. Each man had a shrine for his idol in the shadow of the temple.

8:14-15 This is the only biblical reference to this Babylonian cult. The women "weeping for Tammuz" were mourning the Babylonian equivalent of the Assyrian god of vegetation known as Demuzi. They believed the cycle of seasons represented the dying and rising of Tammuz. In Babylonian mythology, Tammuz was the son of Nimrod (Gn 10:8-14) and his wife Semiramus. He was killed on a wild boar hunt and immortalized by his mother as a nature god and an embodiment of the hope of resurrection depicted in the cycles of the seasons. Women wept each year in the fourth month, at the onset of spring, to induce Tammuz to rise again. Today the fourth month of the Jewish calendar is still called Tammuz. It is not clear why these women were worshiping in the sixth month instead of the fourth, but it may indicate that Tammuz worship had become institutionalized year round.

8:16-18 The 25 men facing east, worshiping the sun, were in the inner court of the temple where only priests were permitted to be. If they were not priests, not only were they practicing idolatry but they had also violated the sanctity of the inner court. If they were priests, their sin was all the more severe. Manasseh, Josiah's grandfather, introduced this kind of idolatry(2 Kg 21:5,18,25-26). Such abhorrent behavior would not go unpunished. God would "respond with wrath." The Lord would spare no one, and neither would He hear their cries for help.

9:2-4 The six men, each with a war club in his hand, were emissaries of judgment. With them was a man clothed in white linen carrying writing equipment. God instructed him to put a "mark" on every person who grieved over the abominations of idolatry. The word translated "mark" is *taw*, the name of the final letter of the Hebrew alphabet. In ancient Hebrew script the *taw* was shaped like an X or + (not as in the "square" script commonly used for Hebrew after the return from exile). Each one who received the mark would be spared. Christian interpreters view this mark as a type of the cross of Christ (see Rev. 7:3; 9:4). According to Jewish tradition the *taw* also represented the first letter in the word *tichyeh*, "you shall live."

9:5-6 The merciless slaughter of those who did not have the "mark" seems out of character for God, who has made it clear that the taking of a human life is contrary to His will (Gn 9:6; Ex 20:13). Several considerations bear on this question. First, the OT names

a number of crimes that were punishable by death, including some that were commonplace in Judah during the time of Ezekiel: advocating the worship of other gods (Dt 13:1-10) and sacrificing to false gods (Ex 22:20).

Second, it was permissible to take a life in the course of warfare. The command to kill those who were not grieved over Judah's rebellion against the Lord is comparable to the command to exterminate the Canaanites during Israel's occupation of the land (see Jos 6:17). A population steeped in pagan religion could not be allowed to remain, for it would tempt the people away from loyalty to the Lord.

Third, under the principle of corporate solidarity (seeDt 2:34; 5:9; 19:6), all who participate in a sinful culture are tainted by its sin. The application of the protective "mark" was an act of mercy by which the Lord spared those faithful few who had not yielded to the general perversity of a society under judgment; the prophet interceded with the Lord on their behalf (Ezk 9:8). Finally, this passage was a vision given to Ezekiel in Babylon (see 8:1-3), not an act that was ever carried out. As extreme as the Lord's command appeared, the actual killings in the streets of Jerusalem would be done by the Babylonian invaders, not the six warriors shown to Ezekiel. The slaughter in this passage was a word-picture predicting the eventual doom of Jerusalem and its inhabitants because of the pervasive climate of sin; the whole nation was guilty of "bloodshed" and "perversity" (9:9-10).

10:14-15 In this description of the cherubim, the first of the four faces, that of the ox (1:10), was replaced by a the face of a "cherub." Otherwise the faces were the same, and the text makes clear that these were the same creatures as those of chapter 1 (10:15,20,22). Rabbinic interpreters explained that the face of the ox was removed at Ezekiel's request because of its association with the golden calf of Ex 32. Since the cherubim, or similar figures, are known from other ancient Near Eastern cultures (see note on 10:18-22), it is also possible that the ox was the ordinary face of a cherub, so that the two terms are synonymous.

10:18-22 Figures similar to the biblical cherubim (cp. the "living creatures" of Rv 4:6-8) are found in excavations of sites from other ancient Near Eastern cultures. Their purpose was to signify the presence of royalty; large statues of such composite creatures flanked the throne of the Assyrian ruler at Nineveh, for example. Their function in the Bible differs somewhat. In Ezekiel's vision, the cherubim transported God in His glory from the threshold of the temple to the east gate of the temple complex. Cherubim appear as servants, worshipers, and guardians of God's holy presence. In addition to the similar "living creatures" in John's vision, cherubim are found exercising this role in five places in the Bible: guarding access to the garden and to the tree of life (Gn 3:24); mounted atop the ark of the covenant as guardians of the holiness of God in the inner sanctuary (Ex 25:18-22; 1 Sm 4:4; 2 Sm 6:2; Is 37:16; cp. Ps 80:1; 99:1); embroidered on the veil of the most holy place in the tabernacle, and later on the veil of the temple (Ex 26:31; 2 Ch 3:14); carved from olive wood and placed inside the inner sanctuary of temple (1 Kg 6:23-25; 8:6-7); associated with the movement of God's presence (1 Ch 28:18; Ps 104:3; Ezk 10:19; 41:18-20).

10:19 The eastern gate is especially significant in the eschatological doctrines of Judaism, Islam, and Christianity. For Jews and Muslims the golden gate is the site of the last judgment (Zch 14:1-9). Jesus ascended from the Mount of Olives on the east side of Jerusalem. He told His disciples He would return to the same place in like manner as He departed (Ac 1:9-12). Both Christians and Jews believe the Messiah will reenter the city through the golden gate (Ezk 44:1-3) from which the glory of God departed (see 11:22-25).

11:1 Recent archeological discoveries have confirmed the historicity of the background for this vision. Two leaders were mentioned by name from among the 25 seen previously in 8:16—Jaazaniah son of Azzur and Pelatiah son of Benaiah. These names were found in a collection of 200 *bullae* (clay seals) found in excavation of the "City of David" area of Jerusalem. These seals were used on official documents sent to the king and contained the name of the sender. Pelatiah was apparently a common name. Seals bearing at least two other Pelatiahs are among those found, one the son of Hoshea and the other the son of Heleq. Another seal contains the name Benaiah, the father of the Pelatiah mentioned here and again in verse 13. One seal also contained the name of Baruch the son of Neriah, Jeremiah's personal scribe.

11:3 For more explanation of the phrase "the city is the pot, and we are the meat," see note on 24:1-14.

11:4 On the meaning of "son of man," see note on 2:1.

11:13-16 Pelatiah's death was evidently a shock to all Jerusalem, including the prophet. Ezekiel's compassionate response was an intercessory prayer that the Lord would spare a remnant of Israel. God's answer was immediate and positive. He did not abandon His people even if the temple was destroyed. The message was simple: No one, especially not the leaders, would be immune from judgment (see 1 Pt 4:7). God wanted the exiles to know that, even though the temple was destroyed, He would be for them a

"sanctuary." The Targums (Aramaic commentaries) interpret this as a reference to the synagogue, an institution that developed during the exile.

11:23 God's departure from the temple showed that He had distanced Himself from the abominable practices described in 8:1-18. His glory left the temple and the city and went eastward to the Mount of Olives. Rabbinic sources trace the movement of the Lord's glory in ten steps: (1) from one cherub on the ark to the other (9:3); (2) from the ark to the threshold of the temple (10:4); (3) back to the cherubim to be transported (10:18); (4) accompanied by the cherubim to the east gate (10:19); (5) the glory entered the court of the temple (10:4); (6) then moved to the altar of sacrifice (Am 9:1); (7) then moved to the roof of the temple (Pr 21:9); (8) then moved to the temple wall (Am 7:7); (9) then moved to the city (Mc 6:9); and (10) to the Mount of Olives (Ezk 11:23), where the glory remained for three-and-a-half years, as if waiting for a change in the hearts of the people.

12:1-7 Ezekiel enumerated many reasons for the fall of Judah and Jerusalem. This third cycle of prophecies includes ten messages that present seven causes for the community's demise (see 12:1,17,21; 13:1; 14:2,12; 15:1; 16:1; 17:1; 18:1), followed by a funeral lament in 19:1-14. The first reason for the fall, presented in this passage, was the people's obstinacy (2:3-8; Jr 36:1-32). The Lord reminded Ezekiel once again of their rebellious nature (see 2:3-5). The prophet then acted out another dramatic sermon by packing his bags with items carried by one leaving for exile (v. 4).

12:21-28 The rebellion of the Judeans was exacerbated because they despised the Word of God. The people adopted a proverb: "The days keep passing by and every vision fails" (v. 22), evidently deriding Jeremiah and Ezekiel. But God warned He would "put a stop to" their proverb and replace it with a new one, "the days draw near, as well as the fulfillment of every vision" (v. 23; see Dt 18:20-22; Jr 5:13-14; 17:15; 26:17-24).

13:1–14:5 The second circumstance that led to the fall of Judah and Jerusalem was that the people listened to and heeded the false prophets. This section clearly defines the breakdown of the religious institutions in the decline of the culture. Ezekiel listed eight failures of these false prophets. (1) They prophesied out of their own mind, or "heart" (Hb *lev*, the seat of the intention), and not what the Lord had told them (13:1-3,17).(2) They made the flock their prey (13:4). (3) They failed to reinforce the people's faith in the time of crisis (13:5). (4) They preached deception as divine revelation (13:6-9). (5) They preached peace in the face of judgment (13:10-16) (6) They used magical methods to gain advantage over the people (13:18-21). (7) They discouraged the righteous and encouraged the wicked (13:22-23). (8) They set up idols in their hearts, enshrining their own wills (14:1-5).

13:18,20 The Lord condemned false prophetesses for sewing magic charms on the wrists of their garments, wearing veils, and casting spells to ensnare victims (v. 18). Witchcraft was strictly forbidden among the Jews (Dt 18:10; 1 Sm 15:23; 2 Kg 9:22; 17:17; 21:6;2 Ch 33:6).

14:14,20 The identity of Daniel (Hb *Dan'el)* has occasioned considerable debate, though there is agreement on the identities of Noah (Gn 6:8–10:1) and Job (Jb 1–42) as well-known figures of the OT patriarchal period. Some scholars have equated Ezekiel's *Dan'el* in verses 14 and 20 with *Dnil*, a hero in Ugaritic tablets found at Ras Shamra, on the coast of Syria. That "Daniel" would have been a contemporary of Noah and Job, whereas the biblical prophet Daniel would not yet have attained the eminent reputation Ezekiel attributes to *Dan'el* (see also 28:3). However, it is unlikely that Ezekiel, unalterably opposed to the worship of false deities, would have upheld the Ugaritic *Dnil*—a devotee of Baal—as a paradigm of righteousness. Such use of a pagan hero as an example is unknown elsewhere in Scripture (see Dt 18:14-22). Daniel the prophet was in captivity from 605 B.C. and had ample time to establish his reputation as a wise and righteous man (Dn 1:1–2:49; 5:12). It is most likely, then, that Ezekiel was referring to the biblical Daniel—like him, a firm opponent of idolatry (Dn 2:8-20).

15:2-8 The third cause of the fall of Judah was that the nation was a useless vine (see 12:1-7). Ezekiel's portrayal of the nation as a vine was not unique. Hosea (Hs 10:1), Isaiah (Is 5:1-7), and Jeremiah (Jr 2:21) used the same figure, which is found in other passages (e.g., Gn 49:22; Dt 32:32; Ps 80:8-16). Ezekiel's message is similar to Isaiah's "Song of the Vineyard" (Is 5:1-30), a message of judgment against Israel. The grapevine has no value as wood for lumber (Ezk 15:2); its only use is its fruit. If a vine bears no fruit, its only other function is as firewood (vv. 3-5). Nebuchadnezzar's invasions in 605 B.C. and 597 B.C. were precursors of Jerusalem's destruction in 586 B.C.

16:1-63 The fourth reason for Judah's fall was the nation's history of unfaithfulness (see 12:1-7). This 63-verse chapter is the longest continuous prophetic message in Ezekiel. It presents Judah as a prostitute (see Hs 4:12-15; 6:10) lacking any sense of gratitude for the Lord's gracious choice of His people, or for His blessing and provision.

16:5 The prophet pictured Judah as an abandoned female upon whom the Lord had pity. In the ancient Near East, females often were abandoned at birth because of family poverty or fear of disgrace because of the low social position afforded women. It was also common to abandon ill, deformed, weak, and unwanted children. Although such barbaric practices were not supposed to be the custom in Israel, Ezekiel was comparing the Lord's compassion with the cruelty that characterized the pagan world. He found Judah in a helpless estate, unloved and unwanted, and rescued and adopted her as His own (Dt 7:6-7).

16:17-25 The "male images" (v. 17) could have been phallic-shaped stones used in fertility cults. Children were sacrificed to Molech, a molten hot image into whose arms a live baby was placed (v. 20). Devotees of these cults practiced sacred prostitution—male and female—at the shrines among groves of trees on the side of hills called "high places" (*bamoth*); in the city streets they might even build an artificial "elevated place" for this purpose (vv. 24-25). God's response of "woe, woe" (v. 23), was a common expression of horror uttered at the arrival of some disaster (1 Sm 4:8; Pr 23:29; Is 3:9).

16:44-47 What is the meaning of the proverb "Like mother, like daughter"? Judah followed the pattern of sin and depravity of her cultural ancestors, her "mother" the Hittites and her "father" the Amorites (v. 45). Samaria, the northern kingdom of Israel, was the "older sister." The phrase did not suggest that Samaria was older than Judah, but it was the first to become ripe for judgment (v. 46; cp. 1 Kg 12:1-33).

16:48-50 Judah was called the "sister" of Sodom since both Israel and Judah had followed the same course as Sodom in pride and perversion (v. 49). "Daughters" often referred to villages that were the suburbs of the larger cities. Judah's reprimand was more excessive than either Sodom or Samaria; she deserved a more severe judgment (vv. 50-54).

16:59-63 Despite the inevitability of judgment for breaking their covenant (v. 59), Ezekiel closed his story of the unfaithful sister, Judah, with a promise of restoration and a new covenant. He used emphatic language; in essence, God was saying, "I myself" will make a new everlasting and unbreakable covenant with her (vv. 60,62). The prophet added that "you will remember your ways and be ashamed" when the Lord makes atonement for her sin—a phrase pungent with Messianic overtones similar to Zch 12:10-14. Judah's new covenant would be based on repentance, an idea Ezekiel expanded in 17:22-24 and 34:23-29 (see also Jr 31:31-34).

17:11-21 A fifth reason that Judah fell was because of her trust in political alliances instead of the Lord (17:1-24). Commentators generally agree on the interpretation of this parable of the great eagle and the cedar (vv. 1-10). The weight of evidence suggests that the story was about Judah's dependence upon alliances with Nebuchadnezzar, the great eagle. At the same time, in secret treaty with another great eagle—Pharaoh Hophra—Judah hoped to gain independence from Babylon's control. But Hophra's kingdom withered and was no longer a factor when Zedekiah was finally overthrown.

17:22-24 With the nation hopelessly gone, the prophet turned to a messianic theme, speaking of a "tender sprig" taken from the top of a tree and replanted in a prominent place. The Hebrew *yoniq* ("sprig" or "shoot") is the same word used in the messianic figure of Is 53:2. Elsewhere, the same word is used for an infant or nursing child (Nm 11:12; Dt 32:25; 1 Sm 15:3; 22:19; Jr 44:7). Synonyms such as *choter* "shoot," *netser* "branch" (Is 11:1), and *semach* "branch" (Is 4:2; Jr 23:5; Zch 3:8; 6:12) were used figuratively of the Messiah. Ezekiel's word picture affirmed the certainty of the restoration of Judah and Jerusalem. While some interpreters see this prophecy fulfilled in Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah, Ezekiel's language went beyond these and looked to a time when the Messiah would reign over Israel and over all the earth.

18:1-2 Ezekiel's sixth reason for the fall of Judah and Jerusalem was the people's failure to accept responsibility for their sin (see 12:1-7). During the nineteenth century, some commentators claimed that the idea of individual responsibility developed only during the exile. But the concept was present in the earliest writings in the OT. Here, Ezekiel clearly made two points about individual responsibility. First, individuals are not guilty for sins committed by others—past or present—especially by family members (vv. 1-20). Rather, they are responsible for whatever they do. Second, although individuals are responsible for their sins, they are not bound by former sins—their own or others—but can alter their situation by repentance and faith (vv. 21-32).

18:5-9 What constitutes a "righteous" person? Ezekiel presented five principles of conduct for righteous people. First, they do what is "just and right" (v. 5). Second, they worship Yahweh as the one and only God (v. 6a). Third, they maintain marital fidelity and moral purity (v. 6b). Fourth, they are good neighbors (vv. 7-8). Fifth, they respect and obey the laws of God (v. 9).

18:10-20 A person who disregards the laws of God is not to go unpunished because he has a righteous father, nor is a righteous son who follows the way of the Lord guilty for the sin of his wicked father. Ezekiel summarized the principle of individual responsibility in verses 19-20. The rationale for it is found in the historical context. The suffering of the exile was a result of that generation's persistent rebellion, idolatry, and covenant unfaithfulness. These sins were also seen in their forefathers, a point made clear in 16:1-59. But it was not their fathers' guilt that brought on their punishment, but their own. The "visitation" of sin mentioned in Ex 20:5 and 34:6-7 was not the transmission of guilt but the consequences of bad choices that affected following generations.

18:21-24 No generation is judged for the sins of a previous one. God always honors genuine repentance, as described in verse 21. Repentance is turning (*shuv*) from sin and turning to God in faith and obedience. The chiastic (symmetrical, in reverse) structure of verses 21-24 begins and ends with exhortations to repentance. Between them is the Lord's rhetorical question, "Do I take any pleasure in the death of the wicked?" The implied answer is, No. God does not create some individuals for the specific purpose of meting out His judgment, as some may claim.

18:25-29 The exiles accused God of being unfair because they failed to understand the principles of verses 10-24, in the belief that they were paying for the sins of previous generations. The accusation that the Lord is "unfair" or unjust is a translation of the Hebrew *takan*, literally "to measure" or "to examine" (1 Sm 2:3; 2 Kg 12:11; Jb 28:25; Pr 16:2; 21:2; 24:12; Is 40:12-13; Ezk 45:11). They claimed that God does not "measure" His actions but acts arbitrarily and unjustly. The Lord turned the argument on the hearers, asking them, "Isn't it your ways that are unfair?" (v. 25).

Judgment for sin is a fixed principle that only can be averted by repentance. When a righteous person abandons righteousness, the judgment of God is released against sin. If the person repents and turns from sin, the judgment is stayed. When a person's guilt is exposed, the human tendency is to blame someone else (e.g., Gn 3:12-13). At such times God can be a handy scapegoat. It is no surprise that both the exiles under judgment and those still in Judah maintained their innocence and the Lord's guilt (v. 29).

18:30-32 God's desire, even in the face of repeated rebellion, is always to deliver—but He will bring judgment if necessary. This is consistent with His character inasmuch as it reveals His wrath against sin and those who choose it (Ex 22:22-24; Nm 11:33; Rm 1:18). When a person repents (*shuv*) and changes direction, the wrath of God is averted because the person turned from sin to forgiveness and faith (see Zch 1:3-6).

19:1-9 Why is a funeral hymn included? The seventh condition that resulted in Judah's fall was that the nation was spiritually dead. This chapter contains two funeral laments written in a special meter called *qinah*, three beats followed by two. The book of Lm, like other funeral poems, was also written in *qinah* meter (see 2 Sm 1:17-27; 3:33-34; Is 14:4-21; Am 5:1-3). One of Ezekiel's laments was for the king (vv. 1-9) and the second was for the end of the kingdom (vv. 10-14).

Ezekiel called the last kings of Judah "princes" because he did not recognize their legitimate right to reign. The line of kings currently in power had gained the throne by intrigue and murder, and they proceeded to rule without seeking God's spiritual guidance. As Hosea earlier stated, "They have installed kings, but not through Me" (Hs 8:4). At the death of Josiah, his son Jehoahaz reigned three months. Eliakim, his brother, overthrew him and took the throne name Jehoiakim, pledging allegiance to Nebuchadnezzar. He reigned 11 years, and upon his death was followed by his son Jehoiachin. After a reign of only three months Jehoiachin was taken captive to Babylon (2 Kg 24:8-17) and replaced by Mattaniah, his uncle, to whom Nebuchadnezzar gave the throne name Zedekiah. He reigned as Judah's last king from 597–586 B.C. (2 Kg 23:31; 24:18).

20:1,5-6,8 A contingent of leaders came to "consult the LORD" about Ezekiel's judgment messages. The Lord responded with five oath-lessons each containing the phrase "I swore to them" (lit. "I lifted my hand to them," vv. 5-6,15,23,28,42), signifying that God swore by His name and reputation. First, He had sworn to be their God and deliver them from Egypt (see Ex 20:2) but both they and their fathers responded with rebellion (Ezk 20:5,6,8). See the following notes for the other vows in this series.

20:15 Second, the Lord swore to them in the wilderness that He would not let them enter the promised land unless they were obedient. His faithful protection (vv. 16-22, cp. Dt 8:4) was repaid by repeated rebellion.

20:23-24 Third, the Lord swore to disperse the people because they persisted in rebellion, desecrating "My Sabbaths" (vv. 13,16,20-21,24). God chose 70 years for the captivity because of their repeated desecration of the Sabbath and the sabbatical year (Ex 20:8-11; 2 Ch 36:21; see five cycles of rebellion in Lv 26:14-35; 2 Ch 36:21).

20:28-38 Fourth, although the Lord had vowed to give them the land, the people came under judgment because, once in the land, they established *bamoth* or high places for pagan altars. "What is this high place you are going to?" is a rhetorical question, a reminder that God knew every *bamah* or pagan shrine they had set up. These idolatrous practices continued while the Judeans were in exile (v. 38).

20:39-49 Fifth, the exile was a divine judgment to purge the nation of sin (vv. 40-44), that the Lord might fulfill his vow to give them the land (v. 42). Verse 46 uses three different words for "south": *timanah* "to the right," since directions were determined by facing east; *darom* "south" in a geographical sense; and *negev* referring to the southern portion of the land. The destruction would be of such magnitude that everyone would recognize it as an act of divine judgment (vv. 48-49). (In the MT, vv. 45-49 are Ezk 21:1-5.)

21:1-7 The phrase "Son of man, turn your face toward . . ." occurs nine times in the Bible, all in Ezk and all in a context of judgment (6:2; 13:17; 20:46; 21:2; 25:2; 28:21; 29:2; 35:2; 38:2). Commentators call Ezekiel's three messages here "sword oracles," and they envision indiscriminate judgment of both the "righteous" and the "wicked" (vv. 3-4). The passage raises the issue of whether the use of a pagan nation, Babylon, as God's "sword" was justifiable. Habakkuk wrestled with this same question and received the same answer: God is sovereign and free to use whomever He wishes to accomplish His purposes (Hab 2:5-20). Those God used, like Babylon, also were accountable to Him (see Ezk 25:1–32:32).

21:8-17 Interpreters who consider this passage a wanton celebration of slaughter are taking a superficial view. This sword song is not a song of delight but a warning of certain judgment. The sword was sharpened and made ready for slaughter (vv. 8-11). Like the Lord, the prophet was visibly moved and grieved by the carnage of judgment (v. 12). The sword was instructed to strike three times to emphasize the extent of judgment (vv. 13-15). Finally, the sword was instructed to strike and do its work (vv. 16-17). Some interpreters try to connect this passage with the sword song of Lamech (Gn 4:23-24), but there is no clear correlation.

21:18-27 The Lord did not endorse divination as legitimate. However, Ezekiel showed that God is in control even when aberrant methods are used to determine the future. Nebuchadnezzar, in his invasion, came to a fork in the road and faced a choice of military objectives: Should he attack Rabbah or Jerusalem? He used three methods of divination (v. 21). The shaking of arrows (belomancy) was intended to determine a yes or no answer to a question. Consulting small household ancestral gods (teraphim, cp. Gn 31:34) was another method for making decisions. Observing the pattern of the holes in an animal liver (hepatoscopy) was another form of divination. The answer Nebuchadnezzar received in each case was the same: Attack Jerusalem!

21:28-32 Why would Ezekiel concern himself with judgment against the Ammonites? The Ammonites and Moabites were descendents of Lot from his incestuous relations with his daughters (Gn 19:30-38). In a sad commentary on the consequences that sin visits on successive generations, their descendents became bitter enemies of the Lord and His people. The Ammonites aided Babylon in the conquest of Jerusalem. Ezekiel's message makes clear that they will not go unpunished. The sword will also visit judgment upon them (25:1-7).

22:1-12 Some commentators suggest this list of the 15 specific sins of Jerusalem is not Ezekiel's. But the list compares favorably with 18:5-17. Both lists include bloodshed (22:3,6); idolatry (v. 4); violation of God's law (v. 4); perversion of power (v. 6); loss of domestic discipline (v. 7); lack of hospitality to strangers (v. 7); oppression of widows and orphans (v. 7); profaning holy things (v. 8); violating the Sabbath (v. 8); giving false witness (v. 9); eating at pagan shrines (v. 9); sacred prostitution (vv. 10-11); accepting bribes (v. 12); exacting exorbitant interest rates (v. 12); and forgetting God (v. 12).

22:23-31 These sins chronicle the total social disintegration of Judah in which all leaders had a share including princes (vv. 6,25), priests (v. 26), government officials (v. 27), false prophets (v. 28), and the people (v. 29). In the midst of this decadence the search for one righteous person to make a difference proved fruitless (see Gn 18:16-33).

23:1-14 The parable of the two sisters, Israel and Judah, is comparable to the parable of chapter 16. While that passage was about the seduction of Canaanite religion, this stressed the political alliances that excluded God from their national life. *Oholah* (Hb "my tent") represented Israel and *Oholibah* (Hb "my tent is in her") represented Judah (see Jr 3:6-12). Ezk 23:22-35 contain four messages of judgment directed at Judah, and verses 36-42 make up a list of crimes similar to the list in 22:1-12 and 18:5-9,10-13.

24:1-14 The parable of the boiling pot is a poetic story that expands on 11:3. In that passage and here, Jerusalem was the pot, the people were the meat, and Babylon was the fire.

24:15-27 Interpreters question why a compassionate God would take the life of Ezekiel's wife as an illustration of coming judgment, but there is no reason to assume that was what the Lord did. In providing advance knowledge of her death to Ezekiel (vv. 15-17), He was preparing him to respond to his loss in a way that would make the deepest impression on the prophet's community. In the ancient Near East, mourning was a public rite in which a family often hired professional mourners to bewail the loss of their loved one. Ezekiel's unorthodox conduct in the face of his wife's death—he was instructed not to mourn in public—aroused the people's curiosity, giving the prophet an opening to declare the word of the Lord. When judgment arrived, there would be no opportunity to conduct the usual ceremonies of mourning for lost loved ones or for the demise of the nation. This passage brings to a conclusion the record of Ezekiel's ministry as the prophet of judgment to come upon Judah and Jerusalem.

25:1ff The messages against the nations serve four purposes. First, God will judge nations that applauded the fall of Jerusalem. Second, foreign nations were not immune from judgment. Third, these messages were against false gods of nations Judah trusted. Fourth, all will know Yahweh as the one true God.

25:1-7 Ezekiel's messages against the nations are similar to those found in Is 13:1–23:18; Jr 46:1–51:64; and Am 1:3–2:3. They affirm that all nations who oppose God and His people will be judged. The Lord chose these nations for a particular reason. Each of the first three was a blood relative of the Israelites. Each had become bitter enemies of God and His people. The Ammonites (Ezk 25:2) were the descendents of Lot (Gn 19:38) from an incestuous relationship with his younger daughter. The speech against them is a continuation of the previous message of Ezk 21:28-32. The Ammonites were known for cruelty (Am 1:3), idolatries (1 Kg 11:7,33), pride (Zph 2:9-10), and hatred for Israel (Dt 23:3-4, Jdg 3:13; 1 Sm 11:1-2; 2 Sm 10:1-14; 2 Kg 24:2; Neh 4:3,7-8).

25:8-11 Moab was Lot's son by his older daughter (Gn 19:37). The Moabites introduced Baal worship to Israel (see Nm 21:1–25:5) and participated in the sins of Ammon (Ezk 25:1-8). Both Ammon and Moab would disappear from the family of nations (vv. 10-11).

25:12-14 The Edomites were descendents of Esau (Gn 25:25), who foolishly sold his birthright to Jacob and held the promises of God in contempt (Gn 25:29-34). He was a profane person (Heb 12:16) who despised his birthright and despised God's promises (Gn 25:29-34). His descendents were bitter enemies of the Jews. Edom would be laid waste (Is 34:5-17; Jr 49:7-22; Am 1:9-12; Ob 18).

25:15-17 The Philistines, a seafaring people, were condemned because of their constant opposition to the Israelites during the period of settlement in Canaan. Their threat gave impetus to the Israelites' desire for a king to lead them in warfare. They captured the ark of the covenant (1 Sm 4–5) and were a source of tension from the time of the Judges (Jdg 3:31; 10:7; 13:1–16:31) until the reign of Saul. Ultimately they were responsible for his death (1 Sm 31:1-13). They were judged because they "took revenge with deep contempt, destroying because of their ancient hatred" (Ezk 25:15).

26:1–28:26 Ezekiel devoted chapters 26–28 to the judgment of Tyre, the "rock" and principal city-state of Phoenicia. A massive rock fortress guarded the harbor of this great commercial and shipping center. Ezekiel predicted that many nations would come against this city, its walls would be destroyed, the supposedly impregnable island fortress would be rubble, and the city plundered (vv. 1-6; cp. Is 23:1-18; Jl 3:4-6; Am 1:9-10; Zch 9:2-4).

27:1-36 Tyre was influential as a center of world commerce in its heyday. Ezekiel listed 23 nations, many still in existence, that had trade relations with Tyre. In verses 3-9 he described it as a magnificent ship marked for judgment because of its self-sufficient pride. Its trading partners would lament its fall (vv. 28-36).

28:1 The most enigmatic and debated passage in Ezekiel's messages against the nations is the lament over the king of Tyre. Although no specific king is mentioned, the king who reigned during Ezekiel's ministry was Ethbaal II (585–573 B.C.). He was called the "prince" of Tyre, judged for arrogance and greed (vv. 1-10).

28:3 On the name Daniel (*Dan'el)* in Ezk, see note on 14:14,20.

28:1-19 This text has presented difficulties for interpreters. Ezekiel compared the king of Tyre to a figure "in Eden, the garden of God" (v. 13). This passage is similar to Isaiah's taunt against the king of Babylon (Is 14:12-17). The king was seeking divine status (Ezk 28:2,6). This is not extraordinary, since ancient Near Eastern kings customarily proclaimed themselves divine and were regarded so by their people. But verse 12 adds that the king was a "seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty." A detailed description follows, naming nine precious stones covering this impressive figure. Verse 14 adds, "You were an anointed guardian cherub" and "You were on the holy mountain of God."

These extravagant descriptions could not literally apply to the king of Tyre; the prophet was comparing him with someone with an exalted position in the garden of God, but who became corrupted and lost his favor and position. Of 20 descriptive elements identifiable in this passage, at least 16 can be seen to correlate with Is 14:12-17, written some 150 years earlier. The correspondence leads many conservative scholars to conclude that the passages are related and refer to the fall of Satan, the adversary of God and His people and the source of evil. On this view, Ezekiel was stating—in terms his audience would understand—that Satan was the mastermind behind the king of Tyre.

Other commentators, no less committed to the inerrancy of Scripture, find such a theory speculative, going "beyond what is written" (1 Co 4:6). If Ezekiel had meant to speak of Satan there is no reason why he would not have mentioned him by name, as occurs in other OT passages (1 Ch 21:1; Jb 1–2; Zch 3:1-2). Ezekiel, like other prophets of Israel, is known for exaggerated speech; in this passage he magnified the king of Tyre as an exalted Edenic figure in order to amplify the "spectacle" (v. 17) of his disgrace, as one who "will never exist again" (v. 19).

28:20-26 Sidon was the sister city of Tyre, often mentioned together with her. Sidon was the home of Jezebel, wife of Ahab (1 Kg 16:31-34). Her vigorous promotion of Phoenician religion resulted in the widespread replacement of the worship of Yahweh with the cult of Baal. The Lord hid Elijah in Zarephath, a suburb of Sidon(1 Kg 17:9), before he went forth to summon the nation back to the Lord (1 Kg 18:1—2 Kg 2:18). The last two verses in this passage are the Lord's promise that He would restore Israel in safety to the land after executing His judgment on their surrounding enemies.

29:1,6-9 This prophecy against Egypt is the first of seven judgment messages against that land that follow in chronological order, except for 29:17-21. Ezekiel gave more attention to Egypt than to any other nation, probably because of its hostility against Israel from the time of the exodus. This prophecy is dated early in 587 B.C. (reckoning from a new year that began in the spring of the previous year), seven months before the fall of Jerusalem. It is usually understood to apply to Pharaoh Hophra. The prophet portrayed Egypt as a splintered reed that would prove worthless; anyone relying on Egypt's help would be crippled (cp. "tearing all their shoulders," v. 7).

29:17-21 This second prophecy, earlier than the others, is dated in the spring of 571 B.C. When Nebuchadnezzar's 13-year siege of Tyre ended unsuccessfully, his armies were left with no spoils with which to pay his soldiers. Ezekiel prophesied that the Lord had allowed him to plunder Egypt as a consolation. The passage concludes with a brief Messianic prophecy that the "horn" of the house of Israel will "sprout" (Hb *tsemach),* the same word used in Jeremiah's prophecy of the "righteous Branch" (Jr 23:5-6), the "beautiful and glorious" branch Isaiah foretold (Is 4:2-6), and "My servant, the Branch" of Zch (Zch 3:8-10).

30:2-4 The third prophecy is undated. It is not the "Wail: Alas" of the funeral lament but the cry of one under judgment, signaling that Egypt would perish on that "day."

30:13-19 These eight Egyptian centers of religious, political, and military might were marked for judgment as centers of idolatry —*gelullim*, literally "dung pellets," Ezekiel's favorite word for idols (see 6:4). The fall of these centers marked the end of Egypt as a world power, as predicted in 29:14.

30:20-21 The fourth prophecy is dated in the spring of 587 B.C. Pharaoh Hophra was portrayed as helpless before the complete devastation by Nebuchadnezzar.

31:1-9 The fifth prophecy is dated in early summer, 587 B.C. Depicting rulers as trees was a common literarydevice in the ancient Near East (see Jdg 9:7-21; Is 14:1-8; Ezk 17:1-24; Dn 4:1-37). This king of Assyria was compared to a cedar of Lebanon, the tallest known trees of the ancient world.

32:1-16 This sixth prophecy is dated in late winter, 585 B.C. (just before the spring new year). It is another funeral dirge in *qinah* meter, lamenting the distress the fall of Egypt would bring to those nations that looked to it for leadership and protection. Egypt's demise was an act of divine intervention by which all would recognize Yahweh as the one true God.

32:17-32 The seventh prophecy is dated shortly after the previous one, after the spring new year. It is the final lament, not composed in *qinah* meter but—like the second prophecy in 30:2-4—a wailing song. These two passages are the only examples of a wailing song in the OT.

32:22-32 When Egypt was thrown in the pit (Hb *bor,* a synonym for *sheol)*, Assyria and Elam, former victims of Babylon's might, already were there along with two older nations, Meshech, and Tubal—all known for terror and ruthlessness. Edom and the Sidonians also were there, as previously predicted in 25:12-14 and 28:20-26.

33:1-2,7 This passage is a turning point, as Ezekiel transitioned to messages of hope and restoration in (chaps. 33–45). This message parallels 3:16-21 and reaffirmed Ezekiel's authority as the prophet of restoration.

33:10-11 The hope of restoration begins with a question, "How then can we survive?" Ezekiel brought a forceful and clear call to "repent, repent," the imperative form of Hebrew *shuv*, "turn."

33:21 The date of this message was early in 585 B.C., nearly two years after the fall of Jerusalem. The text offers no explanation for the delay of news of the fall to reach Babylon. Ezra gave the travel time as five months (Ezr 7:6-9). The news may have come from a refugee who hid along the way to avoid Babylonian troops. Another suggestion is a possible copyist's error; there is only a one-letter difference in the Hebrew spelling for the twelfth year and the tenth year. The LXX and the Syriac (Aramaic) version adopted that solution. Still another possibility is that Jerusalem's fall occurred in the summer of 586 B.C. instead of early in 587 B.C., in which case the "twelfth" year should read the "eleventh"; that would reduce the time span to six months, which better fits Ezra's timetable.

34:1-2 Chapter 34 is a sequel to the enumeration of Judah's sins in 22:1-31. Kings and leaders were often called "shepherds" in the ancient Near East. The failure of weak and corrupt "shepherds" of 22:23-31 and the false prophets of 13:1–14:11 gave way to the Lord's true shepherd promised in 34:11-31.

34:6-31 The Lord is the true Shepherd of Israel. He made clear in this passage by the use of 18 possessive pronouns such as "My flock" and "My sheep." Human shepherds were accountable to the Divine Shepherd, a concept David well understood (Ps 23:1-6). So the Lord declared that He was against the human shepherds (Ezk 34:2,10) and would be the true Shepherd. At least 25 verbal forms translated "I will" punctuate verses 10-29. These promises express the Lord's determination to personally attend His flock. His Messiah will mediate a "covenant of peace" between God and His flock (v. 25; 37:26). Ezekiel joined Jeremiah in outlining the new covenant (34:25-31; Jr 31:31-34).

35:1ff Why was another judgment message spoken against Edom? Some interpreters suggest this message was either superfluous or misplaced and should be moved, perhaps to 25:12-14. But the message indeed was appropriate as a solemn reminder of the tragedy of Esau's descendants, the Edomites. Jacob's descendents would receive the blessing Isaac gave to Jacob (Gn 27:27-29). Mention of the judgment of Edom was a reminder of Esau's loss and a fitting prelude to the restoration of Israel. The Edomites opposed Israel and finally were judged (see also Is 34:5-6; Jr 49:7-22; Ob 1; Mal 1:4).

35:5-15 What were the specific reasons for Edom's judgment? Five reasons are presented. First, Edom's hatred that had been harbored for hundreds of years after Jacob's deception of Esau (v. 5). Second, the Edomites' encouragement of Israel's enemies and

participation in Israel's slaughter (v. 5; see Ps 137:7; Ob 10-14). Third, Edom's belief that the land was still theirs because Jacob obtained it by deception (Ezk 35:10; cp. Gn 27:1-40). Fourth, Edom's cursing of the mountains of Israel and denial that God gave them to Israel (Ezk 35:12). Fifth, Edom spoke defiantly and strained against God's will (v. 13).

36:1-15 This passage was a reversal of the message against the mountains in 6:1-14. It was a celebration of the repossession of the land by the Judeans returning from exile. The passage includes additional accusations against Edom. First, when the Judeans were exiled, the Edomites rushed in to claim the land for themselves (vv. 2-3,5). Second, they plundered Judah and left the land desolate (vv. 3-4). Third, they ridiculed and scorned the people of Judah (vv. 3-6,15). Consequently, God gave four promises to the Judeans who would be returning: (1) the land would again be fruitful (vv. 8-9; cp. 6:8-10); (2) all the people of Judah ultimately would return, multiply, and prosper in the land (vv. 10-11); (3) their return would be permanent (vv. 12-14); (4) the Judeans would no longer be an object of scorn by other nations (v. 15).

36:16-23 The Lord gave two reasons for restoring the "house of Israel," the religious community of Judah:(1) He restored them for the sake of His holy name, not because they deserved deliverance (vv. 21-22); (2) the restoration served notice to foreign nations thatYahweh, the God of Israel, was still in control (v. 23).

36:24-32 This passage expands on 11:14-21, the Lord's promise to the returning exiles, in a series of affirmations. (1) The Lord will honor His promises of restoration (v. 24). (2) He will cleanse the people from their idolatry (v. 25). (3) He will give them a "new heart" and "new spirit" (v. 26). (4) His Spirit will enable them to walk in His laws (v. 27). (5) They will live permanently in the land (v. 28). (6) The Lord will renew His covenant affirmation to have them as His people and be their God (v. 28; cp. Jr 31:32-33). (7) The land will again be productive (vv. 29-30; cp. Am 9:13-15). (8) The Judeans will remember their idolatry and "loathe" themselves (v. 31). (9) Their cities will be resettled (v. 33). (10) Desolate land will again be cultivated (v. 34). (11) The land will be as productive as the garden of Eden (v. 35). (12) All surrounding nations will acknowledge what Yahweh has done (v. 36). (13) He will bless and increase His people like a flock (v. 37).

37:1-14 This passage, among the best known of Ezekiel's writings today, consists of his dramatic vision for the restoration of Israel's life as a community. The restoration of Israel as a people is a fundamental component of the biblical doctrine of the resurrection of the dead. Christian interpretation views this text as part of the "buildup" to the resurrection of Jesus (the passage is read, for example, in the Easter Vigil service of many churches). The distinction sometimes drawn between national restoration (as here) and individual resurrection (as in the NT) is a distinction foreign to biblical thought with its understanding of "corporate solidarity." What happens to the head, or representative, of a community happens to all its members, so that Jesus' resurrection is also the resurrection of all who belong to Him (1 Co 15:22-23), who are the "Israel of God" (Gl 6:16). While Ezekiel's primary purpose may not have been to teach a doctrine of the resurrection, he was not alone among OT writers in being given insight into this concept. Some interpreters deny that either Ezekiel or his hearers had any developed concept about the resurrection of human life, but many OT passages suggest that there was some understanding of resurrection before and after the sixth century B.C. (e.g. Gn 22:5; Jb 19:25-29; Ps 16:10-11; 49:15; Is 26:19; Dn 12:2-3; Hs 13:14). Ezekiel's statement, "I am going to open your graves and bring you up from them" (v. 12) is a direct resurrection analogy. If the Judeans had no idea of the possibility of the resurrection of human life, the analogy would have made no sense.

38:1–39:29 Interpreters have considered these two chapters to be one of the most difficult sections of the Bible. While other approaches are possible, this discussion will take the prophecies literally as referring to a future event of history within a premillennial eschatological framework. The discussion will consider other related biblical passages.

This section is a type of prophecy called "apocalyptic," which presents its messages in symbols and cryptic characters. Generally, the prophets of the OT called for repentance and sought the reformation of human conduct. Apocalyptic prophets such as Ezekiel, Daniel, Zechariah, and John (in the book of Rv) certainly shared these spiritual goals. But they believed God's ultimate solution to evil was not reformation but revolution. They looked to the latter days when God would confront Satan and evil, transform the world, set up a perfect kingdom, and live and fellowship with His people forever.

38:1-3 Gog's identity is crucial to understanding this passage. The name Gog appears only here, in 1 Ch 5:4, and in Rv 20:8. In the book of Ch, Gog was one of the sons of Joel, a descendant of Reuben. In Rv 20:8 he was the leader of history's final battle. Suggestions of Gog's identity include: (1) a ruthless ruler of Lydia known as Gugu or Gyges; (2) a figure from ancient history called Gagu of the land of Sakhi, a region in northern Assyria; (3) an official title, like Pharaoh; (4) a general term for any enemy of God's people.

Amazingly, Babylon was not included in the judgment messages against the nations (Ezk 25:1–32:32). Gog may be a cryptogram for Babel or Babylon, which would make this section Ezekiel's missing judgment message against Babylon. Taking Gog as a cryptic symbol for Babylon fits the apocalyptic character of the book by giving it an immediate limited fulfillment in the

fall of Babylon in Ezekiel's day, and a long-range complete fulfillment in the latter days. Babylon, in Scripture, is synonymous with godless government under Nimrod (Gn 10:8-10); under Nebuchadnezzar (Dn 1:1–4:37); under the "Mystery Babylon" of the last days (Rv 14:8; 17:5); and under Gog at the end of history (Rv 20:7-15).

Gog indeed may be a cryptic reference to the forces of evil foreseen by Ezekiel and already operative in the kingdom of Nebuchadnezzar. The name may be from a Sumerian loan word, *gug* "darkness." This is a suitable synonym for the ruler of end-time "Babylon," the "ruler of this world" of Jn 12:31; 14:30, and Satan, the prince of darkness in Ac 26:18; Eph 6:12; 2 Pt 2:4 (see Mt 8:12; Lk 11:34-35; 22:53; Jn 1:5; 3:19; 8:12; 12:35,46; Rm 13:12; Col 1:13; Jd 6,13: Rv 16:10) who counterfeits himself as an angel of light (2 Co 11:14). This identification of Gog also is appropriate as a cryptic reference to Nebuchadnezzar. His father, Nabopolassar, engineered the overthrow of Assyria, the dominant world powerof the day. He accomplished it by forming an alliance with the king of Media named Cyaxares, who also helped him secure support of the Scythians to overthrow Nineveh in 612 B.C. This alliance was sealed by the marriage of his son, Nebuchadnezzar, to Amytis daughter of Cyaxares. By this arrangement Nebuchadnezzar became the prince of Meshech, Tubal, Gomer, and Togarmah (Ezk 38:2,6).

38:2 There has been a temptation among conservative scholars to associate "Rosh" with Russia. But, this identity was made more from opposing political worldviews about Russia during the twentieth century than from exegetical and lexical evidence. The word *ro'sh* is Hebrew for "head," "top" or "chief," meaning the first or principal thing. It is a component of the first word in the Bible, *bere'shith*, literally "in the head" of things—a point of absolute beginning for the created universe. The phrase should be translated "Chief" (meaning head) Prince of Meshech and Tubal, to be consistent with the Hebrew text and with the historical role of Neb-uchadnezzar as son-in-law of the king of Media.

38:4-7 These verses identify a northern confederacy of Gog's allies, nine nations that make up Gog's army amassed to obliterate Israel from the land. It is called a "huge company" (v. 4) with soldiers from Persia (Iran), Cush (Ethiopia), Put (Lybia), Gomer (Armenia), Togarmah (Armenia)—all of whom will join the armies of Gog (Iraq?), Magog (Western Asia, Sycthians?) Meshech (Armenia, Azerbaijan), and Tubal (Armenia, Azerbaijan, v. 7).

38:8-16 This battle is to take place "after a long time" and "in the . . . last days"—both consistent references to the end-time (cp. Jr 4:6,13,24-26; 5:15; 6:1,22; 10:22; 23:20; Dn 8:26; 10:14). The confederacy will come into the land "that has been restored from war and regatheredfrom many peoples," a reference to regathered Israel. Gog will devise an evil plan against Israel. According to Rv 20:1-10, this battle may be in two parts: one at the end of history (Rv 19:17-21) and one after a thousand years of peace (Rv 20:1-3). Gog and Magog, along with Satan, will be fully and finally defeated (Rv 20:7-10). Ezekiel's battle may be the first battle, or the second, or both. Gog will loot and plunder those who dwell in "open villages" at "the center" (Hb *tabor*), possibly the region around Mount Tabor just north of the Valley of Jezreel, site of the battle of Armageddon (Rv 16:16). Motivated by vengeance and greed, Gog will attempt the annihilation of Israel (v. 16).

38:17 Identification of the prophecies of "former times" (v. 17) has been an issue of debate. Interpreters have compared them, inconclusively, with Is 14:24-25; 26:20-21; Jr 4:5; 6:26; 30:18-24; Jl 3:9-21; Zph 1:14-18. Theexact translation of the question itself, "Are you the one I spoke about in former times through My servants?" is also in doubt. Some amend it to read "You are he . . ." assuming the introductory particle *halo'* ("are you not. . . ?") which is absent from the text. Whatever the case, it was a rhetorical question anticipating a positive answer. This would mean that Gog is not a divinely commissioned agent of judgment, but a perennial enemy of God and His people, an interpretation consistent with the identification of Babylon and Satan.

38:18-23 The battle is resolved through God's direct, wrathful intervention by means of a great earthquake (vv. 19-20), the sword, pestilence, bloodshed, flooding rain, hailstones, fire, and brimstone (vv. 21-22). The Lord says that He will "reveal Myself in the sight of many nations," and by this judgment all will know that "I am the LORD," *Yahweh* (v. 23).

39:4-9 In the end, Gog will "fall on the mountains of Israel" (v. 4), becoming a meal for predatory birds. Fire will destroy the armies of those who have profaned the Lord's holy name (vv. 7-8). Gog's weapons will be burned and it will require seven years to dispose of them (v. 9).

39:11-20 Gog's defeated armies are to be buried in the unidentified valley "east of the Sea" (v. 11). Since the Dead Sea has no large valley to its east, the sea in question would be the Mediterranean and the valley would be Jezreel, the only east-west passage to the Jordan rift. Burial takes seven months and a search party marks body parts for pickup (vv. 12-15). The bodies are buried at a site called Hamon-gog (v. 15, Hb lit. "multitude of Gog") near a city to be called Hamonah (Hb "multitude," v. 16). The Lord invites all birds of prey to the celebratory meal at "My table," to feast on the armies of Gog.

39:25-29 This message parallels 38:18-23, giving a summary of Gog's defeat and exulting in the glory ofYahweh. This passage concludes the restoration section of the book of Ezekiel that began in 33:1. It forms an appropriate prelude to the vision of the coming messianic King and kingdom in chapters 40–48.

40:1–48:35 What is the meaning of the new worship of chapters 40–48? It is fitting that the writings of Ezekiel, a priest, would conclude with the presentation of a new temple and new sacrificial system in the restoration of God's kingdom. This promise was partly realized when Israel returned after the exile and partly realized when Israel became a nation again in 1948. In a Christian interpretation, the realization is present now in the worshiping church and in the Spirit-filled life in the risen Christ which is the "Father's promise" (Ac 1:4; Gl 3:14). The final part will be realized by the rule of the Messiah in His millennial kingdom. For Ezekiel the vision was a whole and only in retrospect have stages of fulfillment been discerned.

40:1-4 Ezekiel's detailed description, including precise measurements, suggests that the prophet saw a literal future temple. No such temple has been built—neither the temple of the returned exiles nor the grand edifice erected by Herod the Great followed Ezekiel's blueprint. Many conservative scholars agree that Ezekiel's vision was for the latter days of the end time.

This is the last dated prophecy in the book, in the spring of 573 B.C. It was not the last message chronologically, as the vision of 29:17-21 is older. Ezekiel was in the twenty-fifth year of exile. In this vision he was taken to Jerusalem, 14 years after its fall (40:1), and the actual city was still in ruins. The language of this vision suggests Ezekiel believed he was seeing Jerusalem in a Jubilee Year of the latter days, evidence suggesting the advent of the millennial kingdom.

40:5-27 In the Hebrew text, all of Ezekiel's measurements are in cubits, a unit of approximately 18 inches. Ezekiel's cubit was a "royal cubit," which added a "handbreadth" or another three inches (v. 5). (To convert feet to royal cubits, divide by 1.75 or multiply by .571429.)

40:31-34,37,39-41 Many of the details of the temple complex the prophet envisioned had typological significance. Each of the gates in the inner court had eight steps instead of seven (vv. 31,34,37). Eight is a Messianic number in rabbinic literature, suggesting the Messiah is the only way of access (Ac 4:12). Details such as a washroom for cleansing sacrifices and eight slaughter tables also pointed to the work of the Messiah, the perfect sacrifice (Heb 10:10).

41:1-4 The floor plan of Ezekiel's structure was the same as that of the Solomonic temple. A porch led into an inner sanctuary known as the "most holy place," 20 by 20 cubits in Hebrew (v. 4).

42:1-14 The large building on the north side of the temple was to be reserved for the priests when they ate the communal meals from sacrifices offered on the altar (e.g. Lv 2:3,10; 6:16-18; 7:14-15). All these offerings were symbolic of Messiah (Ezk 41:13-26; Heb 10:1-39).

43:1-12 Ezekiel witnessed the return of God's glory to the temple from the Mount of Olives. The glory returned (vv. 4-5) to its place in the most holy place(1 Kg 8:10-11) as it had departed (Ezk 10:19; 11:23). The temple had deep theological significance. It was the place of God's throne, a sign of God's election of Israel and a sign of His holiness (43:7). It was a reminder of the people's sin (vv. 10-11) and a visible witness to the laws of the covenant (vv. 11-12; cp. Jr 31:31-34).

43:13-17 This section presents the dimensions of the altar of sacrifice in the restored temple. Ezekiel's blueprint raises the issue of why sacrifices would be reinstated in the end time, since Christ fulfilled them (Eph 5:2; Heb 9:26; 10:5,8,12,26). The Israelites were called to be the Lord's "kingdom of priests" (Ex 19:6) and the vehicle for His blessing on all peoples (Gn 12:3), but through the centuries their understanding of this calling became distorted under the pressures of history, especially that of foreign occupation. As a result, Israel never fulfilled its missionary purpose under the "old covenant." Interpreters who view Ezekiel's prophecy as a prediction of future, end-time events look ahead to the millennial kingdom when Israel, recognizing Jesus as the Messiah, will reestablish the sacrificial ordinances of their covenant in remembrance of His redemptive work. Other commentators, taking a different approach, see Israel's calling to be a kingdom of priests fulfilled in the church of Jesus Christ (1 Pt 2:9; Rv 5:10). In this view, Ezekiel's description of the restoredtemple, altar, and sacrifices points to the priesthood of the new covenant community.

43:18-27 This section provides Ezekiel's instructions for the consecration of the altar. The altar was the table of God where sacrifices were transformed into smoke to rise to Him (44:16; Mal 1:7,12); it was the hearth of God's house where the fire of purification burned (Ezk 43:15-16; cp. Is 6:5-6). The altar of the temple was the sign of God's presence among His people (Ezk 43:27), and was associated with holiness, purity, and mercy (43:15-21; cp. 1 Kg 1:50-51; 2:28). It was an instrument of mediation for the person bringing the offering (Ezk 40:47; 43:19), and sacrifices offered upon it were a gift to God and a form of prayer (43:27; cp. Ps 51:19; 141:2). These sacrifices were an expiation for sins committed in ignorance (Ezk 43:25-27; cp. Lv 4:2,13,22,27; 5:3-4,15,18; Nm 15:22-31).

44:1-3 Ezekiel's guide took him to the eastern gate of the temple, but he found that it was closed. It was to remain closed because the Lord entered the temple through that gate. Only the "prince" could sit in the gate to "eat a meal before the LORD," probably a communal meal (vv. 2-3). Offerings for the feast days, sacrifices, Sabbath, and other offerings were to be presented to the "prince" (*nasi'* "one lifted up," "chief," "prince," "captain," or "leader"; the word appears 14 times in 44:3; 45:7,16,22; 46:2,4,8,10,12,16-18; 48:21-22). The eastern gate is still walled up. In Jewish theology, it awaits the coming of the Messiah who will enter the temple area through this gate.

Some interpreters identify the "prince" as the Messiah. But since he was required to offer a sin offering for himself, he could hardly be the Messiah (45:22; 2 Co 5:21). The Messianic statement in 37:25, "My servant David will be their prince [Hb *nasi'*] forever," may refer both to the Messiah and to David, the "prince" who will serve as temple administrator and Messianic leader of the millennial temple.

44:4-14 Zadokite priests would be the only ones allowed to minister in the temple, according to Ezekiel's vision. Because these regulations for priests are substantively different from those in Lv, Julius Wellhausen, a prominent nineteenth-century OT scholar, used this section as evidence that the Pentateuch was compiled after the time of Ezekiel. He argued that the distinction between priests and Levites in Nm 3:1–4:49 did not come from the time of Moses but originated with Ezekiel. Wellhausen also claimed that the Levites were given an inferior place in temple service because they had administered the pagan sanctuaries where idols were worshiped (Ezk 44:10). When Hilkiah rediscovered the law (2 Kg 22:8), Josiah reformed the laws for worship and eliminated all the pagan shrines. The Levitical priests refused to cooperate (2 Kg 23:9; Ezk 44:10-15). Wellhausen claimed Ezekiel included this to discredit the Levites and establish the line of Zadok over the Levites because of their loyalty to David (2 Sm 15:24-29; 1 Kg 2:35). Wellhausen's view was taken up by other proponents of the "documentary hypothesis," the theory that the Pentateuch is a late compilation of several sources rather than a composition coming from Moses.

Wellhausen's reconstruction of history is based on unfounded presuppositions and unlikely interpretations. Certainly nothing in Ezekiel demands the view that Ezekiel was reallocating the role of the Levites (vv. 10-16; cp. 40:45-46; 45:4-5; 46:20-24). Accurate consideration of the biblical evidence doesn't support Wellhausen's conclusions. Because the priests had participated in idolatry, they were disqualified in Ezekiel's plan for temple service, as verse 15 clearly states. In spite of their participation in pagan worship, the Levites still were allowed to participate as "guards at the temple gates" but excluded from serving at the altar (vv. 10-13). While past moral failure does not exclude a person from worship or the service of God, it may preempt one from serving in a leadership role (vv. 11-14).

44:15-31 This section contains Ezekiel's regulations for the Zadokite priests. They were to teach the people the distinction between sacred and common things (v. 23) because what is "holy" is to be treated in a special way. They are to have "no possession in Israel" (v. 28), that is, no personal property, a practice still observed in the priestly ordination vows of some churches.

45:1-8 The Hebrew text gives the dimensions of the sacred district and its neighboring tracts for the new city of Jerusalem and for the prince in cubits. The district allotted to the prince extends across the land to the west (the Mediterranean) and to the east border (the Jordan and Dead Sea) between the lands of six tribes to the north and six to the south (47:21-22). Ezekiel's dimensions are rectangular and take no account of the actual topography of the land except for the boundaries (see 47:16-20).

45:9-12 This demand for honest balances and measures seems out of place amidst the priestly regulations, but it was a rebuke to the priests for use of dishonest scales for offerings brought to the temple. Old Testament writers frequently mention the abuse of standards in the marketplace (Lv 19:35; Dt 25:13-16; Pr 11:1; Am 8:5; Mc 6:10-12). Just dealings precede acceptable worship, a point Jesus also made (Mt 5:21-26).

45:13-25 The role of the prince was to administer, or arrange for, the offerings of the temple. The people were to bring him offerings for the service and upkeep of the temple. He was to regulate observance of the feast days and rites of purification for the temple (see 44:1-3). In exercising general oversight of the temple, the prince would be following the pattern of David and succeeding rulers of Judah who also provided for the ongoing worship of the sanctuary. The Hasmonean kings of independent

Judah (141–37 B.C.) were also priests, administering the temple. In the NT period, Jewish princes who were client rulers of the Romans exercised general oversight of the temple (e.g., they normally nominated the high priest), even when the temple was not included in the territory they governed. If such princes considered their role to be a fulfillment of Ezekiel's vision, it was surely an inadequate one.

46:1-8 The prophet spelled out regulations for the Sabbath in great detail. Every aspect of worship in the new temple will be a celebration of the redemptive work of the Messiah. Israel will celebrate their salvation through the redemption Christ has already purchased for them.

46:19-24 Kitchens were provided in the temple courtyard so the priests could prepare their communion portion of the animal and grain offerings for their consumption. This arrangement was meant to avoid any defilement by contact with the general population.

47:1–48:35 Some interpreters consider this concluding section to be wholly symbolic. While the passage is saturated with symbolic spiritual truths of great importance, it may also be intended as a description of literal events. It is best to interpret this text allowing for both possibilities.

47:1-12 Ezekiel saw a stream of water flowing from under the threshold of the temple toward the east, then under the south wall, increasing in breadth and depth as it flowed toward the Dead Sea. Current topography of the area would preclude water flow as described here. Zechariah's vision described a cleavage in the Mount of Olives that will occur in the latter days (Zch 14:4-8); Ezekiel's vision apparently presupposed such a topographical restructuring of the region. On either side of the river grow fruit trees whose leaves perpetually provide healing (vv. 7,12). The water of the river brings life to everything it touches, including healing the uninhabitable waters of the Dead Sea, although the useful salt marshes will remain unchanged (vv. 8-11).

Ezekiel's picture of the "river of living water" forms part of the vision of the "new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven" (Rv 21:2) in the revelation to John (Rv 22:1-3). Both passages envision a new quality of life governed by the influence of the worship of God. Water, a commodity not always easy to obtain in the Near East, is a biblical symbol of life—not only physical life but life in its deeper dimension as the fulfillment of God's purpose in the human spirit. He invites all to come to the living waters available in unending supply (see Is 55:1; Jn 4:14; 6:35; 7:37-39). The "water of life" flows from the temple, and from the "throne of God and of the Lamb" (Rv 22:1) in the heavenly city. Christian worship, which celebrates the sacrifice of Christ and exalts God the Father as King, can be a release of divine power in human life—the power of the Holy Spirit—for healing, spiritual sustenance, and productive activity that blesses others. Thus interpreters can see in Ezekiel's vision a charter for the worshiping church, whose influence permeates and transforms the barrenness of surrounding cultures.

47:13-23 The new borders of the land are similar to those in Nm 34:3-12. Ezekiel may have been contemplating a return to boundaries as defined by the Lord. His vision may also have been an attempt to redefine the royal boundaries of the Davidic kingdom (2 Sm 8:1-18). The prophet defined the borders of the land to incorporate its largest geographical and political extent from the Brook of Egypt (47:19; see 2 Kg 24:6-7). Land will be distributed equitably, each tribe receiving an allotment of the same size. Ezekiel's plan also provided for aliens and proselytes who would settle in the land (47:22-23; Is 56:3-8). The boundaries between the tribal territories, and those of the sacred district, the city and the prince, ignore the actual topography of the land, suggesting either that future surface changes are to occur in the millennial era or that this is a symbolic blueprint for the reconstitution of Israel.

48:30-35 Ezekiel closed his prophecy with a marvelous vision of the new Jerusalem located foursquare in the southern sector of the sacred district. The city has 12 gates, three on each side, and is the pattern for John's vision of the Jerusalem "from God" in Rv 21:12-14. The city's name is a testimony of Yahweh's presence among His people forever: *Yahweh Shammah*, "The LORD is there." John's city, likewise, is the place where God will dwell among His people, to "be with them and be their God" (Rv 21:3).

The first city mentioned in the Bible came about as a result of Cain's act of rebellion (Gn 4:12-14). The final city is the city of God, His dwelling place. Ezekiel's ministry began with an awesome vision of the storm of judgment approaching a sinful nation. It closes with a glorious vision of a new people, a new land, a new worship—and in the midst of it all, "Yahweh Is There."

Daniel Articles

How Does Christianity Relate to Other Eastern Religions?

by Winfried Corduan

One of the distinctives of biblical religion is that it does not readily accommodate elements from other religions. Eastern religions, on the other hand have more flexible boundaries. For the five religions below, we will give a brief summary and a response from a biblical perspective.

1. **Jainism** is a popular Indian religion, similar to Hinduism and Buddhism. It was founded by a man named Mahavira in the sixth century B.C. (roughly a contemporary of Jeremiah and Daniel in the Bible). Mahavira taught that human beings need to escape from reincarnation and that they can do so by living a rigorous life of self-deprivation. The highest obligation is never to harm any living being, whether it be animal, insect, or plant. Someone who observes this duty faithfully will attain a higher state of life and, ultimately, release from reincarnation. Jains venerate Mahavira and his mythological predecessors, the Tirthankaras.

Response: The Bible teaches that humanity's main problem is not reincarnation but separation from God due to sin. Salvation cannot be earned by an ascetic life; it can only be received by faith through God's work of redemption in Christ. Christians agree with Jains that all life deserves respect, but they do so because life was created by God, not because it is inherently divine.

2. **Sikhism** was founded by Guru Nanak in India around A.D. 1500, contemporary with the Protestant Reformation in Europe. Nanak sought to establish harmony between Hindus and Muslims by teaching that God is beyond any human name or attribute and that true devotion to God will bring about union with Him. There were nine successive gurus after Nanak, but the last of the line declared that the Sikh holy book, the *Adi Granth*, would henceforth be the true guru. It has been the focus of veneration among Sikhs ever since.

Response: Christians who believe the Bible is the inspired Word of God can appreciate the Sikhs' devotion to the *Adi Granth*. But whereas for Sikhism their holy book itself is a sacred object, for Christians the Bible is the revelation of God's message. The Bible offers to Sikhs (and anyone else) a hope for the future and an assurance of salvation that is absent from Nanak's message.

3. **Daoism** (formerly spelled Taoism) is part of popular Chinese religion, originally based on some fairly esoteric philosophical writings. Its founder, the legendary Laozi (roughly sixth century B.C. again), taught that the true "Way" (the Dao) of life could be found by allowing the opposing forces of the universe—yin and yang—to find their balance. This philosophy eventually metamorphosed into a religion devoted to the service of many gods and spirits, presided over by the Jade Emperor in heaven. Religious Daoism emphasizes devotion to one's ancestors.

Response: In contrast to philosophical Daoism, the Bible asserts that good and evil are genuine realities, not just matters of cosmic imbalance. The Bible condemns all worship of creatures, including nature spirits, ancestors, or images of deities. The Christian gospel offers release from the bondage to the spirit world in which religious Daoists usually live.

4. **Confucianism** is the philosophy of life taught by Confucius, another sixth century B.C. figure in China. It is primarily a code of conduct for individuals and the society they comprise rather than a set of doctrines about gods or worship practices. The fundamental premise of Confucianism is that there is a proper way in which all persons should act, depending on their station in life and the specific relationship of the moment. Thus a prince lives under a different set of expectations than a common worker. The obligation of setting the right example lies with the prince; if he will set the proper example, his subject will follow him in proper behavior, and a perfect society will result. The highest Confucian virtue is filial piety, the unconditional obedience of children to their parents. Even though many Confucian

ideals are outdated, the attitude of filial piety persists prominently among traditional Chinese, Japanese, and Korean people today.

Response: Christians can resonate with the Confucian commitment to a life of virtue, though they will take exception to the way it puts forms ahead of sacrificial love. Even more importantly, the Bible teaches that perfection is unattainable for human beings, who need inward reconciliation with God before outward changes in actions are possible.

5. **Shinto** is the national religion of Japan, worshiping spirits and deities. The *Kojiki*, the Shinto sacred writing, claims the emperor of Japan is a direct descendant of the sun goddess and therefore divine—a claim now officially renounced. Shinto shrines, marked by the traditional *torii* gate, are colorful ceremonial centers.

Response: Shinto illustrates two problems commonly addressed by the Bible: ritualism and escape into myth. By contrast, the Bible offers salvation grounded in the historical Christ, whom we can receive by faith.

What Does It Mean to Say, "Jesus Is Messiah"?

by Walter Russell

The Bible is more focused upon proving that Jesus is the Messiah than on proving that Jesus is God. While some NT passages clearly declare that Jesus preexisted as deity, dozens demonstrate that Jesus of Nazareth is the long-awaited Davidic Messiah-King of Israel. In other words, Jesus is the only one anointed with the Holy Spirit by God the Father and thereby uniquely authorized and empowered to bring about God's kingdom on earth. He is the Anointed One (Hebrew = Messiah; Greek = Christ). While His messianic identity includes His divine preexistence, this isn't the primary emphasis of the NT. That's why all four Gospels speak of Jesus' anointing (baptism) with the Holy Spirit as the beginning of His ministry as the Christ (Mt 3:13-17; Mk 1:9-11; Lk 3:21-22; Jn 1:32-34). For this reason, Christ is a title or office, not a part of Jesus' name. Whenever "Jesus Christ" or "Christ Jesus" or "Lord Jesus Christ" is used, the NT is saying, "Jesus the Messiah" or "Messiah Jesus" or "Lord Jesus the Messiah."

To understand the full significance of saying, "Jesus is Messiah," we must think primarily historically and secondarily theologically. For example, when it comes to Luke 4:16-30—Jesus' inaugural address in the Nazareth synagogue—we must think historically to understand what Jesus was claiming about Himself. He quoted from Isaiah 61:1-2, a favorite messianic passage of the Jews in Jesus' day and one of a cluster of OT passages speaking of the Spirit of the Lord anointing the Servant of the Lord to preach good news to needy people. In Luke 4:21, Jesus claimed that the Spirit anointing that Isaiah prophesied had been fulfilled in His anointing (baptism) in John the Baptist's presence a short time before (Lk 3:21-22). In other words, Jesus claimed to be the Anointed One—the Messiah of Israel. Moreover, Jesus made the unpopular point that His present messianic ministry would be gracious to Gentiles, not wreaking vengeance upon them or overthrowing Rome (Lk 4:23-30). Jesus' claims can be understood only when we see them primarily as claims to be the Messiah who is the unique representative of the Father.

Even in passages clearly emphasizing Jesus' deity (e.g., Jn 1:1-18), such a theological emphasis is secondary to the historical emphasis that the Word who preexisted as God has become flesh and dwelt among us as Messiah. The double mention of John the Baptist, Messiah's forerunner, reveals that the messianic framework is primary (Jn 1:6-8,15).

Even Jesus' miracles weren't primarily to prove His deity but to prove His Spirit-anointed identity (e.g., Jn 6:1-15). However, they prove He is the Messiah as well as God. Also, the confession Jesus spent three years soliciting from His disciples was not "You are God" (which He is) but "You are the Christ" (Mt 16:16; Mk 8:29; Lk 9:20). Moreover, rejection of Jesus' works is not a rejection of His deity per se but rather is a blasphemy against the Holy Spirit who has empowered these works by the Anointed One (Mt 12:22-32; Mk 3:20-30). Last, Jesus' resurrection is the occasion of His coronation or official installation as the messianic ruler (Ps 2, esp. vv. 7-12; Mt 28:16-20; Rm 1:1-5; Ac 13:30-33; Heb 1:1-14).

In defending Jesus' identity, we should confidently set forth, as the NT does, that "Jesus is Messiah!"

Does the Bible Teach Annihilationism?

by J. P. Moreland

Does the Bible teach that the unsaved will suffer in hell for only a time and then be annihilated? Some argue from Scripture that the flames in hell are literal and point out that flames destroy whatever they burn. Further, they claim that infinitely long punishment is disproportionate to a finite life of sin. Thus extinction is morally preferable to everlasting punishment.

The scriptural argument is weak. Clear texts whose explicit intent is to teach the extent of the afterlife overtly compare the everlasting conscious life of the saved and the unsaved (Dn 12:2; Mt 25:41,46). Moreover, the flames in hell are most likely figures of speech for judgment (cp. Heb 12:29; 2 Th 1:8). Otherwise, contradictions about hell are apparent (for example, it is dark despite being filled with flames).

The moral argument fails as well. For one thing, the severity of a crime is not a function of the time it takes to commit it. Thus rejection of the mercy of an infinite God could appropriately warrant an unending, conscious separation from God. Further, everlasting hell is morally superior to annihilation. That becomes evident from the following consideration.

Regarding the end of life, sanctity-of-life advocates reject active euthanasia (the intentional killing of a patient), while quality-of-life advocates embrace it. In the sanctity-of-life view, one gets one's value, not from the quality of one's life, but from the sheer fact that one exists in God's image. The quality-of-life advocates see the value of human life in its quality; life is not inherently valuable. Thus the sanctity-of-life position has a higher, not a lower, moral regard for the dignity of human life.

The traditional and annihilationist views about hell are expressions, respectively, of sanctity-of-life and quality-of-life ethical standpoints. After all, the grounds that God would have for annihilating someone would be the low quality of life in hell. If a person will not receive salvation, and if God will not extinguish one made in His image because He values life, then God's alternative is quarantine, and hell is certainly that. Thus the traditional view, being a sanctity-of-life and not a quality-of-life position, is morally superior to annihilationism.

Introduction to Daniel

AUTHOR

Traditionally, Christians and Jews have maintained that Daniel wrote the prophecy that bears his name in the sixth century B.C. and that his predictions are supernatural and accurate. Critical scholars disagree and hold the view (first proposed by Porphyry, a neo-Platonist, in the third century A.D.) that an anonymous Jew writing under the pseudonym Daniel produced the prophecy in its present form during the second century B.C. They argue that the book consists of non-historical tales and pseudo-prophecies. Its purpose was to encourage Jewish believers in their struggle against the Syrian-Greek tyrant Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175–163 B.C.) during the Maccabean period. According to this theory, the book of Daniel is the latest of the OT Scriptures. Generally, those who advocate the Maccabean view consider chapters 7–12 essentially to be an original creation of the second-century author, who introduced his material with the "court legends" of chapters 1–6, dating to the previous century. Often this writer is identified as a member of the religious sect known as the Hasidim.

THE RELIABILITY OF DANIEL

Critics claim that the book's language, theology, position in the Hebrew Scriptures with the Writings rather than the Prophets, and inaccuracies about historical events before the second century B.C. demand a late date of composition. Evangelicals respond with the following arguments:

1. *Daniel was not placed in the Writings because the book was written later or the author's prophetic credentials were in doubt.* At Qumran, the religious center from which came the Dead Sea Scrolls, the prophecy enjoyed unusual prominence and both the Septuagint and Josephus (*Against Apion* 1.8) classified Daniel with the Prophets. Apparently those responsible for fixing the order of the Hebrew Bible did not include the book in the prophetic section because Daniel was mainly a statesman, not a preacher to the nation of Israel in the manner of Isaiah or Jeremiah.

2. *Archaeological discoveries have confirmed the reliability of the book in many instances* (e.g., the existence of Belshazzar). Alleged historical inaccuracies on close examination are found to be nonexistent or have reasonable explanations.

3. *Daniel's Hebrew is consistent with a sixth century date* (it resembles the Hebrew of Ezekiel), and his Aramaic exhibits striking parallels with that of the Elephantine Papyri, also written in imperial Aramaic and dated to the fifth century B.C. By contrast, the Aramaic of the book does not conform to later samples of the language found at Qumran (e.g., *Genesis Apocryphon*). Critical assertions that the book's Persian and Greek loan words require a late date will be discussed in the notes at 3:2 and 3:5.

4. *The theological argument is one of the most precarious proofs for dating any biblical book.* If Daniel is dated to the sixth century by other objective criteria, alleged late theology in the book (e.g., teaching about angels, the Messiah, and the end times) is sixth-century theology.

Arguments for the traditional view include these points:

1. *The NT writers and Jesus Himself accepted the traditional understanding of the prophecy* (cp. Mt 24:15 and Mk 13:14; Mt 26:64 and Mk 14:62 and Lk 22:69; Heb 11:33-34).

2. *The book professes to have been written by Daniel* (see 7:1; 12:4), to be an account of a historical individual who experienced the exile and lived in Babylon, and to predict future events (e.g., 2:29-45; 7:2,15-27; 8:15-26; 9:24-27; 10:14; 11:2–12:4).

3. *One of the eight manuscripts of Daniel discovered at Qumran (4QDan^{c}) has been dated to about 125 B.C. and may have been written earlier.* Some scholars have argued that there would have been insufficient time for the book of Daniel to have gained such widespread acceptance if it were written only 40 years previously.

4. *The Septuagint was the Greek translation of the OT produced in Alexandria, Egypt, that came to be used widely by the Jews of the Diaspora.* Scholars generally agree that at least the Pentateuch (first five books) was translated in the middle of the third century B.C., but it is likely that all the Bible books were translated into Greek about the same time. If so, a second century date for Daniel is impossible. According to the critical view, only 30 years after it was written, the book of Daniel was received into the canon and carried to Alexandria, approximately 300 miles away, and there translated into Greek. Such a proposal seems unlikely.

5. *Ezekiel, the sixth-century prophet, mentioned Daniel three times in his book* (Ezk 14:14,20; 28:3)—seemingly clear verification of the traditional view. Critical scholars, however, insist Ezekiel was speaking of a mythological hero named Danel who appears in the ancient Ugaritic epic "The Tale of Aqhat." A decisive argument against such a theory is that the epic Danel was an idolater, hardly a model of faithfulness to Israel's God. Ezekiel must have been referring to the author of the book of Daniel. If so, the historicity of Daniel and his book would seem to be established.

THE APOCALYPTIC GENRE

Daniel (specifically chaps. 7–12) is the classic example of the apocalyptic genre. The term *apocalyptic* is derived from a Greek word *apokalupsis*, meaning "revelation, disclosure." In this genre (type of literature), a divine revelation is given to a prophet through a mediator concerning future events. Symbolism and numerology are often used. Apocalyptic literature's major theme is the triumph of the kingdom of God over the kingdoms of earth at the end of time. Critical scholars view apocalyptic merely as a literary technique used to convey a writer's theology of future hope, not as a record of actual supernatural visions given by God about the future. Evangelical scholars differ on specific interpretations of Daniel's apocalyptic passages but agree that biblical apocalyptic grants the world an authentic glimpse of God and the future.

An unusual feature of the book is that it is written in two languages—Daniel 1:1–2:4a and 8:1–12:13 are in Hebrew and Daniel 2:4b–7:28 is in Aramaic. Critics insist that the use of Aramaic reflects a late date (when Aramaic had replaced Hebrew) but offer no convincing explanation as to why only a portion of the book is written in Aramaic. Chapter 7 (Aramaic) seems particularly problematic for the critical position since it is the same literary genre (apocalyptic vision) as chapters 8–12 (Hebrew). The most satisfying proposal is that Daniel wrote in Aramaic (the common language of that region in that period) the parts of the book with universal appeal or special significance for the Gentile nations and employed Hebrew in sections more applicable to the Jewish people.

Eight manuscripts of the text of Daniel have survived two millennia in the caves of Qumran. They were produced sometime between the second century B.C. and the first century A.D. These fragments demonstrate the Qumran community's high regard for the book of Daniel and the faithfulness with which the biblical text was preserved over the centuries.

Daniel Study Notes

1:1 Some commentators deny the historicity of this invasion, yet Babylonian documents record that Nebuchadnezzar defeated the Egyptians at Carchemish in late spring of 605 B.C. and quickly subdued northern Syria. Immediate threats against Egyptian allies such as Judah's king Jehoiakim (2 Kg 23:34) would be expected, and the Babylonian priest-historian Berosus (c. 300 B.C.) reported that Nebuchadnezzar took Jewish captives in his 605 B.C. campaign (Josephus, *Against Apion* 1.19). Jeremiah dates the battle of Carchemish to Jehoiakim's fourth year (Jr 46:2), whereas Daniel (Dn 1:1) places the siege of Jerusalem, which took place shortly after that battle, in Jehoiakim's third year. During this period the Jews used both the Babylonian spring and Judean fall calendars (cp. Ezk 29:17; 30:20; 32:17 where the "first month" reflects a spring new year). The months between Nisan (March–April) and Tishri (September–October) 605 B.C., when the events took place, fell in the fourth year of Jehoiakim's reign according to the Babylonian calendar but were still in Jehoiakim's third year following the Judean system. Nebuchadnezzar was crowned "king of Babylon" subsequent to the siege of Jerusalem, but Daniel wrote after Nebuchadnezzar's coronation and likely spoke of the king's position from the standpoint of a later time (also Jr 46:2). Moreover, a Jewish writer could appropriately refer to the crown prince as king because father-son co-regencies were commonplace in Judah.

In the Hebrew Bible, this book is not in the Prophets section but the Writings section, following the five "Scrolls" or megillot (Ru, Sg, Ec, Lm, Est).

1:2 By the use of the title "Lord" (Hb *'adonai*, "owner, ruler, sovereign"), Daniel emphasized the sovereignty of his God, the dominant theme of the book. References to Daniel's "God" throughout the prophecy read "the God" (lit. "from the house of the God") in the Hebrew-Aramaic text, apparently to underscore that Yahweh was the true God and Babylon's deities were merely lifeless idols. The consistent use of the prefixed definite article when referring to Israel's God is further evidence of the book's literary unity.

1:3 A century and a half earlier, Isaiah warned Hezekiah that some of his descendants would be carted off as officials to Babylon (Is 39:7)—an amazing example of fulfilled prophecy.

1:5 Tablets listing the provisions allotted to the exiled King Jehoiachin (2 Kg 25:30; Jr 52:34) have been uncovered in Babylon and corroborate Daniel's testimony that captives were assigned royal rations. The Babylonian training period of three years was apparently similar to that of the Persians. Plato wrote that Persian youths began their education when 14 (*Alcibiades* 1.121), and Xenophon testified that they finished when 16 or 17 (*Cyropaedia* 1.2.8). According to the Persian *Avesta*, a Zoroastrian scripture, a student trained with a religious teacher for three years.

1:6 Omission of the fathers' names of Daniel and his friends was not a failure in historical accuracy. The fathers' names of Habakkuk, Haggai, and many others whose historicity is beyond dispute are not disclosed.

1:7 Dual names were not uncommon in ancient times. Pharaoh assigned Joseph an Egyptian name (Gn 41:45), and Hadassah is better known by her Persian name, Esther (Est 2:7).

1:8 Critics who consider Daniel a fictional story from a later time maintain that this moral test reflects the pressure to forsake the Mosaic dietary laws during the reign of the Seleucid (see Dn 2:31-43) ruler Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175-163 B.C.), who attempted to stamp out Judaism in the Syrian Empire. Dietary laws were an issue during these persecutions (1 Maccabees 1:62-63), but keeping kosher practices when in foreign lands has been a challenge for Jewish people from the sixth century B.C. onward.

1:15 The improvement in the Hebrew youths' appearance after only 10 days may be attributed to God's special intervention, or to their improved diet through following His directives in the Torah.

1:18 In the ancient texts, usually in Jr, and always in Ezk,the Babylonian king's name is spelled Nebuchadrezzar (with an r). In Dn, 2 Kg, Jr (8 times), 1 and 2 Ch, Ezr, Neh, and Est the spelling is Nebuchadnezzar (with an "n"). The rendition with an "r" is closer to the Babyloni-an name, Nabu-kudurri-usur ("O Nabu [the god], protect the offspring/boundary,"). For this reason some critics deem the spelling Nebuchadnezzar in Dn incorrect. However, the change from "r" in Akkadian and Aramaic to "n" in Hebrew was an accepted literary practice.

1:21 Some commentators allege that this verse is saying that Daniel died in the first year of Cyrus, in contradiction to 10:1 which reports that Daniel was living in Cyrus's third year. But this verse says nothing of Daniel's death. It simply notes that Daniel was still alive in the first year of King Cyrus, perhaps emphasizing that he survived his Babylonian masters.

2:1 How could Daniel have finished a three-year training program by Nebuchadnezzar's second year if he was captured in the year that Nebuchadnezzar became king (605 B.C.)? During this period the Babylonians used the accession-year dating method whereby the king's first year did not begin until after the new year. Thus, Daniel's first year of captivity corresponded to Nebuchadnezzar's accession year, his second year of captivity to the king's first regnal year, and so forth. Moreover, Daniel did not have to train three full years; according to Hebrew usage a part of a year could be counted as a whole (cp. the "three days" between Jesus' death and resurrection [Jn 2:19-21], which was actually on the third day [1 Co 15:4]).

2:2 In this book, "Chaldeans" may refer to the Babylonian people generally (1:4; 5:30; 9:1) or to a professional group of priests or wise men (2:2,4,5,10; 3:8; 4:7; 5:7,11). Critics insist that the term was not used in the professional sense until the Hellenistic age when Greek culture spread throughout the region with Alexander's conquests of the fourth century B.C. Yet Herodotus (*Histories* 1.181-83) wrote of the Chaldeans as priests of Bel about 450 B.C., less than a century after Daniel's death. Sorcery (also called "witchcraft," Nah 3:4) was widespread in the ancient world but was severely condemned in the OT (Ex 7:11; 22:18; Dt 18:10; Is 47:9,12; Jr 27:9; Mal 3:5). The book of Daniel accurately reflects how pervasive astrology, sorcery and other occult practices were in sixth-century Babylon.

2:4 From this point through 7:28 the book was written in Aramaic rather than Hebrew. The term "Chaldeans" may indicate that the would-be dream interpreters spoke to the king in Aramaic, the diplomatic language of the Babylonian and Persian Empires and throughout the region.

2:5 Herodotus, the Greek historian, related a similar instance in which Darius I (about 100 years later) massacred his wise men with the result that the group was almost annihilated (*Histories* 3.79). Examples of houses and temples being made into refuse sites or public toilets as a mark of contempt are also known from ancient times; Jehu did the same to the temple of Baal in Samaria (2 Kg 10:27).

2:27 Astrology may be traced back to earliest antiquity and was highly regarded in Babylon. The Tower of Babel, "with its top in the sky" (Gn 11:4), may have been planned as an elevated map of the heavens for the purpose of seeking advice from the stars. The practice was implicitly condemned by the prophets' ridicule of it (Is 47:13; Jr 10:2) and Daniel's repeated emphasis on its failure to afford divine wisdom (2:27; 4:7; 5:7-8).

2:28 Daniel's statement "But there is a God in heaven," the overriding theme of the Bible, was a direct challenge to atheism and agnosticism. God's reality is attested by His creation (e.g., Rm 1:19-20), His wondrous acts in history, His supernatural revelation —the Bible—and the Spirit's witness in the hearts of those who know Him (e.g., 1 Co 2:9-10).

2:31-43 The different materials of the statue represent four world empires. Interpreters who view Dn as taking a long-range view have usually identified these kingdoms as the Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Greek, and Roman. Critical scholars who view Dn as a work from the second century B.C. generally consider the empires to be Babylon, Media, Persia, and Greece—the empire of Alexander the Great of Macedonia, whose far-flung empire was divided into four major parts (cp. "a divided kingdom," v. 41) after his death in 323 B.C. On this view the final kingdom, to be crushed and replaced by God's eternal kingdom, would be the regime of the Seleucid ruler Antiochus IV Epiphanes. By this argument these critics assign the writing of Dn to the period of Antiochus's persecution. To make the Greek Empire the last in the series, they claim that Daniel's author artificially partitioned the

Medo-Persian Empire into two consecutive world empires, the Median and the Persian. The traditional interpretation (Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome) conforms to the text of Daniel, which considers the Medo-Persian Empire as one (e.g., "law of the Medes and Persians" in 6:8,12,15; cp. 8:20). It is supported by other OT testimony (2 Ch 36:22-23; Ezr 1:1-4), the historical record, and more than two millennia of Jewish (Talmud, medieval Jewish commentators, etc.) and Christian (Church fathers, Jerome, Calvin, etc.) interpretation.

2:44 According to some critics, the author of Dn predicted that God's kingdom "that will never be destroyed" would appear with the collapse of the Seleucid dynasty. As the record of history shows that did not occur, therefore these commentators assert that this prophecy was in error. But if the fourth kingdom referred to Rome, not Greece, the difficulty disappears. Jesus Christ set up His spiritual kingdom (e.g., Jn 18:36-37) in the Roman period and will establish a direct rule at His second coming (which some suggest will involve a later form of the Roman Empire).

2:46 Skeptics claim the king's response is implausible, but Nebuchadnezzar had just witnessed a miracle (vv. 10-11). No record exists from the ancient Near East of a wise man revealing the content of someone else's dream.

3:1 Ancient rulers commonly constructed large statues (e.g., the Great Sphinx in Egypt), and Herodotus wrote that a solid gold statue of Bel (Marduk) in Babylon stood 18 feet high.

3:2 Some commentators claim that Persian loan words (including some titles for officials listed in chap. 3) indicate a late date for the book. But Daniel completed his book after the Persian conquest of Babylon and even served in the new administration, so the presence of Persian loan words is not surprising. The Persian expressions are, in fact, strong evidence for a date of composition not long after the Babylonian exile, since they are old Persian words that ceased to be used by about 300 B.C.

3:5 Typically, interpreters who advocate a date for Daniel's composition in the Hellenistic period point to three Greek loan words in chap. 3 (vv. 5,7,10,15) as evidence favoring their view. One of these Greek terms (*kitharis* "zither") is documented in Homer (eighth century B.C.). The others (*psalterion* "harp"; *symphonia* "drum") are not attested in Greek until after the sixth century B.C., but this argument from silence does not mean they were unknown in Babylon at the time. Archaeology has demonstrated extensive Greek trade and influence in the Near East during this period, and Greek mercenaries even served in Nebuchadnezzar's army. Conversely, the meager number of Greek terms in the book of Daniel is one of the more convincing arguments that the prophecy was not composed in the second century during the height of the influence of Greek culture.

3:6 Burning, as a form of execution, was a practice of Babylonian rulers. According to Jr 29:22, Nebuchadnezzar burned to death two men named Zedekiah and Ahab. Burning as a penalty for certain crimes appears twice in the Code of Hammurabi, the system of law set forth by that Babylonian king (eighteenth century B.C.). Another early Babylonian monarch, Rim-Sin, also punished in this manner.

3:12 Critics who question the authenticity of the book of Daniel point to the omission of his name here as evidence that the story of the three Judean youths was a legend that had circulated independently of the other narratives in the book. They assert that the author conflated older tales into one story to inspire faithfulness during the persecutions of Antiochus IV. Such a conjecture has no objective support. Daniel's responsibilities as "ruler over the entire province of Babylon and chief governor over all the wise men of Babylon" likely required his presence at the palace (2:48).

3:17 The Judeans had no doubts about God's existence or power to deliver. Their statement, "If the God we serve exists, then He can rescue us," did not suggest any uncertainty on their part about the reality of God; it means only that they were leaving the matter of their deliverance to His sovereign will. The verse may also be rendered "If it happens [that we are thrown into the furnace], our God whom we serve can rescue us."

3:25 Grammatically, the text may be translated "a son of the gods" or "the Son of God" (KJV). In this context, the HCSB rendering is to be preferred since the polytheistic Nebuchadnezzar had no conception of the Christian Trinity nor of Jesus Christ as the Son. The pagan king recognized that the being in the fire was divine; inscriptions found in excavations of ancient Ugarit (Ras Shamra, on the coast of Syria) use this expression to designate members of the court of the gods. Nebuchadnezzar's use of the phrase in a pagan sense does not mean that the person in the fire was not Christ. Most likely, He was the fourth man in the furnace. Indeed, the pre-incarnate Christ appeared to other individuals in the OT (e.g., Gn 18:1-2,10).

3:29 Nebuchadnezzar's decree shows that he, unlike modern skeptics, accepted the truth that God can miraculously deliver His people. In this he was in agreement with the biblical view that God can override what is seemingly a closed system of cause and effect in the physical world. The angel Gabriel told Mary, "For nothing will be impossible with God" (Lk 1:37); Jesus Himself affirmed, "With God all things are possible" (Mt 19:26).

4:16,32-33 Nebuchadnezzar's appalling illness resembles a well-documented psychological malady known as lycanthropy (lit. "wolf-man"), although there is insufficient detail in the text to assume that he suffered from that particular condition.

4:30 Historical sources (e.g., Herodotus, Berosus, cuneiform inscriptions) and archaeological excavations have substantiated Nebuchadnezzar's claim concerning Babylon's grandeur and the king's extensive building program. Ancient Greeks regarded Babylon's famous Hanging Gardens as one of the "seven wonders of the world," and bricks from ancient Babylon are stamped with Nebuchadnezzar's name.

4:34-37 Critical scholars consider this section to be literary fiction derived from the same source as the "Prayer of Nabonidus," an Aramaic fragment discovered at Qumran near the Dead Sea in 1952 (known in scholarship as 4QPrNab). Though affinities exist between chapter 4 and that document, they are far outweighed by the differences (e.g., the name of the king, the nature of the illness, and the location). The Nabonidus story is doubtless a distorted version or later application of the biblical narrative. Apocryphal imitations of canonical works were common during the intertestamental period, and several others grew up around the book of Daniel (e.g., Prayer of Azariah, Susanna, Bel and the Dragon). Although these works drew material from biblical sources, they are clearly fictional.

5:1 Until the latter half of the nineteenth century, Belshazzar's name was unattested except for the book of Daniel and works dependent on it (Baruch, Josephus). From other sources Nabonidus was known to have been the last king of Babylon, and some critics declared Belshazzar to be fictional. However, during the past 150 years abundant evidence has come to light (at least 37 archival texts) demonstrating that Belshazzar was a real person, the son of Nabonidus and ruler of Babylon during his father's extended absences.

5:2 "His predecessor" literally reads "his father" in the Aramaic text. Nebuchadnezzar is called Belshazzar's predecessor six times in this chapter (vv. 2,11,13,18), and the king is designated as the "successor" (literally, "son") of Nebuchadnezzar once (v. 22). Babylonian sources record that Belshazzar was the son of Nabonidus. The apparent discrepancy may be explained by the use of the terms predecessor (or father) and successor (or son) in the Semitic languages. "Predecessor" could refer to one's immediate father, grandfather, ancestor, or as in the case of kings, the immediate predecessor. Likewise "successor" may mean one's immediate offspring, grandson, descendant, or the immediate successor. An example of the latter is Jehu's designation as the "son of Omri" in the Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser III. It is likely that Nabonidus wed a daughter of Nebuchadnezzar, making the great king both Belshazzar's "predecessor" and grandfather.

5:7 The fact that Belshazzar could offer only the "third highest position in the kingdom" (5:16,29) is evidence that the author of Daniel had accurate knowledge of Nabonidus. Nabonidus was first in rank, followed by his son Belshazzar and then the decipherer of the handwriting would be third in rank.

5:30 Xenophon mentions that Babylon's Medo-Persian invaders "avenged themselves upon the wicked king" (*Cyropaedia* 7.5.32), meaning they executed Belshazzar.

5:31 According to the *Nabonidus Chronicle*, Babylon fell to the Medo-Persians on the sixteenth of the month Tishri, in the autumn of 539 B.C. The Greek historians Herodotus and Xenophon supply fascinating details about Babylon's fall. The *Nabonidus Chronicle* and the *Cyrus Cylinder* both agree with Daniel that Babylon was captured without a major battle and that the citizens readily accepted Persian rule (6:1-3).

6:1 Critical scholars judge Darius the Mede (see 5:31) to be literary fiction, pointing out that no such name has been discovered in ancient texts. They claim the Jewish author conflated details about Cyrus (559–530 B.C.) and Darius I (522–486 B.C.) into his imaginary monarch. Such arguments from silence are notoriously precarious. Skeptics once confidently declared Belshazzar to be a fictional character as well. Scholars who accept the historicity of Daniel's account usually identify Darius the Mede as a governor of Babylon (Gubaru=Gobryas) or as Cyrus himself. Lesser rulers were often spoken of as kings in ancient times, and dual names for kings were common. Either explanation is historically feasible.

Ancient records vary in the exact number of Persian satrapies. "Satrap" means "protector of the kingdom"; Xenophon and other Greek historians applied the term to lower officials. Daniel apparently used it in similar fashion.

6:7 "Petitions any god or man" signifies religious petitions to the gods or their earthly representatives, the priests. Darius did not proclaim himself to be a god and forbid the worship of other gods. Rather, during this 30-day period, he intended to act as mediator for the gods of all the nations subject to him.

6:8 Critics have challenged Daniel's statement that "a law of the Medes and Persians" was "irrevocable" and could not "be changed" (see Est 1:19; 8:8), but Diodorus Siculus (17.30) reported that Darius III (336–330 B.C.) executed an innocent man because he could not change what had been decreed by royal authority. The phrase "a law of the Medes and Persians" (Dn 6:8,12,15; see Est 1:19; 8:8), shows that Daniel knew the Medo-Persian Empire existed jointly, and not as a separate Median Empire followed by a Persian Empire as some critics allege (see Dn 2:31-43).

7:3 Commentators generally interpret these "four huge beasts" in the same manner as the four parts of the statue described in chapter 2—the head of gold and the first beast symbolize the Babylonian Empire, and so on (see 2:31-43).

7:6 In Scripture, "heads" may represent rulers or governments (e.g., Is 7:8-9; Dn 2:38; Rv 13:1,3). Daniel predicted that this one kingdom (the "leopard") would ultimately evolve into four ("four heads"). Alexander the Great, ruler of Macedonia, spread Greek rule throughout the eastern Mediterranean region and as far eastward as Persia (modern Iran). After he died in 323 B.C., his generals—after extended internal struggle—carved his empire into four parts (cp. 8:8 with 8:21-22). No fourfold division of the Persian kingdom existed at any time throughout its history, compelling evidence against the proposal that the third beast symbolizes Persia.

7:13-14 "One like a son of man" has been interpreted in three primary ways—as an angel (Michael), a personification of the people of God (Israel), and the Messiah. The NT apostles (see Jn 12:34) and Christ Himself (Mk 14:61-62) confirm the latter view, specifically that the "son of man" is Jesus of Nazareth. Early post-biblical Jewish literature (e.g., 1 Enoch 46:1; 48:10; 4 Ezra 13) also reflects the messianic view. That the "son of man" of verse 13 was considered a divine personage is affirmed by the high priest's charge of blasphemy (Mk 14:64) when Jesus identified Himself as the One "coming with the clouds of heaven" (Mk 14:62). Jesus' use of this title for Himself is one of the strongest evidences that He claimed to be the Messiah. "Son of man" is especially common in eschatological passages (see, e.g., Mt 16:27,28; 19:28; 24:30; 25:31), and the phrase "a son of man coming with the clouds of heaven" is an allusion to the second advent of Christ, as Mt 24:30 makes clear.

7:26-27 Critical scholars claim that here, as elsewhere, the author erroneously predicted the end of the age in his own day—the reign of Antiochus IV. Yet Jewish believers would never have received the book of Daniel into the canon of Scripture if it contained such a blatant prophetic failure (see Dt 18:21-22). Daniel was looking ahead to the coming of the Messiah in great glory at the end of this present age (cp. Dn 7:13-14 with Mt 24:30).

8:1-2 Some critics have argued that Susa (Hb *shushan*), the capital of Elam, did not exist in Belshazzar's third year, because the Assyrian King Ashurbanipal had destroyed the city around 640 B.C. However, it is known that Nabopolassar (626–605 B.C.)

restored the Elamite gods from Uruk to Susa, and Jeremiah indicated in prophecies delivered around 596 B.C. that Elam had again become a relatively strong nation (Jr 49:34-39). In any case, the condition of the city makes little difference because Daniel apparently visited Susa in vision only.

8:3-14 Here Daniel predicted Alexander the Great's conquests 200 years beforehand, and Antiochus's persecutions 350 years in advance (vv. 20-26).

9:1 Critics equate the Darius of this verse with Darius I and Ahasuerus with Xerxes I, as in the book of Esther, and then charge the writer with several major historical blunders. Darius I was the father, not the son, of Xerxes I and both were of Persian, rather than Median, lineage. If Darius the Mede was someone other than Darius I, as is the case (see 6:1), such criticisms are without foundation.

9:2 Jeremiah first prophesied Judah's 70-year captivity period in 605 B.C. (Jr 25:11-12; 29:10), and Cyrus issued the decree releasing the captives around 538 B.C. Considering that 70 years is a round number, Jeremiah's prediction is an astounding testimony to God's omniscience (see Jr 29:10 for discussion of the 70-year number).

9:24-27 Some commentators interpret the "seventy weeks" as weeks of years (a total of 490 years) beginning in 586 B.C. with the fall of Jerusalem and terminating with the cessation of Antiochus's persecution in 164–3 B.C. At that time the kingdom of God would arrive. Thus, these critics argue, the author was mistaken about the arrival of the kingdom of God and miscalculated the time span represented by the weeks by approximately 67 years. Traditionally, Christians have held that the prophecy predicts Christ's coming, although there is disagreement as to whether the 70 weeks culminate with His first or second advent. There is also uncertainty about when to begin the count. John Chrysostom (A.D. 345–407), for example, did not take Jeremiah's prophecy of 29:10 (see Dn 9:2) as the reference point, but the "issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem" by Cyrus at the end of the Babylonian exile (*Discourse* 5.10.3). He therefore understood the rebuilding of Jerusalem to be that under Nehemiah a half-century later, and the destruction of the sanctuary (Dn 9:26) to be that under the Romans—Pompey (63 B.C.) and Vespasian and Titus (A.D. 70). However Daniel's scheme is calculated, it seems clear that only the Messiah is able to bring about the cessation of sin, the establishment of righteousness, and the consecration of the sanctuary associated with the end of the 70 weeks (v. 24).

10:12-14 The angel's delay does not signify that God's will can be thwarted, even temporarily. In this case the delay was permitted within God's divine plan, possibly to accomplish some work in Daniel's spiritual life as he prayed and fasted (vv. 2-3).

11:2 Xerxes I (486–465 B.C.) is unmistakably identified as the fourth Persian king by the description of his great wealth and expedition against Greece. This astonishing prediction by Daniel is one of more than 130 prophecies in the first 35 verses that are validated by a review of the history of the period. God's omniscience and omnipotence (power over history) are unmistakably set forth in this chapter.

11:3-35 Critical scholars point to the great number of historical details in Daniel regarding events in the Greek period, particularly the persecutions of Antiochus IV (175–163 B.C.) in verses 21-35, as proof that the book must have been written in the second century B.C. In light of the book's claims and other compelling evidence, only an *a priori* assumption that inspired predictive prophecy is impossible could rule out this text being a preview of future history written by Daniel in the sixth century B.C.

11:36 At this point the writer introduces a king who will rule "at the time of the end" (v. 40). His reign of terror ushers in a "time of distress" unparalleled in human history (12:1; see Mt 24:21,29-31), and the resurrection of the saints takes place immediately after God delivers His people from this evil king's power (12:2). This king cannot be Antiochus IV (certainly not in vv. 40-45) but is an evil, tyrannical figure of the end of the age. This identification conforms to the description of this figure presented elsewhere in the Bible (see 7:8-11,20-27; 2 Th 2:3-10; Rv 13:4-8; 19:19-20) and has been widely accepted throughout church history (e.g., Chrysostom, Jerome, Theodoret, Luther). The sudden leap forward in time from Antiochus IV (v. 35) to the eschatological opponent of God's faithful people (v. 36) is consistent with other leaps in time earlier in the chapter (vv. 2-3).

11:45 Some interpreters maintain that the author erroneously predicted that Antiochus IV would "meet his end" in Palestine when, in reality, the Syrian king died in Persia. Therefore they take this passage (which they view as original with the author of Dn) to be a precise indicator that the book was written in 164 B.C., just before Antiochus's death. Of course, such critics disavow the validity of future prophecy and have no compunctions about declaring that the author was mistaken. But if the king in question is not Antiochus IV but the end-time ruler who will persecute the faithful, no historical difficulty exists. The Apostle John also affirms that this figure, whoever he is, will meet his end in the land of Israel (Rv 16:13-16; 19:19-20; cp. Ezk 39:4).

12:2-3 Verse 2 is generally considered to be the OT's plainest reference to the resurrection of the faithful (cp. v. 13), though the idea occurs in several earlier passages (Jb 19:26; Ps 17:15; Is 26:19; cp. Ezk 37:11-13). At one time it was common for critical commentators to credit the author of Daniel with the first unmistakable teaching about life after death. Yet recent studies, particularly in linguistic parallels in texts from Ugarit(c. thirteenth century B.C.), have demonstrated that such a belief is very ancient in Israel. Critical suggestions of an origin for the Hebrew doctrine of the resurrection in the Zoroastrian religion of Persia have been shown to have no real basis.

12:11-12 Commentators who relate the book of Daniel to the events of the persecution under Antiochus IV Epiphanes theorize that the 1,290 and 1,335 days were adjustments to the author's previous failed predicted time until the end of 1,260 days (cp. v. 7 with Rv 12:6,14). Perhaps the extra days signify the time in which the Lord will judge the nations and officially inaugurate His kingdom. Those who reach the 1,335 days are "blessed" because they will enter the greatest period in human history—the Messianic Age.

Hosea Articles

Does the "New Physics" Conflict with Christianity?

by Jeremy Royal Howard

The Bible portrays God as a rational Being who created the world from nothing and rules over it as Sovereign. Logic, order, purpose, natural law—these qualities are etched into the universe as reflections of the will and mind of God. Moreover, God made humans in His own image, which means our minds are equipped to operate according to God's rationality. Finally, since God is the author of the world *and* humanity, we are intellectually ready-made to understand truth about God and the world He made.

Some people say quantum mechanics (QM) refutes these beliefs. QM studies the bits of matter that are the size of atoms and smaller. It was long assumed that these micro-objects would follow the physical laws Newton described, but modern research shows that quantum entities behave far differently than the objects of our everyday experience. For example, photons (light) can take the form of particles *or* waves. However, the problem is that waves and particles are contrary things. Waves cover a wide zone, but particles can only be at one tiny place at a time. Physicists are baffled that photons can do both. Next, tests reveal that in laboratory settings, quantum particles separated by a vast expanse can still affect one another as if they are in direct contact. This is like scratching someone's back from two thousand miles away. Finally, experiments suggest that quantum entities behave lawlessly, meaning there are no "rules" for their actions.

These oddities prompt some observers to conclude that QM overturns natural law and rationality, leaving us with an incomprehensible, uncreated universe. Standard physics says matter can be neither created nor destroyed by natural means, but some scientists (falsely) claim that quantum particles naturally pop in and out of existence. From this, leading atheists claim the whole universe "sprang" into existence naturally. No Creator necessary. Furthermore, they say that even if God exists and created the universe, QM shows He made a world He cannot control. Once He uncorked this world, not even God knows what will come of it. Theologians who favor science fads over Scripture conclude the same thing: QM implies God cannot govern creation or know the future.

Scientists have historically taken the appearance of mystery or irrationality in nature as a sign that they do not yet know enough about the object under study. However, following the lead of Niels Bohr's Copenhagen Interpretation (CI) of QM, many physicists refuse to count their inability to understand or predict quantum action as a sign of ignorance. Rather, they claim QM is basically a finished science that reveals a genuinely lawless and irrational world—a brooding cauldron of chance actions and purposeless conclusions. This fits well with non-Christian concepts of the universe. In fact, Bohr and his colleagues enthusiastically asserted that QM endorses Eastern worldview images. Today, popular science opinion is captive to Bohr's CI, and thus holds that QM supports New Age or atheistic worldviews.

I suggest the following starting points for the Christian response: First, for all the wild attributes that may hold true in QM, we note that macroscopic reality behaves in a predictable, law-like fashion and everywhere presents us with evidence of its fundamentally rational construction and operation. So even *if* quantum particles could do lawless things like pop in and out of existence naturally, no such thing happens in the realm of everyday objects. Quantum oddities, whatever you make of them, are detained at the door to the larger realities we experience.

Second, many of the astounding behaviors attributed to QM occur only in highly artificial laboratory settings. There is no certainty that these things can actually happen in real-world settings. Thus, we are justified in casting an indifferent eye on many of the zany headlines coming from physics laboratories.

Third, science's ability to penetrate the microphysical world is still very rudimentary. This leaves room for exceptionally high degrees of speculation and error. In this light, Christians should join the chorus of noteworthy scientists (like Einstein) who have insisted that QM should not be the basis for worldview assertions. This problem will apparently not be fully alleviated in the future, for scientists acknowledge that the mega-scale facilities and energies required to verify the most important claims of QM will forever lie outside our reach.

Fourth, science would be impossible if this world were not created by a personal, rational Being who designed both physical reality and human beings to reflect His rationality. Any scientific theory that supports non-rational worldviews is self-defeating. After all, the deliberations involved in reaching the conclusion that "this world is fundamentally irrational" have relied on the very rationality whose legitimacy is denied in the conclusion.

Finally, a growing body of experts believes the CI will someday fall out of scientific favor, thus shifting the dominant paradigm of QM to models supporting rationality and natural law. Whether or not this happens, Christians can rest assured that this world is the creation of a rational God who rules as Sovereign over all things, including the wily objects of the quantum realm.

Besides QM, some suggest Chaos Theory and Special Relativity impinge on the Christian worldview. Special Relativity shows there are no fixed reference points in the universe. All motion or apparent non-motion is relative to a specific frame of reference. Some have imagined that this undermines our ability to form fixed judgments that apply universally, but of course our inability to do this in *physics* is irrelevant to our assurance about unalterable, universal truths revealed by God. As for Chaos Theory, the name itself is deceptive. Properly understood, it only says that many deterministic physical systems are so sensitive to initial conditions that we cannot fully predict their future behaviors unless we perfectly comprehend *all* of those conditions. Hence it is our ignorance, not creation itself, which sets up the appearance of chaos in physics.

In summary, the new physics highlights human finitude but does nothing to overturn God as Author and Ruler of creation.

Introduction to Hosea

AUTHOR

Hosea addressed the nation of Israel when it was in a great struggle between those who worshiped the Lord only and those who advocated the worship of other gods in addition to the Lord. Hosea used many strange and harsh metaphors, writing most of his message in a powerful but sometimes obscure poetic form.

Hosea, along with the other prophets, had a message that concerned God's plan for the ages. Though the prophets spoke about their own times and people, they prophesied of the spiritual realities of the Lord and of His kingdom. This mission to speak God's voice into the everyday affairs of men and women required speech that would arrest the attention of a people who had become complacent.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF HOSEA

Hosea mentioned four kings of Judah and one king of Israel who reigned during his ministry (1:1). He omitted additional reigning kings of Israel, probably because he did not consider them legitimate (cp. 8:4).

Pressure from the Assyrian Empire caused much instability and violence during this period. Pro-Assyrian and anti-Assyrian parties developed within Israel, and often the king sought aid from Egypt or other nations. Of the six kings who followed Jeroboam II, only one was succeeded by his son, four were assassinated, and one was taken captive by Assyria (2 Kg 15:8-31; 17:1-6).

Judah also went through a major upheaval. King Ahaz refused to help Pekah (king of Israel) after he assassinated the previous king of Israel and rebelled against Assyrian authority. Aram (Syria) allied with Israel, but when Ahaz refused to join, Israel and Aram attacked Judah (2 Kg 16:5-6). This Syro-Ephraimite war may form the background for Hosea 5:8-15. Ahaz called upon Tiglath-pileser III, the king of Assyria, for help, and Tiglath-pileser subsequently conquered Damascus and took control of large portions of Israel (2 Kg 16:7-9). According to an Assyrian source, he also confirmed Hoshea (not to be confused with the prophet Hosea) as the new king of Israel.

The northern kingdom of Israel collapsed when King Hoshea rebelled against Assyria and sought aid from Egypt. The new Assyrian ruler, Shalmaneser V, invaded Israel, took Hoshea captive, and laid siege to Samaria. After three years, the city finally fell (722 B.C.). At that time the 10 northern tribes were carried captive into various parts of the Assyrian Empire, just as Hosea had predicted (cp. 9:3; 11:5). Based on this data, we can reliably place Hosea's ministry between 755 and 722 B.C.

THE MEANING OF HOSEA'S MESSAGE

Hosea claimed that his message was the "word of the LORD" (1:1). God's call came in the form of a command to marry an unfaithful woman, and so the prophet's family life became a model for God's relationship with Israel. Like his predecessor Amos, Hosea preached to the entire people of God, both Israel and Judah, but he stressed the coming judgment against the northern tribes (Israel).

Hosea wrote in a highly emotional tone, showing the Lord, as it were, agonizing over the consequences of judgment against His beloved Israel. This literary technique was intended to seal the message of God's everlasting love for His people in their hearts more powerfully.

At the exodus from Egypt, the Lord established a covenant with Israel. Hosea told the nation that they had broken not only the covenant but also the Lord's heart. God had loved them from the

beginning, still loved them, and would always love them. But the people had spurned His love like an adulterous woman rejecting her husband. In following after false gods they participated in various rites of drunken and sexual debaucheries. They resorted to violence and relied on foreign nations to solve their political problems.

Hosea preached a tough love. God had to judge Israel's destructive behavior. The Assyrians would destroy Israel and send her into captivity. That disaster would set into motion a process of refinement that would result in restoration. God's covenant love is not like Israel's—fickle and quickly evaporating. God's love endures forever. Someday those who are no longer God's people will once again be called "My people," and once again they will say of the Lord, "You are My God" (2:23).

The book of Hosea gives insight into the character of God. He is the sovereign Lord over history and has the absolute right to bring judgment against His people, but He exercises that right only after bearing with them with long-suffering mercy. Eventually sin requires drastic action, but the Lord still has plans to give His people a future.

The Lord requires that all people must worship Him alone, and they must treat each other justly. Hosea shows us what it means to "love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength" (Dt 6:5) as well as to "love your neighbor as yourself" (Lv 19:18). Hosea's message that God loves His people even when He has to discipline them is needed for any people who ignore their Creator and treat their fellow human beings as things that get in the way of personal pleasure.

Hosea Study Notes

1:2 The Lord ordered Hosea to marry "a promiscuous wife," but the exact nature of the command and how Hosea carried it out are not entirely clear. There are four common interpretations. (1) The marriage never took place; Hosea's experience should be interpreted either allegorically or as part of the vision itself.(2) Gomer was guilty only of religious infidelity; she was not literally a prostitute. (3) Gomer was a prostitute or at least sexually experienced at the time Hosea married her. (4) Gomer was pure at the time of the marriage and only later became unfaithful to her husband.

The first two views would not involve any immoral action on Hosea's part, but they are difficult to reconcile with a literal interpretation of the text. The third view would raise some problems for Hosea as a committed follower of God's ways. First, God had commanded that a priest should not marry a prostitute (Lv 21:1-15). Second, God had high expectations of purity for the marriage covenant (see Gn 24:16; Ac 15:19-20; Heb 13:4).

The fourth view is commonly held among evangelical scholars. It allows for a literal understanding of the marriage and the children while at the same time avoiding any moral difficulties. The most important support is provided by Hosea's description of the time when the Lord brought Israel out of Egypt as a season of bliss (2:14-15). Israel's initial purity at the exodus from Egypt required that Hosea's wife was also pure at the start of the marriage. In this view "a promiscuous wife" means a wife who would prove unfaithful to Hosea after she married him, because she had a predisposition to adultery.

2:2 By contemporary Western standards the rough language of verses 2-7 might seem abusive, casting the prophet, as the Lord's spokesman, in an unfavorable light. However, Hosea's marriage was a prophetic dramatization of the Lord's relationship with Israel, and the language of this section reflects that relationship, not the prophet's domestic situation. The Lord spoke with the voice of a husband whose wife has been consorting with other men. Whether Hosea ever said anything like this to his own wife and children is impossible to determine. That Hosea did not physically abuse Gomer seems clear from the fact that he later rescued her from the abuse of her "lovers" (3:1-2). Hosea's description concerned Israel's violation of her covenant with the Lord.

Adultery and prostitution were serious violations of God's law and were treated as such by the judicial system. The penalty for adultery was death for both the offending woman and the man (Lv 20:10). Therefore it would be an act of grace on Hosea's part to receive Gomer back as his wife (Hs 3:2-3), and in the same way the Lord would mercifully receive Israel because of His *hesed* (v. 19), His "love" or faithfulness to the covenant.

2:3 The sufferings that Israel would have to endure were punishment for sin, and the Lord's warning was intended to turn Israel back to Him. When the Lord said "I will strip her naked and expose her as she was on the day of her birth," He was referring to the Assyrians who would destroy the land and exile its inhabitants before not many years had passed. Israel would be "exposed" to all that the enemy would want to do to her with no protection from the Lord. She might think that her prosperity had come from other gods, but it was the Lord who had supplied her abundance (vv. 8-9).

2:4 The Lord not only directed Hosea to marry "a promiscuous wife," He also told him to acquire "children of promiscuity." Characterizing the children this way, in effect as bastards, seems unfair to them since they had no say in the circumstances of their birth. But verses 8-13 make it clear that the speaker here is the Lord, not the prophet speaking about his personal family situation. The language of the passage moves beyond the literal circumstances to a metaphorical application. Additionally, it is not clear whether all the children were Hosea's. The text indicates that Jezreel was Hosea's child (1:3), but the text is more ambiguous about the others. They were called "children of promiscuity" not because of anything they did but because of the character and behavior of their mother (vv. 4-5). The children of the unfaithful wife, Israel, were thereby children of Israel's false gods, not children of the Lord.

3:1 The usual interpretation of this passage is that Hosea was told to take Gomer back as his wife after her unfaithfulness; yet he was told in the beginning to take "a promiscuous wife" (1:2). Some interpreters believe this is not a second act on the prophet's part but another version of his initial marriage to a prostitute. The Hebrew text of Hosea contains many difficulties, which may reflect the unstable conditions leading to the demise of the northern kingdom of Israel. In this uncertain time, accurate transmission of Hosea's words (especially in an oral state, before they were committed to writing) may have been difficult. The later compilers of his book may have included both versions of the marriage in their care not to exclude any of the inspired text.

Assuming that Hosea took back the unfaithful Gomer, his action was consistent with that of other OT prophets who acted out their messages with dramatic signs (see Is 20:2-4; Ezk 24:16-19). In doing something unusual, they hoped to gain the people's attention. Normally such signs concerned future events, not the present condition of the nation. Hosea's "sign"—if it was that—

was not a dramatization of Israel's unfaithfulness but of the Lord's mercy. No sign of Israel's sin was needed; that was evident enough in the people's own behavior.

4:1-3 This passage is an example of the basic form of Israelite prophetic utterances, the "judgment-speech." Scholars sometimes refer to it as the "covenant lawsuit". The prophet indicted the people of Israel on the basis of the violation of the covenant; there was "no faithful love" (*hesed*, loyalty to the covenant) in the land. The indictment lists several of the Ten Commandments that the people had violated (v. 2; cp. Ex 20:13-16), and the consequences (v. 3) reflected the desolation of the land that were part of the curses in the Sinai covenant (Lv 26:34-35; Dt 28:23-24,38-42). Commentators who claim that the law of Moses took shape only during the postexilic period ignore evidence, such as that which Hosea provides here, that the provisions of the Torah were well known long before the Babylonian exile.

6:2 The expression "on the third day He will raise us up" is sometimes taken as evidence for a belief in the resurrection during the OT period and a prefiguring of Jesus' resurrection on the third day. Although several OT passages witness to a belief in the resurrection of the dead (Jb 19:26; Ps 17:15; Is 26:19; Ezk 37:11-13), this verse should not be included in the list. It was, apparently, not Hosea's own teaching but the shallow, complacent response of the people to his warning of judgment to come. This becomes clear from the Lord's evaluation of their words: "Your loyalty [*hesed*, faithfulness to the covenant] is like the morning mist and like the early dew that vanishes" (v. 4).

8:13 Hosea twice declared that Israel would return to Egypt (v. 13; 9:3) but also that Israel would not return to Egypt (11:5). Several solutions to this seeming contradiction have been suggested. Many see the return to Egypt as figurative for the place of captivity. Yet 9:3 implies that Israel would go both to Egypt and Assyria, while 11:11 says that in the future they will also return to the land from both localities. Also, 9:6 refers to a role for Egypt in the coming judgment. Possibly Egypt stood for the general fact of renewed enslavement (as before the exodus), but Assyria gave the actual place of exile. Another possibility is that 11:5 may have suffered a scribal error in transmission, in which the word "not" (*lo'*) replaced a similar-sounding word meaning "them" that should be attached to the previous verse. A third solution takes the word "not," which begins the sentence, as an independent clause, in the sense "No! He [Israel] will return . . ." The Lord was then drawing back from the compassionate actions of the past described in 11:1-4.

In any case, it is likely that some Israelites did flee to Egypt to escape the Assyrian oppressors, especially since there were frequent political contacts between Israel and Egypt. In relation to the large contingency of Israelites exiled to Assyria, however, the number that went to Egypt must have been small since Scripture does not mention them explicitly (see Dt 28:68).

Joel Articles

What Is the Relationship Between Science and the Bible?

by J. P. Moreland

Christians are committed to the reality of knowable truths from the Bible and science. Further, Christians seek to integrate claims from both sources into their worldview. How is this done? What is the relationship between the Bible and science?

Some claim that the history of Bible-science interaction is largely a war, with theology constantly losing. But for two reasons, this claim is false. First, the relationship between the Bible and science is much richer than what can be captured by a warfare metaphor (see below). Second, many times the teachings of the Bible and science confirm each other, and when there have been differences, it is not always the Bible that has been reexamined. Sometimes scientific claims have been reinterpreted. For example, shortly after Darwinism arose, creationists predicted that there would be gaps in the fossil record, with no clear transition forms, whereas evolutionists predicted that thousands of transitional forms would be discovered. Evolutionists were wrong.

In general, the warfare metaphor is not adequate. At least five different models have been offered to capture the integration of science and the Bible. None of these positions is exhaustive, and one can subscribe to any of the five on a case-by-case basis.

1. Distinct realms. Claims from the Bible and science may involve two distinct, nonoverlapping areas of investigation. For example, debates about angels or the extent of the atonement have little to do with organic chemistry. Similarly, it is of little interest to theology whether a methane molecule has three or four hydrogen atoms in it.

2. Complementary descriptions of the same realm. Claims from the Bible and science may involve two different, complementary, noninteracting approaches to the same reality. Sociological aspects of church growth and some psychological aspects of conversion may involve scientific descriptions of certain phenomena that are complementary to a theological description of church growth or conversion. Claims in chemistry that water comes from combining hydrogen and oxygen are complementary to theological claims that God providentially creates water.

In general, we may describe God's activity in terms of primary causes (when God acts in an unusual way and directly, miraculously produces an effect) or secondary causes (when God acts in ordinary ways by sustaining and using natural processes to accomplish a result). The complementarity approach is most effective when God acts by way of secondary causes.

3. Direct interaction. Claims from the Bible and science may directly interact such that either one area of study offers rational support for the other or one area of study raises rational difficulties for the other. For example, certain theological teachings about the existence of the soul raise rational problems for scientific claims that deny the existence of the soul. The general theory of evolution raises various difficulties for certain ways of understanding the book of Genesis. Some have argued that the second law of thermodynamics supports the theological proposition that the universe had a beginning. Special creationism—for example, young-earth and progressive creationism—are applications of this approach to the question of the origin and development of life.

4. Presuppositional interaction. Biblical teaching can be used to support the presuppositions of science. Some have argued that many of the presuppositions of science (e.g., the existence of truth; the rational, orderly nature of reality; the adequacy of our sensory and cognitive faculties as tools suited for knowing the external world) make sense and are easy to justify through Christian theism but are without justification in a worldview that does not include God.

5. Practical application. Biblical teaching can help one practically apply principles discovered in science and vice versa. For example, theology teaches that fathers should not provoke their children

to anger; psychology can add important details about what this means by offering information about family systems, the nature and causes of anger, etc. Psychology can devise various tests for assessing whether one is or is not a mature person, given a normative definition (a definition of what ought to be the case and not just a description of what actually is the case) from the Bible as to what a mature person ought to be like.

It is the direct interaction approach that opens up the possibility that scientific and biblical claims may provide mutual intellectual support or be in conflict with one another.

Three things should be kept in mind in approaching areas of apparent conflict.

First, the vast majority of biblical teachings and scientific claims have little to do with each other directly, and it is wrong to give the impression that most of the issues from these two sources support or conflict with each other. Areas of potential conflict are quite small compared to the vastness of ideas from the Bible and science.

Second, there are several areas where scientific discoveries have lent support to biblical assertions:

- evidence that the universe had a beginning
- evidence that the universe is fine-tuned and delicately designed so that life could appear
- evidence strongly suggesting that there is no naturalistic explanation for the origin of life and moreover that life is characterized by information that always comes from a mind
- evidence that living things are irreducibly complex such that all their parts need each other to function and thus could not have evolved gradually
- numerous archaeological confirmations of biblical claims
- psychological discoveries of the importance of a unified spiritual, moral free agent to explain human functioning and maturity

Third, we should face areas of conflict honestly but confidently in light of points one and two. Christians ought to make sure we have understood scriptural and scientific data correctly, and we should seek solutions that are both biblically and scientifically adequate. Given that Christianity provides a reasonable worldview for justifying science, that most areas of science and the Bible do not directly interact, and that many scientific discoveries have added confirmation to biblical teaching, there is no reason why Christians cannot be rational in admitting that there are currently areas of apparent conflict for which we do not have adequate solutions. No worldview is without some problems and unresolved questions. Still, contrary to popular opinion, the difficulties that scientific claims raise for biblical teaching are far from overwhelming, and they are fewer in number than one would expect by listening to propagandists from secular culture.

Introduction to Joel

AUTHOR

Joel was the son of Pethuel, about whom we know nothing. That the prophet lived in Jerusalem is probable because of his avid interest in the city, his repeated references to Zion, his call to the people to assemble for worship, and his interest in the temple rituals and sacrifices. His use of the popular formula, "The word of the LORD that came," demonstrates his devotion as God's prophet. Distinguishing himself from the priests, he respectfully urged them to lead the people in repentance. As many as 20 references to and quotations from other prophets attest to his position in the prophetic ministry.

Joel prophesied about the future day of the Lord in terms of a locust plague and the specific events that would accompany it. He spoke about God's judgment of all the nations but also promised a renewed blessing in the land of Judah.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF JOEL

Joel's book does not state when it was written, and the main historical event it mentions is the locust plague—hardly something that helps to date the book. Since the book does not mention a king, one suggestion is that Joel lived during the minority of Joash (835–789 B.C.), when Jehoiada the high priest was the regent. The position of the book among the early prophets in the Hebrew canon is considered evidence for an early date. An alternative hypothesis dates Joel around 500 B.C. In the period after the Babylonian exile, Judah had no king. Of the nations mentioned in chapter 3, all except Sheba show up in Zechariah 9 or 14. While the mention of Greeks and Sabeans does not rule out a pre-exilic date, the reference fits naturally with the postexilic period (Zch 9:13). Joel's description of what the nations did to the Judeans (3:2-3) sounds like an event that was past, and it most likely refers to the fall of Jerusalem in 587 B.C. Certainty is not possible, but a date between 500 and 400 B.C. seems most likely.

THE MEANING OF JOEL'S MESSAGE

The effects of the locust plague and drought were so severe in Judah that sacrifices could not be provided for the temple. Joel suggested that this could be a sign that God's covenant with Israel had been broken and that Judah could be destroyed. Therefore Joel called the people to repent. Perhaps in His mercy God would relent (2:13-14) and renew the covenant, restoring and blessing the nation.

The second part of Joel (2:28–3:21) turns to the future when the Lord will judge the nations and restore Judah and Jerusalem. By intertwining the concepts of judgment and repentance, Joel stressed that while that day will be utter blackness, God will hear those who call on Him. The response of the Lord to Judah's repentance during the locust plague therefore prefigured His response to all Israel in the last days. God will destroy the nations who have harmed Judah just as He destroyed the locusts, and He will restore the fortunes of His people just as He made up for the devastation of the locusts.

Joel tells us how God will make His Spirit abundantly available in the last days and be a refuge to all who call upon Him (2:28-32; cp. Ac 2:14-39). Prophecy is meant to challenge God's people to live righteously in the face of opposition and struggle. Prophets like Joel show us the cosmic dimensions of life. Joel also shows us that God is at work in all aspects of life; even disasters are a part of His plan. Joel underlines God's control of the physical aspects of life in an age that increasingly seeks only scientific explanations. Such explanations may be helpful, but they do not explain why, only how.

Joel also teaches the importance of repentance and regular communication with God. The greatest tragedy of the locust plague was not the loss of daily bread but the loss of fellowship with God. Jesus reiterated the words of Deuteronomy 8:3, "Man must not live on bread alone" (Mt 4:4).

Joel Study Notes

1:15 Joel had a terrifying view of what he called "the Day of the LORD." He used terms like "Woe!" and "great and awe-inspiring" (2:31) to describe it. The expression "Day of the LORD" is known from other prophets. Amos may have been the first to use it. He spoke of a time that the Israelites longed for without realizing its negative consequences for them. Apparently they thought it would be a time of "light" and "brightness," whereas actually it was to be "darkness" and "gloom" (see Am 5:18-24). Both Joel and Amos mention a time of restoration after a period of judgment (Jl 3; Am 9), so that some will be saved from God's wrath. Joel emphasized the salvation aspect with his proclamation that "everyone who calls on the name of Yahweh will be saved" (2:32).

For Joel the locust plague was so severe that he compared it to the coming Day of the Lord. Only complete repentance on the part of the people could give the nation any hope that the Lord might turn back from the judgment it represented. The plague could bring about a destruction that, for all practical purposes, would seem like the final judgment.

2:1 Pronouncements about the Day of the Lord often speak of its imminence—it will come soon, it is impending. Three times Joel declared that the day of the Lord was "near" (1:15; 2:1; 3:14), and most of the other prophets who referred to the Day of the Lord also spoke of it as "near" (Is 13:6; Ezk 30:3; Ob 15; Zph 1:7,14). Zephaniah added that the day was "rapidly approaching." Since well more than two millennia have passed since these prophets wrote, it may seem strange that they used such an expression for an event that is yet to occur.

Christian interpreters who have pondered this biblical phenomenon have arrived at different explanations for it. One consideration is that, because the prophets who spoke of the imminence of the Day were themselves widely separated in time (spanning a period of 350 years or more), they did not mean that it would have to arrive within a few years. Their unified witness to the coming of the Day speaks not of its timing but of its certainty, and the foreboding associated with it. The devastating judgment could come at any time; this urgency was what they sought to convey.

The tension between the imminence and delay of the Day of the Lord is a question taken up in the NT. Peter pointed out that God's timing may differ from human expectations, and that a delay in His timetable for judgment is due to His grace. He wants to afford every possible opportunity for people to repent before bringing the judgment (2 Pt 3:8-10).

2:18-27 The Lord responded to the people's repentance, spared the land, and promised a new era of prosperity. After speaking of the "great army" of destruction that the Lord had sent against Judah (v. 25), Joel turned to His promise of restoration (see 3:3). Many of the Minor Prophets stress that the Lord personally brings disaster for the purpose of punishment or judgment (e.g., Hs 5:14; Jl 2:25; Am 1:4; Mc 1:12; Nah 1:2; Zph 1:17; Hg 2:17; Zch 8:10). In the prophetic worldview, God is ultimately behind everything that takes place, orchestrating the course of history even when injustice is seemingly allowed to prevail.

As objectionable as such a view of history may appear to people with a modern Western worldview, the Bible clearly presents it. But lest that understanding of history be thought to attribute injustice to God, the Bible also recognizes more immediate causes for things that happen. Such immediate causes could be the natural operating conditions of global life (severe weather, earth tremors, the cycles of living creatures such as locusts) with which God would not interfere without disrupting the stability of His creation. Or they might be the cultural effects of human disregard of God's directives for conduct and worship (e.g., social disintegration and inequality, violence, crime, international conflict). For Joel, both of these immediate causes combined to present a foretaste of divine judgment, which only God's gracious purpose in the ultimate establishment of His kingdom can override.

Amos Articles

Does the Design Argument Show There Is a God?

by William A. Dembski

Suppose you take a tour of the Louvre, that great museum in Paris housing one of the finest art collections in the world. As you walk through the museum, you come across a painting by someone named Leonardo da Vinci—the *Mona Lisa*. Suppose this is your first exposure to da Vinci; you hadn't heard of him or seen the *Mona Lisa* before. What could you conclude? Certainly you could conclude that da Vinci was a consummate painter. Nevertheless, just from the *Mona Lisa* you couldn't conclude that da Vinci was also a consummate engineer, musician, scientist, and inventor, whose ideas were centuries ahead of their time.

The design argument is like this. It looks at certain features of the natural world and concludes that they exhibit evidence of a designing intelligence. But just as the *Mona Lisa* can tell us only so much about its creator (da Vinci), so the natural world can tell us only so much about its Creator (God). The design argument allows us reliably to conclude that a designing intelligence is behind the order and complexity of the natural world. But it cannot speak to the underlying nature of this designing intelligence (for instance, whether this intelligence is the transcendent, interpersonal, triune God of Christianity). Nor can it speak to the actions of that designing intelligence in human history. In particular, the design argument is silent about the revelation of Christ in Scripture. It follows that the design argument cannot "prove the Gospel" or "compel someone into the kingdom."

Christian theologians have long recognized that the design argument is a modest argument. Even so, it is a powerful argument. Perhaps the best-known design argument is William Paley's. According to Paley, if we find a watch in a field (and thus lack all knowledge of how it arose), the adaptation of the watch's parts to telling time ensures that it is the product of an intelligence. So too, according to Paley, the marvelous adaptations of means to ends in organisms (such as the human eye with its ability to confer sight) ensure that organisms are the product of an intelligence. The theory of intelligent design—or ID as it is commonly abbreviated—updates Paley's argument in light of contemporary information theory and molecular biology, bringing the design argument squarely within science.

The implications of ID for the Christian faith are profound and revolutionary. The rise of modern science led to a vigorous attack on orthodox Christian theology. The high point of this attack came with Darwin's theory of evolution. Orthodox Christian theology has always been committed to the proposition that God by wisdom created the world. A clear implication of this proposition is that the design of the world is real. The central claim of Darwin's theory is that an unguided material process (random variation and natural selection) could account for the emergence of all biological complexity and order. In other words, Darwin appeared to show that the design of the world was unreal—that science had dispensed with any need for design. By showing that design is indispensable to our scientific understanding of the natural world, ID is breathing new life into the design argument and at the same time overturning the widespread misconception that science has disproved the Christian faith.

Introduction to Amos

AUTHOR

The prophet Amos was from Tekoa, a town in the Judean hills southeast of Bethlehem (1:1). When God encountered him, he was a "herdsman" (cattle breeder) who "took care of sycamore figs" (7:14). God called him to go to the northern kingdom of Israel and speak a message. His activities of dealing in sheep and sycamore figs evidently led him to travel a lot, and it was not unusual that he traveled to Samaria and Bethel in the north. Amos wanted his readers to know that he did not seek the calling of a prophet, nor did he seek to gain financially from his calling. He simply received a message from the Lord and delivered it despite opposition from the king and the religious leaders (7:10-15).

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF AMOS

Amos prophesied in "the days of Uzziah, king of Judah, and Jeroboam son of Joash, king of Israel" (1:1). This would place his ministry between 767–753 B.C. But a historically verifiable earthquake happened two years after he began to preach, and so it is possible to place Amos's ministry more precisely between about 765–760 B.C.

Jeroboam II had a long reign and restored Israel's borders to Lebo-hamath in the north and to the Dead Sea in the south (2 Kg 14:25). The expansion was set against a background of bitter hostility between Israel and her northern neighbor, the Aramean (Syrian) kingdom of Damascus. The Arameans were kept busy with the ever-increasing incursions of the Assyrian Empire to the west, enabling Jeroboam II to succeed in his military efforts. Peace between Israel and Judah led to great prosperity and unhindered commerce along the major trade routes through the two countries.

THE MEANING OF AMOS'S MESSAGE

Amos told the northern kingdom of Israel that God was about to bring it to an end. He showed that Israel's outward displays of worship could not compensate for a lack of the compassion and humanity that the covenant with Moses demanded. Just because the Israelites had been chosen by God did not mean they could ignore the conditions of the covenant handed down to them by Moses.

Would God abandon His eternal covenant with His people? Amos responded with a decisive no! The Lord had always been full of compassion and mercy in His dealings with Israel, and past judgments were intended to bring the people back to their God. Although there would be no escape from complete destruction, Amos held out hope for a restoration of Israel in a new Davidic era. A righteous remnant would always exist to inherit the promises of the messianic kingdom.

Amos preached against injustice and oppression, anticipating themes that are in the NT (e.g., Lk 1:52-53; 4:16-21; 18:22; 19:8-9; Jms 5:1-6). He also anticipated the teaching of Jesus Christ when He condemned worship that considers only outward form and not acts of love and compassion in the life of the worshiper (see Mt 5:23; Jn 15).

The book of Amos provokes questions about the relationship between private morality and public morality. It reacts not merely against hardhearted individuals but also against corrupt social structures. Amos invites the reader to look for general principles that could be applied to any governmental system. For example, Amos showed that God is concerned that a government provide channels available for addressing issues of justice for all its citizens (2:6-8; 5:24; 8:4-6).

Amos revealed that the Lord is sovereign over the nations of the earth, expecting righteousness from all peoples, especially Israel and Judah. That perspective sees that the Lord created the earth

and all its inhabitants. Creation theology permeates the book and will have decided consequences for those who seek to understand their relationship to the world.

What the Lord expected of Israel is not so far removed from what He expects of His people today. We should glean from Amos issues that are universal in scope. The book of Amos has much to say to the church about requirements for justice among Christians as well as about a sense of compassion and generosity in one's dealings with society in general.

Amos Study Notes

3:1-8 This passage presents the general "principles" of OT prophecy. (1) The prophet was the Lord's spokesman, declaring what "the LORD has spoken" (v. 1). (2) The prophet took his stand on Yahweh's covenant with Israel—"I have known only you" (v. 2). The Lord's choice of Israel was confirmed in His deliverance of His people from slavery in Egypt. (3) As a result of the people's faithlessness, the Lord was about to inflict upon them the consequences of their disobedience (v. 2). (4) Whatever occurs in the arena of history is the Lord's doing (v. 6). (5) The prophet understood these things because the counsel of God had been revealed to him (v. 7), and he was, in effect, a divinely appointed prosecutor. (6) The prophet was under compulsion to speak once he had heard from the Lord.

5:18-24 Amos says that the "Day of the LORD," for which the people longed, would not be a day of gladness and "light" but of treacherous "darkness" and "gloom" (v. 20). The people's desire for the Day and the context, which refers to feasts and worship assemblies (vv. 21-22), suggest that the prophet was referring not only to the final day of judgment but also to a popular festival observance. Scholars have suggested that the "Day of the LORD," or "Yahweh's Day," may have been the annual festival of the new year, which, because it celebrated the kingship of the Lord, was associated with His role as Judge of the people. (Commentators who hold this view find extensive evidence for it in the psalms.)

If a particular worship festival was not in view, it is difficult to see why the prophet would move immediately from a terrifying description of the Day to an indictment of the community's hypocritical worship. Amos preached during the prosperous reign of Jeroboam II of Israel, but the national prosperity was limited to the wealthier families and came at the expense of the poor who were victims of injustice (5:10-13). It was this inequity that rendered the people's worship repulsive to the Lord, for it violated His covenant in which justice and fairness for all were supposed to prevail.

5:25 The Lord's rhetorical question about Israel's offering sacrifices in the wilderness expected the answer, "No, we did not." This answer would fit the context in which the Lord found the many sacrifices of the people offensive because of the injustice the nation had come to tolerate. But this appears to contradict passages that show that Israel did offer sacrifices during the wilderness wanderings (Ex 24:4-8; Nm 7). One suggestion is that Israel did not sustain her relationship with the Lord by *regularly* offering these sacrifices. But Scripture nowhere else indicates that the Israelites did not offer sacrifices in the wilderness, and the presence of the tabernacle suggests that they did so frequently. Another solution places the main emphasis of the passage with *to Me*, so that the Lord was saying, "It was not *to Me* that you offered sacrifices." The reference to false gods in the following verse (Sukkuth and Kaiwan, v. 26) would support this view.

Either Israel's worship in the wilderness had been insincere, or it had consisted of idolatrous practices. If the Lord expected the answer yes to His rhetorical question, the meaning of His statement would be, "Indeed you did offer sacrifices and grain offerings in the wilderness, but now you will take up your idols, since you have rejected Me, and I will send you into exile."

7:10-15 Amos, a native of Tekoa in Judah, was told to prophesy in the northern kingdom of Israel (v. 15) as well as in Judah. For this purpose he went to Bethel, one of the two sanctuaries set up by Jeroboam I as alternatives to Jerusalem when he led the northern tribes in revolt against Solomon's successor Rehoboam (1 Kg 12:26-30). Amaziah, the priest at Bethel, told him, "Go away, you seer!" (v. 12). A "seer" (Hb *hozeh)* was the earlier term for a prophet (see 1 Sm 9:9), a sort of technical functionary who could solve problems such as locating a lost herd of donkeys (1 Sm 9:3). To call a man who was the proclaimer of the Lord's word a mere "seer" was to insult him. Amos's words in reply, *lo' 'ani navi'*, are usually rendered "I was not a prophet," but they can also be translated as protest against Amaziah's insult: "No! I am a *prophet!*" Amos's following words, that he was not "the son of a prophet," can also be understood to mean that, though he was a prophet, he was not a member of a guild or community of prophets. That is, he was not a "professional prophet" but one the Lord had specially called from another line of work as an herdsman and caretaker of sycamore figs (vv. 14-15). Amaziah's response to Amos further showed his disdain for the Lord, in that he referred to the sanctuary at Bethel as "the king's sanctuary and a royal temple"—not a temple of Yahweh.

7:17 After Amaziah, the priest of Bethel acted to curtail Amos's mission in Israel, Amos prophesied not only that Amaziah would die in exile but also that his sons and daughters would be killed and that his wife would become a "prostitute in the city." Why would God punish the priest's innocent wife and children when Amaziah was the guilty one? The prophets viewed the Assyrian advance into the region as the instrument of the Lord's judgment upon Israel's disobedience. That disobedience was evident not only in the social inequalities that had developed between rich and poor, but also in the false religion that the nation tolerated. The temple at Bethel, like that of Dan, had been established as a rival to the Solomonic temple in Jerusalem in the kingdom of Judah (1 Kg 12:26-30). Amos, a Judean, viewed these sanctuaries as sites of false worship, together with other local sanctuaries where sacrifices were conducted. To conduct worship at these locations was an act of rebellion against the Lord (4:4-5). As priest of Bethel, Amaziah epitomized this condemned religious system, and because Bethel was "the king's sanctuary" (v.

13), he represented the entire nation of Israel. The invasion of the Assyrians would be marked by great cruelty; all Israel's inhabitants would suffer, including Amaziah's children and his wife. When the Assyrians carried Amaziah into exile, along with other Israelite leaders, his wife would have no source of support and might well be forced into prostitution for a livelihood. Regardless of their personal guilt or innocence, the members of Amaziah's family would face the dire consequences of the judgment to come.

9:7-12 The Lord's choice of the nation was evident in His delivering them from Egyptian slavery in the exodus. But the Israelites had become complacent about their standing with the Lord (v. 10); they had forgotten that His calling laid upon them a special obligation of obedience (see 3:2). In response, Amos reminded them that the Lord had a plan for all the world's peoples, including the Cushites (Ethiopians), the Philistines, and the Arameans (Syrians). Because of Israel's sin, the "house of Israel" (especially the northern kingdom) would be shaken and the disobedient would meet with the Lord's judgment. But Amos looked ahead to the day when the Davidic dynasty, which had lost control of the northern tribal areas ("the fallen booth of David," v. 11) would be restored and would, in fact, receive "all the nations that are called by My name" (v. 12). According to James, leader of the early church in Jerusalem, this prophecy was fulfilled when the Gentiles began to turn to Jesus Christ (Ac 15:13-18), the "descendant of David" (Rm 1:3).

Introduction to Obadiah

AUTHOR

Obadiah is the shortest book of the Minor Prophets. No other source mentions Obadiah, although the name is a common one in the OT. Meaning "servant of Yahweh," it reflects his parents' faith and spiritual ambitions for their child. The title, "The vision of Obadiah," turns attention to the divine author, "vision" being a technical term for a prophetic revelation received from God.

Obadiah had angry, bitter words for Edom, a nation that no longer exists in our day. Why would God inspire a prophet to write even a short book with its main theme about such an obscure nation? Obadiah was outraged about a time when the Edomites should have come to Judah's aid as allies in an alien attack but instead took advantage of the situation.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF OBADIAH

At first glance it would seem that Obadiah has his chronology mixed up. He warned the Edomites not to carry out their (future) treachery against Judah (vv. 10-14), yet right after that warning, he pronounced judgment for what Edom (and other nations) had already done to Jerusalem. Why warn Edom not to do something and then announce that they had already done it? Possibly Obadiah penned the warning before the attack took place and then wrote the announcement of judgment later. However, it is more likely that he stated the warnings in this way for rhetorical effect. Obadiah portrayed Edom's past transgressions against Jerusalem far more vividly by placing himself at the scene and demanding, as it were, that the Edomites cease their wicked behavior. Indeed, this was a common literary technique employed elsewhere in the prophetic material (see Is 14:29; Lm 4:21; Hs 9:1; Am 3:9; Mc 7:8; Nah 2:1).

When did Edom betray the people of Jerusalem (vv. 13-14)? There are two possibilities.

A first possibility is that in the mid-ninth century B.C., Edom revolted from Judah (2 Kg 8:20-21; 2 Ch 21:8-10). Later the Philistines and Arabs invaded Judah and "carried off all the possessions found in the king's palace and also his sons and wives; not a son was left to [Jehoram] except Jehoahaz, his youngest son" (2 Ch 21:17). However, despite this raid, Jehoahaz (Ahaziah) became king after his father died, and Judah remained independent. The text of the books of Chronicles is silent about any Edomite role in this raid.

A second possibility is the invasion of the Babylonians under Nebuchadnezzar in 587 B.C. In this catastrophic event, the Babylonians captured Jerusalem and burned the temple. This would therefore seem to be the most likely context for the book of Obadiah. The Edomites should have been allies of Judah (Jr 27:1-11), but they sided with the Babylonians (Ps 137:7; Ezk 25:12; 35:15).

The book of Obadiah has some close similarities with Jeremiah 49:7-16. Some think these similarities show that Jeremiah must have been familiar with Obadiah's book. If so, then Obadiah was written before 587 B.C. Historically that seems improbable because there is no sense either in Obadiah or elsewhere in the OT that the people of Jerusalem knew in advance that the Edomites would betray them. It is difficult to compare two related passages of unknown date and decide which one was written first. Given that some prophets in Israel (e.g., Elijah and Elisha) did not record their sermons in book form, it is possible that Obadiah and Jeremiah could have both relied on earlier traditional language, reshaping their own unique prophecies under the inspiration of the Spirit of God.

Obadiah's description is so vivid that he likely wrote his book not long after the fall of Jerusalem. He also predicted the fall of Edom as a future event, so he must have written before the late sixth century B.C., when Edom was destroyed. Taking all the evidence into account, a likely date for Obadiah to have written the book would be between 585 and 550 B.C.

THE MEANING AND SIGNIFICANCE OF OBADIAH'S MESSAGE

Edom represents all those who oppose the purposes of the Lord (cp. Jdg 5:4; Is 63:1-6). The perspective shifts at Obadiah 15-21 from Edom alone to Edom and all the nations. Edom's treachery and overconfidence made it a perfect example for Obadiah. Whatever Obadiah said about Edom applies equally well to any nation that sets itself against the Lord and His people. The Lord's sovereignty over the nations is evident throughout the book. He summoned them to assemble against Edom (v. 1), He challenged Edom's haughty attitude (vv. 2-4), He threatened to cut off all hope of rescue (vv. 8-9), and He promised a day when He would set all things right, restoring Israel and Judah to their former territories (vv. 15-21).

Obadiah, along with many other prophets, foresaw that the messianic kingdom would be established on the earth, with Mount Zion at the center. The people of Israel, whether of the southern or northern tribes, would return to the land and join together to win back their territory with the Lord's aid. Then they would rule over the rest of the nations.

In Obadiah's contrasting of the destiny of the people of God and that of the enemies of God, he reminds us of the severity of the sins of arrogance, pride, and betrayal. God will always judge the proud, arrogant ones, and those who betray another will themselves be betrayed.

Obadiah pointedly proclaimed that good will triumph at the end of the day, but it is God's goodness that triumphs, not mankind's. Throughout the book of Obadiah, God is the central figure. God defines the rules, chooses His own people, and dispenses judgment. He is in control of history. Surely the one who rules the nations also is able to care for His people.

Obadiah Study Notes

10-14 God used pagan nations, Assyria and Babylon, to discipline His people Israel (722 B.C.) and Judah (586 B.C.). As Babylon made its third and most devastating invasion of Judah, their neighbors, the Edomites, helped the Babylonians capture the king of Judah. The Babylonians rewarded Edom by inviting them to join in the plunder of Jerusalem. This was especially painful to the residents of Judah since the Edomites were heirs of Abraham and Isaac through Esau. The Lord was not pleased with the Edomites' attitudes or actions, and raised up Obadiah to prophesy against them. Obadiah charged Edom with one of the oldest crimes on earth—fratricide, or brother turning against brother (Gn 4:1-15). Both human decency and the Mosaic law called for the Edomites to help their kinsmen instead of gloating over them and adding to their pain.

Introduction to Jonah

AUTHOR

Jonah ben Amittai was a prophet of Israel from Gath Hepher, a village near Nazareth. He prophesied during the time of Jeroboam II (793–753 B.C.). God had earlier given Jonah the privilege of delivering the good news that Israel would experience a time of safety and prosperity (2 Kg 14:25). According to the book of Jonah God also used him against his will to deliver a warning to the pagans in Nineveh.

Jonah is the only prophetic book that consists entirely of an account of what happened to the prophet. Indeed, the prophetic message is primarily told through both the story and the dialogue between God and Jonah.

IS THE STORY OF JONAH FACT OR FICTION?

Is the book of Jonah historical narrative or fictional narrative? Biography or autobiography in the Prophets can either give historical information or illustrate the message. For example, Hosea's marriage to Gomer typified God's relationship with Israel. The events of the book of Jonah illustrate, or in this case even comprise, the message of the book. That the book of Jonah teaches a lesson through what happened does not rule out its historicity any more than the lesson of Hosea's marriage rules out the historicity of Hosea's book. However, the style in Jonah is somewhat different from other Minor Prophets.

Various suggestions of a non-historical genre have been made for Jonah: a parable; an allegory; a midrash (a preaching commentary on a portion of Scripture); a short story; a satire. The supernatural elements are the main reason that some object to viewing Jonah as historical. Also there are elements of the account that seem unusual or humorous, such as the king's decree that the animals should participate in the repentance (3:7-8) or Jonah's odd behavior as a prophet of God.

While they are certainly intriguing, none of these reasons automatically rules out the historicity of this book. Moreover, two things tip the balance in favor of Jonah as history. First, the form of the book does not fit easily into any of the suggested fictional categories; everything about its form suggests a historical work. Second, the use Jesus made of the account of Jonah implies that He considered the book historical (Mt 12:39-41; 16:4; Lk 11:29-30,32).

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF JONAH

The reign of Jeroboam II allows us to date Jonah somewhere between 793–753 B.C., although his mission could have occurred after Jeroboam died. The Assyrians, not unexpectedly, left no known record about the repentance of the Ninevites. Assyria was in a weakened condition in the first half of the eighth century, and though Nineveh did not become the official capital until Sennacherib (705–682 B.C.); there is evidence that it served at least as a part-time royal residence during the era of Jeroboam II.

It is significant for the meaning of the story to know that the Assyrians were feared throughout the ancient Near East and threatened the very existence of Israel shortly after the time of Jonah. In their inscriptions the Assyrians boast of their conquests and of their cruel treatment of prisoners of war.

THE MEANING OF THE BOOK OF JONAH

To some extent it is possible to interpret Jonah in more than one way because the meaning derives from narrative rather than from explicit statements. Nevertheless, there are some clues in the story that should help. Here are two.

The first clue involves the intended audience of the book. It would have to have been written to Israel or Judah, not Assyria. So how would an Israelite have reacted to this book? Other prophets complained that Israel failed to respond to their messages, but the Ninevites responded immediately to Jonah's simple statement, "In 40 days Nineveh will be overthrown!" (3:4). Jonah's story would have been a rebuke to the Israelites and an exhortation for them to likewise repent.

A second clue is found in the reason that Jonah gave God for why he fled. He knew that God was merciful and would forgive the Ninevites, not destroy them. Jonah represented Israel's provincial attitude that the Lord was unconcerned about those outside Israel. The book of Jonah tried to bring a corrective to that.

If we reflect on how we might be like Jonah, some of our incorrect attitudes may come to the surface. Are we concerned only about ourselves in our faith? Is ministry important only if it has some relationship to us personally? To our racial or ethnic group? Are there groups that we would rather hate than love? Have we opened our lives completely to God's grace, compassion, and love if we are unwilling to love those who have offended us deeply?

Jesus' parable of the unforgiving servant (Mt 18:23-35) makes a nice parallel to the message of Jonah. Indeed, a theme that runs from Deuteronomy (6:4-5), through all the Prophets, and on into the NT is that God wants His people to love Him wholly and to love their neighbor as themselves (see Mc 6:8; Lk 10:25-37; Jms 2:8; 1 Jn 4:7-21). The book of Jonah conveys this message in a unique way.

Jonah Study Notes

1:3 It may seem unusual that a prophet of God, called to be His spokesman, would ever presume to run away from the Lord. The story of Jonah shows that the prophet had a good deal to learn about the extent of the Lord's mercy; his narrow view of that mercy may be a clue to why he thought he could escape God. Perhaps he did not expect His presence to be easily encountered outside the land of Israel. God "made the sea and the dry land" (v. 9), but would He really dwell among people who were outside His covenant with Israel?

1:17 Was Jonah swallowed by a fish or a whale? Traditionally *dag gadol* has been translated "a whale" (e.g., Mt 12:40 KJV). Ancient taxonomy of the animal kingdom did not follow the modern Linnaean system, so perhaps any swimming sea creature might be considered a "fish." The author of Jnh was not concerned with phylogenic distinctions but with the Lord's involvement in Jonah's life. When Jesus speaks of the "great fish" (Mt 12:40), the text uses the same word found in the Greek OT at Jnh 1:17. If Jesus was speaking Aramaic, or possibly Hebrew, when He made His pronouncement, Matthew—or the source he was using—simply chose the Greek word already available to render Jesus' words into Greek. Whether it was a fish or a whale in which Jonah was kept alive is less important than the fact that God provided a miraculous means to redirect the wayward prophet to his original task, preaching repentance to Nineveh. God's plans will not be thwarted by the schemes disobedient people devise to get around them.

3:10 Jonah announced that "in 40 days Nineveh will be overthrown" (v. 4), but God did not overthrow Nineveh in 40 days. He "relented" in response to the repentance of the Ninevites. Since Jonah prophesied something that failed to occur, did this make him a false prophet (see Dt 18:21-22)?

Some have suggested the solution lies in the ambiguous nature of the Hebrew word translated "overthrown." While the verb could have that meaning, it can also have the sense of "turn around" or "be changed" (see Ezk 4:8; Hs 11:8). Nineveh would be either destroyed or changed, and when the people repented it indeed was changed. An objection to this view is that the Ninevites understood the message as a threat of destruction. Further, according to verse 10, "God relented from the disaster He had threatened to do to them."

A better solution considers the nature of a prophecy of judgment. If God was concerned enough about Nineveh—capital city of the feared Assyrian Empire—to send Jonah to preach repentance, such a message must be understood as a warning. Jonah's prophecy to the Ninevites was therefore conditional, not absolute. If the people repented, the Lord might not bring the judgment. Jonah recognized this even before he gave the message; he fled from the Lord initially because he knew that God might relent (4:2).

Micah Articles

What Does the Hebrew Bible Say About the Coming Messiah?

by Michael Rydelnik

How can someone be convinced that Jesus truly is who He claimed to be—the Messiah of Israel and the world? One of the ways Jesus Himself proved this was by citing the Hebrew Bible's prophecies of the Messiah and how He fulfilled them. For example, Jesus said, "These are My words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about Me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms must be fulfilled" (Lk 24:44).

So, to what prophecies was He referring? Probably not merely to individual messianic texts but to the whole Hebrew Bible. Even so, Jesus fulfilled numerous specific predictions about the coming of the Messiah. In fact, the entire life of the Messiah can be found in the Hebrew Scriptures, demonstrating that Jesus is actually the Promised One.

Messiah's Birth

The Hebrew Bible contains several predictions of the Messiah's birth. Micah foretold that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem when he wrote, "Bethlehem Ephrathah, you are small among the clans of Judah; One will come from you to be ruler over Israel for Me" (Mc 5:2).

Also, Genesis 49:10 predicted that the Messiah would come by the first century A.D. It says, "The scepter will not depart from Judah, or the staff from between his feet, until He whose right it is comes and the obedience of the peoples belongs to Him." Besides plainly stating that the messianic King would come from the line of Judah, additionally it says that He would come before the "scepter" and "staff" depart from Judah. The word "scepter" in Hebrew, as used here, refers to tribal identity. The word "staff" means a judge's staff and refers to judicial authority. The prediction is that the Messiah would come before Judah would lose its tribal identity (lost in A.D. 70 with the destruction of the temple) and judicial authority (lost in A.D. 6 or 7 when the Romans replaced Herod Archelaus with a Roman governor). Based on these two elements, the Messiah needed to come by the first century.

Additionally, Isaiah predicted that the Messiah would be born of a virgin. King Ahaz and Judah were under a threat from two northern kingdoms that wanted to remove the Davidic king and thereby jeopardize the messianic promise. Isaiah gave two predictions, one of which was a long-term prophecy assuring the people of the enduring nature of the Davidic house until the coming of the Messiah (Is 7:13-15). Isaiah wrote, "The Lord Himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive, have a son, and name him Immanuel." The sign of hope would be the Messiah's supernatural birth by a virgin in the distant future.

Taking this all together, the Hebrew Bible predicted that the Messiah would be born of a virgin in Bethlehem by the first century.

Messiah's Nature

Although some have thought that Messiah would just be a glorious king, the Scriptures foretold that He would have a unique nature. For example, the same prophecy that predicted that the Messiah would come from Bethlehem (Mc 5:2) also said that His origin would be "from antiquity, from eternity," indicating His eternal nature.

Isaiah also foresaw that the Messiah would have a divine nature. In a birth announcement, Isaiah gave the royal names of the future messianic king: "Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace" (Is 9:6). These glorious titles of deity indicate that the Messiah would be God Himself.

Messiah's Life

Isaiah foretold the characteristics of the Messiah's life. In the messianic age, "the eyes of the blind will be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped. Then the lame will leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute will sing for joy" (Is 35:5-6). So when the Messiah would make His appearance, He was to be a miracle worker. Isaiah also predicted that the Messiah's teaching would "bring good news to the poor . . .
[and] heal the brokenhearted" (Is 61:1). Despite these many signs, Isaiah foretold that the Messiah would also be "despised and rejected by men" and that His own people would confess that "we didn't value Him" (Is 53:3).

Messiah's Death

Daniel 9:26-27 predicted the time of the Messiah's death. He would be "cut off" before A.D. 70, when the Romans would "destroy the city [Jerusalem] and the sanctuary [the temple]."

King David foretold that the Messiah would die by crucifixion, saying, "They pierced my hands and my feet" (Ps 22:16). So David predicted the Messiah's crucifixion more than 300 years before that manner of execution was known.

More significant than the time or manner of His death, Isaiah predicted that the Messiah's death would be as a substitution for humanity's sin. The Servant of the Lord would be "pierced because of our transgressions, crushed because of our iniquities" (Is 53:5). The Lord would punish Him "for the iniquity of us all" (Is 53:6). The Servant would have "submitted Himself to death," and as a result, "He bore the sin of many" (Is 53:12).

Messiah's Resurrection

The prophets not only foretold the Messiah's death, they anticipated His resurrection as well. In Isaiah 52:13–53:12, after describing the Messiah's substitutionary death, Isaiah promised that the Lord would "prolong His days" (Is 53:10). David also expressed his own confidence that God would "not abandon [him] to Sheol" because the Messiah, God's "Faithful One," would not "see the Pit" (Ps 16:10).

Messiah's Return

The Hebrew Scriptures present the Messiah in two ways: as a Suffering Servant and as a victorious and righteous King. Although this has confused many, the difficulty is resolved by recognizing that the prophets anticipated two appearances of the Messiah. First, He would come as an atoning sacrifice for sin. Second, He would come to establish His righteous kingdom.

One of the passages that links the two comings is Zechariah 12:10. It speaks of the Messiah coming to deliver Israel at the last battle and then "they will look at Me whom they pierced." These verses depict the Messiah's second coming as the victorious king but also recognize His first appearance as the Pierced One.

Mathematician Peter W. Stoner calculated the probability of one person fulfilling not all the messianic predictions of the Bible, or even the ones mentioned in this article, but just eight messianic predictions. He found that the probability would be 1 in 10^{17} or 1 in 100,000,000,000,000,000. The likelihood of this occurring is comparable to covering Texas with 10^{17} silver dollars, marking only one of them, stirring the mass of dollars, and then having a blindfolded man randomly pick up the

marked silver dollar. This is the likelihood of Jesus of Nazareth randomly fulfilling only eight of the Messianic predictions of the Hebrew Bible.

Introduction to Micah

AUTHOR

Micah was an eighth century B.C. prophet who came from Moresheth-gath (1:14). This village was located about 25 miles southwest of Jerusalem in the tribe of Judah. Micah, however, may have lived in Jerusalem during his ministry. He worked in the reigns of Jotham (750–732 B.C.), Ahaz (735–715 B.C.), and Hezekiah (715–686 B.C.) who were kings of Judah. The identification of these kings does not mean that he was active from 750–686 but that his ministry spanned parts of each reign. Since he predicted the fall of Samaria (722 B.C.), the bulk of his ministry probably took place between about 750 and 725 B.C. Jeremiah 26:17-18 refers to Micah as prophesying during the time of Hezekiah. Determining exact dates, however, for each of the prophecies contained in the book is difficult. Micah was a contemporary of Isaiah, Hosea, and possibly Amos. His prophecies addressed Samaria and Jerusalem. Samaria was the capital of the northern kingdom (Israel) and Jerusalem of the southern kingdom (Judah). Even though Micah ministered in Judah, some of his messages were directed toward Israel.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF MICAH

Early in Micah's time the kingdom of Judah under Jotham was strong, but there were signs of a need for religious reforms, a need that became more evident during the reign of Jotham's son Ahaz. Conditions in Judah deteriorated considerably during Ahaz's reign, both religiously and politically.

It is surprising that a wicked king like Ahaz would have a son, Hezekiah, who would turn the nation back to serving the Lord. Perhaps Micah and Isaiah had some influence on the young prince even before he became sole ruler when his father died. Hezekiah, unlike his predecessors, tore down the high places and other symbols of idolatry (2 Kg 18:4). Unfortunately, the religious reformation did not reach deeply into the hearts of the people, and Hezekiah's own son, Manasseh, quickly reversed all the good his father had done.

THE MEANING OF MICAH'S MESSAGE

Micah's book has two cycles that describe God's judgment of sin followed by a future restoration. The first cycle focuses more specifically on Samaria (Israel) and Judah, while the second cycle addresses the people of the Lord more generally. The first cycle is notable for its prediction of the birthplace of the Messiah (5:2), while the great statement about mankind's responsibility before God occurs in the second cycle (6:8).

Micah had a strong sense of the need for justice in society, whether through the proper administration of justice in the courts (3:11; 7:3), through fairness in the marketplace (6:10-11), or through dealing with authority and power in a responsible manner (2:1-2,8-9; 3:1-3,9-10; 6:12; 7:2-6). A person's relationship with God is primary and determines all others (6:8). Since justice and mercy are the Lord's requirements, "to walk humbly with" Him must entail fair dealings with others. And what is fair should be measured only against the standard that God has already showed mankind to be "good." The issue of social justice brings Micah alive as a prophet who has much to say to all generations.

Another key theme in Micah is the proper worship of the Lord. Like Amos, Micah deplored a religious system that had much ritual but little repentance. He admonished people to commit themselves totally to the Lord. This meant "to walk humbly with" God, to forgo the worship of other

gods (1:6-7; 5:13), and to forgo anything that might become a source of confidence for the believer other than the Lord (5:10-12).

Even though Micah spent a lot of time preaching about judgment to come (also a topic of present-day relevance), he was above all a prophet of hope for the future. God would bring a ruler who would allow the people to live in peace (5:1-5). Micah gave many details about the coming kingdom of God and its blessings for the entire world. In the final chapter of his book, Micah expressed trust that the Lord will accomplish His purposes in the world even when society is filled with corruption and violence. Matthew saw in Micah's hope for a new ruler a description of Christ (Mt 2:6).

Micah Study Notes

4:1-5 This passage virtually duplicates Is 2:1-5. Either one prophet borrowed from the other—not an unusual practice, if they were associated in their ministries—or the Lord gave the same message separately to each. The passages are not exactly the same. The major difference is that, whereas Isaiah ended the section with "House of Jacob, come and let us walk in the LORD's light" (Is 2:5), Micah inserted additional material before ending similarly with "we will walk in the name of Yahweh our God forever and ever" (Mc 4:5). Isaiah referred to his having disciples (Is 8:16), and perhaps Micah was one of them, amplifying his teacher's prophecy to encourage devotion to Israel's "walk," or its life in covenant with the Lord. The presence of duplicate, or near-duplicate, passages in Scripture only strengthens its impact as the word of God; when He speaks, it does not really matter who hears from Him and passes on His message to others.

5:2 Ephrathah was a clan that was part of the tribe of Judah (Ru 1:2; 4:11; 1 Sm 17:12); it may have received its name from Caleb's second wife (1 Ch 2:19). Bethlehem was the main town in Ephrathah's small territory, and the two became associated in order to distinguish the place from another Bethlehem in the north. Bethlehem was David's hometown (1 Sm 16:4-13), and therefore Micah spoke of a coming ruler who would be in David's line. This ruler's "origin is from antiquity, from eternity." Thus, it is likely that this prophecy does refer to the Messiah's origins or descent from David and to His birthplace in Bethlehem. The name Bethlehem means "house of bread," a fitting name for the birthplace of Him who said, "I am the bread of life" (Jn 6:48).

5:3 The woman who gives birth most probably refers to the mother of the Messiah. Micah called Israel without a king "like" a woman "in labor" (4:9), but here he distinguished between Israel and the woman and had just referred to the birth of the Messiah.

5:4-6 These verses await fulfillment at the second coming of Christ. The mention of Assyria seems at first glance to shift the focus back to Micah's own day. The Lord did save Jerusalem from the Assyrian Sennacherib, but the end of verse 6 says that the Messiah ("He") will deliver the nation from Assyria. Micah mentioned "the land of Nimrod" in addition to Assyria, a designation that meant he had something broader than just Assyria in mind. In Genesis, Nimrod was viewed as the founder of both Babylonia and Assyria (Gn 10:8-12). Micah viewed Assyria, the major world power of his day, as symbolic of all the kingdoms of the world (see Zch 10:11). Even so, the Messiah will deliver Israel in the last days from all the powers that come against it.

Introduction to Nahum

AUTHOR

Nahum was a Hebrew prophet about whom very little is known. He is called an Elkoshite (1:1), but the location of Elkosh is unknown. The date of the prophet's ministry can be placed between 700–600 B.C. by two events mentioned in his book. Nahum 3:8 refers to the destruction of the Egyptian capital, No-amon or Thebes, in 663 B.C. and indicates that the prophet was active after this time. In chapter 2 he looked forward to the destruction of Nineveh which took place in 612 B.C. Nahum, therefore, prophesied after 650 B.C., probably close to the time of the fall of Nineveh.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF NAHUM

The Assyrians practiced cruel violence against other nations, all in the interest of financial gain and power. They brought about the destruction of Samaria, the capital of Israel, and they invaded Judah in the days of Hezekiah. They practiced a form of empire building through demanding yearly payments of tribute, followed by invasion if the tribute was not paid. The Assyrian king would then set up a puppet king over the rebellious nation. If rebellion continued, the nation would be incorporated directly into the empire. Scholars refer to this period as the neo-Assyrian period, and the empire extended to Babylonia in the south, to Syria-Palestine in the northwest, to Egypt in the southwest, and to the area of Turkey in the north.

THE MEANING OF NAHUM'S MESSAGE

Nahum summarized the message of his book in his opening statement about the awesome power of God in wrath and judgment. God is good, but His goodness includes both His love for those who place their trust in Him and His justice for those who set themselves against Him. Nineveh, as the capital of the cruel and violent Assyrian Empire, was ripe for judgment. Justice demanded that the Lord right the situation. That is what Nahum meant when he declared that the Lord "takes vengeance and is fierce in wrath" (1:2).

How difficult it is to watch what is happening in the world today! Terrorists seem to strike all over the globe; dictators oppress their people through murder and brute force; wars break out all the time and never seem to fully solve anything. Nahum assures us that none who do evil can expect to escape divine justice. The desire for justice is inborn to the human psyche, so it is encouraging to know that in the end evil will be defeated. Nahum also warns us to be sure that we are among those who seek refuge in God and not among those who fight against Him. Divine judgment is a sword that cannot be deflected by hypocrisy.

Nahum Study Notes

1:2-6 Even Christians who are firmly convinced of the authority and inspiration of the Scriptures tend to minimize, or explain away, descriptions of the wrath and vengeance of God such as Nahum presented here. While it may not be appropriate to use such passages when first approaching people with a view to persuading them of the truth of the Bible, eventually there comes a time when we cannot avoid the question of how God's wrath and vengeance are related to His love. Pursuing these connections requires thought, courage, and a willingness to come to know God as He is and not as we might wish Him to be. Conversion to the faith of Christ is not simply a matter of "asking Jesus to come into your heart." It involves a *metanoia* (the NT word for repentance), which means, literally, a "change of mind." In other words, becoming a believer involves adopting a new worldview, or perspective on reality. The modern Western world view has blurred distinctions between right and wrong, and within such a perspective there is no place for the wrath and judgment of God. But when one's perspective changes, and it becomes evident that God is a moral force to be reckoned with, then it becomes equally apparent that serious consequences ensue for those who attempt to live without regard for His plan for human life (see Rm 1:16-32).

Introduction to Habakkuk

AUTHOR

Habakkuk was a prophet of the late seventh century B.C., contemporary to Jeremiah. One explanation has his name based on a root meaning "to embrace." The Greek OT spelling "Hambakoum" suggests a root meaning "plant" or "vegetable." Other than his work as a prophet, nothing for certain of a personal nature is known about Habakkuk. Tradition makes him a priest of the tribe of Levi. The apocryphal work, Bel and the Dragon, tells a story about Habakkuk being taken to Babylon by an angel to feed Daniel while he was in the lions' den. Habakkuk must have prophesied shortly before the Babylonians brought Judah under their control. The Babylonians were already notable as a force that other nations feared (1:7), but they had not yet made Judah a vassal of their empire. Since the first foray of Nebuchadnezzar into Judah took place in 605 B.C. (Dn 1:1-2), Habakkuk must have prophesied before then. He made no reference to the Assyrians, so it is likely that he preached after the fall of Nineveh in 612 B.C.

Habakkuk was concerned about divine justice but faced a dilemma. God was prepared to judge the violence in the southern kingdom of Judah through the Babylonians, but what about the Babylonians? Weren't they even more violent and wicked than the Judeans? Habakkuk was not afraid to question the purposes of God and to "watch to see" how God would respond (2:1).

Habakkuk's book contains an "oracle" (1:1) and a "prayer" (3:1). In the oracle Habakkuk pronounced judgment against both the wicked in Judah and the Babylonians. The prayer is called *Shigionoth*, a reference to a tune for singing or to the style in which it was composed (see Ps 7). Other musical terms in Habakkuk's prayer include *Selah* (3:3,9,13) and a comment about "stringed instruments" (3:19). The prayer also has a dedication to "the choir director" (3:19). Clearly the third chapter was meant for liturgical worship with instrumental music.

THE MEANING OF HABAKKUK'S MESSAGE

Habakkuk 2:4 summarizes the prophet's message from the Lord: "Look, his ego is inflated; he is without integrity. But the righteous one will live by his faith." In other words, those who trust in themselves and have no concern for others will perish in divine judgment, but those who trust in the Lord and obey His laws will live. While this verse does not explicitly mention judgment, the rest of the chapter develops the consequences of the sin of pride (2:6-20). Also, the chapter lays out what it means to be righteous. The righteous person is not a drunkard, is not deeply in debt, is not given to violence, is not a robber, is not sexually immoral, and is not an idolater. Instead, the righteous person trusts completely in the Lord, pleading for mercy and waiting patiently for Him to bring about salvation in the day of judgment.

The prayer of chapter 3 describes the awesome character of God as Judge in powerful and moving imagery. The closing lines where Habakkuk speaks of his resolve to wait patiently for the Lord despite all the signs of disaster around him are a classic expression of faith and are much quoted.

Habakkuk Study Notes

2:2-5 The Lord commanded Habakkuk to write the vision He was giving him clearly—literally, "so that he may run who reads it." This could be taken in two ways: either the tablets were to be written in letters large enough that a person running by would not have to stop to read them, or that the message was so clear that a messenger could run with it. This message was for all God's people distressed by arrogant oppressors, whether aggressive foreign nations ("the Chaldeans," 1:6) or treacherous and greedy members of Habakkuk's own community (1:13). Its essence was "Trust, and you will be able to live!" This was the ultimate answer to both of the prophet's complaints. God is going to deal with wickedness among His people in His own good time, as He is also going to deal with wickedness generally (Gn 3:15). Even when appearances and human reasoning contradict what God has said, His people can trust His word given through the prophetic vision.

2:4 The translation "faith" in this verse is much debated; some prefer to use the word "faithfulness" instead. The Hebrew word is *'emunah*, the root of our word "amen," and it signifies reliability and steadfastness. Ultimately it is a word that signifies loyalty to the Lord's covenant. Thus there is not a great deal of difference between faith, faithfulness, and steadfast allegiance to God. The person who has true faith in God will remain faithful despite outward circumstances (3:16-19), and the faithful person will not endure without faith in God (see Heb 10:36-39).

Paul quoted verse 4 to support his argument that the gospel is "God's power for salvation to everyone who believes" because "the righteous will live by faith" (Rm 1:16-17). Those who trust in what God has done through Jesus Christ—not simply as a matter of intellectual belief but as a matter of life commitment—will be saved, or delivered, from the consequences of sin and the effects of God's wrath. Paul made an even stronger argument from Hab 2:4 in his letter to the Galatians, asserting that salvation is through faith, not through "the law" (of Moses; Gl 3:11). Habakkuk did not directly contrast righteousness based on keeping the law with righteousness based on faith; to a prophet of Israel there would have been no difference between these concepts, since the law itself was an act of God's grace (Dt 7:6-11). But he did make faith the key element for survival when the Lord brings disaster. Habakkuk's statement should be viewed in light of earlier prophets who stressed that offering sacrifices according to the requirements of the law was useless when a genuine commitment to live according to God's standards of justice and mercy was lacking.

3:16-19 At the end of his book, Habakkuk reiterated his determination to continue to trust God even when conditions of physical survival would become almost insurmountable. Nothing would deter him from his first obligation as a worshiper of Yahweh, to "triumph" and "rejoice" in Him. The "salvation" (v. 18) Habakkuk mentioned, in other words, is not dependent on people or circumstances but on God, who supplies "strength" (v. 19). That was Paul's point: Salvation is through faith and therefore dependent on God alone, not on what people strive to do by their own means nor upon the outward circumstances of life. One can hear the echo of Habakkuk in Paul's admonition, "Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!" (Php 4:4).

3:19 The final line of Habakkuk is an instruction for musical performance, similar to what is found in the superscriptions of many of the psalms. This would indicate that his prophecy, or a portion of it, was intended for use in worship.

Introduction to Zephaniah

AUTHOR

Zephaniah received his prophetic message from the Lord during the reign of Josiah, king of Judah (640–609 B.C.). Possibly Zephaniah's great-great-grandfather was the famous Hezekiah, the reformer king of Judah (1:1). Hezekiah and Josiah were the two kings of Judah who made the greatest effort to purify worship from its pagan elements, making it conform to the law of Moses. However, Zephaniah denounced the mixing of pagan worship with true worship that still existed in Judah, showing that even the efforts of these two great reformers were not enough to make a lasting impression on the nation.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF ZEPHANIAH

Josiah carried out a religious reform that was unmatched in the history of Israel since the days of Hezekiah. Just as Hezekiah's righteous reign was followed by the evil reign of his son Manasseh, so Josiah's reforms were soon undone by his sons Jehoahaz (2 Kg 23:29-33) and Jehoiakim (2 Kg 23:34–24:1) and Zedekiah (successor to Jehoiakim's son; 2 Kg 24:18). The wickedness in Judah was so great that even Josiah could not affect lasting reform.

Zephaniah denounced the way the Judeans mixed the worship of the Lord with the worship of idols (1:4-5,9), and he criticized the religious and political leaders in Jerusalem (3:1-4). Josiah started his religious reforms early in his reign (2 Ch 34:3-7), but he carried out his major reforms only after Hilkiah the high priest discovered the book of the law in the temple in the eighteenth year of his reign (2 Kg 23; 2 Ch 34:8-33). It seems likely that Zephaniah delivered his messages prior to 622 B.C., Josiah's eighteenth year. Zephaniah also predicted the destruction of Assyria and the fall of Nineveh, so he must have prophesied prior to 612 B.C., when Nineveh fell.

THE MEANING OF ZEPHANIAH'S MESSAGE

Like Joel, Zephaniah talked at length about the "Day of the LORD," and there are some striking similarities in wording between the two books (cp. 1:14-16 with Jl 1:15; 2:1,30-31). The day of the Lord, said Zephaniah, would have severe consequences for the sinners in Judah, and Zephaniah exhorted the people to repent by seeking the Lord in humility (2:1-3).

Not only would the Lord judge Judah, but He would also destroy Judah's neighbors (2:4-11) as well as all the nations of the world (3:8). Zephaniah tied together the theme of judgment on Judah and the nations by focusing on the cities of Nineveh and Jerusalem (2:13–3:7).

Following worldwide judgment, there would be a new era of blessing for the nations and for Israel. Zephaniah's picture of the people's new relationship with the Lord is one of the most beautiful in all of Scripture: "[God] will rejoice over you with gladness" (3:17).

From Zephaniah we learn that God cannot tolerate the worship of other gods alongside Him, nor can He tolerate violence, fraud, complacency, haughtiness, lying, or deceit. God has absolute power to judge and destroy because He created all things, but He does not use this power in an arbitrary way; He uses it to respond to evil and injustice or to idolatry and false worship. We also learn from Zephaniah that God responds to true and sincere repentance. God loves His people who serve Him humbly.

Zephaniah Study Notes

2:1-3 Faith in God involves the intellect but so much more. The mind that acknowledges God sees His high standards and becomes aware of the distance between the actions of human beings and God's requirements. In this section, the prophet called on Israel to "seek the LORD." This could refer to desiring to "inquire of Him" (1:6) or to turning to Him in repentance. These actions are the opposite of indifference to the Lord and abandoning Him.

3:14-20 Zephaniah looked ahead to the day of the Lord's deliverance in language that had a historical application—apparently the return of Judah and Jerusalem from exile (v. 20)—and also to the coming of the kingdom of God, when the Lord would dwell amidst His people (v. 15; cp. Rv 21:3). The prophet summoned the people to "be glad and rejoice with all your heart," indeed, to join the Lord in His own rejoicing (v. 17). His poetic language depicts the Lord as a warrior, whose "shouts for joy" mark the festive celebration of victory in battle (see Ps 118:24, where the same Hb root *smh* is used).

Introduction to Haggai

AUTHOR

Haggai was one of the "postexilic" (sixth-century) prophets. His name probably means that he was born on one of the Jewish feast days. He and the prophet Zechariah roused the people of Judah to finish the temple under Zerubbabel's leadership. Haggai focused much of his preaching on the temple but also made important predictions about what God planned for the future of His people.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF HAGGAI

Haggai's book has five messages, each provided with a heading that gives an exact date based on the second year of the Persian king Darius I (Hystaspes), 520 B.C. (see Zch 1:1,7).

After Cyrus the Great, king of Persia, defeated the Babylonians, he decreed that various peoples who had been taken captive to Babylonia were free to return to their ancestral homes and reestablish their religion. His original decree still exists today as an artifact in the British Museum, the so-called Cyrus Cylinder. This decree also applied to the Judeans in Babylonia, and a contingent of them returned to the land and brought with them the temple vessels that had been taken to Babylon (Ezr 1:1-11).

Once back in Jerusalem, the people erected an altar on the temple site and reinstated offerings to the Lord. Within a year they were able to lay a foundation for the temple (Ezr 2:68–3:13). After some political opposition from "the enemies of Judah and Benjamin," the work ceased and was not reinstated until the time of Haggai and Zechariah (Ezr 4:1-5,24; 5:1-2). Haggai and Zechariah wrote as though the building was founded for the first time by Zerubbabel in their day (Hg 2:18; Zch 4:9). The project had been neglected so long that it was necessary to start over from the foundation up. Eventually the people did rebuild the temple (Ezr 6:1-18).

THE MEANING OF HAGGAI'S MESSAGE

Haggai and Zechariah were called to bring the people back to proper worship of the Lord. The first priority was to get the temple rebuilt, but the people did not share this priority. So Haggai pointed out that some difficulties the Judeans faced in meeting their basic needs were due to their neglect of the Lord and His house. The solution was to collect the necessary materials and start the work, and that is exactly what the people did. Under the leadership of Zerubbabel their governor and Joshua the high priest, "they began work on the house of Yahweh of Hosts, their God" (1:14).

Haggai then exhorted the people to continue their work in light of the Lord's abiding presence among them (2:1-9). The temple in its initial stage might not have seemed like much, but the Lord would be with His people just as He had been with their ancestors when they came out of Egypt. The Lord would fill the new house with His glory and grant the blessing of peace to His chosen people.

Haggai reiterated the relationship between material blessing and proper worship of the Lord (2:10-19). Holiness cannot be transferred from one object to another, but uncleanness can. When the people neglected the temple, their disobedience was transferred to the sacrifices they brought to the altar (see Ezr 3:3). The Lord could not accept those sacrifices, so their land had been plagued rather than blessed. Now that they were obeying the Lord's prompting to rebuild the temple, they could expect that the Lord would accept their offerings and once again bless their land (Hg 2:18-19).

As Haggai dealt with the coming material blessings on Judah, he looked ahead to a time when the Lord would "fill this house with glory" (2:7). At that time the "glory of this house" would be "greater

than the first" (2:9). This prophecy points to the coming of the Messiah, whose presence in the temple would represent the glory or the presence of the Lord.

Haggai stressed the messianic theme with the Lord's promise to make Zerubbabel "like My signet ring" when heaven and earth are shaken and the kingdoms of the earth overthrown (2:21-23). Zerubbabel, as a descendant of David, symbolized the continuation of the line of David even though he was no more than "governor of Judah," not a king. That line would continue down to the Messiah Himself, Jesus Christ. God would accomplish everything: the shaking, the overthrow, and the elevating of Zerubbabel. In this sense Zerubbabel prefigured the Messiah.

An important lesson from Haggai is that the Lord should always take first priority in life. We cannot expect that He will hear our prayers and bless us if we do not make obedience to Him of first importance.

Also, there is continuity in the way the Lord works with His people throughout history. We can be confident of His abiding presence because He has always been present with His people. He has not forgotten His promise: "I am with you always, to the end of the age" (Mt 28:20).

Another principle from Haggai is that we can know that history is working toward the goal of the messianic kingdom. Christians await the second coming of Christ to usher in that kingdom, guaranteed to them by the promise of the Lord Himself (1 Co 15:20-28; 1 Th 5:9-11).

Haggai Study Notes

1:1-15 To acknowledge the Lord as God has implications for ordinary decisions of life. It is to live before One who is all knowing, all-powerful, and who has an agenda. He has a plan that impinges on the details of our life. The people who had returned from Babylon through God's grace and leadership soon tried to put Him at the edge of their awareness. They had their own agenda, building comfortable homes for themselves while God's house lay in ruins (v. 4). Through Haggai's preaching, the people were moved to respond to the Lord's command to build His house for His glory.

1:5-8 For the prophets before the Babylonian exile, the major issues were the people's tendency to worship false gods and the social injustice that created severe inequalities between rich and poor. For prophets whose message focused on the postexilic Judean community, the issue was different. The great need was the restoration of the institutions of Israelite worship centering in the sanctuary. Ezekiel drew up a blueprint for the restored temple and its ceremonies (Ezk 40–47); Malachi called for the purification of the priesthood (Mal 3:1-4) and faithfulness in the tithe (Mal 3:8-10). Zechariah, likewise, was concerned with the honor of the priesthood (Zch 3:1-5). Haggai also turned to this emphasis on worship. It was because the people had neglected their responsibilities, including the rebuilding of the Lord's house, that their efforts to prosper came to nothing. His message was a precursor to Jesus' teaching, "with the measure you use, it will be measured to you" (Mt 7:2). One cannot open the hand to receive while clutching what he already has.

2:2 Zerubbabel, governor of the community of returned exiles, was a descendant of David (Mt 1:6-13; Lk 3:27-31). But the Lord's promise to David that his dynasty would endure (2 Sm 7:12-16) was not fulfilled in Zerubbabel; the family dropped into obscurity after his time. The fulfillment awaited the appearance of Jesus, "a descendant of David according to the flesh" (Rm 1:3).

Zechariah Articles

How Should a Christian Understand Postmodernism?

by Douglas R. Groothuis

The term *postmodernism* means many different things. However, postmodernist *philosophy*, generally understood, claims to leave behind modernist (or Enlightenment) commitments to the objectivity of truth, the universality of reason, and the inevitability of progress. Instead of attempting to fashion a rational worldview, postmodernism opts for lesser goals by cobbling together various ideas, practices, and goals for pragmatic purposes. As postmodernist Walter Truett Anderson puts it, "Truth isn't what it used to be." Postmodernism embraces a cluster of ideas, most of which contradict the Christian understanding of truth, authority, and rationality. (One positive note is that postmodernism tends to deflate overly optimistic accounts of human reason and progress based solely on human ability.)

Postmodernists claim that any comprehensive and authoritative worldview is forever out of reach and that to claim otherwise is an arrogant pretext for dominating those with whom one disagrees. For example, claims for the objective truth of the Christian worldview are unwarranted and lead to the oppression of non-Christians. Such "metanarratives" (Jean-Francois Lyotard), or stories used to describe reality as a whole, must be abandoned. No worldview holds any objective or rational authority over any other.

Thinkers such as Jacques Derrida "deconstruct" texts in order to abolish their authority. Texts do not possess any knowable or rational meaning established by the author and discernible by the informed reader. Their meaning is variable and open-ended. The text has no authority. The reader contributes decisively to the meanings (plural) of texts. Thus deconstruction undermines the truthfulness of any text (including the Bible) since no text contains a single meaning that may correspond with objective facts. (Ironically, deconstructionists decry "misinterpretations" of their own writings.)

For postmodernists, "truth" is fundamentally a social, linguistic construction devised for a certain purpose. Various cultures have their own "maps," which describe reality differently. However, we cannot determine which "map" connects more closely with reality, since we cannot press beyond our own cultural conditioning. There is no objective reality apart from our languages and concepts. Various communities determine their own truths. There is no God's-eye view of anything and thus no objective truth. As Friedrich Nietzsche declared, "There is no truth, only interpretation."

Against these claims, Scripture claims to be an objectively true revelation from God, authoritative on whatever it speaks (Rm 3:4; 2 Tm 3:15-17). Only God knows reality comprehensively, but humans may attain to partial knowledge by attending to God's revelation and by using their minds in wise ways. The Bible—and most philosophers—claim that a true statement is one that corresponds with reality. Social customs or personal opinions do not create truth; hence the Bible's condemnation of idols as *false* gods. The statement "Jesus is Lord" does not merely express the cultural language and tradition of Christians. It is a truth claim about objective realities. Moreover, good apologetic arguments may rationally verify the objective truth of this statement.

Postmodernist claims are logically flawed. First, their pronouncements on truth contradict themselves. Their statements claim to be applicable to reality itself, not merely to one's culture. Yet this is just what postmodernists claim cannot be done. In rejecting all objective authority, they end up asserting their own authority and their own metanarrative. This is contradictory and false. Second, sane people judge certain acts—such as the terrorist attacks on America on September 11, 2001—as objectively evil and not as merely relative social constructions. If this is so, the postmodern view of constructed morality cannot be defended. Postmodernism emphasizes the diversity of truth claims, particularly in pluralistic settings, but it provides no method to test these claims against reality.

Instead, it succumbs to a kind of intellectual indifference—the enemy of moral progress and spiritual virtue.

Although no major religion adheres to the postmodern view of truth, this mindset has affected how many people view spirituality, particularly in nations with significant religious freedom. Many think that religion is a matter of choice, taste, and preference. One seeks a designer religion that suits one's taste, or one is born into a religion that defines who one is. One may even mix and match elements from several religions. Debating whether a religion is true or false is pointless. All are "true" in the postmodern sense because they give meaning to people's lives. This perspective contradicts the Christian's apologetic duty to address the falsity and rational inadequacy of alternative religions in order to present Christianity as true, rational, and pertinent (2 Co 10:3-5).

Notable Christian Apologist: Origen

by Ted Cabal

Origen (A.D. 185–254) was born in Alexandria, Egypt, to Christian parents. Devout in the extreme, Origen devoted his life to Christian scholarship. Seeking to be totally faithful to the Bible and arguing for its complete inspiration, he worked diligently as a biblical scholar. As a philosophical theologian, however, he sometimes was led astray by his speculations (e.g., believing that God's conquering love will lead to universal salvation). Late in life Origen suffered torture during the reign of the emperor Decius and died a few years later.

Origen produced perhaps the greatest Christian apologetic work of the first few centuries, *Against Celsus*. Celsus, a pagan philosopher, argued that the OT did not predict events in the life of Jesus. The alleged fulfillments should be understood as nothing more than fabrications. Jesus' miracles also could be accounted for either as being legends or, worse, as being due to sorcery. The supposed resurrection was a fiction dependent on pagan mythology. And hints of truth or wisdom found in the Bible were borrowed from Greek philosophy.

This influential work of Celsus demanded a response, and Origen brilliantly refuted it point by point. He carefully demonstrated that OT prophecies concerning Christ were not manufactured, and he noted that miracles, in some measure, were still seen in the lives of those following Christ. Origen carefully displayed the evidence for the literal resurrection of Jesus through the confirmations of skeptics such as Thomas and Paul. And Origen, through a comparison of pagan mythology with the Bible, demonstrated not only the independence of the scriptural narratives of miracles and resurrection but also their superiority as truth.

Introduction to Zechariah

AUTHOR

Zechariah is the eleventh of the so-called Minor Prophets. Like Jeremiah and Ezekiel, Zechariah was a priest as well as a prophet. This is fitting since the book largely concerns the temple and priesthood and the purification of the people. Zechariah's grandfather Iddo was a priest who returned from exile with Zerubbabel (Neh 12:4), making it likely that Zechariah was Haggai's younger colleague. Whereas Haggai's focus was on the rebuilding of the temple and the reinstitution of the sacrificial system, Zechariah's was on the people's spiritual transformation.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF ZECHARIAH

Zechariah's book contains three exact dates. The first two (1:1,7) pertain to the second year of Darius (Hystaspes), or 520 B.C., and they correlate with the prophecies of Haggai (see the Introduction to Haggai). The third date (7:1) is from Darius's fourth year and marks the arrival of a delegation that came to worship the Lord and to ask about keeping a fast that commemorated the fall of Jerusalem.

While chapters 1–8 deal with the rebuilding of the temple, the priesthood, and the future of Jerusalem, chapters 9–14 deal mostly with the distant future and the coming messianic kingdom. Because of this division, some have thought that these later chapters were written by another author. However, it is just as likely that the social and political climate had changed in the country, and Zechariah's prophecies changed as a result. In this case it may be that these messianic prophecies were delivered sometime around 500 B.C.

THE MEANING OF ZECHARIAH'S MESSAGE

Zechariah stressed the presence of the Lord with His people (1:16; 9:9-10; 14:4,9) and also the necessity to obey the Lord, especially in matters of justice, mercy, compassion, and truthfulness. He was concerned that the returned exiles not repeat the mistakes of their forefathers whose disobedience had brought upon them the Lord's judgment (1:1-6).

Zechariah's eight night visions focus attention both on the Lord's purposes for His people in Judah and Jerusalem and on His purposes for the nations. The colored horses in the first and last visions represent different aspects of judgment that the Lord intends to carry out on the nations. The central visions speak of how the Lord is prepared to restore His relationship with the people of Judah and Jerusalem. Steps toward that restoration include reinstating the priesthood, rebuilding the temple, and cleansing the land of iniquity.

Zechariah, like Haggai, addresses not only the present condition of the land but also its future. Some aspects of the visions relate to the future messianic kingdom, especially in the promise of the coming Messiah (3:8-10). Zechariah taught that the Messiah would combine the offices of priest and king in one person (3:8; 6:12-13) and that He would be the Lord Himself (12:10; 13:7). Zechariah clearly stated that Yahweh will be "king over all the earth" (14:9; cp. 2:10-12; 8:20-23) but also said that the Lord's messianic representative will be "King" (9:9-10; cp. 3:8; 6:12-13; 11:4; 13:7). Zechariah also foreshadows the work of Jesus Christ on the cross by emphasizing the rejection of God's representative (11:4-13) and the subsequent need for cleansing in the land (12:10–13:1).

The Lord abides among His people and desires to bless them, but they continue to disobey Him and go their own way. That is the tension that Zechariah (in common with many of the other prophets) raised. And that is a tension that is still with us in the church. Zechariah's book is needed to direct our thoughts to the Lord's plan for blessing and also for cleansing.

It is also an encouragement for the believer, as well as a sign to the unbeliever, to realize how much about the ministry and life of Jesus Christ was seen ahead of time in the OT prophets. In this regard Zechariah stands alongside Isaiah and the Psalms as books with a wealth of messianic teaching.

Zechariah Study Notes

1:1 The heading to Zechariah's book identifies him as the son of Berechiah and grandson of Iddo, whereas Ezr 5:1 and 6:14 call him the son of Iddo (see Neh 12:16). As there is no special word for "grandson" in Hebrew or Aramaic, the word for "son" is sometimes used in its place (cp. Gn 29:5 with 28:5; 1 Kg 19:16 with 2 Kg 9:2). Evidently Iddo was better known than Berechiah.

3:1–4:14 This section is concerned with Joshua, the high priest of the returned Judean community, and Zerubbabel, the governor who was a descendant of David (Mt 1:6-13; Lk 3:27-31). Together, they were "the two anointed ones . . . who stand by the Lord of the whole earth" (4:14). Under the difficult conditions encountered by the returned exiles, the Lord sent Zechariah a vision of encouragement for these two men. But the vision looked ahead to Christ, the "anointed" (Messiah), who fulfills in Himself both roles: high priest (Heb 4:14) and Davidic ruler (Rm 1:3; Rv 22:16). Interestingly, Joshua was one of at least 17 men mentioned in the Bible whose name is Joshua (or a variant of it), including Jesus Himself.

9:9-10 Matthew quoted Zechariah's prophecy of a coming king when describing Jesus' entry into Jerusalem (Mt 21:4-5; cp. Jn 12:14-15). Verse 9 applied to Jesus' actions at that time, but verse 10 referred to the end of warfare against Ephraim (i.e., Israel) and Jerusalem, and peace among nations. These things did not occur before Jesus' crucifixion, and in fact warfare against Jerusalem took place when the Jews revolted against Rome in A.D. 66–70. Obviously, such warfare has not ended in our time.

Like many messianic prophecies in the OT, verses 9-10 appear to combine more than one appearance of the Messiah. That is, it did not distinguish between Christ's first coming and triumphal entry into Jerusalem and His second coming when He will establish His kingdom on earth. Other places in Zch predict things that would happen to Jesus Christ either in His first coming (11:4-14) or in His second coming (14:4).

Malachi Articles

Does the Bible Teach That Everyone Will Be Saved?

by Gregory Alan Thornbury

The Bible plainly teaches that only those who personally, consciously, and explicitly confess Jesus Christ as Lord possess eternal life. All others will face the holy and just wrath of God in hell throughout eternity.

Throughout the NT, the biblical writers uniformly describe a coming fixed and final divine judgment. Revelation 20:11-15 describes this scene in which all persons, both living and dead, will stand before God to be "judged according to their works." John wrote, "Anyone not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire." The "book of life" lists all those who have believed and obeyed Jesus Christ.

Jesus Himself said, "I will give to the thirsty from the spring of living water as a gift . . . But the . . . unbelievers . . . their share will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death" (Rv 21:6-8). This passage reveals central truths concerning who will be saved. Redemption comes by grace through faith in Christ, apart from individual merit. Those who have not believed are deemed "unbelievers" and will receive a just and endless punishment in hell.

During His earthly ministry, Jesus talked more often about final judgment than He did about heaven (see, for example, Mt 25:41; Lk 16:23-31). He also warned anyone who rejected Him, "Just as the weeds are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age" (Mt 13:40). Throughout the NT, the apostles consistently echoed their Lord's theme (see 2 Th 1:5-9; Heb 9:27; 2 Pt 3:7).

Despite repeated scriptural emphasis to the contrary, universalists commonly raise three objections to the exclusivity of the gospel.

All religions are equally true; therefore everyone will be saved. This claim is easily disproved. For example, a Hindu might say all religions lead to God, while a Christian asserts that Jesus is the only way to the Father. In order to stay true to his conviction, the Hindu must say that the Christian's exclusive claim is wrong. But once he has said this, he has violated his dictum that all religions are equally valid. The two beliefs cannot both be right. Therefore it cannot be concluded on this basis that all persons will be saved.

God will give all human beings an opportunity to accept the gospel after death. Despite a lack of biblical evidence in its favor, this view teaches that God will offer a final chance for people to repent after death and before the judgment. On the contrary, the Scriptures clearly indicate that once a man dies, it is too late for him to repent and turn to God (see Mt 25:35-46; Lk 16:19-31). "It is appointed for people to die once—and after this, judgment" (Heb 9:27).

What about the "man on the island" who has never heard the gospel? It would not be fair for God to send such a person to hell for not believing in Jesus. This argument from emotion is often heard and particularly dangerous. If it is true that God is obligated to save everyone who has not heard the gospel, then we might be better advised to recall all missionaries and stop proclaiming the gospel. Of course, the Bible does not countenance such a God-dishonoring approach. The "man on the island," like all people, is in desperate need of the good news about the forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ.

Introduction to Malachi

AUTHOR

The prophet Malachi's name means "my messenger," and some have wondered whether that was his real name or a title. For example, "My messenger" in 3:1 has the same Hebrew form as the name Malachi. Additionally, the phrases "the messenger of the LORD of Hosts" (2:7) and "the Messenger of the covenant" (3:1) are related to Malachi's name. The emphasis of the book is clearly on the message rather than the messenger, since 47 of the book's 55 verses are personal addresses from the Lord. An ancient Jewish tradition identifies Malachi with Ezra, but this seems improbable. Since all the other writing prophets are named in the heading to their book, it seems best to take Malachi as the prophet's name.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF MALACHI

Malachi could have written his book anytime between about 500–400 B.C. The earlier date is the approximate time for the fall of Edom (Esau), which Malachi referred to as in the past (1:2-4). The later date is about the time that Nehemiah's ministry ended and when the last part of the OT was written. Certain issues that Malachi treated were also treated by Ezra and Nehemiah, leading to the conclusion that Malachi was likely written between 450–400 B.C. These include the problems of mixed marriages (Ezr 9–10; Neh 10:30; 13:23-27; Mal 2:11), corrupt priests (Neh 13:4-9; Mal 1:6–2:9), and the failure of people to pay their tithes (Neh 13:10-13; Mal 3:5-10).

THE MEANING OF MALACHI'S MESSAGE

Malachi contrasted the faithfulness of the Lord with the faithlessness of Israel. The Lord had always loved Israel, still loved Israel, and would always love His people. In return, the Lord expected the honor due to a father from a child or the respect due to a master from a slave. The Israelites had failed to honor God, choosing instead to participate in disrespectful worship practices and to oppress their fellow Israelites. The Lord would deal with these issues by judging the guilty and blessing the repentant. He would purify His people, removing those who persisted in disobedience and leaving behind a righteous remnant.

While animal sacrifices and tithes are concerns more of the OT than of the NT, the principle of bringing the best to the Lord still abides. Honor and respect are still due the Lord, and He still desires that those who worship Him do so by dedicating themselves entirely to Him. The tithe was a way to carry out in an economic way the wholehearted love of God and the love of neighbor as oneself (Lv 19:18; Dt 6:4-9). Believers today would do well to consider all they have as a stewardship responsibility from the Lord, asking Him what He would have them do with what He has given.

Malachi Study Notes

1:2-5 Malachi begins with a reference to the long-standing tension between Israel and Edom, the descendants of Jacob's brother Esau who despised his birthright and held the promises of God in contempt (Gn 25:29-34). Moses admonished the Israelites, "Do not despise an Edomite" (Dt 23:7) because Esau was the brother of Jacob. But the Edomites continued to believe the Israelites had taken the land of Canaan by deception. They cooperated with the Assyrian invasion of Judah, and when the Judeans were taken into exile they claimed the land for themselves. For these reasons they came under the Lord's judgment (see Ezk 35:5-15; 36:1-15). When the Judean exiles returned to the region of Jerusalem the Edomites further opposed them. In this situation Malachi heard the Lord saying, "I loved Jacob, but I hated Esau" (vv. 2-3).

The word "hate" in the Bible does not always carry the same sense of antipathy and disgust associated with the English expression; it can mean simply to favor someone else with special privilege or devotion. In that sense, the Lord's "hatred" of Esau was only the other side of His loyalty to His covenant with Israel. Paul quoted verses 2-3 with that meaning in Rm 9:13 as an illustration of the Lord's mercy and compassion on whomever He chooses to bestow them (Rm 9:15). Nevertheless, in the circumstances of the Jews' return from exile, the hostility of the Edomites seems to have reached another level, provoking Malachi to call them "the people the LORD has cursed forever" (v. 4).

2:10-16 What Malachi taught about divorce must be understood in its historical context. The challenge facing the Judean community after the return from exile was the reestablishment of its religious institutions (see Hg 1:5-8). But Judean men were marrying women from other ethnic groups in the region who worshiped pagan gods (vv. 11-12)—in some cases, at least, divorcing their Judean wives ("the wife of your youth," v. 14) to do so. Marriage to unbelievers diluted their commitment to the faith of Israel and resulted in children who were not the "godly offspring" the Lord desired (v. 15). The prophet's overriding concern was not marriage, as such, but the effect of an unwise mixed marriage on a man's relationship to the Lord, and the impact of many such unions on the solidarity and stability of the covenant community.

Malachi admonished the men of Judah to honor the commitment they had made to the wife they married under the Lord's covenant, and not to "act treacherously" (v. 15) against her. To divorce her to marry a pagan woman would be to break faith with the Lord, as well as with her. The Lord finds such an action detestable. Malachi appealed not only to the covenant but also to the Lord's creation of man and woman, with "His life-breath" (v. 15), to become one flesh (Gn 2:7,21-23). As Creator, God is the Father of His people and desires covenantal loyalty within His family (Mal 2:10). (Apparently polygamy was not an option in Judah at this time, although earlier figures in OT history such as the Hebrew patriarchs, David and Solomon, had more than one wife. Either monogamous marriage had become the norm or, under the rigorous conditions of the earlier return from exile, men of ordinary means could not afford to practice polygamy.)

3:8-12 As it was for Haggai (see Hg 1:58), an issue for Malachi was the community's provision for its worship life. The people were not bringing in the tithe of their grain for the support of the priesthood and the temple ceremonies. In response, Malachi declared the word of the Lord: "Bring the full 10 percent into the storehouse" (v. 10). Interpreters do not all agree on the status of the tithe in Christian practice. Some see it as part of the law of Moses that has been superseded as a mandatory requirement in the new covenant of Jesus Christ. Others see it as a fundamental principle of faithful Christian living in the kingdom of God, comparable to the moral requirements of the Ten Commandments.

Most would agree on several points, however. (1) Thetithe of one's increase does not represent *all* that belongs to the Lord; it is emblematic of the fact that "everything in the heavens and on earth belongs to You"(1 Ch 29:11), and whatever a person has should be applied, in some way, to God's purposes. (2) The tithe supports the work of God through the church He has called to serve Him in the world. It is instrumental in making possible both the edification of believers and the outreach to unbelievers; without it, the church's mission and the extension of the kingdom of God would be hampered. (3) The practice of tithing, and of giving in general, prepares the believer to receive blessing from the Lord. The grasping hand is not open to what He seeks to give. On this last point, Malachi specifically urged the Judeans to "test Me in this way" (v. 10).

3:16-18 In the era of "postmodernism," the distinction between what is right and wrong is often minimized; what is wrong for one person, it is said, may be right for another, or what is right in one situation may be wrong in another. Such indifference to moral and ethical standards can even filter into the Christian community. Malachi spoke of a time when such indifference will no longer be the case, for those who "feared the LORD," at least, it would be clear what was righteous and what was wicked, and it would be evident who was truly serving God. Jesus Christ laid down a firm test of righteousness, or standing with God: "No one comes to the Father except through Me" (Jn 14:6). Whether or not a person is found "in Christ" (2 Co 5:17) would not be a matter of indifference; it would be a test on the order of that of which Malachi spoke.

4:2 Sometimes this verse is taken as a specific promise of the appearance of Jesus Christ. The KJV reads, "But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings." However, the Hebrew word for "sun" (*shemesh*) is feminine; a literal translation would be "and healing in her wings." In monuments from the ancient Near East, the sun is sometimes portrayed with wings. It is doubtful that this verse should be regarded as a messianic promise, in the narrow sense, although it does speak of the coming of that righteousness that marks the kingdom of God.

Matthew Articles

Does the New Testament Misquote the Old Testament?

by Paul Copan

Perhaps you've wondered why New Testament (NT) writers appear to take Old Testament (OT) verses out of context to make them fit their theology about Jesus' teaching or ministry. Critics cry foul and charge that such "fabricated predictions" referred to something other than a coming Messiah. For example, the context of Hosea 11:1 ("Out of Egypt I called My son") referred to Israel's exodus from Egypt, but Matthew 2:15 says that the "Son" was Jesus coming from Egypt. Isaiah 7:14 ("the virgin will conceive, have a son") directly concerned King Ahaz's time, when a "sign child" would be born within Isaiah's lifetime (7:15-16; 8:4), but Matthew 1:22-23 says Mary was the virgin fulfilling the Isaiah passage. Rachel's weeping in Jeremiah 31:15 probably referred to mourning over Judah being taken into exile (Babylon) in 586 B.C., but Matthew 2:18 speaks of weeping mothers after Herod's capricious decree to kill all boys under two in Bethlehem (where Rachel was buried).

Frequently critics—and Christians too—think *prophecy* means "prediction" and *fulfillment* means "realization of a prediction"; from this, critics conclude "fabricated predictions." However, this charge rests on a great mistake, and sometimes Christians become confused by it.

First, if the NT writers "plundered" the OT for proof texts, why, for instance, didn't Luke—who mentioned the virgin birth—quote Isaiah 7:14 (as Matthew did)? The same could be asked about other such passages.

Second, Jewish interpretation of the OT during Jesus' day viewed "fulfillment" more broadly, as more varied and nuanced. The literal approach was only one method.

Third—and most importantly—the word "fulfill" (*ple-roo-*) in the NT is used to portray Jesus as bringing to full fruition OT events or experiences (the exodus, covenant), personages (Jonah, Solomon, David), and institutions (temple, priesthood, sacrifices, holy days). "Fulfill" doesn't necessarily (or even primarily) refer to the mere fulfillment of a prediction. Rather, a theological point is being made: many OT events and institutions—usually related to Israel—foreshadow something greater in Christ and the new community He called together (e.g., Christ's calling 12 disciples, reminiscent of Israel's 12 tribes). Jesus is the true, beloved Son that Israel failed to be (Hs 11:1; cp. Mt 2:15; Lk. 3:22), the shepherd Israel's leaders weren't (Ezk. 34; cp. Jn 10:1-18), and the genuine ("true") fruit-bearing vine Israel wasn't (Ps 80:8,14; Is 5:1-7; cp. Jn 15:1-11). In His ministry, Jesus reenacted the history and experiences of Israel—but on a higher plane (e.g., 40 days of testing in the wilderness, giving a new "law" from a mountain in Matthew 5–7, being in the "belly" of the earth for "three days and three nights"). He took over Israel's destiny and role, bringing it to fulfillment. The Law of Moses has a handful of messianic predictions, but Jesus' fulfilling the Law (Mt 5:17; Lk 24:44) refers to His bringing it to completion.

Of course, there *are* predictions regarding the Messiah's birthplace (Mc 5; cp. Mt 2:5), the Messiah's death and atonement (Is 53), and a coming prophet and messenger (Dt 18; Mal 3). But fulfillment of the OT generally refers to the broader idea of perfectly embodying, typifying, epitomizing, or reaching a climax. For example, Jesus (citing Is 29:13) said to unbelieving Jews of His day, "Hypocrites! Isaiah *prophesied correctly about you* when he said: 'These people honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me' " (Mt 15:7-8, emphasis added). Of course, Isaiah didn't literally predict that Jesus would deal with hostile religious leaders; rather, Jesus was using the situation from Isaiah's time to epitomize, embody, and typify the same situation in His own day. This was typical of how Jews spoke of "fulfillment"—a this-is-that method called *pesher*: "*This* situation is a fulfillment or embodiment of *that* Scripture."

The NT writers weren't immoral or ignorant. They didn't illegitimately rip passages out of their context and deviously reduce them to messianic predictions. And they were well aware that OT writers (such as Hosea) were often commenting on events in Israel's past (such as the exodus in 11:1, "Out of Egypt I called My son") or events in their own day. But NT writers (and Jesus) interpreted the OT in a Christocentric manner: Jesus is the embodiment or completer of foreshadowed OT historical events, images, and personages. While fulfillment includes literal predictions of Christ and the new covenant, it goes far beyond to a richer theological embodiment of what the OT foreshadowed.

Does the Bible Contain Errors?

by Paul D. Feinberg

W"hy do you believe the Bible? It is an ancient book full of errors and contradictions." We have all heard this many times. However, most conservative evangelical Christians disagree with this claim. They hold to a doctrine called *the inerrancy of Scripture*.

The place to start our discussion is with a definition of inerrancy and error. By *inerrancy,* we mean that when all the facts are known, the Bible—in its original manuscripts and properly interpreted—will be shown to be true and never false in all that it affirms, whether related to doctrine, ethics, or the social, physical, or life sciences. Three matters in this definition are noteworthy. First, there is the recognition that we do not possess all the information to demonstrate the truth of the Bible. Much data has been lost due to the passing of time. It simply no longer exists. Other data await archaeological excavation. Second, inerrancy is defined in terms of truth that most philosophers today take to be a property of sentences, not words. This means that all the indicative sentences, or statements, of the Bible are true. Therefore, on this definition, an error in the Bible would require that it made a false statement. Finally, all information in the Bible, whatever the subject, is true. That is, it accurately records events and conversations, including the lies of men and Satan. It teaches truly about God, the human condition, and heaven and hell.

The belief in inerrancy rests on at least four lines of argument: the biblical, the historical, the epistemological, and the slippery slope arguments.

The *biblical* argument is drawn from what the Bible has to say about itself and is the most important. This argument may be formulated in a circular and a noncircular way. It is circular when one claims that the Bible says it is inspired and inerrant and that this is true because it is found in an inspired and inerrant Scripture. It is not circular when claims are made that are verifiable outside the document. This is possible because the Bible makes historical and geographical statements that are verifiable independently. Inerrancy follows from what the Bible has to say about its inspiration. It is the exhaled breath of God (2 Tm 3:16) and is the result of the Holy Spirit's guidance of human authors (2 Pt 1:21). It is a divine-human book. Moreover, the accreditation of a prophet in the OT requires nothing less than complete truthfulness (Dt 13:1-5; 18:20-22). Can God's written communication meet any less a standard? It should be noted that both these oral and written forms of communication involve the human element. This shows that human agency does not necessarily imply the presence of error. The Bible teaches its own authority as well. Matthew 5:17-20 teaches that heaven and earth will pass away before the smallest detail of the law fails to be fulfilled. John 10:34-35 teaches that Scripture cannot be broken. Furthermore, the way Scripture uses Scripture supports its inerrancy. At times arguments in Scripture rest on a single word (Ps 82:6; Jn 10:34-35), the tense of a verb (Mt 22:32), or the number of a noun (Gl 3:16). Finally, the character of God stands behind His word, and He cannot lie (Nm 23:19; 1 Sm 15:29; Ti 1:2; Heb 6:18).

A second argument is *historical*. While there have been those who disagree, inerrancy has been the normative Christian view throughout history. Augustine writes, "I have learned to yield this respect and honor only to the canonical books of Scripture: of these alone do I most firmly believe that the authors were completely free from error." Luther says, "Everyone, indeed, knows that at times they [the fathers] have erred as men will; therefore I am ready to trust them only when they prove their opinions from Scripture, which has never erred." John Wesley gave a similar opinion: "Nay, if there be any mistakes in the Bible, there may as well be a thousand. If there be one falsehood in that book, it did not come from the God of truth."

A third argument is *epistemological* (based on what and how we know something). A helpful way to formulate this argument is to recognize that if the Bible is not entirely true, then any of it may be false. This is particularly problematic when some of the most important information communicated is not verifiable through independent facts. It teaches about an invisible God, angels, and heaven. Inerrancy requires that those claims of the Bible that are testable will be shown to be true once all relevant information is available. Critics of the Bible's full truthfulness point out numerous alleged errors. But in these cases, the passage in question may have been misinterpreted by the critic or not all relevant facts are brought to light. During the twentieth century, numerous claims of the Bible, thought to be in error, were shown to be true in the light of more information. If that is so, why should anyone believe what is unverifiable? Only an inerrant Bible assures us that what we read is true.

The fourth argument is the *slippery slope* (not a fallacy in this case). The argument states that inerrancy is so fundamental that those admitting errors into the Bible will soon surrender other central doctrines like the deity of Christ and/or the substitutionary atonement. The denial of inerrancy leads to greater doctrinal error. This does not happen in every case, but it is demonstrable as a trend.

Each of these arguments has been criticized. However, a common and fundamental objection to them contends this doctrine is meaningless since it is true only of nonexistent autographs (the original manuscripts). But is it meaningless? Not if two conditions are met: (1) we possess a sufficient number of high-quality copies of the autographs, and (2) there is a sophisticated discipline of textual criticism to use these copies in determining what the original must have said. Both of these conditions are met in the case of the Bible.

The fundamental issue is the Bible's teaching of its own inerrancy. And for those who are skeptical, evidence from science, archaeology, and history has supported this claim over and over again.

Who Are You to Judge Others?

by Paul Copan

Hands down, Matthew 7:1 is the most frequently quoted Bible verse today: "Do not judge, so that you won't be judged." It's been twisted to mean we can't say someone's action or lifestyle is wrong. However, when someone says, "Don't judge," he's judging you for judging someone else. You've done wrong by saying someone else has done wrong! Clearly, we can't escape making moral judgments. Furthermore, in the same context of the oft-quoted verse, Jesus made a moral judgment about certain persons, using metaphors about "dogs" and "pigs" (Mt 7:6), stressing that we shouldn't continue to present God's grace to those who persistently scoff and ridicule. At some point we must shake the dust off our feet and move on to the more receptive (Mt 10:14; Ac 13:51). On the other hand, Jesus commanded, "Stop judging according to outward appearances; rather judge according to *righteous* judgment" (Jn 7:24, emphasis added).

How do we resolve the apparent tension? By taking note of the spirit in which we make judgments. Do we think we're superior (the attitude Jesus condemned), or are we assessing actions or attitudes with a spirit of humility and concern, recognizing our own weaknesses (1 Co 10:13; Gl 6:1)? In Matthew 7:5, Jesus told us first to examine ourselves (removing the log from our own eye), then we can help our brother or sister (taking the speck out of his or her eye). So there *is* a problem to be dealt with—but only after self-examination. The wrong kind of judging is condemning. The right kind of judging is properly evaluating moral (or doctrinal) matters with a humble, helpful attitude. (In 1 Co 5:5, "judging"—even excommunicating—is required in light of a church member's shameless sexual misconduct.) We should treat others the way we would want to be treated (cp. Mt 7:12), thinking, *There—but for the grace of God—go I.*

So when discussing judging with others, first clarify what you mean by the word "judge." This can serve as the context for clarifying right and wrong kinds of judgment. Further, we must take care to avoid the "Who am I to say So-and-So is wrong?" mentality. We can't shrink from making moral judgments, nor can we escape them—lest we declare it wrong to say another is wrong.

Are Biblical Miracles Imitations of Pagan Myths?

by Gary R. Habermas

Frequently the complaint is made that biblical miracles, especially those of Jesus, were motivated or even inspired by pagan accounts from the ancient world. We are told that healings, demon possession, virgin births, and resurrections were all common fare in ancient times. So the implication is that the Bible is no different from other religious documents. Perhaps Christians even plagiarized other accounts.

While it is true that a myriad of miracle stories adorned the ancient world, it does not follow that Scripture duplicated them. Although promoted in some popular circles, this assumption is mistaken on several levels.

It is true that some scholars emphasize the similarities between pagan and biblical miracle accounts. But we must also accent the more common (and profound) differences. For example, there is usually an immense philosophical gulf between the pagan and biblical backgrounds for their respective miracle accounts. The pagan mindset most commonly incorporated cyclical, repetitive patterns in nature, marked by the seasonal cycles. In contrast, the Jewish philosophy of history moved in linear patterns, from one event to the next, culminating in God's grand climax.

Further, these pagan stories often concern persons who never even lived in history, such as Hercules of ancient Greek mythology, while Jesus and other biblical miracle workers undoubtedly did. Moreover, scholars note that these pagan stories were never influential in Palestine, where a far different outlook prevailed.

Surprisingly, virtually no miracle stories in the ancient world are even candidates for inspiring Jesus' miracles. Few of these tales both predate the NT and closely approximate Jesus' miracles. So it is difficult to prove a parallel.

Regarding Jesus' resurrection, the inadequacy of this proposed solution grows even more apparent. Writings clearly claiming that prominent pagan heroes were resurrected postdate the NT accounts. Scholars know that some ancient religious teachings copied from Christianity, and Jesus' resurrection may be an example of what was copied!

So there are many reasons why the NT accounts were not derived from pagan texts. The most crucial response, stated simply, is that we have many reasons for believing that Jesus actually performed miracles during His ministry. Indeed, virtually all contemporary critical scholars agree that Jesus performed many acts that might be termed "miracles" or "exorcisms."

Most of all, there is an incredible amount of evidence arguing that Jesus was really raised from the dead. For instance, we have reliable reports from various authors regarding many who thought that they had actually seen the risen Jesus. The most crucial witness is Paul, an eyewitness who provided very early testimony. So we must not miss the clear point that a number of early, credible witnesses (including previous skeptics Paul and James) were proclaiming their conviction that they had seen the risen Jesus, for which they were willing to die. Far from being inspired by faraway tales, many died for their honest belief that *they* had *really seen* the risen Jesus. Pagan stories do not explain this conviction.

How Should We Treat New Challenges to the Christian Faith?

by Gary R. Habermas

It seems every year during the Easter season the popular press boldly announces new claims troubling to Christians. Stories emerge, often as if breaking news, promising exciting new evidence contrary to the Bible in the form of scholarly research, archaeological discovery, or scientific breakthrough.

In recent years believers have been challenged with questions such as: Was Jesus married to Mary Magdalene? Did Jesus father one or more children? Was Mary supposed to be the appointed leader of the church but was denied that right by the male leaders? Was Judas Iscariot not really the betrayer of Jesus, but Jesus' key disciple and hero? Were Jesus' bones really discovered in His family's burial tomb?

These tests to Christian faith arise in other formats, too. Novels, movies, chain e-mails, or casual talks with friends often present alleged reasons for believing the Bible wrong.

Perhaps the majority of Christians are not troubled, simply assuming that anti-biblical bias explains all such allegations. Others may react fearfully as if their faith were in danger of crumbling at any moment. But this reaction is almost never based on any thorough study of the claims themselves.

So how should Christians respond to ideas which, if they were true, might undermine our faith? Following are general suggestions we can utilize when evaluating disturbing challenges.

(1) Divorce our emotions from the challenge. We should immediately remind ourselves that the Bible has successfully withstood innumerable attacks over the centuries. Though many sensationalistic claims have been made against it, how many of them have ultimately proven the Bible wrong? That's right, none! So why spend painful emotional energy before the conflicting claims are sorted out? Typically these controversies are forgotten precisely because they are unable to withstand the scrutiny of scholarly examination.

Even if the claim initially appears substantial, there is still no reason to worry. Researchers have noted that this type of emotional response is linked not to the challenges but to the questions we ask ourselves at such moments: "Oh no, what if my faith is misplaced?" or "What if the Bible is wrong?" But though we rightly are passionate about God's Word, we should not succumb to troubling thoughts when others question its truth. Yes, a challenge has been proposed, so now we will study the specific claims being made.

(2) Assume the Bible is true. We should not adopt the critic's view that the Bible is guilty until proven innocent. Remembering how Scripture has withstood the test of time inspires us to develop our response with confidence and patience. Neither uncritical acceptance nor superficial rejection of an anti-biblical claim is worthy of those who know God does not lie. Presupposing the Bible's truthfulness enables the Christian to work toward an answer with persistence and the clarity of mind that stems from assurance.

(3) Carefully analyze each critical allegation against the Bible. Too many Christians attempt to counter critical views without having done their homework. Before we begin jousting with specific challenges, we need to understand the fundamental assumptions of the critic's worldview. Often just knowing the opponent's presuppositions helps us spot potential biases masquerading as scholarly research. Though we must still analyze the *evidence*, we need not accept *pronouncements* just because they are issued by an authority. If we know that Professor X discounts even the possibility of miracles, we may rightly assume that any relevant evidence for the miraculous did not factor into his reasoning.

A Christian respondent wisely focuses on those challenges which are stronger and more important. Questions on the periphery of the faith need not be treated with the same diligence as attacks on indispensable doctrines. Happily, our cardinal doctrines are also the best grounded, often established by multi-faceted evidence.

We should also understand and employ basic critical thinking skills. Some scholars exhibit an almost uncanny knack for dissecting opposing arguments and exposing their crucial weaknesses. This proficiency can be cultivated by asking certain essential questions. Is there an argument here based on evidence, or is someone simply making an assertion? If evidence is presented, how strongly does it actually support the critical claim? Are words being used for the purpose of explanation (cognitive meaning) or for persuasion (emotive meaning)? Are fallacies of reasoning employed (e.g., straw man: attacking something the Bible doesn't even say)?

(4) Get help from Christian scholars. The Lord has blessed the church with scholars devoted to working in the very disciplines so often employed to attack biblical Christianity. The works of outstanding evangelical biblical scholars, theologians, philosophers, scientists, and historians should be consulted. Often what the media presents as a daring new challenge to the Christian faith, we will find that experts have already thoroughly discredited.

(5) Be patient! Though we would like to have instant answers, they do not always come on our timetable. The wise Christian continues to assume the truthfulness of Scripture while awaiting solutions to problems. We happily confess we don't have all the answers (only God does!), even while we confidently await further substantiation of biblical veracity.

To sum up, controlling our emotions is a prerequisite for responding adequately to critical challenges. We also reject the notion that Christianity is guilty until proven innocent. Then, there are no substitutes for knowing not only our position but also the assumptions that may color the critic's allegations. We employ the basic tools involved in digesting and dissecting an argument. This provides the basis upon which we build our counter-challenge, aiming for the most crucial and vulnerable premises of our opponent's position. We thoughtfully utilize the labors of faithful Christian scholars. And we are patient when answers don't come quickly—because we know there *are* good answers.

Is the New Testament Trustworthy?

by Darrell L. Bock

Like any ancient book, the NT has a strange feel about it. It reports unusual events as well as strange customs. This naturally raises the question of whether we can trust what it tells us. These six statements of fact affirm that the NT can be trusted.

1. The books of the NT were recognized through a careful sifting process. The process stretched from the first to the fourth century. The catalysts for the formation of the NT were the use of Scripture in worship, the rise of false teaching (which necessitated identifying the authentic works), and persecution (which called for the burning of holy books—so one needed to know which those were!). The books included in the NT were those regarded as giving evidence of divine authority. Was it associated with an apostle? Was it in line with other authentic biblical books? Was it widely used and received? These were the questions used to identify the trustworthy and authoritative books of the NT.

2. The NT is based on reliable sources carefully used and faithfully transmitted. The Bible is both like other books and unlike them. Luke explained that he used sources (Lk 1:1-4). Jesus taught that the Spirit would help these apostles recall what Jesus taught them (Jn 14:25-26). To argue that the Bible is inspired by God does not dismiss the human elements that make up the book. What are the sources and how were they handled? The texts surrounding Jesus stress the role of eyewitnesses as the root of the tradition (see Lk 1:2). An apostolic association ensured the account's credibility.

The distance between event and recording is not great—less than a lifetime, a small distance of time by ancient standards. For example, the first-century Roman historians Livy and Dionysius of Halicarnassus were centuries removed from many of the events they chronicled. Judaism depended on the ability to pass things on with care from one generation to the next, recounting events with care. This does not exclude some variation, as is obvious by comparing the Gospel accounts or parallel accounts in 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings, and 1 and 2 Chronicles. Judaism, and the Christianity that grew out of it, was a culture of memory. People memorized long liturgical prayers and more often than not worked from memory rather than from a written page. Anyone who has read a children's book again and again to his child knows that the mind is capable of absorbing vast amounts of wording and retaining it.

Finally the biblical text we have today basically reflects the text as it was originally produced. The NT has far better manuscript evidence than any other ancient document. Where most classical works, such as those of Plato, Herodotus, and Aristophanes, have from one to 20 manuscripts, the NT has about 5,400 Greek manuscripts that we can compare to determine the original wording, not to mention more than 8,000 ancient Latin manuscripts.

3. Assessing trustworthiness means understanding history's complexity. Differences in accounts do not necessarily equal contradiction, nor does subsequent reflection mean a denial of history. Events can be viewed from different angles or perspectives without forfeiting historicity. Thus the differences in the four Gospels enrich our appreciation of Jesus by giving us four perspectives on Him—Jesus in four dimensions, so to speak. Neither is reflection a denial of history. Sometimes the significance of a historical event, such as a football play, becomes clear only when we see successive events. History involves both what happened and its results. Trustworthiness simply affirms that the assessed account is an accurate portrayal of what took place and a credible explanation of what emerged, not that it is the only way the events in question were seen.

4. Trustworthiness demands not exhaustive but adequate knowledge of the topic. Sources are selective even when they are accurate. The Bible makes this point in John 21:25: "There are also

many other things that Jesus did, which, if they were written one by one, I suppose not even the world itself could contain the books that would be written." When people call Scripture trustworthy, they are arguing that its testimony is not contrary to what happened and is sufficient to give us a meaningful understanding of God and His work for us (2 Tm 3:16-17). Speaking *accurately* is not the same as speaking *exhaustively*.

5. Archaeology teaches us to respect the content of Scripture. Archaeology seldom can prove that events took place. What it can show is that the details of an account, some of them incidental, fit the time and culture of the text. Archaeology also shows that we should be cautious in pointing out errors in the Bible merely because only the Bible attests to something.

For example, there was once debate about the description in John 5:2 of a pool with five porticoes in Jerusalem, called Bethesda or Bethsaida. Many questioned its existence despite its wide attestation in ancient tradition. Different spellings of the locale in the NT manuscript tradition added to the tendency by many to reject the claim. In 1871 a French architect, C. Mauss, was restoring an old church and found a cistern 30 meters away. Later excavations in 1957–1962 clarified that it consisted of two pools large enough to hold a sizable amount of water and people. Today virtually no one doubts the existence of John's pool.

6. The Bible's claim for miracles are plausible when one considers the response to resurrection claims. The events of the Gospels were recorded within the lifetime of several of those who claimed to have observed them. Perhaps the greatest evidence for the resurrection is the change and reaction of those who testified to it. The disciples openly admitted that they had no formal training and for a long period were shockingly inept at responding to Jesus. Yet they become courageous leaders. They stood firm in the face of the threat of death and rejection by the Jewish leaders who resisted them. This did not involve one or two people but a whole host of leaders who left their mark on history, notably the former chief persecutor of the church, Paul. Both Peter and he, along with others such as the Lord's brother James, died for their belief in Jesus' resurrection.

The Trinity: Is It Possible That God Be Both One and Three?

by Douglas K. Blount

Like Jews and Muslims, Christians are monotheists. In other words, they believe in the existence of precisely one God. Unlike other monotheists, however, Christians also believe that, while there exists just one God, He is three persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The belief that the one and only God exists eternally as three persons is known as the doctrine of the Trinity. And this doctrine plays an important role in Christian faith. In fact, the doctrine of the incarnation—which says that Jesus as God became a man and that He is thus both fully divine and fully human—assumes it. This latter doctrine lies at the heart of Christian faith.

On its face, however, the doctrine of the Trinity might look like a contradiction. It might seem impossible that God be both one and three. Indeed, the apparent absurdity of this doctrine has led to at least two major errors, each of which elevates one of the doctrine's claims at the other's expense. On one hand, some stress the oneness of God at the expense of His threeness, claiming there is only one divine person. Those who describe God in this way usually say that the one divine person appears in different guises or masks, sometimes as Father, other times as Son, and still other times as Spirit. Since this view says the one divine person changes His mode of appearance, it is called *modalism*. On the other hand, some stress God's threeness at the expense of His oneness, claiming each of the three divine persons is a distinct god. This view, which says that there are three gods, is called *tritheism*.

But modalism and tritheism are at odds with the Bible, which presents God as both one and three. There is just one God (Dt 6:4), yet this God is three persons—Father, Son, and Spirit (Mt 3:16-17; Mk 1:9-11; Lk 3:21-22). No doubt it is difficult (or perhaps even impossible) for us to understand *how* God is both one and three. But something's being difficult (or even impossible) for humans to understand doesn't make it a contradiction.

A contradiction involves saying that something is both true and false at the same time and in the same way. So, for instance, one who says both that Napoleon lost the Battle of Waterloo and that Napoleon did not lose the Battle of Waterloo contradicts himself. It is logically impossible for Napoleon to have both lost that battle and not to have lost it. His claim is contradictory.

Now if Christians said both that (1a) there exists precisely one God, and that (1b) it is not the case that there exists precisely one God, they would contradict themselves. So also if they said both that (2a) there are three divine persons, and that (2b) it is not the case that there are three divine persons, they also would contradict themselves. But Christians do not affirm both 1a and 1b. Neither do they affirm both 2a and 2b. Rather, they affirm 1a and 2a. And this would be contradictory only if either 1a entails 2b or 2a entails 1b.

To put the point differently, when Christians say that God is both one and three, they do not say that He is one in the same way in which He is three. So, for instance, they do not say both that (1a) there exists precisely one God, and that (1c) there exist three gods. Nor do they say both that (2a) there exist three divine persons, and that (2c) there exists only one divine person.

Since 1c entails 1b, affirming both it and 1a would be contradictory. And since 2c entails 2b, affirming both it and 2a also would be contradictory. But, as a matter of fact, Christians deny both 1c and 2c. In affirming 1a and 2a, then, Christians affirm that in one way God is one and in another way He is three. And in so doing they do not contradict themselves.

So, then, those who think the doctrine of the Trinity is contradictory misunderstand either the nature of a contradiction or the doctrine itself. Perhaps they confuse contradiction with mere paradox, taking our inability to understand *how* the doctrine is true to entail that it is false. But our inability to

understand *how* God is both one and three tells us far more about ourselves than it does about God. The Bible presents God as both one and three; that suffices for us to know that He is so, regardless of whether we understand the *how* of it.

Introduction to Matthew

AUTHOR

Nowhere does the first Gospel name its author. Though the title, "According to Matthew," was probably added early in the book's history, most likely around the beginning of the second century, the book was not quoted as Matthew's Gospel until Irenaeus, bishop of Lyon, did so around A.D. 180. Earlier documents quoting Matthew (going back to the same period as the title or earlier) do not name the Gospel from which the quotes came.

According to the sources available, the early church was in unanimous agreement that the Apostle Matthew was the first to write a Gospel and that he originally did so in Hebrew (or Aramaic). Irenaeus was the first to explicitly claim this, and it was repeated thereafter with relative frequency. The claim seems to stem, at least in part, from Papias, a bishop in Asia Minor, writing around A.D. 130.

The fourth-century church historian Eusebius cited Papias as affirming that Matthew arranged Jesus' sayings in Hebrew or Aramaic and each interpreted them as best he could. This sentence from Eusebius has provoked considerable scholarly debate. Was Papias saying that Matthew wrote a Gospel or merely that he wrote an orderly collection of Jesus' sayings? Was he claiming Matthew wrote in Hebrew (or Aramaic) or in Greek with a Semitic flavor? Did people try to translate Matthew's work into Greek? At one end of the spectrum, Papias may have been saying that Matthew arranged, in Hebrew, the sayings of Jesus (or perhaps just OT testimony about Jesus). At the other end of the spectrum, Papias may have been talking about a complete Gospel account, such as the Gospel of Matthew that we know. Certainly the church fathers understood the latter to be the case, and Jerome who translated the Bible into Latin (c. 380) even insisted that he was given access to the Hebrew original possessed by the Nazareans, a Jewish-Christian sect.

The problem for modern scholarship is that Matthew's Gospel shows few signs of having been translated into Greek from an earlier Semitic text. It appears much more likely to be an original Greek composition. Scholars thus disagree over whether Papias was wrong to insist on a Matthean Hebrew original or whether he was correct but was referring to something written in Hebrew that was different from our first Gospel. (Other church fathers besides Jerome reported a Hebrew Gospel existing in their day associated with Jewish Christians. They agreed that it was in many respects different from the biblical Matthew, though connected with that apostle.) If the latter is the case, our first Gospel was either not written by Matthew or is a second work written by him, this time in Greek. It could be that Papias confused the two works and assumed one was the basis for the other.

The best evidence from the Gospel itself that Matthew was its author is that only in this Gospel is Levi the tax collector (Mk 2:14; Lk 5:27) identified as the Apostle Matthew (Mt 9:9; 10:3). At the very least, this suggests the author presents Matthew's witness. The Gospel also contains clear evidence that the author possessed a strong command of both Aramaic and Greek, something that would be a prerequisite for most tax collectors. Furthermore, the author of Matthew used the more precise term *nomisma* for the coin used in the dispute over tribute (Mt 22:19) than Mark's and Luke's *denarion* (Mk 12:15; Lk 20:24). This linguistic specificity strongly implies that the author was conversant in the fine details of money and finance,
a point that would lend credence to the proposition that the author was a tax collector.

Nevertheless, most critical scholars still reject Matthean authorship of the first Gospel. Some argue that an apostle and eyewitness of Jesus' ministry would not have used a secondary source, yet the first Gospel relies on Mark for much of its material. Others claim that the perspective of the book

shows a fuller development of traditional material and of relations with the Jews than one might expect in an early Gospel.

Neither of these objections is telling. One could just as easily speculate that Mark's Gospel, associated as it was with Peter, had gained so much acceptance as the first accurate narrative of Christ's life that Matthew saw no need to disregard it in compiling his own Gospel. Another objection to Matthean authorship is the highly developed relationship between Jews and Gentiles. The same can be said for Paul's letters, which are indisputably from the apostolic age. Thus there is no compelling reason to overturn the unanimous external evidence associating the first Gospel with the Apostle Matthew.

DATE

Matthew was quoted by the church father Ignatius around A.D. 110 (perhaps 15 years earlier in *1 Clement*), and thus could not have been written much later than about A.D. 90. Most critical scholars opt for a date not much earlier than that for the same reasons that lead them to deny Matthean authorship. Because Matthew seems to betray knowledge of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, any date before A.D. 70 is presumed impossible.

But besides prejudicially disallowing that Jesus could have predicted Jerusalem's fall, the evidence for "prophecy" after the fact is not as clear as some suggest. First, the words of Christ (Mt 22:7; 24:15) are so general that one could easily understand them as indicating *no* knowledge of the actual destruction of Jerusalem. Second, certain episodes in Matthew give pre-A.D. 70 perspectives that would at least require clarifying comment from the Gospel writer if the temple had already fallen (e.g., the discussion of the temple tax in 17:24-27). There is no reason, therefore, that the Gospel could not have been written before A.D. 70. Irenaeus reported that Matthew was written while Peter and Paul preached at Rome, placing at least early versions of the Gospel in the A.D. 60s, assuming Irenaeus had a reliable tradition. The precise date of the writing of Matthew is uncertain, but some time in the 60s is not unreasonable.

THEMES

Each Gospel, though broadly compatible with the others, emphasizes something different about the significance of the life and ministry of Jesus. For Matthew, that significance clearly lies in Jesus' status as the promised messianic son of David, the king of Israel. Several features of the Gospel are related to this primary theme. Foremost is Matthew's citation of OT prophecies fulfilled in the life of Jesus. Matthew is often faulted for taking these "prophecies" out of context and misapplying them. However, his practice must be understood in terms of the conventions of first-century citation generally, and the charge is less appropriate than is often thought (see the notes, esp. 2:15). Other features related to the theme of Jesus as promised King include long teaching discourses in which the word of Jesus becomes a new law for the church, a confession of Jesus as the Son of God in divine (as opposed to merely messianic) terms, and an extension of kingdom promises from the Jews to the Gentile nations in fulfillment of the covenant with Abraham.

For more on the similarities and distinctions between Matthew and the other Gospels, see the Introduction to Mark.

Matthew Study Notes

1:1 In identifying Jesus as Son of David and Son of Abraham, Matthew linked Jesus to the Davidic messianism of the OT. This connection is suggested in the Davidic covenant (2 Sm 7:12-16; Ps 89:29) and explicitly expressed in the Prophets (Is 9:6-7; 11:1-10; Jr 23:5-6; 30:9; 33:14-26; Ezk 34:20-24; 37:24-28; Hs 3:5; Am 9:11; Zch 3:8). Matthew also linked Jesus to the Abrahamic covenant (Gn 12:1-3; 22:18), in which God promised to bless all the nations of the earth through Abraham's seed. The two covenants are brought together in Ps 72:17 (Mt 28:19). Jesus' Davidic descent was not a theological invention of the early church. It was attested as early as Paul (Rm 1:3) and in the letter to the Hebrews (Heb 7:14). Furthermore, Jesus' immediate family, which was prominent in the early church, would have had to accept the claim. The Talmud, a collection of Jewish rabbinical writings, repeatedly charges Jesus with being born out of wedlock, for example, to Pandera a Roman soldier, so this *is* a polemic againstJesus' lineage. But there is no polemic against Mary's or Joseph's lineages.

1:2-16 There is evidence that first-century Jews kept genealogical records (for example, the Jewish historian Josephus referred to public registers as sources of some of his information). Matthew's genealogy emphasizes Christ's royal lineage, while Luke's focuses on His biological lineage. For more about the differences between the genealogies, see note on Lk 3:23-38. (On the schematic nature of the genealogy, see note on Mt 1:17.)

1:11 According to Jr 22:30, no son of Coniah (Jechoniah, Jehoiachin) would prosper on David's throne. Therefore, Matthew's genealogy seems to be wrong. However, Matthew's focus was on the royal lineage of Jesus. As noted in Lk, Jesus' (Joseph's) physical descent stemmed from David through Nathan, not Solomon. So his physical lineage did not pass through Coniah, even though Matthew's legal lineage must. See note on Lk 3:27.

1:16 On the different names for the father of Joseph in the genealogies of Jesus in Mt ("Jacob fathered Joseph") and Lk 3:23 ("Joseph, son of Heli"), see note on Lk 3:23-24.

1:17 Matthew omitted several names in his genealogy in order to maintain a three times 14-generation structure (Gk *egennesen,* translated "fathered," indicated ancestry, not actual fatherhood. "All the generations" must then be taken to imply "as summarized here.") Matthew was emphasizing Jesus' birth as a culminating moment in Israel's history. The third set of "14" has only 13 names, unless one counts Jechoniah a second time (or the second set has 15, if one begins it with David).Perhaps Matthew reflected the common feeling of his time that Jechoniah could be considered both a pre-exilic and a post-exilic figure (see 2 Kg 24:8-12; 25:27-30). David is the central figure in the lineage of Jesus. When the consonants of his name are added, the sum is 14; hence, the importance of the number 14 to Matthew. David is the fourteenth entry in the genealogy.

Luke has a different genealogy of Jesus that traces His ancestry all the way back to Adam. See note on Lk 3:23-38 for an explanation of the differences between these two genealogies.

1:18-25 This passage, unique to Mt, shows the exemplary character of Joseph. He did not question the angel's explanation for Mary's pregnancy. He obeyed without question what the angel told him to do, going ahead with his plans to take Mary as his wife.

1:20 On the announcement of the birth of Jesus to both Joseph and Mary, see note on Lk 1:26-38.

1:22-23 Matthew cited the Greek version of Is 7:14 virtually verbatim, including the Greek word *parthenos* ("virgin"). The underlying Hebrew word, *almah*, means something like "a marriageable girl." It probably always refers in the OT to virgins (Pr 30:19 has been suggested as a counterexample, but it is not obviously such). For more on the virgin birth of Jesus, see note on Lk 1:35. Isaiah 7:14 was a prophesied sign to Judah's King Ahaz that an impending military crisis would be averted by God. The prophecy received an immediate fulfillment in Isaiah's own son (Is 8:1-4), but that son was a "sign" of a greater fulfillment (Is 8:18), and the prophecy thus continued to present the ultimate manifestation of "God with us" in Is 9:1-7. The name Jesus

("Yahweh saves") describes what Jesus does; Immanuel ("God with us") describes who Jesus is. Matthew included the prophecy to assert the divinity of Jesus. For more on prophecy and fulfillment in Matthew, see note on 2:15.

1:25 This text implies that Mary and Joseph had biological children after the birth of Jesus. That Jesus had earthly brothers and sisters is explicitly stated in 13:55-56, Mk 6:3, and Gl 1:19.

2:1-2 Some interpreters deny the historicity of the wise men's visit. One reason for doing so is a general anti-supernaturalism. Another is the alleged parallelism in form and/or content with legends or myths of great people or gods in the ancient Mediterranean world. Some take the star as purely supernatural, since it pointed the way to where Jesus lay (v. 9). Several scientific explanations have been offered to identify the star of Bethlehem, such as it being a conjunction of Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn in 7–6 B.C. or perhaps the appearance of a comet in 5 B.C. Wise men (sometimes translated as "magi") were originally a religious class in Media and the Persian Empire, but the word *magi* came to describe any student of astrology and lore. These men had probably been studying Jewish texts such as Nm 24:17 in order to correlate their astronomical observations with the birth of a Jewish king.

2:6 Matthew did not quote Mc 5:2 directly but paraphrased it to bring out the sense of the passage. Thus, while the prophet Micah noted the smallness of Bethlehem in relation to its being the home of the ruler, Matthew emphasized Bethlehem's significance by calling it "by no means least" of Judah's towns. (The reading "leaders" for thousands predates Matthew. These terms are spelled the same in Hb.) He concluded with a quote from 2 Sm 5:2 (see Ezk 34:23), since the identification of Bethlehem as the ruler's hometown set the prophecy in the stream of Davidic messianism (and was so understood in first-century Judaism). The principle of biblical inerrancy requires only that a NT paraphrase of an OT text preserves the intent of that text or expresses its implications.

2:15 Some critics suggest that the quote from Hs 11:1 led to the invention of the story of the flight to Egypt as a "fulfillment." But it fits the story tangentially enough to render that opinion less plausible than the alternative, namely that the flight to Egypt was historical and led to the use of the Hs quote. Matthew and other NT writers did not usually mean a one-to-one correspondence of prediction and fulfillment by this language, but rather they had a much broader understanding of the OT in mind. Jesus was the culmination of many themes, lines of progressive revelation, and streams of tradition. The texts cited (often conflated texts, as in Mt 2:6) stand for these broader themes; they do not in themselves carry the themes fully. Thus here, though Hs 11:1 refers directly to the exodus as an originating event in God's relationship with Israel, it stands in streams of traditions that include the Messiah as God's Son and One who represents Israel, succeeding—and thus fulfilling—where Israel failed (cp. the Servant in Is 49–53, who is related to the Davidic branch of Is 11:1-10). On the comparison with Luke, see note on Lk 2:39.

2:16 No sources outside the Bible corroborate this episode, but it fits the character of Herod as reported in the writings of the historian Josephus. In addition to atrocities he had earlier perpetrated, Herod grew increasingly paranoid in his last years and committed or planned several political executions, including those of members of his own family. The slaughter of perhaps 20 or so babies in an insignificant village to protect his throne is thus entirely plausible and would hardly merit mention in historical sources. That Herod based his decision to kill all male children two years or younger on the timing ascertained from the wise men indicates that they had initially seen the star rise two years earlier. It is unknown whether the initial appearance corresponded to the birth (making Jesus two years old at this point) or merely foretold it (so that Jesus at this point was still a baby).

This Herod, known as Herod the Great, was different from the other three members of the Herodian dynasty mentioned in the Gospels. They are (1) Herod Archelaus, son and successor of Herod the Great as ruler over Judea (Mt 2:22); (2) Herod Antipas, who executed John the Baptist (Mk 6:17-29) and who returned Jesus for sentencing by Pilate (Lk 23:6-12); and (3) Herod Philip, ruler in extreme northern Galilee when Jesus began His public ministry (Lk 3:1,19-20).

2:17-18 On Matthew's use of the OT, see note on 2:15. Matthew loosely translated the Hebrew of Jr 31:15. Ramah was the staging point for the Babylonian exile (Jr 40:1-2), an event Matthew had already identified as important to Jesus' identity (1:17). But Jr 31:16-35 also promised an end to the exile and the institution of the new covenant with Israel, events associated elsewhere with the messianic reign (Jr 30:1-9; 33:14-26; cp. Mt 26:28). With the birth of Jesus, the Davidic son had arrived and the exile was ended. Thus the weeping in Bethlehem fulfilled, or culminated, Rachel's weeping. This is the final mourning of exiled Israel.

2:23 According to Lk 1:26 and 2:4, Mary and Joseph lived in Nazareth prior to the birth of Jesus, prompting some to claim that Matthew was unaware of this and thus presented Bethlehem as their hometown. But Matthew's focus was only the well-known fact that Nazareth was Jesus' hometown at the start of His ministry. He was not concerned to tell the reader the hometown of Jesus' parents. Though he first mentioned them in connection with the birth of Jesus at Bethlehem, he nowhere stated that Bethlehem was their hometown. The quote corresponds to no known passage in the OT. The best possibility is that Matthew alluded to Is 11:1 ("shoot" = Hb *nezer*), but others suggest that "a Nazarene" is a title of dishonor and thus alludes to those texts in which the Messiah is despised (e.g., Ps 22:6-8; Is 53:2-3). The two may go together, since Is 11:1 describes the Messiah as arising from the ignominious conditions into which David's house had fallen and has links to the Servant of Is 49–53 (see Is 11:1,10,12; 49:22; 53:2).

3:8 For more on repentance, see note on Lk 3:3. The slight variations in wording between Mt and Lk demonstrate that the Gospel writers followed first-century convention and aimed to convey the gist of reported speech, not the exact words. Inerrancy requires only that paraphrased speech accurately summarizes the content and intent of the original utterance.

3:11 On John the Baptist as the forerunner of Jesus, see note on Mk 1:7.

3:15 Jesus' baptism announced His intention to follow God's will and identified Him with the sinners He came to save, the most important aspect of God's will for Him. His baptism, then, appropriately initiated His messianic ministry; it was the first step in His carrying out the will of God, of fulfilling all righteousness.

3:17 God addressed these words about His Son, Jesus, to those who witnessed His baptism. The Gospels of Mk (1:11) and Lk (3:22) report that God spoke these words directly to Jesus. See note on Mk 1:11.

4:2 The 40-day fast and temptation in the wilderness paralleled Israel's exodus experience. See note on Lk 4:2.

4:5-10 On the differences in the order of the temptations in Mt and Lk, see note on Lk 4:5.

4:12 Jesus launched His public ministry after the death of John the Baptist. See note on Mk 1:14.

4:17 The theme of Jesus' preaching was the kingdom of heaven, also referred to as the kingdom of God in Mk (1:15) and Lk (13:28). These two phrases refer to the same reality: the rule of God in human hearts. See note on Mk 1:15.

4:18-22 Matthew's account of the call of the fishermen brothers, Peter and Andrew along with James and John, differs in one detail from the parallel narrative in Luke's Gospel. Luke's longer account has Jesus teaching the crowds from a fishing boat, then producing a miraculous catch of fish for these professional fishermen. After this miracle, He issued His call to them, and they became His disciples. See notes on Mk 1:16-20 and Lk 5:1-11.

4:24 Matthew distinguished between physical maladies and demon possession (though he also could relate the two, 17:14-18). Contrary to what modern critics claim, the disciples did know the difference between a physical ailment and demon possession. "Throughout Syria" is probably shorthand for the regions surrounding and including Galilee rather than a strict reference to the entire Roman province of Syria. So verse 25 specifies the crowds as coming from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and Perea.

5:1–7:27 Matthew seems to have presented Jesus' Sermon on the Mount and other discourses in his Gospel as actual events rather than as anthologies of Jesus' teaching, and thus parallels to individual sayings appearing elsewhere in the Gospels should be taken as evidence that Jesus taught similar things on multiple occasions. Matthew organized other major teachings of Jesus around

specific events in His ministry (see 7:28; 11:1; 13:53; 19:1; 26:1). For differences between Matthew's account and Luke's account of this famous sermon, see note on Lk 6:17-49.

5:1-10 On the subtle differences between the Beatitudes in Mt and in Lk, see note on Lk 6:20-23.

5:13 On Jesus' reference to believers as "the salt of the earth," see note on Mk 9:50.

5:16 This verse is not contradicted by 6:1. Here Jesus commended good works properly motivated, so that God might be glorified. In 6:1 He discouraged improperly motivated good works, namely those intended to bring self-glorification. The stress was not on the openness or hiddenness of actions but on the reasons for them.

5:17-20 Jesus did not come to destroy the Law but to fulfill it and to enable those who trust Him to fulfill its demands. Jesus fulfilled the Law both by His obedience to it and by His sacrificial death, through which He satisfied the law's demands for those who trust Him.

5:19 Some have seen in this verse not the voice of Jesus but a later reaction against the Apostle Paul's brand of Christianity. However, there is no reason why Jesus could not have said these words. Given what Jesus had said of His status with regard to the Law, keeping and teaching the commandments must take on different force than strict adherence. The Law is good and remains valid (Rm 3:31; 1 Tm 1:8). Loving God and neighbor is a fulfillment of the Law (Mt 7:12; 22:37-40; Rm 13:8-10; Gl 5:14; Jms 2:8).

5:22 On Jesus' command not to call a person a "fool" or a "moron," see note on Lk 11:40.

5:29 Jesus did not commend self-mutilation to avoid sin. He was exaggerating to emphasize the point that avoidance of sin is worth whatever drastic measures are required. A blind person can still lust.

5:38-42 On Jesus' principle of non-retaliation and love of one's enemies, see note on Lk 6:29-35.

5:48 The perfection that Jesus referred to is that of loving all people, both good and evil (v. 45; cp. Lk 6:36).

6:1 On the proper motivation for good works, see note on 5:16.

6:9-13 On Jesus' teaching of the model prayer to His disciples, see note on Lk 11:2-4.

6:12,14-15 This prayer seems to be a model for believers. Forgiveness is an attitude that follows from recognition of the seriousness of our sin (18:23-35; Eph 4:32; Col 3:13). A person with an unforgiving heart toward others shows that he does not take his own sin seriously and has not appropriated God's forgiveness.

6:13 Jewish parallels suggest that "Do not bring us into temptation" may be idiomatic for "Do not let us be overcome by temptation" or "Do not let our faith be tested beyond what it can bear." James 1:2-3,13-14 shows that "temptation" can have a negative or positive purpose—the one an enticement to sin, the other the strengthening of faith. God pursues only the latter, and Satan only the former (see 1 Co 10:13).

6:22-23 The "good eye" and the "bad eye" are expressions for generosity (Gk *haplous* = "single, undivided" and "generous," see Rm 12:8) and miserliness (Pr 28:22). "If the light within you is darkness" is a paradoxical way of saying, "If where there ought to be light, darkness is found." Jesus' point is that love of money clouds one's moral vision.

6:33 On Jesus' provision for our daily needs, see note on Lk 12:22-34.

7:1-2 Jesus did not prohibit judging of any sort, as verse 6 makes clear. Rather, He warned against judging others in way that we would not want applied to ourselves. To judge another person in a harsh spirit is to take on a role reserved only for God. Only the Lord can see beyond the outward appearance to underlying motives and causes in a person's heart.

7:7-12 On Jesus' instructions about asking, searching, and knocking, see notes on Mk 11:22-24 and Lk 11:10.

7:21 A person who comes to Christ for salvation comes to Christ the Lord, who has the right to demand obedience because of His lordship. Note that Jesus did not teach here that works save us, but rather that doing good works is a reflection of our obedience to God's will (7:16-20,24-27; cp. Jms 2:14-26). Attempting to earn salvation by works is a rejection of Christ's sovereignty. Sin replaces God's sovereignty with our human bent toward self-will and rebellion against God's will. For more on this point, see note on 5:17-20.

8:4 On Jesus' instructions to a man not to tell anyone about his healing, see note on Mk 1:44.

8:5-13 For differences between Matthew's account and Luke's account of the healing of a centurion's servant, see note on Lk 7:1-10.

8:17 Matthew cited Is 53:4 as fulfilled in the healing ministry of Jesus. That Matthew understood this fulfillment in the light of the larger, atonement context of Is 52:13–53:12 is made clear in Mt 20:28 (see Heb 9:28;1 Pt 2:24). That is, Jesus' healing ministry was part of His larger ministry of bringing in the kingdom(Mt 4:23). His atoning death was the central and necessary feature of this kingdom. His healings were a foretaste of the ultimate benefits of His death, benefits that will not be fully realized till His return. Thus this passage does not teach that Christians can expect automatic healing in this age.

8:20 On Jesus' reference to Himself as the Son of Man, see note on Mk 2:10,28.

8:22 On Jesus' statement "Let the dead bury their own dead," see note on Lk 9:60-61.

8:26 On Jesus' stilling of the storm, see note on Mk 4:39-41.

8:28 Matthew's account of this miracle reports that Jesus healed two demon-possessed men, while Mark(5:1-20) and Luke (8:20-39) mention only one (see note on Mk 5:2). On the difference among the Gospels in the spelling of the name of the region in which this healing occurred, see note on Mk 5:1.

8:31-32 On the entering of a herd of pigs by the demons cast out of a man by Jesus, see note on Mk 5:11-13.

9:8 The bystanders recognized that Jesus was a man and yet He exercised the prerogative of God. In Jesus, they saw God at work. His works of healing and the forgiveness of sins were signs that the kingdom of God was dawning.

9:9 On the calling of Matthew (Levi) as a disciple ofJesus, see note on Mk 2:14.

9:13 All three Synoptic Gospels (Mt, Mk, and Lk) place the dinner at Matthew's house immediately after the call of Matthew. But there is probably a significant time lapse between the two events, and they were placed together because they dealt with the same character. Mark and Luke placed these events and the healing of the paralytic before the exorcism at Gadara, while Matthew placed them after that event. All three Gospel writers placed the raising of Jairus's daughter after Gadara. It is likely that a combination of literary and chronological concerns caused the writers to order the events as they did. On Jesus' statement "I didn't come to call the righteous, but sinners," see note on Lk 15:7.

9:18-26 Matthew greatly compressed his version of this story compared to Mark's (Mk 5:21-43) and Luke's (Lk 8:40-56). Indeed, there was often much more to the actual events than the Gospel writers told us, and responsible harmonization of divergent accounts is a legitimate and at times necessary undertaking. See note on Lk 8:46-48.

9:27-31 Several stories of healing blind men are recorded in the Gospels (20:29-34; Mk 8:22-26; 10:46-52; Lk 18:35-43; Jn 9:1-7). Some of these record the same event (Mt 20:29-34; Mk 10:46-52; Lk 18:35-43), but others are surely separate incidents, since healing the blind was a regular part of Jesus' ministry (Mt 15:30; 21:14). Passages such as Is 35:5-6 gave rise to the expectation that the Messiah would heal the blind.

9:29 Jesus did not mean that He healed in proportion to the men's faith, but He healed because of faith. See note on Lk 8:46-48.

9:34 On the charge by the Pharisees that Jesus healed through the power of demons, see note on Mk 3:22.

10:2-4 On the names of the 12 disciples of Jesus, see note on Mk 2:14.

10:5-6 As the Jewish Messiah, Jesus primarily focused His ministry on the Jews. He did respond to Gentiles who showed faith (8:5-13; 15:21-28; Jn 4:5-42), but the preaching of the gospel to Gentiles awaited His ascension (Mt 28:19; Lk 24:47) and the subsequent bestowal of the Spirit at Pentecost (Ac 2).

10:8 On Jesus' distinction between healing those with physical disabilities and delivering those who were possessed by demons, see note on Mt 4:24.

10:9-10 On Jesus' instructions about what His disciples should not take with them on their mission, see note on Mk 6:8-9.

10:16-22 Matthew may have included here predictions of future persecution originally part of the Olivet discourse (Mt 24:9,13; Lk 21:12) in order (1) to place all "mission" sayings together, and (2) to use the mission of the Twelve as a paradigm for the mission of the church. Alternatively, Jesus may have repeated these warnings in His discourse about the end times (Mt 24). See notes on Mk 13:24-25 and 13:30.

10:23 There is a close connection in the Gospels between the coming of the Son of Man and the destruction of Jerusalem (see note on Mk 13:30). Jesus was either telling His disciples the evangelism of Israel and subsequent Jewish persecution of the church would not be complete before Jerusalem was destroyed by the coming of the Son of Man, or explaining that the evangelism of Israel would be an ongoing task until the end of the age.

10:34-36 On the claim of discrepancy between Jesus' statement about bringing peace versus not bringing peace, see note on Lk 12:49-53.

10:40 That Jesus was "sent" by God does not detract from His own deity. Indeed, Php 2:5-8 makes clear that the Son voluntarily subordinated Himself to the Father in the incarnation. See note on 28:18.

11:3-5 On the question by John the Baptist of whether Jesus was the Messiah, see note on Lk 7:18-23. Josephus, the Jewish historian, gave an account corroborating John's imprisonment and execution.

11:11 On Jesus' statement about the greatness of citizens of the kingdom in relation to John the Baptist, see note on Lk 7:28.

11:14 On Jesus' identification of John the Baptist with "the Elijah who is to come," see note on Lk 1:16-17.

11:19 On the charge of gluttony and drunkenness against Jesus by the religious leaders, see note on Lk 7:34.

11:25 The "wise" are the self-sufficient, and the "infants" are those who depend on God (see note on Lk 1:51-54). Verses 20-24 emphasize the coming punishment of the cities of Galilee (whose main populations were part of "the wise") for failing to heed the miracles of Jesus. On God's "hiding" matters from the wise but still holding them responsible for their unbelief, see note on Mk 4:11-12.

11:27 When Jesus said that all things had been entrusted to Him, He was speaking of His authority to reveal the Father (see note on Lk 10:22). Thus, passages such as Mk 13:32, where it is said that God reserves certain knowledge to Himself, do not stand in contradiction to this verse. See note on Mk 13:32.

12:1-2 On the Pharisees' criticism of Jesus for picking grain on the Sabbath, see note on Lk 6:1.

12:18-21 Matthew quoted from Is 42:1-4 to highlight the compassionate character of Jesus' ministry. He paraphrased Is 42:3-4 in verses 20-21. "Until He has led justice to victory" is equivalent to Isaiah's "He will faithfully bring justice. . . . Until He has established justice on the earth." And "The nations" paraphrases "the islands." While the Hebrew text of Is 42:4 has "His instruction," the Greek text has "His name."

12:30 On Jesus' statement about those who oppose His ministry and refuse to accept His authority, see note on Lk 9:49-50.

12:31-32 Blasphemy against the Spirit means consciously rejecting His incontrovertible testimony to the truth of the gospel (see Heb 6:4-8). (To blaspheme or speak against the Son of Man seems to be to reject the claims of Jesus. Paul blasphemed the Son of Man prior to the Damascus road experience; he would have blasphemed the Spirit had he rejected the Damascus road experience.) This, then, is the only unforgivable sin, and this saying thus does not contradict such texts as 1 Jn 1:9. This is not something Jesus addressed to the disciples or the crowds but to one small group of Jewish leaders who had already demonstrated their implacable opposition to Him. There is no biblical evidence that a genuine Christian can commit this sin. Fear that one has

done so is probably a good sign that one hasn't, for full-fledged apostasy is a defiant rejection of everything Christian and lacks the tender conscience that would be worried about such an action.

12:38-40 See note on Mk 8:12. "Three days and three nights" is from Jnh 1:17. In Jewish reckoning, a period of light and darkness makes a "day" (*onah*), and any part of a "day" is considered as the whole. Since Jesus arose on the third day (Mt 16:21; 27:63-64), which was the first day of the week (28:1), the language of three days and nights does not mean 72 hours (see Est 4:16; 5:1) but "part of Friday, all of Saturday, and part of Sunday."

12:48-50 On Jesus' declaration about His earthly relatives as opposed to His spiritual relatives, see note on Mk 3:31-35.

13:10-11 On Jesus' explanation of why He spoke in parables, see note on Mk 4:11-12.

13:32 Jesus did not intend to teach botany here but to make a point about the kingdom of God. The mustard seed was the smallest seed of any plant cultivated in first-century Palestine and was proverbial for minuteness. Though mustard is not technically a tree, it can grow to a height of from six to ten feet and support birds. Jesus was probably making a theological point that His readers would catch, alluding either to Ezk 31:17 or Dn 4:12 and the world dominion of God's kingdom. Alternatively the statement may have been meant to shock: The kingdom of heaven will grow much bigger than one would expect when seeing its beginning.

13:35 Psalm 78 records the "parable" (*mashal*) of Asaph, in which, as a warning to his generation, he reviewed the history of God's gracious dealing with the Jews despite their stubbornness (Ps 78:4-5). Matthew cited the opening verses of the psalm because they parallel most specifically the teaching ministry of Jesus, but he probably intended the reader to place them in their larger context. Matthew did not assert that Asaph was talking about Jesus but that Jesus' parables culminated the sort of teaching Asaph conducted, teaching about the history of salvation intended to turn Israel from unfaithfulness to faithfulness. In Jesus, God gave His final revelation to the Jews, and, like Asaph's audience, they were expected to respond appropriately.

13:55 The people of Nazareth assumed Jesus was Joseph's son. Mark had the people identify Jesus as the carpenter (Mk 6:3); in Matthew they identified his father as such. Jesus probably learned the trade of his adoptive father, as was typical, and the crowd referred to Him in various ways, Matthew summarizing one way and Mark another.

14:3-11 On the death of John the Baptist, see note on Mk 6:17-30.

14:15-21 On the feeding of the 5,000 and the setting of this miracle, see notes on Mk 6:32 and 6:34.

15:20 Jesus was not addressing hygiene but religious purity. The Pharisees required ritual washings before eating to cleanse from contact with religious impurity. Jesus taught that such contact was not defiling but that personal ethical and moral corruption is (Mk 7:15-20).

15:22-28 On the healing of a Gentile woman's daughter, see notes on Mk 7:24-30 and 7:26.

15:32-38 On the miraculous feeding of 4,000 people and its relation to the feeding of the 5,000, see note on Mk 8:1-10.

15:39 On the place referred to here as Magadan by Matthew and as Dalmanutha in Mark's parallel account, see note on Mk 8:10.

16:16 See note on Mk 8:29. Matthew included the words "Son of the living God," while Mark excluded them. Peter made the complete confession recorded in Mt, and each Gospel writer recorded as much of it as necessary for narrative purposes. Matthew emphasized Jesus' divine sonship throughout his Gospel and so retained the confession. Mark reserved the confession of Jesus' divine sonship for the end of his Gospel (Mk 15:39) in order to tie the confession more explicitly to the cross. Peter presumably meant no more by "Son of the living God" than "the Messiah" (2 Sm 7:14; Ps 2:7; Mt 26:63), but the virgin birth makes clear that the divine sonship of Jesus is more than just a title.

16:18 The use of "church" (Gk *ekklesia*) here (among other reasons) has led some scholars to conclude that this saying is inauthentic. But Jesus' preaching of the kingdom could easily envision the establishment of the messianic community. *Ekklesia* merely means "assembly" or "congregation," and it is used in the Greek OT for the "congregation" of Israel, i.e., God's people.

16:19 Within the Roman Catholic tradition this passage has been used to support the infallibility of the pope as Peter's successor. Peter and other NT writers don't sustain this view. Peter was one among a number who were leaders in the first generation of the church (Ac 15:13-21; Gl 2:9,14; 1 Co 3:11; 1 Pt 2:7). The context demands that the binding and loosing had especially to do with opening or closing access to the kingdom, most likely through the preaching of the gospel, that is, confessing Christ. Peter was uniquely used by God to build Christ's church (e.g., Ac 2:14-42; 3:1-26; 10:27-48). Matthew 18:18 indicates that the church as an assembly has similar authority.

16:21 On Jesus' prediction of His death, see note on Lk 12:50.

16:28 On Jesus' promise that some of His followers would experience a foretaste of His glorious revelation before they died, see note on Mk 9:1.

17:1-8 On the historical reality of the transfiguration, see note on Lk 9:28-36.
17:1 On the different timing for the transfiguration as reported by Mt, Mk, and Lk, see note on Mk 9:2.

17:10-13 On Jesus' discussion of the coming of Elijah, see notes on Mk 9:12-13 and Lk 1:16-17.

17:20 See note on Mk 11:22-24.

17:24-27 The historicity of this event is questioned by a number of scholars. Some have suggested that the passage is a later insertion, reflecting a common concern of the early church. Such theories, however, are highly suspect. Payment of the temple tax was not an issue in the early church, and thus it is far more likely that the episode dates back to Jesus' life. Coins have been found in the mouths of fish from the Sea of Galilee. This coin is a *state-r*, equivalent to four drachmas.

18:8-9 On Jesus' statement about disfiguring the body to avoid sin, see note on 5:29.

18:10 Some suggest that Jesus referred to the destiny of believers at death, but more likely He meant that there are angels who constantly represent believers to God, since He used the present tense. The concept of such "guardian" angels was common in first-century Judaism. Jesus did not indicate the ratio of angels to believers nor whether their ministry would continue after His own ascension. See Ps 91:11; Ac 12:15; Heb 1:14.

18:12-14 This parable has a different setting in Lk 15:3-7, leading scholars to conclude that one Gospel writer invented the setting in his Gospel. But Jesus undoubtedly applied many of His stories and illustrations to different situations, and neither setting is historically implausible. Others suggest that Matthew placed the parable here for thematic reasons.

18:17 Jesus had in mind an actual assembly of God's people. On the word "church," see note on 16:18.

18:18 See note on 16:19. Jesus delegated authority tothe church and its leadership to open access to the kingdom (16:19) and so to forgive or retain sins (in the context of the gospel, Jn 20:23), to discipline members (as here), and to render doctrinal decisions (binding and loosing can mean "forbidding and permitting"). This authority is seen exercised in Ac 5:1-11; 13:38,46; 15:23-29; 1 Co 5:3-5. The fact that a similar promise is given to the Twelve that was previously given just to Peter casts further doubt that any unique authority was being given to Peter that is not available to all disciples.

18:35 See note on 6:12,14-15. This parable established in the strongest terms the importance of forgiveness. The parable made the same point as the metaphor of a bad tree bearing bad fruit (cp. 7:15-18): Those who have received God's forgiveness will forgive.

19:9 Matthew 5:32 also contains this exception clause (permitting divorce in cases of sexual infidelity), while Mk 10:11 and Lk 16:18 do not. This has led many interpreters to conclude that Matthew has liberalized Jesus' strict teaching. But all three Synoptic Gospels (Mt, Mk, and Lk) agree that Jesus viewed divorce as wrong, and no good reason has been given as to why Matthew included this exception. The discussion as presented in Mt fits first-century Jewish debates about divorce, particularly centering on the meaning of "something improper" in Dt 24:1. Jesus agreed with the school of Shammai that the indecency involved is sexual sin. But whereas Pharasaic *halakah* required divorce for adultery, Jesus only permitted it.

19:12 Making oneself a eunuch for the sake of the kingdom is to be taken figuratively (as in 5:29). Jesus was referring to celibacy.

19:16-17 Jesus did not teach that eternal life is earned by keeping the commandments (see note on Mk 10:18). Instead, the man had to follow Jesus (19:21). Jesus began where the man was: a Jew seeking life and righteousness must look to the law. But Jesus sought to move him to a new understanding. It is not strict adherence to the law that leads to life, as the would-be follower himself realized, but submission to the Messiah and to the broader ethic of the law as defined by Him. See notes on 5:17-20 and 5:19. Matthew's account tells us that this man was young (19:22). Luke's parallel narrative indicates that he was very rich (Lk 18:23) and that he was a ruler (Lk 18:18). Thus, the characterization of this would-be follower of Jesus as the "rich young ruler."

19:21 On Jesus' radical requirement that a rich man sell all his possessions and follow Him, see note on Mk 10:21.

19:29 On Jesus' promise of "100 times more" to those who sacrifice to follow Him, see note on Mk 10:29-30.

20:1-15 The parable merely illustrates God's generous mercy; it recommends neither wage practices nor deathbed conversions.

20:20 On the differences between Matthew's account and Mark's account of favored places in His kingdom to be granted to His disciples James and John, see note on Mk 10:35.

20:28 On Jesus' understanding of His mission, see note on Mk 10:45.

20:30 For differences among the Gospel accounts ofJesus' healing of a blind man in Jericho, see note on Mk 10:46-52.

21:2 The inseparability of a donkey and its colt was proverbial in Judaism, and here the mother apparently accompanied the unbroken colt on its first ride to keep it calm. Matthew noted both animals because of the nice parallelism with the prophecy of Zch 9:9 (two animals are mentioned: the colt and the female donkey of whom it is the son), though he doubtless understood that only one animal was indicated as being ridden there and intended his readers to understand that it was upon the colt that Jesus actually rode. Mark and Luke referred only to the colt since it was the animal ridden and since they made no mention of the prophecy. See note on Mk 11:2-3.

21:12-22 Matthew (and to a lesser extent Luke) differed from Mark on the timing of these events (see note on Mk 11:15). It appears that Mark recorded the actual chronology, while Matthew and Luke gave a more topical arrangement within the broad chronology. Mark had Jesus merely looking around at the temple on the day of the triumphal entry and cleansing the temple the following day. Matthew and Luke skipped the initial visit and jumped immediately to the cleansing. Mark split the cursing of the fig tree (before the cleansing) and its withering (after the cleansing). Matthew combined both events and reported them immediately after the cleansing.

21:22 On Jesus' statement about receiving "whatever you ask for in prayer," see note on Mk 11:22-24.

21:33-46 On Jesus' parable of the vineyard owner and its messianic message, see note on Mk 12:6.

22:11-13 The man without a wedding garment apparently represents the false disciple (7:22). His speechlessness indicates that he recognizes his fault, not that the king (God) is making an impossible demand, especially since there was a custom of kings providing festal garments for those who needed but lacked them. Deliberate spurning of the king's offer may be in view here.

22:14 Many were invited to the feast, but only a minority responded, and of those some were rejected. Those who remain to the end show that they had in fact been chosen from the beginning. Jesus preserved a tension between individual response and divine election (see 11:25).

22:30 On Jesus' statement about our bodily form in heaven, see note on Mk 12:25.

22:45 On the superiority of the Messiah to David, see note on Mk 12:37.

23:2-3 This saying seems to contradict the strong polemic against the Pharisees in Mt, and especially 16:12, but it must be understood in context. Verses 4-36 qualify the otherwise strong endorsement of the teaching of the scribes and Pharisees. Jesus was thus either being ironic in verses 2-3, saying, in essence, "They presume to sit in Moses' seat, so you had better do what they say!" Or He was endorsing the objectives of their teaching but denigrating the application ("They are attempting to safeguard the purity of Israel and its faithfulness to the covenant, so listen to them; just do not follow their practice").

23:8-10 The point of this text is not what titles may legitimately be used in addressing those in authority, but that titles are not to be used to confer privilege or status. Jesus used characteristically Semitic, hyperbolic rhetoric to get His point across.

23:17,33 On Jesus' reference to the Pharisees as "blind fools" and "snakes," see note on Lk 11:40.

23:34 On Jesus' prediction of the persecution of believers, see note on Lk 21:12-13.

23:35 Luke 11:51 identifies the prophet who died in the temple simply as Zechariah, and there is no problem identifying him as the priest Zechariah ben Jehoiada of 2 Ch 24:20-22, since 2 Ch is the last book of the Hebrew Bible and it records Zechariah crying out for vengeance (see Gn 4:10; 2 Ch 24:22). But Mt 23:35 says the murdered prophet was the son of Berechiah, which seems to identify him with the author of the book of Zechariah (Zch 1:1). Most understand the reference in Mt to be a blending of the two Zechariahs that occurred in Jewish tradition. It is possible, however, that Zechariah the priest had a father named Berechiah and that Jehoiada was the name of his grandfather, since Jehoiada died at the age of 130, shortly before the murder of Zechariah (2 Ch 24:15). Others suggest that the minor prophet Zechariah is intended and that he was murdered as described, though there is no evidence for this claim.

23:38 On Israel's being left desolate, see note on Lk 13:35.

24:9 On Jesus' prediction of the future persecution of His followers, see note on Lk 21:12-13.

24:15 On the interplay between Jesus' prediction of the destruction of Jerusalem and the end times, see notes on Mk 13:30 and Lk 21:20-28.

24:29-30 On the signs that foretell Jesus' second coming, see note on Mk 13:24.

24:34 On the events that will happen in "this generation," see notes on Mk 13:30 and Lk 21:28,31-32.

24:45-51 The historical setting of this parable is uncertain; neither Mt nor Lk provides chronological information. They each apparently placed the parable in their respective contexts for thematic reasons, though it is possible that Jesus taught these lessons to His disciples on more than one occasion. On the harsh punishment of the servant in this parable, see note on Lk 12:46-48.

25:14-30 On the relationship between the parable of the talents in this passage and the parable of the minas in Lk, see note on Lk 19:11-27.

25:26,28-30 On the harsh treatment of the unfruitful servant in Jesus' parable of the talents, see note on Lk 19:26.

25:31-46 This teaching of Jesus on the sheep and the goats appears only in Mt. He was not teaching salvation by works in these verses. The compassion shown by the sheep shows their salvation (7:15-27). That both the sheep and the goats are surprised at their "qualifications" indicates that neither was working for salvation. Those who were punished for their failure to minister to others were so blinded by their preoccupation with themselves that they showed no compassion. The parable shows that mere profession of one's belief that does not lead to love and concern for people is useless.

26:6-13 On the relationship of this anointing of Jesus to a similar event reported by Lk (Lk 7:36-50), see note on Mk 14:3-9. The Dead Sea Scrolls attest to a leper colony near Bethany, adding plausibility to the event taking place at the home of Simon the leper.

26:11 On Jesus' statement about the poor, see note on Mk 14:7.

26:17 On the sequence of events during the last few days before Jesus' crucifixion, see note on Mk 14:12.

26:24 Jesus used Son of Man as an all-encompassing term for His concept of the Messiah, a concept that included OT figures such as those in the servant passage of Is 53:7-8, and probably others. See notes on Mt 26:31 and Lk 18:31-33.

26:26-29 On the variation among the Gospel accounts about the number of cups drunk in the memorial supper and the sequence of the wine and bread served, see notes on Mk 14:22-24 and Lk 22:17,20.

26:31-35 On the differences among the Gospel narratives about Jesus' prediction of Peter's denial, see note on Mk 14:27-31.

26:31 In Zch 13:1-6 the shepherd, God's associate, is a messianic figure (cp. Zch 11:4-17; 12:10; 13:7-9; Ezk 34:1-31) whose death leads to the judgment of Israel and subsequent establishment of a remnant.

26:36-46 This prayer in the garden of Gethsemane is the classic disproof of "name it and claim it" praying.

26:57 On the legality of Jesus' appearance before the Sanhedrin, see note on Mk 14:53. On the order ofJesus' appearances before Caiaphas and Annas, see note on Mk 15:1.

26:64 "In the future" (Gk *ap' arti*) means "hereafter" or "in the coming days." Jesus told the Sanhedrin that they would be confronted with the vindication of the Son of Man in His resurrection, ascension, and the pouring out of the Holy Spirit (seated at the right hand of God) and later, at the last day, coming on the clouds of heaven for their judgment. See notes on Mk 14:61-62 and Lk 23:3.

26:65 On the high priest's statement that Jesus was guilty of blasphemy, see note on Mk 14:63-64.

26:71 On whether Peter's second denial of Jesus was initiated by a woman or a man, see note on Lk 22:58.

26:74-75 On the number of crowings by a rooster when Peter denied Jesus for the final time, see note on Mk 14:30,68,72.

27:5-7 The differences between Matthew's and Luke's (Ac 1:18-19) accounts of the death of Judas and the use of the blood money are not as imposing as some suggest. Both Matthew and Luke agreed that a field was purchased with Judas's money (though only Matthew mentioned that the priests purchased the field as agents of Judas), and both agreed that the field subsequently became known as the Blood Field. Luke was ambiguous as to why the field was so named; Ac 1:19 says, "This became known to all," can be read as referring to the purchase of the field with the tainted money (Ac 1:18) rather than to the manner of Judas's death. Matthew and Luke must be taken to supplement one another on the manner of Judas's death. The simplest harmony is that Judas hanged himself above a precipice but that the rope or support broke, causing him to fall. The topography of Jerusalem easily lends itself to this scenario.

27:9-10 Most of this quote is from Zch 11:12-13, but it also contains allusions to Jr 19:1-13. Both Zechariah and Jeremiah were part of a tradition within the OT dealing with the apostasy of Israel and its rejection of God's leadership. These themes come to fulfillment in Jesus' rejection by the Jewish leadership and more specifically in the details of the blood price of God's shepherd (see note on Mt 26:31) and the purchase of the potter's field. Jeremiah is cited as the prophet most relevant to Matthew's point (see

note on Mt 2:15). That the fit between the quote and the event is rough argues that Matthew did not invent the event to "fulfill" a prophecy.

27:11 On Jesus' response to Pilate's question whether He was the Messiah, see note on Lk 23:3.

27:15 On the Roman custom of releasing a Jewish prisoner during the Passover festival, see note on Mk 15:6.

27:24-26 This episode is often thought unhistorical (though there is nothing historically implausible in Pilate's action) and that Matthew was thereby anti-Semitic. But all the Gospels note that Pilate was reluctant to execute Jesus (Mk 15:9-10,14; Lk 23:7,14-16,20-25; Jn 18:31,38-40; 19:4,6,12-16) and that the Jewish leadership and mob were insistent that he do so. Thus Matthew's portrayal is not unique. The first Christians and Jesus Himself were Jewish. Luke portrayed the early church as self-consciously Jewish.

27:28 On the color of the mock royal robe placed onJesus by Roman soldiers, see note on Mk 15:17.

27:34 On the sour wine offered to Jesus on the cross, see notes on Mk 15:23 and 15:36.

27:37 On the minor variations in wording among the Gospels about the sign posted on Jesus' cross, see note on Mk 15:26.

27:38 On crucifixion and the criminals executed with Jesus, see note on Mk 15:27.

27:44 All three Synoptic Gospels (Mt, Mk, Lk) report that two criminals were crucified at the same time as Jesus. But only Luke recorded that one of them repented and was converted. See note on Lk 23:39-40.

27:46 Mark's version of Jesus' cry of dereliction (see Ps 22:1) is in Aramaic. Matthew's "Eli" is technically Hebrew (though the rest follows Mark's Aramaic). Matthew's rendering is found as well in the Aramaic paraphrase of Ps 22 used in Jewish synagogues. Either Matthew conformed his record to the synagogue reading or Jesus cried out as Matthew recorded and Mark rendered it in more idiomatic Aramaic.

27:48-49 On the possibility that Jesus was offered sour wine more than once while He was on the cross, see note on Mk 15:36.

27:51-53 Presumably the tombs were opened when Jesus died, and the saints were raised and came out whenJesus arose, later ascending at His ascension. Matthew referred to their resurrection here apparently because he wished to link the messianic victory and end of the age represented by that resurrection with the death of Christ. That they "appeared to many" indicates that Matthew's intention in this report was historical, for the detail is irrelevant if his intention was merely symbolic.

27:54 On variations among Gospels in the words spoken by the Roman centurion at Jesus' death, see note on Lk 23:47.

27:62-66 Some have argued that Matthew created this account to provide evidence that the body of Jesus was not stolen. But if Matthew wished to create such evidence, surely he would have had the guard posted immediately upon burial, not a day later, or

even witness the resurrection (as in the clearly contrived Gospel of Peter). The account rather seems intended to provide background for the report in 28:11-15, which in itself points toward its historicity. The Jewish response to this story would have been to deny it altogether, had it not been true, rather than complicate it by asserting the sleeping guard allowed the theft of the corpse. An inscription discovered in Nazareth and dating to before A.D. 70 records an imperial decree forbidding the removal of bodies from graves on pain of death. This decree is thought to have been issued by either Tiberius (A.D. 14–37) or of Claudius (A.D. 41–54). Grave robbing was a perennial problem in the Roman Empire. Other inscriptions as late as the third century A.D. threaten severe punishment to those who remove bodies from tombs. See note on 28:11-15.

27:62,66 The priests did not break the Sabbath regulations by gathering before Pilate and securing the tomb (especially if non-Jewish auxiliary troops actually did the work), though theirs was extraordinary behavior brought on by extraordinary circumstances. They may have delayed the request because they assumed Jesus was buried in a common grave and only too late learned that Joseph had been granted the body.

27:63-64 The priests could have learned of Jesus' prediction of His resurrection from Judas or at the trial of Jesus (if 26:60-61 is not the full extent of the discussion), or it could have been public knowledge (as v. 63 implies). They did not take the prediction seriously, but they feared the disciples did or that the disciples would capitalize on the public knowledge of the prediction.

28:1 On variations among Gospels on the women who went to Jesus' tomb, see note on Mk 16:1.

28:2-5 See note on Mk 16:5-7. Only Matthew mentioned the earthquake and the angel opening the tomb. There is nothing in this, however, that contradicts the other Gospels.

28:8-10 On variations among the Gospel accounts of Jesus' appearances after His resurrection that are both similar and difficult to reconcile, see note on Lk 24:36-43.

28:11-15 Though Matthew has been accused of inventing this story, it is still of great evidential value for the empty tomb, since it attests to polemics between Jews and Christians regarding the issue. Clearly the Jewish response to the Christian proclamation of the resurrection was that the disciples stole the body while the guards were asleep. (It would serve no purpose for Matthew to invent this charge, even if he invented the posting of the guard.) This means that the better responses of denying that Jesus was ever buried in the tomb or that the tomb still contained the body were not available to early opponents of the church. The known location of Jesus' burial site and the fact that it was empty are the best explanation for this Jewish charge.

28:11 It is difficult to tell whether the guards mentioned here were Roman troops or Jewish temple guards. Pilate's words, "You have a guard of soldiers" (27:65), may imply either. That they were in danger of dereliction of duty before Pilate (v. 14) implies that they were Roman. They reported to the priests, then, because they had been assigned to the priests to guard the tomb.

28:13-14 Presumably the priests suggested to the guards that they would explain the true situation to Pilate. It is not difficult to imagine, given the relative difficulty with which secrets are kept, that the story of the bribery eventually became public (especially considering Ac 6:7).

28:16-20 This passage is related thematically to Lk 24:47-49 and Ac 1:4-8, but it does not record the ascension of Jesus and is best understood as a separate incident. Like Luke, Matthew was probably summarizing the final teaching of Jesus to some degree. (See note on Lk 24:44-53 and cp. Lk 24:44-49; Jn 20:21-23.) John 21:1-23 indicates that the apostles spent at least some of the 40 days between Jesus' resurrection and His ascension in Galilee, as Jesus had instructed them. There is no contradiction between this account and the command in Lk 24:49 (cp. Ac 1:8) to remain in Jerusalem, because that command referred to the days after Jesus' ascension, not His resurrection.

28:17 All the resurrection narratives record the doubt of some of the characters at one point or another. The early church preserved in its tradition the fact that the apostles were not expecting the resurrection, despite repeated predictions of it by Jesus Himself. This can only be a historical reminiscence, and it corroborates the disciples' later faith in the resurrection. That is, the actual appearance of the resurrected Jesus best accounts for the historical facts that the disciples initially did not believe Christ had risen and that they later were convinced He had.

28:18 This is probably an allusion to Dn 7:13-14 and indicates that Jesus now began His messianic reign (Php 2:9-11). Absolute authority was given to Jesus by the Father (1 Co 15:27-28). This does not detract fromthe full divinity of Christ, since the subordination of the Son to the Father has to do with their respective roles, not their natures. Thus the baptismal formula in Mt 28:19 treats the Father, Son, and Spirit as equals.

28:19 Some claim that the later difficulty of the church in accepting a Gentile mission is evidence that Jesus never issued this command. But the slowness of the disciples to grasp and implement the words of Jesus was not unusual (15:17; 16:9; Mk 9:32); they experienced a process of growth in obedience as any other group might have. Furthermore, the main problem in Ac and Paul's letters is not whether there ought to be a Gentile mission but under what conditions that mission ought to be carried out.

28:19 In all other Christian baptismal texts in the NT, baptism is said to be in Jesus' name (Ac 2:38; 8:16; 10:48; 19:5; Rm 6:3). However, none of these descriptions may have been intended to be strict formulas for use in baptism. The early summary of apostolic doctrine, the Didache 7:1-4; 9:5, uses both formulas interchangeably. Matthew 28:19 implies Trinitarianism, since it not only places the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit equally at the center of Christian allegiance (baptism is at least a declaration of allegiance) but also unifies them under a singular reference to "the name" (cp.1 Co 12:4-6; 2 Co 13:14; Eph 4:4-6; 2 Th 2:13-14; 1 Pt 1:2; Rev 1:4-5). The clear Trinitarian implications of Lk 24:49; Jn 14:1-11,16,23,26; 15:26; 16:7; 20:28 testify to the likelihood that Trinitarianism has its roots in the teaching of Jesus Himself and argues for the historical probability of the saying in this verse.

Mark Articles

Has Historical Criticism Proved the Bible False?

by Thomas R. Schreiner

Historical criticism of the Bible began in earnest in the eighteenth century, flowered in the nineteenth century, and became the dominant approach to the Scriptures in the twentieth century. Historical criticism has at times been rejected by conservatives because it has called into question the accuracy of the Bible. For example, in the nineteenth century, most scholars delving into the life of Jesus provided rationalistic, not supernatural, explanations of Jesus' miracles. New Testament scholar F. C. Baur argued that the theologies of Peter and Paul contradict one another if one reads the NT historically. Old Testament scholars, such as Julius Wellhausen, maintained that the Pentateuch (first five books of the Bible) was not actually written by Moses. Careful literary and historical study, it was claimed, indicated that the Pentateuch had various sources that were written over a period of hundreds of years and that the final document was put together by an unknown editor.

Still, it is important to recognize that the rise of historical criticism has also benefited the church. The Christian faith is rooted in history. God has manifested Himself supremely in the person of Jesus Christ. He lived and ministered in a particular time and place—in Palestine in the third decade of the first century. As Christians, then, we believe that our faith is historically rooted. Paul insisted that Christians were foolish to believe in the Christian faith if the resurrection of Jesus did not actually occur (1 Co 15:12-19). Hence, we have no fear of historical study but welcome it, for we believe historical research can assist us in understanding the message of the Scriptures.

The benefits of historical study are numerous. It has cleared up the meaning of obscure terms. The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls has cast light on the environment within which the NT was birthed. Study of the ancient Near East and the Greco-Roman world has clarified the extent to which the Scriptures are similar to and dissimilar from documents that came out of surrounding cultures. Historical criticism has also demonstrated that some traditional views were not credible. It was once thought that the NT was written in a special "Holy Ghost" language, but study of sources from the era of the NT has demonstrated that the NT was written in the common Greek of the day. The King James Version of the Bible was an outstanding product of the scholarship in its day, but we now have many more manuscripts for both the NT and the OT, and hence our English Bibles are even closer to the original today because of recent manuscript discoveries and the careful work of scholars in text criticism.

While historical criticism has benefited the church, it also carries with it liabilities. Many scholars who practiced historical criticism imbibed the Enlightenment philosophy sweeping Europe in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Their philosophical worldview masqueraded as historical criticism. As described above, they rejected the miracles of Jesus and provided rationalistic explanations. But scholars do not reject miracles on historical grounds. They have accepted a naturalistic philosophical standpoint that presupposed that miracles don't happen. On this view, even impressive evidence to the contrary is beside the point. Rudolf Bultmann is an example of this view. Bultmann defined historical work in such a way that the acceptance of any miracles was excluded. When we read the NT, we see that credible historical reasons exist to support the resurrection of Christ, but many scholars refuse even to consider the evidence, for they are convinced from the start that resurrections cannot happen. This fundamental bias, i.e., naturalistic philosophy, is all too often cloaked as "objective history."

Historical criticism hoped that it would succeed where orthodoxy failed. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, orthodox Christians debated the interpretation of the Bible, leading to several

different theological systems (Lutheranism, Calvinism, Arminianism). Historical critics believed that they were more objective and that by means of a "neutral" scientific approach they could discover what the Bible really taught. But with the arrival of postmodernism this view seems naive to almost all scholars today. And the record of historical criticism reveals that it did not succeed in agreeing upon "the assured results of scholarship." Indeed, a dizzying array of viewpoints and perspectives are present in historical criticism today, and many of them are mutually contradictory.

The work of F. C. Baur and Julius Wellhausen threatened the faith of evangelical believers in the nineteenth century. Yet few scholars today embrace the conclusions of F. C. Baur, and the documentary hypothesis of Wellhausen is severely questioned. The "assured results" of scholarship in one generation are often vigorously challenged by the next. Evangelicals, of course, should be open to correction. Perhaps we have misread some parts of the Bible because of our tradition. On the other hand, we need to be critical and savvy and to reject the temptation of embracing the latest fad in scholarship just because it is current.

Though evangelical scholars have often solved problems raised by historical critics, conservatives have not solved them all. This does not mean that the Scriptures are inaccurate in such instances but instead that we could resolve such problems if we had enough information. To make such a claim is not a sacrifice of one's intellect. Comprehensive answers are lacking in every historical discipline since the evidence is fragmentary. We can be grateful to historical criticism since it has helped us understand the Scriptures better. But we must also be on our guard. Often historical criticism has veered off into unsubstantiated allegations about the accuracy of the Scriptures, and it has routinely approached the Scriptures with an antisupernatural worldview. Historical criticism has not demonstrated the Bible to be false. The Bible, rightly interpreted, has stood the test of time.

Can We Still Believe in Demons Today?

by Clinton E. Arnold

Many modern scholars regard belief in demons as a primitive worldview that includes elves, dragons, and a flat world. They contend that the advent of modern science, especially advances in understanding body chemistry, psychology, and neurology, enables better understanding of the phenomena the ancients attributed to the work of demons.

Skepticism about the existence of angels and demons is at odds with the direct and explicit testimony of Scripture. From the Garden of Eden in Genesis to Satan's doom in Revelation, the pages of Scripture are filled with references to evil supernatural beings who oppose God and His purposes. Their frequency of appearance actually heightens during the ministry of Jesus and the apostles. In fact, we learn most about their nature, character, and activities from Jesus and Paul.

Beside the biblical assumption of demonic reality, other matters must be considered:

Science is inherently incapable of answering this question. Some critics grant science authority to make judgments on issues it is incapable of judging. Just as science is incompetent to adjudicate on morality, so it is also beyond its jurisdiction in trying to decide the question of demonic existence. Science seeks to describe and explain natural phenomena. There is no reason to assume it has power to answer questions regarding the supernatural, such as whether these beings exist.

Purely naturalistic explanations are not adequate for describing many forms of evil in the world. Although the impact of sin on the human soul explains much of the proliferation of evil, some situations are still so abhorrent or inexplicable that they suggest a demonic origin. The horrors of an Auschwitz or of a mother roasting her own child to death imply a powerful force leading humanity to destruction.

Some therapeutic situations are best explained by the work of a spirit being. While it is true that symptoms produced by schizophrenia, dissociation, and other psychological and chemical disorders have often been wrongly attributed to demons, some conditions are best explained by the direct influence of a spirit entity. The international community of mental health professionals recognizes this and labels it "Trance and Possession Disorder," an especially common diagnosis in non-Western cultures.

We need to learn from the broader sweep of human history and cultures. The last 300 years in Western history represent the only time when the existence of evil spirits has been viewed with widespread skepticism. Furthermore, an exploration of other cultures throughout Asia, Africa, the Pacific Islands, and elsewhere reveals that belief in evil spirits continues to be integral to the worldview of many people groups.

Belief in the reality of evil spirits need not lead to uncritical or unwarranted beliefs about demons nor the bizarre and dangerous practices of extremist individuals and groups. Our task should be to integrate this more complete view of reality into our functional worldview with constant sensitivity to biblical teaching on this topic. At the beginning of the *Screwtape Letters*, C. S. Lewis warned that we can err in two ways as regards the devil. We can fail to take account of him or we can give him too much attention.

Why Would a Good God Send People to an Everlasting Hell?

by Paul Copan

The essence of hell is to be "away from the presence of the Lord" (2 Th 1:9). Hell's differing images of darkness, fire, and decay express the anguish of being cut off from intimate union with God (Rv 21:3; 22:4). God genuinely offers salvation to all and thus commands all without exception to repent (Ezk 33:11; 2 Pt 3:9; Ac 17:30), but He will not hold up the final celebration because of those resisting His grace (Ac 7:51)."

Let's address some hell-related questions that unbelievers and believers find troubling.

"Isn't God unjust to punish persons forever for sins committed during a limited earthly existence?" Those in hell have committed the ultimate, infinite sin—not simply a string of finite sins—in rejecting a relationship with the self-giving God. Also, hell is the logical outcome of a mindset to live life apart from God—not simply committing individual sins. The punishment fits the crime. You want no God, you get no God. There are two kinds of people: those who say to God, "Thy will be done," and those to whom God says, "*Thy* will be done" (C. S. Lewis).

"But wouldn't persons in hell really want to be with God if they knew what hell is like?" No. Those who have resisted God on earth continue in their hard-heartedness thereafter (just as those living for God on earth continue to enjoy Him). God's holy presence would truly be "hell" for those wanting their own way. We have no hint from Scripture of repentance in hell. Rebellion, hate, and selfishness continue. The rich man in hell (Lk 16:19-26) is remorseful, not repentant—not wanting to change but to find relief!

"But how can people be sent to hell without knowing its full implications?" Even if one isn't fully aware of hell's anguish, this doesn't mean our choice is too much to bear. God is ready to equip anyone for salvation (Jn 16:8). Though the full consequences of our embracing or rejecting God aren't fully apparent to us now, grace to choose responsibly is available to all. What prevents the salvation of everyone? Individuals' choosing freely to reject God's grace. We can always resist the Holy Spirit (Ac 7:51). God doesn't *send* people to hell; they freely *reject* Him, condemning themselves by not acknowledging their guilt.

"Why didn't God make the world in such a way that all people would love Him?" While a world in which everyone loves God is theoretically possible, it is not feasible. Whatever possible world with free creatures God could create, it may be that none is sin-free, and God's love isn't *forced*. Hell—the absence of God's presence—exists because, like Milton's Satan, people would rather "reign in hell than serve in heaven." God isn't unloving but rather has gone to great lengths to show grace to everyone. Should God not create at all because many freely resist Him in the world God created and thus deprive many others of the greatest good possible?

"Why did God create people He knew would reject and be separated from Him forever?" Despite God's desire that all be saved (1 Tm 2:4; 2 Pt 3:9), many still resist. What if some become more resistant no matter how loving God is (Is 5:4; Mt 23:37)? Should God not create those who would respond to His love simply because others would refuse it? What if God created a world in which a maximal balance of least condemned and most redeemed was realized? This is not unloving.

"Why couldn't God, from the start, make us like heaven's saints—loving God while unable to sin?" Robust freedom on earth—to embrace freely God's grace or resist it—is a requirement for arriving at one's final destiny. Our earthly direction is "sealed" in the afterlife; our heart's desire is finally granted—God or no God. So God couldn't have created a heavenlike state in which the redeemed no longer sin without damaging this vitally important freedom. (Or perhaps, rather than

"sealing" us from sin in the afterlife, God simply foreknows that no saint will actually freely sin, guaranteeing a sin-free condition in the final state.)

Finally, because God has so fully given of Himself to make salvation freely available through His Son, we can confidently entrust any lingering questions about hell to His excellent character.

Can God Create a Stone Too Heavy for Him to Lift?

by Charles Taliaferro

This question should immediately strike one as a word game. Many puzzles exist in the same category, such as, "Can God eat oatmeal that no one can eat?" Such puzzles are intended to reveal a logical problem with the divine attribute of omnipotence. If God can create a stone too heavy for anyone to lift, then there is one task God cannot do, namely lift any conceivable stone. But if God can lift any stone, then again there appears to be one task God cannot do, namely create a stone too heavy for God to lift. The argument concludes there cannot be an omnipotent God.

The most plausible and common philosophical response to this puzzle is to challenge the coherence of the task demanded. In order for someone to conclude that there is some state of affairs God cannot bring about, the objector must establish that the state of affairs is a genuine, bona fide possibility. It is no imperfection of anyone to be unable to make the concept of justice dance with the number two. The concepts of justice and the number two are not the sorts of things that can dance.

Does the above reply make "logic" something greater than God? No, "logic" is not the name of some concrete or abstract thing that can carry out tasks. When you cannot do something contradictory (such as make a square circle), it is not as though there is a force called logic restraining you. "Logic," in this context, may be formulated in terms of two laws: the law of identity (A is A) and noncontradiction (A is not not A). These are not "laws," however, like the laws of nature (e.g., the laws of motion). They are, rather, necessary conditions of there being anything at all and for there being thought or language about anything at all. God the Son is identified in the NT as the Logos. Some philosophers and theologians have understood this to imply that logic and reason are attributes of God's excellent nature.

The stone paradox may be resolved in terms of strict logic, but does it not generate a more general problem? Can the God of Christian theism commit suicide? Tell lies? Do evil for its own sake?

Two replies should be considered. One is to claim God can bring about any of these states of affairs, but because of God's essential goodness, God does not do so. On this view, God is still omnipotent in the sense of being able to bring about any state of affairs. A second reply is to question an assumption behind the objection. Why think of divine omnipotence exclusively in terms of the bare scope of power? An important classical Christian tradition (Augustine, Anselm, Aquinas) holds that God's power is also supremely good. Is the "power" to do evil for its own sake a worthy, good power? Arguably, God's excellent power is the power to do good, not evil. A further exploration of this concept of divine power leads us away from the apparent word game of the stone paradox and focuses the mind on the nature of God's excellence, the object worthy of worship.

What About "Gospels" Not in Our New Testament?

by Graham H. Twelftree

The four Gospels in our Bible had all been written by the end of the first century. Apparently no other gospels were written by this time. By the last 20 years of the second century, when Irenaeus the bishop of Lyon was writing, the four Gospels had been widely and firmly established for some time as the only ones accepted by mainstream Christianity. However, many sections of the church did not use all of them.

Irenaeus argued against accepting other gospels, such as the Gospel of Truth, alleged to have been written by the Gnostic teacher Valentinus. He said it had only recently been written and "did not agree in any respect with the Gospels of the apostles." This gospel is a homily or meditation and does not resemble our biblical Gospels in telling of the activities and teaching of Jesus, including His appearances after Easter. The same is true of the Gospel of Philip, an anthology of sayings from the mid-fourth century, as well as the second-century Greek Gospel of the Egyptians, about which we know little except that it was apparently a collection of sayings. The Gospel of Thomas, which also contains a collection of sayings of Jesus (some of which may be historically authentic) along with minimal narrative material, has been argued to be early. However, because of parallels with literature of this period, many date it late in the second century. More fanciful gospels include the Infancy Gospel of Thomas, with its miracles conducted by the child Jesus, ending with the story from Luke of the 12-year-old Jesus in the temple.

Other gospels approximate those in the NT. For example, the now largely missing Gospel of Peter came from the middle of the second century. From the fragmentary evidence we have, it told of the trial of Jesus, His crucifixion, and His appearing to a group of His followers. Also, the Gospel of the Ebionites, from Syria in the same period, is a harmony of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Later in the century Tatian produced a widely used harmony of all four Gospels, the Diatessaron, which was highly valued particularly in Syria. From papyrus fragments we also have evidence of a handful of other gospels from as early as the second century. A letter of Clement of Alexandria (c. 150–215) discovered in 1958, which tells of a "secret gospel" of Mark, may be a modern forgery.

The Gospel of Hebrews, written before the mid-second century, perhaps in Egypt for Greek-speaking Jewish Christians, was the only gospel apart from the four in our Bible that was ever considered part of the legitimate Scriptures by sections of orthodox Christianity. The few remaining quotations of it show that it probably began with Jesus' preexistence and included His descent from heaven and subsequent birth. Jesus describes Himself as the son of the Holy Spirit and reports His temptation. There are also examples of His teaching. During the Last Supper, James the brother of Jesus says he will not eat again until he has seen the risen Jesus. There was probably a story of the burial of Jesus, and those who guarded the tomb may have witnessed the resurrection. As anticipated, there is a story of Jesus appearing to James, reinforcing his importance to this gospel. Gnostic characteristics, divergence from the biblical Gospels, and lack of any connection with an apostle may account for its eventually being excluded from the NT by mainstream Christianity.

Introduction to Mark

AUTHOR

The second Gospel is anonymous, but its only association has been with the Mark of the NT. The earliest existing Greek manuscripts including the title

"According to Mark" come from the third century, though the title was probably added when the Gospels were first being collected, sometime between A.D. 100–130. The earliest mention of Mark as the author of a Gospel comes from Papias, the bishop of Hierapolis, in Asia Minor, writing around A.D. 130. The early church historian Eusebius quoted Papias's words to the effect that Mark, as a follower of Peter, recorded stories about Jesus that Peter used in his preaching and that the stories were accurate but not in proper order. Papias added that he received this information from "the elder," by which he possibly meant the Apostle John.

Critical scholars have challenged Papias's claims, either suggesting that Papias was not referring to our second Gospel or that Papias was merely conjecturing about its authorship. These objections are weak. Not long after Papias (c. A.D. 150), Justin Martyr was quoting the second Gospel as "the memoirs of Peter," indicating at least that the Papias tradition was associated with Mark's Gospel. Why should Papias or another invent as its author the rather obscure character Mark? Why not identify Peter as the direct author, or at least Silas, who arguably was much more important in the early church than Mark and is mentioned in 1 Peter 5:12 as Peter's secretary?

Because there are no competing traditions, and because Papias's testimony is early and apparently well informed, it seems best to accept the traditional authorship of Mark based on the external evidence. But many critics also point to internal evidence to question whether the Mark of the NT authored the second Gospel. How strong is this evidence?

A John Mark is mentioned 10 times in the NT—in Acts as a young man in whose house the church in Jerusalem met (Ac 12:12) and who accompanied Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey (Ac 12:25; 13:5,13; 15:37-39). In Colossians and Philemon Mark is mentioned as someone with Paul during his first Roman imprisonment (Col 4:10; Phm 24) and in 2 Timothy as someone Paul desired to have with him during his second Roman imprisonment (2 Tm 4:11). First Peter indicates that Mark was someone beloved by Peter and with him in Rome (1 Pt 5:13). There is little doubt these four personages are one and the same. It is highly unlikely, despite the popularity of the name Mark in the first century, that more than one Mark could be mentioned in such close proximity to the ministries of Peter and Paul (and Barnabas, Silas, and Luke) without any distinction between them being indicated. That means that the Mark who presumably wrote the second Gospel grew up in Judea in a wealthy, urban family, that he was raised under the teaching of the 12 apostles, that he knew well the movers and shakers of the early church, and that he was relatively well traveled. And yet some scholars believe that this cannot be the sort of person who wrote the second Gospel. They note two points especially: (1) the Gospel was written in Greek, not Aramaic, the primary language of Palestinian Jews in the first century; and (2) the author seems not to have been well acquainted with the geography and customs of Palestine.

For specific responses to these charges, see the notes included with the Bible text. It is sufficient here to note, first, that even though it would virtually be expected of a wealthy urbanite in Palestine to know Greek, the Greek of Mark's Gospel has a distinctly Semitic tinge, a fact that makes it much more likely that its author was a Semite who spoke Greek as a second language. Second, the alleged erroneous references to the customs and geography of Palestine appear as such only on a skeptical reading of the text. On the other hand the Gospel of Mark familiarity with Paul's theology and an

apostolic (Peter's?) eyewitness version of the events of the life of Christ. Some scholars have suggested that the rather negative portrayal of the disciples in Mark could only have had apostolic sanction. Others say that the outline of Mark bears resemblance to the preaching outline of Peter in Acts.

In the final analysis, the internal evidence does not weigh against traditional authorship any more than does the external evidence, and the best conclusion is that the second Gospel was indeed written by John Mark. The second Gospel must thus be treated as a highly reliable source on the historical Jesus.

DATE

There are various traditions for the dating of the Gospel. According to Irenaeus, bishop of Lyon, France (c. A.D. 180), Mark was written after the "departure" of Peter and Paul from Rome. Scholars are divided over whether Irenaeus meant that Mark wrote after Peter and Paul left Rome or after they died. But in either case, that would place the writing of Mark perhaps in the early 60s. Later church fathers place the writing during the life of Peter. If, as most scholars believe, the Gospel of Mark was used, at least in some form, by Luke in the writing of his Gospel, the date of Mark could be pushed back to the 50s, since the earliest date for Luke is around A.D. 60. Thus Mark could have recorded his information only 20 to 30 years after the actual events of Christ's life, well within the lifespan of eyewitnesses. Even critical scholars tend to date Mark no later than 69, since he does not seem to have been aware of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, which occurred in A.D. 70.

PROBLEMS

The greatest problem in studying the historicity of Mark is its relation to the other Gospels, particularly to Matthew and Luke. It is generally agreed there is a literary relationship among the first three Gospels, that one or another of the Gospels was used by the others. The theory that deals best with the data (though by no means with all of it) is that Mark was used by Matthew and Luke. Nevertheless, there are striking dissimilarities in how these three Gospels report the same events, especially between Mark and Luke. The words of Jesus are often reported with slight variations among the three Gospels, and the order of the events varies at times. Some of these dissimilarities may be due to Jesus saying and doing similar things on multiple occasions, but we cannot plausibly account for all, or indeed for most, of them this way. Instead, the differences are best attributed to a Gospel's genre, or kind of writing.

The Gospels are most like Greco-Roman popular biographies, and they follow similar conventions of reporting speech and events. Ancient biographers were not as interested in giving the precise details of a person's life as are modern biographers. They were more interested in presenting a sympathetic picture of their subject and in recording the hero's words and deeds in such a way that it would present him or her as worthy of honor or emulation. This is not to say they wantonly presented false information but rather that they aimed at only a general degree of precision. Thus the Gospels don't give us the exact words (often called the *ipsissima verba)* of Jesus on every occasion but instead His genuine teaching (the *ipsissima vox*, or "exact voice"). The Gospels make virtually no claims to chronological reporting (till the Passion narratives), and thus the events of Jesus' life are often arranged on other principles, thematic or geographical, or even merely within the broad chronological framework. Inerrancy is compromised in these cases only if Jesus never said or did the things attributed to Him or if the author made false chronological claims.

Unlike Greco-Roman biographies, the Gospels are concerned less to showcase Jesus' character than to explain His significance within God's program as the long-awaited Messiah, and each Gospel emphasizes a different aspect of this significance. Mark's emphasis is on Jesus as the suffering Son of God. Jesus is presented as fully aware of His messianic identity and calling, while everyone else

(except God and the demons) is baffled by Him. He is at once supernaturally powerful and authoritative and yet also humble, servantlike, and committed to the cross. Mark moves the reader quickly through the teaching and miracle-working ministry of Jesus to the climactic events of His death and resurrection. The Gospel reaches its high point with the confession of the centurion at the cross, "This man really was God's Son!" (15:39).

Mark Study Notes

1:1 Though the phrase "Son of God" does not appear in all ancient Greek manuscripts of Mk, it is probably original. It is easy to account for its omission as a copying mistake, and the phrase appears at crucial moments in Mark's Gospel (notably 1:11; 9:7; 15:39; see 3:11; 5:7; 14:61-62). Son of God could merely be intended as a synonym for Christ (2 Sm 7:14; Ps 2:7), though Mark clearly portrayed Jesus as having supernatural ability and authority and probably used the title purposely to emphasize his special relationship to the Father.

1:2-3 This quote combines material from Mal 3:1, Ex 23:20, and Is 40:3. Such combinations were common among some groups in early Judaism and allowed a number of theological themes that had been developed in the OT to be brought forward with minimal citation. Here Mark highlighted the themes of God's salvation in the wilderness and the herald's announcement of the end-times coming of God, both fulfilled in the baptism of Jesus by John. Mark attributed the entire quote to Is either because the material in Is was most central to his portrayal of the baptism scene or because the quote serves to interpret the "beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ" within the larger framework of Isaiah's description of the coming Messiah (see Is 41:27; 52:7; 61:1).

1:5 When Mark stated that "the whole Judean countryside" and "all the people of Jerusalem" came out to John, he did not literally mean every single person. Biblical writers used the same figures of speech, including hyperbole, that any other person would use, and their precision must be judged by their purpose. Mark was conveying a story vividly, not reporting numbers scientifically.

1:7 The context of the opening scriptural salvo, which presents John the Baptist as the prophesied forerunner of the coming God (Is 40:1-11; Mal 3:1-6), implies that "more powerful" one who would come after him is God Himself. Similarly, in the OT it is God who pours out the Holy Spirit (Is 32:15; 44:3; Ezk 36:26-27; 39:29; Jl 2:28-29). Mark thus emphasized the divinity of Jesus here.

1:11 The voice from heaven is reported differently here and in Lk than in Mt. Mark and Luke recorded the event from Jesus' perspective; Matthew likely presented John the Baptist's viewpoint (see Jn 1:32-34). The voice was apparently addressed to Jesus but had the effect of confirming Jesus' status to John. The Gospel writers did not aim at "tape recording" accuracy but at the gist of the characters' speech. On this point see note on Mt 3:8.

1:14 Jesus' Galilean ministry began after the arrest of John the Baptist. John 3:22-30 indicates that Jesus had been conducting a baptism ministry in Judea prior to this. The fact that John told his readers that thisministry occurred before John the Baptist's arrest (Jn 3:24) may indicate that he knew of and was attempting to fill out the picture given by Mk or Mt.

1:15 Jesus was not mistaken about the nearness of the kingdom of God, despite the fact that almost two thousand years have passed since His announcement. Though the consummation of the kingdom awaits a future return of Christ, its inauguration occurred during His initial ministry, especially with His atoning death.

1:16-20 Mark gave only the briefest description of the events surrounding the call of Jesus' disciples. Andrew and Peter had earlier contact with Jesus, according to Jn 1:35-42, and Peter's call was more extended than Mark's presentation of it, according to Lk 5:1-11. This does not undermine the historicity of Mark's account; his narrative interest was not in the historical details but in the authority of Jesus. He was not concerned to tell us precisely how the disciples were called but rather that they *were* called and that they responded in complete submission to Jesus.

1:21 The Capernaum synagogue ruins visible today were most likely erected on the site of the synagogue mentioned in this verse.

1:29 Peter and Andrew's home at this time was in Capernaum, though Jn 1:44 states that they were originally from Bethsaida. In the 1970s and 1980s a house that may have been Peter's house was excavated in Capernaum beneath a fifth-century church dedicated to Peter.

1:29-34,40-45 Mark and Matthew presented these episodes in opposite order, indicating that the principle upon which they arranged their material was not always chronological. Neither Mark nor Matthew used language that indicated the chronological relationship of the two events. This phenomenon occurs frequently in the Gospels.

1:44 If Jesus was the Messiah, why did He not allow the man with the skin disease to spread the news about Him? Jesus did not want His program co-opted by others (see Jn 6:15; 7:3-6). He would reveal Himself on His own terms when the time was right. Jesus' purpose was not popularity and political insurrection but discipleship and ultimately the cross (Mk 10:43-45). This point is particularly central to Mk, so Mk includes several instances when Jesus ordered those whom He healed not to tell others about it.

2:10,28 These are the first references in Mk where Jesus used the self-designation Son of Man. There is evidence that the corresponding Aramaic phrase could be used to make oblique reference to oneself as an individual or as a member of a class ("a certain person [or "certain people"], namely, me"), and many scholars understand Jesus' usage of "Son of Man" this way. But there is also evidence of speculation among some Jews of Jesus' day about a judicial messianic figure based in part on the "One like a son of man" in Dn 7:13-14. This concept is certainly represented in the Gospels (see 13:26; 14:62) and helps clarify Jesus' claim of unique authority. Verse 28 may show a link between the two concepts, where the concluding Son of Man saying requires a meaning something like "the representative Man" or "the Second Adam."

2:14 Levi is the name given the tax collector here and in Lk 5:27-32, but he is called Matthew in Mt 9:9-13 and 10:3. It was not uncommon for Jews in the first century to have two names. Both Levi/Matthew and an apostle James the Less had fathers named Alphaeus, though whether they were brothers is uncertain.

2:26 According to 1 Sm 21:1-6, Ahimelech was high priest when David ate the bread of the presence. Abiathar, Ahimelech's son, became David's high priest shortly after as a result of the episode (see 2 Sm 8:17;1 Ch 24:6). There is no error in Mk 2:26, however, because the Greek idiom used can merely mean "in the passage about Abiathar." If that's the case, Mark's reference would be to the multi-chapter segment of 1 Sm that would have been a unit within a Jewish lectionary.

3:2 On Jesus' relationship to the Law, including observance of the Sabbath, see notes on Mt 5:17-20 and 5:19.

3:11 On the phrase "Son of God" spoken by the demons, see note on Mk 1:1.

3:12 See note on Mk 1:44.

3:13-19 The 12 apostles are listed four times in the NT (cp. Mt 10:2-4; Lk 6:13-16; Ac 1:13), and every list is essentially the same with the exception of Thaddeus and Simon. Luke gave these names as Judas and Simon the Zealot (see Jn 14:22). The variations in the nickname of Simon are due to its expressions in Aramaic (*qan'ana* = "zealot") and Greek (*zelotes* = "zealot"). It must be assumed that Judas son of James had a second name or nickname, Thaddaeus, used here by Mark. Similarly, Bartholomew is a patronymic, literally meaning "son of Talmai," and it is conjectured that his first name was Nathanael (see Jn 1:45). The Gospels report faithfully that Jesus chose Judas Iscariot as one of the Twelve. This points to the integrity of the early church in preserving accurately details that would be omitted in an account whose concern was image rather than truth.

3:22 This statement is reflected in rabbinic recollection of the ministry of Jesus: "On the eve of Passover Yeshu [Jesus] was hanged. And an announcer went out in front of him for fourteen days [saying], 'He is going to be stoned, because he practiced sorcery and led Israel astray!' " (*b. Sanh.* 43a, cp. 107b; *b. Sota* 47a; *t. Sabb*. 11:15; cp. Justin *Dial.* 69:7). The quote is from the earliest period of compilation of rabbinic traditions (c. A.D. 70–200) and shows a clear polemic against Christianity, but it nevertheless confirms that Jesus was remembered as a miracle worker opposed by the keepers of Jewish tradition.

3:31-35 Jesus' language in this passage would have been shocking to His audience. Family relationships were very important in first-century Palestinian society. But Jesus was not being rude; He was making two forceful and related points. First, His family had come to take control of Him (vv. 20-21), and He was distancing Himself from obligations to family honor for the sake of His greater calling. Second, He commended those who make a similar choice. He underscored in the strongest terms the pursuit of God's will as the highest value. Jesus' family eventually came to be His followers (Ac 1:14); see note on Lk 14:26.

4:11-12 Did Jesus really speak in parables to hide the kingdom from "those outside"? According to the context here, yes and no. Proper listening is the theme that connects the parables in chapter 4, and Jesus spoke in parables to distinguish between "anyone who has ears to hear" (v. 9; that is, those with responsive hearts) and those who do not. He knew His parables would have opposite effects on those ready to listen and those not ready. He therefore implied an element of culpability in the audience (see Mt 13:14). To those who have ears to hear, more revelation of the kingdom will be given, but to those who do not have ears to hear, even what revelation they have been given will be taken away, or will prove ineffective (Mk 4:25).

The quote in verse 12 is from Is 6. Concealing the message came in response to the people's repeated, prolonged hardening, but the end of Is 6 nevertheless promises that a remnant would repent and return.

4:31-32 On Jesus' reference to the seed of the mustard plant, see note on Mt 13:32.

4:39-41 Causing the wind and waves to cease was a strong indication of deity (Ps 65:5-7; 89:9; 107:23-32). Only God had the power to calm the sea, but His Son Jesus had the same power. For more on miracles, see note on 6:34.

5:1 The place of this miracle is somewhat confused in the Greek manuscripts of the NT, with testimony divided among Gerasenes, Gadarenes, and Gergesenes. (The best reconstruction has Mk and Lk naming the region of the Gerasenes, while Mt has the region of the Gadarenes.) All three places were cities or villages east of the Sea of Galilee. Gerasa was the most important village, but only Gergesa (modern El Kursi) is close enough to the lake and possesses a suitable geography (steep cliffs) to fit the story. It is likely that early in the transmission of this story the name of the lesser-known Gergesa was replaced by the better-known and similarly pronounced Gerasa. Or perhaps Gerasa was an alternative spelling of the name of the village, later confused with the well-known namesake city. Others argue that Gergesa was a village in the territory of Gadara, prompting Matthew to use the regional designation for its inhabitants in his version of the story.

5:2 While Mk and Lk mentioned one demon-possessed man, Mt mentioned two. Some understand Mt to have increased the number for theological reasons, but it is more likely that Mk focused only on the more prominent of the two men.

5:11-13 Jesus was not uncaring and destructive for causing a herd of pigs to die and its owners to be deprived of their property. First, the destruction was caused by the demons, not directly by Jesus. Second, though the intrinsic value of animals is taught in Scripture (e.g., Pr 12:10), the surpassing value of humans as made in the image of God is more fundamental. Jesus cast the demons into the pigs for the greater good of saving the demon-possessed man (see Mt 10:31). Pigs were the most unclean of animals and, by Jewish kosher laws, were not to be raised for food.

5:34 For more on the healing of the woman suffering from bleeding, see note on Lk 8:46-48.

6:5 Jesus was physically able to perform miracles in Nazareth. This is made clear by the exception clause at the end of the verse. The restriction on this healing was a moral one. Just as we are sometimes morally limited from performing some action though physically able to do it, so Jesus was morally limited from healing because of the conditions of faithlessness in Nazareth. Thus Mt 13:58 reports that Jesus "did not do many miracles there because of their unbelief."

6:8-9 This saying differs in Mt and Lk. In Mt 10:9-10 Jesus forbade the disciples to take a walking stick, while in Lk 10:4 the prohibition of sandals is added. The intent of the saying in each version, however, is the same: Take minimal provisions and trust God's goodness in the kindness of strangers. Matthew and Lk probably focused on the acquiring of possessions on the journey (thus Mt used the Gk term *ktaomai*, "acquire") or of bringing extra provisions (thus the prohibition in this account against "an extra shirt").

6:14 The reference is to Herod Antipas, son of King Herod the Great, who was made tetrarch of Galilee and Perea by Caesar Augustus after the death of his father. Antipas was given the rank of tetrarch explicitly to deny him the higher rank of king, and continual campaigning for the former title eventually resulted in his exile by the emperor Caligula. Mark called Antipas "king" because that was what he was in effect, if not in title, within his regions (see Mt 14:1,9, where Matthew referred to him as both tetrarch and king). Some scholars have also suggested that Mark's comment could be tongue-in-cheek criticism of Antipas's claim to be a king.

6:17-30 The first-century Jewish historian Josephus related the death of John the Baptist at the hands of Herod Antipas somewhat differently (*Ant.* 18.5.2-4). But the accounts are compatible. Josephus focused on the political reason for the death of John, namely John's potentially seditious popularity, while Mark focused on the more personal reason of Antipas's illicit marriage to his brother's wife. Yet John's preaching against Antipas's marriage to Herodias would be viewed by the ruler as seditious, particularly since the intrigues surrounding the marriage brought him to war with the Nabatean Arabs. Bawdy parties and extravagant gifts to entertainers were common in the first-century Roman world.

6:32 Luke places the feeding of the 5,000 near "a town called Bethsaida" (Lk 9:10), but Mark has Jesus direct the disciples afterward to "go ahead of Him to the other side, to Bethsaida" (Mk 6:45), creating a geographical difficulty. This is further complicated when John says in his Gospel that the disciples took the boat toward Capernaum (Jn 6:17). The best solution is to assume that Luke referred to Bethsaida Julias, a city on the north shore of the Sea of Galilee, just east of the Jordan River, in Gaulanitis, and that Mark referred to a Galilean village of the same name. (Bethsaida means "fishing village" and was perhaps the name of several towns along the shore of Galilee.) This may be confirmed by John's designation of the hometown of Philip, Peter, and Andrew as "Bethsaida in Galilee" (Jn 12:21, cp. 1:44) and by the regular association of Bethsaida with the Galilean villages of Chorazin and Capernaum (Mt 11:20-24). Alternatively, "to the other side" (Gk *peran*) in Mk 6:45 may merely indicate moving from one place to another via the lake rather than a crossing between its eastern and western halves. In this case the disciples left the location of the miracle and traveled northwestward, in the direction of both Bethsaida Julias and Capernaum, but ended up southwest of Capernaum (Gennesaret) because of the storm (v. 53).

6:34 The feeding of the 5,000 in the wilderness was a messianic act signaled here by an allusion to Nm 27:16-17. Moses prayed for someone to replace him after his death so the people would not be left as sheep without a shepherd. The motif is picked up in Ezekiel, where God promised that His servant David (i.e., the Messiah) will shepherd His people. John 6:14-15,26-34 makes it clear that the Galileans recognized the significance of the act (see Dt 18:15-19).

6:48 The feeding of the 5,000 and Jesus walking on water are narrated in three of the four Gospels. These nature miracles, along with the stilling of the storm, are most difficult for critics to accept as historical, since no good naturalistic explanation can be provided for them. Here we come up against a fundamental point of contention. Either one believes that God can work through His creation in patterns that differ from the normal patterns or one does not. God's usual ways of working we describe as laws of nature. The fact that John attests these miracles support their historicity.

6:50 "It is I" may have been intended as a divine disclosure here (lit., "I am"; see Ex 3:14). That Jesus intended "to pass by them" (v. 48) recalls God's self-revelation in Ex 33:19 and 1 Kg 19:11, as did walking on the water (Jb 9:8,11). The passage forms a fitting and ironic conclusion to a section of Mk that opened with the stilling of the storm (4:35-41) and the disciples' awestruck question: "Who then is this?"

6:56 On the relation of faith to healing in the Gospels, see note on Lk 8:46-48.

7:19 There were no parentheses in the original Greek manuscript of this Gospel. But if we didn't consider the sentence, "As a result, He made all foods clean," to be Mark's comment and not a part of Jesus' speech, then we would have to wonder why Peter needed the vision and the visit to the home of Cornelius (Ac 10) to get the message. But here Mark is writing with 20/20 hindsight in the c. A.D. 60s, based on Peter's testimony. Jesus' words regarding foods was one of many teachings the disciples failed to grasp in the period before Jesus' death and resurrection.

7:24-30 Jesus was not being unnecessarily harsh with the woman but rather eliciting her faith. Though we cannot know with what tone of voice or body language Jesus responded to the woman, His language points to a gentler and more provocative response

than is often supposed at first reading (in English). The word Jesus used for dogs (Gk *kunaria*) means a lap dog or household pet. In effect he invited this woman to express the faith that would eventually come to be expected of the Gentiles while reminding her that his present ministry is directed to Israel (see Mt 10:6).

7:26 The woman was ethnically Syrophoenician, descended from the original inhabitants of the area. "Greek" did not indicate her ethnicity but rather the fact that she was a Hellenized pagan, a non-Jew. Matthew called the woman a Canaanite (which can merely mean a pagan in rabbinic literature) because of her ethnicity and to heighten the contrast of a woman from the traditional religious enemies of Israel approaching the Jewish Messiah for help. Because it is unlikely this woman spoke Aramaic, the story indicates that Jesus, like many Palestinian Jews, was able to converse in Greek.

7:31 Because of this verse, Mark is sometimes accused of not knowing Palestinian geography. He described Jesus and His disciples as traveling to the southeast shore of the Sea of Galilee by heading north from Tyre through Sidon. But Mark did not tell us that Jesus' route took Him directly from Tyre to Decapolis. He implied that Jesus avoided Galilee by traveling through Gentile territory to the north and east.

7:33 Though Jesus was capable of healing by a mere word, He presumably used this method to make clear to the deaf-mute what He was about to do.

8:1-10 Many scholars question the historicity of this miracle, even if they accept the historicity of the feeding of the 5,000. The second feeding appears to be a different version of the first, especially when in this story the disciples do not seem to be aware of the possibility of Jesus performing such a miracle. But if this is so, it is hard to account for the several distinctions between the two accounts and for Mark's reference to both miracles in verses 17-20. The disciples' lack of expectation here may be accounted for by the Gentile location or by the disciples not anticipating Gentile participation in the messianic banquet.

8:10 We have no record other than this mention in Mk of a place called Dalmanutha. Matthew 15:39 has Magadan, equally unknown. Most interpreters suggest that Magadan is a variant spelling for Magdala, the major center of the Galilean fishing industry. Dalmanutha may be a small anchorage north of Magdala discovered in 1970 (the name Dalmanutha may mean "anchorage" or "enclosure").

8:12 At least six places in the Gospels have Jesus' audience asking Him to show them a sign (Mt 12:38-39; 16:1-2; Mk 8:11-12; Lk 11:16,29-32; Jn 2:18; 6:30). The request for a sign was a regular occurrence during Jesus' ministry, and this alone may account for some of the distinctions among the various records. If Mt 16 and Mk 8 record the same event, then Mark's must be taken as a truncated version, giving in effect the message of the longer accounts. The authorities wanted an immediate sign attesting to Jesus' message, but they would not receive such a sign. Jesus did supply signs, particularly in Jn, to help create faith where there was openness for it or to bolster weak faith. But He would never work signs on demand, just to pacify the skeptics. The sign they would be given, that of Jonah, would not be the sort they sought. Some scholars, on the basis of Lk 11:29-32, take the sign of Jonah to be Jonah's effective preaching. Others, on the basis of Mt 12:39-41, take the sign of Jonah to be the resurrection.

8:29 Some scholars see this episode as a post-Easter confession of the church read back onto Peter's lips. Yet this theory cannot plausibly account for the rebuke in verse 33, since this is not a detail the church would invent. It is best to conclude that Peter's confession was historical and that Jesus accepted it, albeit on His own terms.

8:30 For more on Jesus' command to be silent concerning this, see note on 1:44.

8:33 Jesus intended His statement to Peter to shock some sense into the disciples. Chapters 8–10 of Mk form a transition from Jesus' ministry to His passion. In this section Jesus three times prepared His disciples for the goal of His ministry—His death—by trying to correct His followers' power-centered understanding of what His messianic role meant (see 8:34-35; 9:30-36; 10:32-45). Peter, like Satan, would undermine the purposes of God by self-centeredly seeking the glory of the messianic kingdom too quickly (see Mt 4:8-10).

9:1 Jesus reassured His disciples that He was not entirely rejecting Peter's expectations of a powerful Messiah (8:29-33). Some of them would experience a foretaste of the glorious revelation of the Son of Man in their lifetimes, a promise made good to Peter, James, and John immediately in the transfiguration (vv. 2-8). All further experienced the power of the kingdom with the coming of the Spirit on Pentecost.

9:2 Mark and Matthew presented the transfiguration as occurring six days after Jesus spoke of the coming kingdom. But Luke said it happened "about eight days" later. The Greek of Mk and Mt, compared to Lk, indicates that Jesus set out six or seven days after the saying and ascended the mountain on or around the eighth day. The six-day language may be another of the many parallels between the transfiguration and Moses on Mount Sinai preparing to receive the law. Alternatively, Luke's expression "about eight days" may merely signify "about a week later." On the historicity of the transfiguration, see note on Lk 9:28-36.

9:12-13 Jesus' point was that, though the disciples were correct to look for the coming of Elijah to restore all things before the establishment of God's kingdom, they needed to figure into their concept a time when the King, as representative of the people, would be mistreated. The story was more complicated than they supposed. Jesus' language alluded to Ps 118:22 and Is 53:3 as relating the rejection of the Christ. Not only was Christ rejected, His forerunner was ill-treated. In Lk 1:17 John the Baptist is described as one who "will go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah."

9:23 On Jesus' statement about the unlimited power of faith, see note on 11:22-24.

9:29 "This kind" may mean "this type of demon" or "a demon this difficult." But it may also mean "this race [of being]," that is, evil spirits in general. However, the focus of the statement was the reason for the disciples' failure, namely, lack of prayer. Presumably they were trusting their own ability to exorcise rather than prayerfully trusting the power of God.

9:40 On Jesus' statement about those who were "not against us," see note on Lk 9:49-50.

9:43-47 On Jesus' statement about the disfiguring of the body to avoid sin, see note on Mt 5:29.

9:50 The Dead Sea provided rock salt to much of Palestine, but it was often of inferior quality, being mixed with other minerals, particularly gypsum. When the salt leeched out of the mixture, the result was a weak product. (The Greek historian Pliny [*Nat. Hist.* 3, 31, 34] attests to this feature of Dead Sea salt.) Or Jesus' saying might have been hyperbolic, showing the uselessness and lack of positive witness among His followers if they were not totally committed to Him.

10:15 Jesus was not commending unthinking credulity to enter the kingdom, as if Christians must be fools. He was commending an attitude of dependence, without which it is impossible to be saved. Sin is fundamentally independence from the rightful rule of God, and unbelief can be as much a matter of the will as of the intellect.

10:18 Jesus was not denying that He was good, nor was He denying that He was God. Rather, He was rejecting the flattery offered by the man and challenging him to consider both his concept of goodness and his concept of Jesus. Matthew's version (Mt 19:16-22) makes the same point but renders the exchange differently to bring out the erroneous focus of the man's thinking more directly. Mark included this saying to indicate his interest in reporting the actual sayings of the historical Jesus, for no one in the early church would have invented such a saying and placed it on the lips of Jesus.

10:19 Jesus was not confused about the Ten Commandments; that any first-century Jew could be is inconceivable. Jesus probably replaced "Do not covet" (Ex 20:17) with "Do not defraud," since fraud was commonly assumed to be the particular form of covetousness the rich manifested in the first-century Mediterranean world. Economics were viewed as a zero-sum game, and the rich were understood to obtain more wealth only by defrauding others of their fair share.

10:21 The demand placed on the rich man was radical and one that Jesus did not require of all His disciples. Jesus' goal was to discover the extent to which the man really desired eternal life and to underscore the radical self-denial of discipleship (8:34-38), a self-denial more difficult for "the haves" (the first) than the "have nots" (the last).

10:29-30 Jesus did not promise health and wealth to His followers. That He was speaking hyperbolically is made clear by the promise of receiving a hundred mothers and fathers in return for the loss of one. Rather, Jesus did promise that Christians are amply compensated in the new community for what they give up of their former lives. On the denial of family relationships, see notes on 3:31-35 and Lk 14:26.

10:35 Matthew tells us that it was James and John's mother who made the request of Jesus, whereas Mk has the brothers approaching Jesus directly. Matthew's version (Mt 20:20-28) is probably more accurate, since it was common in Mediterranean culture to broach delicate requests through a respected intermediary. Nevertheless, Jesus understood that the mother was speaking for the sons, so that even in Mt, Jesus responded directly to the brothers rather than to the mother and focused on their untoward request as the main issue. Mark simplified the story in the interests of this main point.

10:45 This saying combines allusions to the Son of Man of Dn 7 and the Suffering Servant of Is 53. These ways of understanding Jesus were rare, if not nonexistent, in the early church, and thus it is improbable that the church (instead of Jesus Himself) would have created this saying. In fact, a similar saying in 1 Tm 2:5-6 is reworded in a much more Hellenistic style, highlighting the antiquity and Semitic background of Mark's version. The cross was central to Jesus' messianic self-understanding. (Mk 14:24).

10:46-52 While Matthew mentioned two blind men healed at Jericho, Mark seemed to focus on only one of them, perhaps the spokesman. Mark named the man, something he rarely did (15:21).

10:47 On blind Bartimaeus's reference to Jesus as the "Son of David," see note on Mt 1:1.

11:2-3 For the number of animals, see note on Mt 21:2. Some understand Jesus to have been stealing the donkey or at least to have been presumptuous in taking it. However, Jesus had visited this region before (see Lk 10:38-42; Jn 11:1), and it is possible He had arranged the securing of the animal earlier. Other scholars refer to the recognized prerogative of government officials, or even a rabbi, of requisitioning mounts. The Greek word for "lord" here (*kurios*) could mean God had need of the animals, but it may also merely mean "our master" or "its master" had need of them.

11:12-14 Jesus appears out of character in this story. Its context, however, makes it clear that He intended His actions as an acted-out parable about His unsuccessful search for fruit in Israel and subsequent rejection of the religiously active but unproductive temple, perhaps with Mc 7:1 in mind (cp. the spoken parable in Lk 13:6-9). Though it was not the season for figs, Jesus could reasonably expect to find "early figs" on the tree (Is 28:4; Hs 9:10; Mc 7:1).

11:15 Jesus continued His prophetic action in the temple, undoubtedly not driving everyone (hundreds of people!) out of the precincts, but overturning some tables and accosting some individuals, as a symbolic demonstration against what He perceived as unacceptable use of the temple and a corrupt temple establishment (Zch 14:21). Other contemporary Jews held similar views (e.g., *2 Bar* 10:18). Josephus (*Jewish War* 6.5.3) told of an individual, Jesus son of Ananias, who in A.D. 62 was delivered to the Romans by the temple authorities for similar prophetic cries against the temple. For more about the day of the cleansing of the temple, see note on Mt 21:12-22.

11:22-24 It is characteristic Semitic style to make a point in exaggerated and unqualified terms (e.g., 9:45-48; 13:2; 1 Jn 3:9). The hyperbolic casting of a mountain into the sea by faith signals the exaggeration in these statements about prayer. The point of the saying is the absolute necessity of trust in God's unlimited power, not a blank check for answered prayers. The disciples (and readers of this Gospel) were expected to supply the proper qualifications. Some of these are stated explicitly or illustrated elsewhere in the NT (Mt 6:10; 26:42; Jms 4:3; 1 Jn 5:14).

11:25 On Jesus' commendation of the spirit of forgiveness in the lives of believers, see note on Mt 6:12,14-15.

11:33 Jesus was not being flippant or dodging the question of the scribes. He made His point quite clearly to His questioners. If they could not recognize God's authority in John the Baptist, no amount of argument would persuade them that Jesus acted on God's authority.

12:6 The authenticity of this parable is established, among other things, on the word play in Hebrew of "son" (*ben*) and "stone" (*eben*). It indicates that Jesus understood Himself to be Israel's Messiah and shows that He viewed rejection as essential to the Messiah's mission. The Jewish audience was quite able to follow Jesus' point. They understood that He was referring to Israel as the vineyard (Is 5:1) and to the prophets as the servants of the owner, God. Thus they could be expected to recognize the son as the Messiah (2 Sm 7:14; Ps 2:7; 89:26-27; cp. Mk 14:61). What they could not accept was that the Messiah would be rejected and killed by the Jewish leadership, who would in turn be destroyed.

12:25 Humans do not become angels in the resurrection but are merely *like* angels. That is, they are no longer earthy creatures but heavenly ones (1 Co 15:35-50).

12:30 The addition by Jesus to Dt 6:5 of "with all your mind" is reflected in some manuscripts of the Greek version of the OT, though probably He was merely summarizing the passage in a way that heightens the point of total commitment to God.

12:37 In Jewish culture (and Roman culture as well) fathers (and other patriarchs) were deserving of utmost respect; they were lords of their families and descendants. Thus Jesus pointed out a paradox intended to expand the audience's messianic categories. He did not deny the Messiah was a son of David but noted that Ps 110 implies that the Messiah, though David's son, is his superior. Some have argued that the superscription of Ps 110 can be read as "a psalm to [or for] David," indicating that the psalm was written about David by someone else. However, the same superscription is used on all the psalms of David, notably Ps 18, which was clearly written by him, not about him, nor do the Pharisees seem to have entertained this option (Mt 22:45).

13:2 Jesus accurately prophesied the destruction of the temple 40 years before its demise. The fact that more details about its destruction (such as by fire or by the Romans, etc.) are not given indicates that this is not a "prophecy after the fact."

13:24-25 Jesus quoted Is 13:10, but the language of cosmic disturbances at the coming of God is common in Jewish literature (see Is 34:4; Jl 2:10; 3:15; Ezk 32:7-8; Am 2:9). Stars falling from heaven is apocalyptic rather than literal language.

13:30 "These things" that will happen in "this generation" are the events surrounding the destruction of the temple, about which the disciples asked (vv. 1-4). The temple was destroyed 40 years after the prophecy of Jesus, well within the lifetime of many of those present. Jesus, however, also talked about events surrounding His second coming (in vv. 14-27, though some scholars admit only vv. 24-27 or v. 32). The two events are spoken of together because the terror of the first-century Roman invasion of Palestine was viewed as representing the terror of the days leading to the coming of the Son of Man (vv. 7-8). Matthew's version of this prophecy makes the point more explicitly (see Mt 24:2).

13:32 The NT presents the incarnation of the Son as a period of humiliation and obedience (Php 2:5-11). When the Son became a man, He did not cease to be divine, but He condescended to live as humans properly should—in full dependence upon, and submission to, God the Father by the power of the Holy Spirit. At this point only the Father knows the timing of Jesus' second coming (so also Mk 10:40).

14:3-9 Though the account in Lk 7:36-50 is superficially similar to this episode, the details indicate that it was a different incident. The Gospel of Jn says that the event took place six days before Passover, i.e., before the triumphal entry. Mark apparently placed the event where he did in the narrative (note the lack of temporal markers) for thematic reasons, the focus from here on being the passion.

14:7 By focusing on His coming death, Jesus commended the appropriateness of the woman's actions. In doing so He also tacitly admitted that He was worth the costly sacrifice made by the woman. He was not disparaging the poor or helping the poor but emphasized the value of His presence, which would soon be taken away. Here He alluded to Dt 15:11, which explicitly commands helping the poor.

14:12 The Synoptic Gospels seem to represent the Last Supper as a Passover meal. They also appear to describe Jesus' death as occurring on the day of Passover. But the Gospel of Jn places these events on the day before Passover (Jn 13:1; 18:28; 19:14,31-32). All four Gospels agree, however, that the day of the week on which Jesus died was a Friday. Because there were calendrical disputes among first-century Jews, some scholars suggest that Mark and John used different calendars, both referring to the same Friday but as different days of the month. Others argue that when John referred to Passover, he was not referring to the day the Passover meal was eaten but to the entire Feast of Unleavened Bread, which began with Passover (or even, popularly considered, the day before) and lasted for seven days. Thus John's "preparation day for the Passover" (Jn 19:14) is taken to mean "the Friday of Passover week" ("preparation" being a term used for Friday, the day before the Sabbath; see Mk 15:42, Jn 19:42). For more on this point, see note on Jn 13:1.

14:21 Prophecy and foreknowledge do not negate human choice. Judas chose to betray Jesus, even though God knew such would be the case and decreed it as part of His plan for redemption.

14:22-24 The essential historicity of the words of institution is indicated by their reception by Paul as traditional (1 Co 11:23). The variation in wording among the accounts is due to the tendency of the Gospel writers to paraphrase in the interest of making a specific point. Just as in the Passover celebration the bread was said to be "the bread of affliction that our fathers ate when they left Egypt," though it was not literally such, so Jesus said that the bread was (i.e., represented) His body. This could be a messianic claim, since the eating of the *afikoman*, a piece of bread broken from the rest at Passover, signifies partaking in the messianic banquet. The words concerning the cup confirm 10:45, showing that Jesus understood His death as that of the atoning Suffering Servant (Is 53:12) and now indicated that His death would establish the promised new covenant of the messianic age (see Ex 24:8; Jr 31:31; Zch 9:11). The meal was not intended to be "cannibalistic" but symbolic of the significance of the death of Christ and the ensuing messianic fellowship among His followers.

14:27-31 Mark and Matthew set the prediction of Peter's denial on the way to the garden of Gethsemane, while Luke set it during the Last Supper. John divided the saying, giving the prediction of Peter's denial during the Last Supper (Jn 13:36-38) and the prediction of the scattering on the way to the garden (Jn 16:32; cp. 14:31; 18:1). The historical setting ranged from the Last Supper to the arrival in Gethsemane. The writers of the first three Gospels placed the material as they did for concerns other than pure chronology.

14:30,68,72 Rabbinic sources, which may not necessarily apply to conditions in the first century, both presuppose and disallow keeping poultry in Jerusalem. Thus, even if Jews could not keep their own poultry, roosters from outside the walls of the city could still be heard. In Mk, Jesus told Peter he would deny Him "before the rooster crows twice." In the other Synoptic Gospels,-Jesus referred to only one crowing of a rooster (Mt 26:34; Lk 22:34).

14:53 According to the later Jewish rabbinical writings known as the Mishnah, capital cases could not be tried at night and required two consecutive days before verdicts could be rendered. If these criteria were used in the first century, either convention was flouted in this case for expediency's sake or, more probably, this was not an official trial. The "trial" before the high priest seems to have been an ad hoc gathering of the ruling council demanded by the course of events (i.e., the opportunity afforded by Judas and the desire to do away with Jesus before the feast). Its purpose appears to have been to arrive at a consensus to deliver Jesus to the Romans with recommendation for execution. We must assume that Peter was informed of the proceedings by others in the high priest's household and related the trial to Mark or that some present at the trial—perhaps Nicodemus or Joseph of Arimathea—later reported the proceedings to the early church.

14:61-62 "The Blessed One" is an uncommon expression for God but is attested in Jewish literature. Caiaphas was demanding that Jesus admit plainly whether He was the Davidic Messiah. Mark made plain the intent of Jesus' actual, more evasive wording, which Matthew recorded (see note on Lk 23:3). On the timing of the return of Christ, see note on Mt 26:64.

14:63-64 Caiaphas probably did not take Jesus' admission to be the Messiah as blasphemy. He did see as blasphemy Jesus' claim to be the Son of Man who approaches God's throne (Dn 7:13-14) and the one who sits at God's right hand (Ps 110:1), sharing His authority. Later rabbis condemned such an understanding of the Messiah. Threatening the high priest was also related to the charge of blasphemy. According to rabbinic sources (*m.San.* 7:5), once the judge has heard blasphemy—a capital offense—he is to stand and tear his robes.

14:68,72 On the crowing of a rooster at Peter's final denial of Jesus, see note on 14:30,68,72.

15:1 John 18:13 has Jesus first examined before Annas, the father-in-law of the reigning high priest, Caiaphas. (See note on Lk 3:2.) The meeting appears to have been brief. After it, Jesus was sent to Caiaphas (Jn 18:24), whose house may have been on the same premises as Annas's. Mark 14:53-65 and Mt 26:57-68 describe the examination before Caiaphas. This meeting either continued into the morning (Mt 27:1; Mk 15:1; Lk 22:66-71),with a review of the case and summary judgment, or else a third, more official meeting was held in the morning before sending Jesus to Pilate. Each Gospel writer summarized this sequence and focused only on the parts that were important for the narrative.

15:6 That Mark and John independently related the story of the release of Barabbas points to the historicity of the event, especially since it could easily have been refuted in the first century and makes no particular contribution to the theology of the narratives. Slight evidence from outside the Bible exists for the practice of releasing a prisoner at Passover (*m. Pesah* 8:6), though more exists of Roman governors releasing prisoners to appease unruly crowds.

15:15 Luke and especially John gave added detail to the short, summary accounting by Mark and Matthew. John noted that the flogging of Jesus was an initial punishment (presumably the least severe type, termed *fustigatio*) intended by Pilate to appease the Jewish authorities. Verse 15 may indicate a second flogging (the more severe *flagellatio* or *verberatio*) after the verdict of crucifixion, or it may refer back to this initial punishment ("[already] having flogged Him").

15:17 Mark and John call the color of the soldiers' cloak put on Jesus "purple"; Mt 27:28 calls it "scarlet." Greek literature uses both words to describe such a cloak, since they describe a wide range of hues. Matthew's "scarlet robe" describes the coat as a military cloak, its color derived from a cheap dye. Mark's "purple" highlights the mocking of Jesus' supposed royalty intended by the soldiers.

15:23 Mark's phrase "mixed with myrrh" is more specific than Matthew's "mixed with gall" (Mt 27:34). The Greek term Matthew used (*chole*) means "a bitter substance," which Mark specified as myrrh. Matthew used "gall" to link the crucifixion to Ps 69:21.

15:25 According to Jn 19:14, Jesus was before Pilate at "six in the morning." Mark and John were probably using alternative means of reckoning time, both of which were in existence in the first-century Mediterranean world. Mark, in the common Jewish manner, reckoned the hour from daybreak (therefore, the third hour was about 9:00 A.M.), while John, in the official Roman manner, reckoned the hour from midnight (therefore, his "sixth hour" was about 6:00 A.M). See also Mk 11:11-12; Jn 12:1; 20:19 and note on Jn 19:14.

15:26 There are minor variations among the four Gospels as to the wording of the charge on the placard placed on Jesus' cross. Probably the charge read, "Jesus of Nazareth, king of the Jews," and each Gospel writer summarized it slightly differently while retaining the basic point. A placard noting the prisoner's name and offense often accompanied those condemned to death by the Romans.

15:27 Crucifixion was reserved for dangerous criminals and was especially employed for treason. Mark used the Greek term *lestai* for those crucified with Jesus. The term means "thugs" and could be applied not just to robbers but also to those agitating against the authorities. It may be that the men were associated with Barabbas and thus were crucified along with Jesus as insurrectionists.

15:32 On the crucifixion of criminals at the same time as Jesus and their attitude toward Him, see note on Lk 23:39-40.

15:33 On the darkness that happened at noon at Jesus' crucifixion, see note on Lk 23:44-45.

15:34 The greatest mystery of the gospel is that Jesus was both God and man in one person. Though the Gospels do not tell us, we can deduce from the rest of Scripture that Jesus was forsaken by God due to His bearing the sin of the world on the cross (Is 59:2; 2 Co 5:21;1 Pt 2:24). The rupture in relationship was between God and Jesus in His humanity. On the final words of Jesus, see notes on Mt 27:46 and Lk 23:46.

15:36 All the Gospels record that Jesus was offered sour wine, or wine vinegar, on the cross (see Mt 27:48; Lk 23:36; Jn 19:30). It is unclear whether what Luke and John related was parallel to Mark and Matthew. In the course of Jesus' six hours on the cross, He might have been offered a drink several times, particularly since in the first three Gospels it seems to be related to the mocking of Jesus. On the other hand, it is not hard to imagine all referring to the same incident, with sympathizers attempting to comfort Jesus, while the soldiers, in concert with the Jewish scoffers, used the opportunity to ridicule Jesus' messianic claims.

15:38 Some tantalizing parallels to the tearing of the veil are recorded in non-biblical sources (Josephus, *War* 6.7.3, *b.Yoma* 39b). But there is no direct confirmation of this event.

15:42-46 Victims of crucifixion were generally left as carrion for vultures and other wild animals to eat. But evidence indicates that a simple burial was more common in Palestine because of Jewish scruples about corpses. Joseph of Arimathea seems to have been an influential person since he was granted permission by Pilate to give Jesus a proper burial. This may support the portrayal of Pilate in the trial scenes as finding Jesus and His movement harmless to Roman rule. Otherwise, he probably would not have released Jesus' body to His followers.

15:47 Mark reports that Mary Magdalene and "Mary the mother of Joses" were at the cross and they observed that Jesus was placed in Joseph's tomb. Matthew's account includes these two women at the cross and adds "the mother of Zebedee's sons" (Mt 27:56). Luke's narrative does not name any specific women at the cross but refers to them as "the women who had come with Him from Galilee" (Lk 23:55). The Gospel of Jn indicates that Jesus' mother was at the cross, as well as Mary Magdalene and "Mary the wife of Clopas" (Jn 19:25). This Mary was probably the same person as Mary the mother of Joses in Mark's account.

The difference among these narratives may be disturbing to some people. But we must remember that the Gospels were not committed to writing until 30 to 50 years after the death of Jesus. They circulated as oral accounts for many years before finally being written down. The Gospel writers did not get together as a group to make sure their reports matched in every detail. They wrote from their recollections of the life and ministry of Jesus and the eyewitness reports from others who had known Jesus in the flesh. Just as the witnesses of an auto accident will remember different details of what they saw, the variation in these accounts is understandable and actually argues for the authenticity of the Gospels.

These variations in the Gospels have been known since the early days of the church. Church leaders creating neat, completely harmonious accounts would raise concerns about the authenticity of the account. As it was, the church was confident enough in the truthfulness of these accounts not to have to hide or eliminate the places that were challenging to a unified account.

16:1 All the Gospels agree that Mary Magdalene went to the tomb along with other women (see Lk 24:10; Jn 20:2). The first three Gospels agree that one of the others was named Mary. Mark tells us Salome was also present, and Luke that Joanna was present. See notes on Mt 28:9-10 and Jn 20:1-2. If the story of the empty tomb were invented by the early church or by Mark, it is hardly likely that it would feature women as the primary witnesses, especially in the way Mark portrayed the incident. John's (and perhaps Luke's) apparently independent version corroborates this judgment. The women presumably supplemented the supply of spices they had prepared earlier (Lk 23:56) by buying more on Saturday night, after the Sabbath had ended. Conversely, Mark may have compressed the events of Lk 23:56 since his point was that they bought spices to anoint the body on Sunday morning.

16:2 The Gospels agree that the women arrived at the tomb about dawn. Mark's "sunrise" and John's "while it was still dark" should be understood similarly, since at dawn *light* and *dark* are relative terms. The series of events probably began in relative darkness and ended in relative light. See note on Jn 20:1-2.

16:5-7 Matthew 28:2-4 agrees with Mark that there was one angel at the tomb (describing an angel as a "young man" was common in Jewish literature). Luke 24:4 (and Jn 20:11-12, if we can assume it records the same events) indicates two angels. As with the entire resurrection narrative in all four Gospels, the account of the angel(s) is told in a highly selective manner. There

were apparently two angels, but Mark and Matthew focused on the one who took the initiative. Mark placed the angel in the tomb, and Luke seems to have done the same. Matthew had him initially outside the tomb, but his location when he addressed the women is not clear. Presumably he had at that point moved into the tomb.

16:6 The resurrection can be doubted on philosophical grounds, but it is a historical certainty that the first disciples of Jesus believed He had actually risen from the dead (1 Co 15). Such belief cannot be accounted for merely by hallucination, wishful thinking, or conspiracy to commit fraud. See note on Mt 28:17.

16:8 Manuscript evidence indicates that this Gospel probably did not originally include any of verses 9-20. Either Mark ended his Gospel here, he never wrote an intended ending, or his original ending has been lost. The Greek syntax of verse 8 and the fact that all the other Gospels include the announcement to the apostles and subsequent resurrection appearances lead some scholars to conclude that Mark's original ending has been lost.

If the Gospel ended with verse 8, Mark intended his readers to assume the women did as they were told. Their fearful silence did not imply their failure to deliver the angel's words to the disciples. The reading provides the mental image of the resurrected Jesus heading for Galilee and the women and disciples doing the same, their minds full of the inescapable and wonderful conclusion "This man really is God's Son!" Many times before, the response to Jesus' work was fear and faith (4:41; 5:15,33; 6:50; 9:6,32; 10:32). Furthermore, the abruptness of such a conclusion matches the abruptness of Mark's beginning as compared with the other Gospels.

Luke Articles

Could the Gospel Writers Withstand the Scrutiny of a Lawyer?

by John Warwick Montgomery

Lawyers distinguish between *making claims* (almost anyone can file a lawsuit) and *proving the case* (which is possible only on the basis of good evidence). Lawyers, therefore, are in the evidence business and will not accept any claims (including religious claims) without good reason to do so. It is highly significant, then, that throughout history so many great lawyers, judges, and legal scholars have come to Christian belief.

This is due in large part to the solidity of the Gospel testimony to Jesus Christ. The Gospel records qualify under the "ancient documents rule" and would be admitted as evidence in any common law court. They assert that they are firsthand, nonhearsay testimony to Jesus Christ (1 Jn 1:1, etc.) or are the product of careful research concerning Him (Lk 1:1-4). Documents, like defendants, are innocent until proven guilty, and the critics have not been able to impugn the credibility of the Gospels.

The soundness of the four Gospels depends upon their early dating and their authorship by those who knew Jesus personally. Corroboration from outside the Gospels comes by way of such early writers as Papias, who was a student of the Apostle John. Papias tells us that the four Gospels were written either by an apostle (Matthew and John) or by an apostle's associate (Mark with Peter, Luke with Paul). The Gospels were in circulation, then, while hostile witnesses of Jesus' ministry were still alive. As F. F. Bruce has argued, these opponents were the functional equivalent of modern cross-examiners: They had the means, the motive, and the opportunity to refute the Gospel accounts of Jesus' miraculous ministry if it had not happened just as the Gospel writers said it did. Since the opposition could not do that, the Gospel narratives stand as powerful evidence that the miraculous picture of Jesus they convey is accurate.

The fact that the first three Gospels were written prior to the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, and the Gospel of John not long thereafter, makes impossible the attempt of liberal Bible critics and secularists to argue that they are really the product of a developing oral tradition in which the early church modified Jesus' life and teachings. There was insufficient time for doing this. A. N. Sherwin-White has pointed out that the case for accurate reporting is far better in the case of the Jesus of the Gospels than for the best-known contemporary of Christ, Tiberius Caesar, whose career is also known from just four sources.

Harvard professor Simon Greenleaf, the greatest authority on the law of evidence in the nineteenth century, wrote, "All that Christianity asks of men on this subject is [that the testimony of the Gospels] be sifted as if it were given in a court of justice. . . .
The probability of the veracity of the witnesses and of the reality of the occurrences which they relate will increase, until it acquires, for all practical purposes, the value and force of demonstration."

What About Those Who Never Heard About Christ?

by Chad Owen Brand

Human beings as a lot are incurably religious. The problem is that since these same human beings are also infected by sin, they tend not to desire to honor and glorify the true God, who is righteous and holy. Rather, they tend to make gods for themselves that are pleasing to them or that satisfy some sense of what they think a god ought to be. As John Calvin said, the human mind is a factory for idols. Such gods, concocted by the rationale of humans apart from special revelation, are invariably out of touch with the truth (Rm 1:18-32).

What hope is there for those who do not live in predominantly Christian parts of the world? Historically, Christians have argued that their hope lies in the mission impulse of the Christian church. From the earliest days of Christianity, Jewish believers began to spread the message to the Gentile world (Ac 10–11). Christians such as the Apostle Paul made it clear that it was not good enough even to be a Jew, since the hope for salvation rests in affirming Jesus as Messiah (Php 3:7-11). In the early centuries of the faith, Christians spread the message to Africa, northern Europe, the British Isles, and the Asian subcontinent, all because they believed this message was the hope of salvation for the world.

It is obvious to anyone that vast numbers of people in the world today either have never heard the gospel or have heard it in only a cursory manner. What hope do such people have? The Bible makes it clear that there is no salvation in any name other than that of Christ (Jn 14:6; Ac 4:12). That means that one must believe specifically in Jesus in order to be saved (Rm 10:9-14). Does this mean that most people ever born will spend eternity in hell? If so, is that a problem for the Christian faith?

A couple of proposals have been offered to respond to this difficulty. Some have suggested that God will evaluate all people according to the "light they have." That is, if someone is a Hindu or a Muslim or an ancient Aztec, God will judge that person only according to his response to the religious information he has at hand. The problem is that the Bible regularly condemns idolatry. Scripture even indicates that idolaters know intuitively that there is something wrong with their idolatry (Rm 1:19-20). The other problem is that many actions of religious people are terrible. Hindu Kali worshipers murdered travelers, and Aztecs sacrificed young women to their god. Another proposal is that God will simply save all persons by His power. The difficulty here is that it ignores human free will as well as the fact that the Bible indicates that some will eventually go to everlasting punishment (Mt 25:46).

Christians must hold that faith in Christ, and only faith in Christ, is the avenue to salvation. But having said that, God will judge those who have heard the truth and yet have rejected it more severely that those who have never heard (Lk 10:14). There is also the hope that in the future the church's message of salvation will cover the entire earth.

(For another perspective, see the article in Romans 10, page 1696.)

Does the Bible Teach That There Is a Purgatory?

by Chad Owen Brand

Some Christian traditions teach that Christians who die in good fellowship with the church but still not in a state of perfection will go to an intermediate place after death that is neither heaven nor hell. This intermediate place is known as purgatory. Unbaptized adults and those who have committed mortal sins, according to this tradition, go to Hades or hell. A few perfected persons (saints) go directly to heaven.

Defenders of purgatory teach that it will be a time and place of suffering, something akin to the lake of fire, but not as severe and only temporary. The amount of time one spends there depends on the degree of purging needed, based on one's sins. Pope Gregory I taught that baptism absolves us of original sin but that we have to remit payment for our actual sins. This purging is a preparation of the soul for heaven.

Is there any biblical justification for the doctrine of purgatory? Supporters of the doctrine generally defend their position by citing 2 Maccabbees 12:39-45 (a passage in the Apocrypha, or collection of writings that Protestants do not accept as a part of the Bible). But this text says nothing about purgatory, and those who do not accept the authority of the Apocryphal writings would not find it compelling even if it did. The other text that is sometimes cited is 1 Co 3:10-15, where the concluding phrase is "yet it will be like an escape through fire." But again there is nothing in the text that indicates that there will be a time and place after death in which individuals will be purged of the sins committed in this life.

The doctrine of purgatory fails the biblical test both in terms of direct interpretation of the specifically cited texts and in terms of the overall teaching of Scripture. Neither of the classically cited passages mentions purgatory by name or by concept. Even more, this doctrine denies one of the fundamental teachings of the NT—that Jesus' death on the cross atoned for all our sin, not simply original sin (Rm 3:21-26; 2 Co 5:21). Because of that atonement, though we will all stand before the judgment seat of Christ, those who have placed faith in Christ will never face condemnation (Rm 5:1; 8:1; 2 Co 5:10).

Are the Teachings of Jehovah's Witnesses Compatible with the Bible?

by Robert M. Bowman Jr.

Jehovah's Witnesses (JWs) claim to regard the Bible as the absolute Word of God and to base all their beliefs on it. In fact, the teachings of JWs are contrary to the Bible.

The Bible. JWs use a doctored version of the Bible called the New World Translation (NWT). The JW leaders who produced the NWT were not biblical scholars, and it shows. The most obvious difference between the NWT and other Bibles is its use of "Jehovah" in the NT. JWs claim that the NT originally used the Hebrew name YHWH (translated "Jehovah" or "Yahweh") and that apostate scribes put "Lord" (Gk *kurios*) in its place. There is no historical or manuscript evidence for this claim.

The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. JWs teach that the Father alone is Jehovah, the almighty God; that the Son, Jesus Christ, is "a god" (their translation of Jn 1:1) inferior to the Father; and that the "holy spirit" is an impersonal force emanating from God. The Bible, on the other hand, teaches that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are each God (Jn 1:1; 17:3; 20:28; Ac 5:3-4; 2 Co 3:17-18; Ti 2:13). The Son made everything (Heb 1:10-12) and is to be honored as God (Jn 5:23; Heb 1:6; Rv 5:13). The Holy Spirit is a person, called the "Comforter" or "Helper" (Gk *parakletos*); He teaches, speaks, and bears witness to Jesus (Jn 14:16,26; 15:26-27; 16:13-14).

Death, the soul, and eternal punishment. According to JWs, when unsaved human beings die, they cease to exist. There is no intermediate state of the dead and no eternal punishment for the wicked (who are annihilated instead). The Bible, on the other hand, teaches that human beings exist after their deaths as spirits awaiting the resurrection and final judgment (Lk 16:19-31; 23:43; Heb 12:9,23; Rv 6:9-11). (The NWT mistranslates Lk 23:43 and the Hebrew texts to avoid this implication.) The wicked will suffer eternal punishment (Mt 25:46; Rv 14:9-11; 20:10).

Jesus' resurrection and return. JWs believe that God "raised" Jesus from the dead as an angelic spirit, with a so-called spirit body. They deny that He will return visibly and personally to earth. Scripture, however, teaches that Jesus rose with the same physical body with which He died, though glorified and immortal, and that His body possessed flesh and bones, hands and feet, and even marks of His crucifixion (Lk 23:49; Jn 2:19-22; 10:17-18; 20:20,25; Ac 2:24-32). Though He is the second person of the Godhead, Jesus is also a glorified man (Ac 17:31; 1 Co 15:47; 1 Tm 2:5) and He will return personally and bodily to the earth (Ac 1:9-11; 3:19-21; 1 Th 4:16; Heb 9:26-28).

Salvation. JWs view Jesus' death as providing a "corresponding ransom," releasing all people in principle from the condemnation due to Adam's sin. However, to enjoy everlasting life, JWs believe they must not only accept Christ's ransom but also prove themselves worthy by their works. The Bible's teaching is quite different. Christians are saved by God's grace alone, through faith in Christ, and our good works are the fruit of salvation, not the prerequisite for it (Rm 3:21-28; 5:1-11; Eph 2:8-10; Ti 3:4-8).

How Is the Transformation of Jesus' Disciples Different from Other Religious Transformations?

by Gary R. Habermas

When people discuss the beliefs of Jesus' disciples and their willingness to suffer martyrdom for their convictions, they often make comparisons to other religious persons whose lives were also changed due to their own religious beliefs. Like Jesus' disciples, many have willingly given their lives for their beliefs. Examples include modern Muslims, the followers of various religious teachers, and certain UFO groups. Even political ideas, such as communism, have inspired life changes and martyrdoms.

Under these circumstances, can Christians continue to make evidential use of the disciples' transformations?

Initially, we need to make a crucial distinction. Transformed lives, whether the disciples' or others', do *not* prove that someone's teachings are true. However, they *do* constitute evidence that those who are willing to suffer and die for their religious commitments truly *believe* them to be true.

So, can we distinguish between the disciples' transformations and the experiences of others? In general, people committed to a religious or political message really believe it to be true. Of course, beliefs can be false. But in the case of Jesus' disciples, one grand distinction makes all the difference in the world.

Like other examples of religious or political faith, the disciples believed and followed their leader's teachings. But unlike all others, the disciples had more than just their beliefs—they had seen the resurrected Jesus. This is a crucial distinction; their faith was true precisely because of the resurrection.

Let's view this another way. Which is more likely—that an ideology we believe in is true or that we and a number of others saw a friend several times during the last month? If eternity rested on the consequences, would we rather base our assurance on the truth of a particular religious or political view, or would we rather that the consequences followed from repeated cases of seeing someone?

But unlike the world's faiths, which rest on certain beliefs being true, the disciples both heard unique teachings and saw the resurrected Jesus. Jesus was the only founder of a major world religion who had miracles reported of Him in reliable sources within a few decades. But most of all, He confirmed His message by rising from the dead. The disciples, both individuals and groups, saw Him repeatedly. Even two skeptics—James the brother of Jesus and Saul of Tarsus (Paul)—witnessed the resurrected Jesus.

No wonder the disciples were so sure of their faith! Not only had they been promised heaven, but then they had actually been shown a glimpse of it!

Introduction to Luke

AUTHOR

Luke is unique among the canonical Gospels for having features indicating that it, along with Acts, was written as a self-consciously literary work (see the note on 1:1-4). The author apparently intended the Gospel not merely for private or church use but to set before a broad literary public the facts of the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus of Nazareth, the founder of the fledgling "Jewish sect" called Christianity. The prologue shows an awareness of other sources, both written and oral, that provided accounts of Jesus' life and ministry based on the testimony of eyewitnesses. The author had carefully investigated these. His aim was to compile his own orderly account in order that his reader may "know the certainty" (1:4) of those things he had been taught.

There is no reason to dispute the traditional belief that Paul's traveling companion Luke (Ac 16:10-16; 20:6–28:22; Col 4:14; Phm 24; 2 Tm 4:11) was the author of this Gospel. It is unlikely that a Greco-Roman literary work would have been published anonymously. Usually the name of the author, if not indicated directly in the text, was attached as a tag to the scroll. Though the earliest manuscript we have that bears the title "The Gospel According to Luke" (as a postscript) is from the end of the second century, the heretic Marcion acknowledged Luke as the author as early as A.D. 135. This tradition is strongly attested in writings by Christian leaders from 160 on. The Muratorian canon (a fragmentary list of biblical Christian books from about A.D. 180) names the author of the third Gospel as "Luke, that physician, who after the ascension of Christ, when Paul had taken him with him as companion of his journey, composed in his own name, on the basis of report." There is no competing tradition of authorship in the early church, as one might expect if Luke's name were attached to the Gospel on conjecture. Luke is a minor character in the NT. Had there been any doubt that he was author of this Gospel and the Acts, it would likely have shown up in other traditions regarding authorship of these two key documents. Some have denied Luke's authorship of the third Gospel, raising three possible objections. (1) The portrait of Paul in Acts seems dissimilar to that in Paul's letters. (2) The "we" sections of Acts (indicating that the author was traveling with Paul) could be a literary device or a subterfuge. (3) The author of Acts does not seem to know about Paul's letters.

Each of these points is easier to understand as supporting the traditional authorship. We would expect one trying to pass himself off as a companion of Paul to cite or mention Paul's letters, and to correlate his account with the biographical and theological details garnered from those letters, since that was the primary means by which Paul was known to the generation that came after him. A writing failing to do so, as suggested by some critical scholars, would at least have met with suspicion in the early church, but such was never the case with Luke or Acts. Similarly, with the "we" sections, if one were trying to pass oneself off as Paul's companion, why include oneself in only part of the narrative rather than the entirety of it? On the other hand, the sporadic "we" sections and the portrait of Paul we encounter in Acts, which is certainly compatible with the Paul of the letters, though not derived from them, comport well with authorship by someone who knew Paul and traveled some with him but who wrote before Paul's letters were collected and recognized as having canonical status.

Since the early church conceived of no other candidate for this person than Luke, the tradition must be considered trustworthy.

DATE

The date of Luke is debated among scholars, and the issue is clearly tied up with the book's authorship. The latest possible date for Luke is about A.D. 80, since there is evidence of its use from 95 on and since Acts makes no use of Paul's letters. On the other hand, the book probably was not written earlier than, say, the late 50s, since Luke was apparently written not long before Acts (Ac 1:1), and 62 is the date of the last event recorded in Acts (Paul's house arrest in Rome). Most critical scholars argue that Luke could not have been written before A.D. 70 since it records as a prophecy of Jesus the fall of Jerusalem to the Romans in that year (Lk 13:35; 19:43-44; 21:20,24). However, aside from the question of the ability of Jesus to prophesy or even merely to predict the destruction of Jerusalem, the language describing the destruction is general rather than detailed. Those recording Jesus' prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem would likely have included more detail had they experienced this series of devastating events or had talked with witnesses of these events. It has in fact been argued that Jesus could have couched His prediction in such terms solely from OT precedents. Furthermore, it is astonishing that Luke, who recorded so much in Acts about the Jerusalem church and the expansion from there of the gospel to the Gentiles, should fail anywhere in that book to mention such a historically and theologically momentous event as the destruction of the temple, or of Emperor Nero's persecution that preceded it, or yet of Peter's and Paul's deaths in the same general time period. It is much more likely that Luke made no mention of these events because they had not yet happened. Acts ends with Paul in prison because that was the state of affairs when Luke concluded his writing. Thus a date prior to A.D. 62 for the third Gospel is best.

THEMES

Luke wrote as a historian and noted that he was aware of both written sources (the Gospel of Mark appears to have been one of them) and oral testimony from eyewitnesses. His Gospel and Acts are thus noteworthy for the number of named characters (e.g., Zechariah, Elizabeth, Mary, Cleopas). Presumably these names attest to his careful research, including the interviewing of primary witnesses. He could have conducted this research in Palestine while he awaited the outcome of Paul's case in Caesarea (Ac 23:23–27:1).

Each of the four Gospels emphasizes something different about the significance of Jesus of Nazareth, the Messiah of Israel. Luke especially emphasizes Jesus as Savior and His work as one of salvation (2:11; 19:10). And though the author stressed Jesus' life and work as fulfillment of God's promises to Israel, a primary point of his Gospel (and Acts) is that Jesus brought salvation not just to Jews but also to Gentiles. In turn, love of neighbor, expressed in concern for the poor and marginalized, becomes a major demand of discipleship in Luke and Acts. Other major emphases include the Holy Spirit and prayer.

For more on the similarities and differences among the Gospels, see the Introduction to Mark.

Luke Study Notes

1:1-4 This prologue is typical of Greco-Roman literary works. Luke noted that other gospel narratives had been produced prior to his. These were based on the testimony of eyewitnesses. His account, the result of careful investigation, was intended to reassure his benefactor, Theophilus, of the historical accuracy of that received tradition. Luke did not contrast his Gospel to earlier ones; rather, he placed his alongside them (note "also" in v. 3). The account is "orderly" (Gk *kathexes*), but the term does not tell us what the principle(s) of order is (are). Of the four canonical Gospels, Lk is most like a biography, beginning with detailed circumstances of Jesus' birth and frequently tying notable events to secular history and personages.

1:5–2:52 The Semitic flavor of 1:5–2:40 and its inclusion of theologically irrelevant details has led many to conclude this passage was reworked by Luke from an earlier source or sources. Presumably Mary the mother of Jesus, or other family members, related them to the early church (Ac 1:14) or Luke interviewed some of these primary sources for this information. If Mary were about 15 years old when Jesus was born, she would have been about 75 when Paul was in prison in Caesarea (Ac 24–25), the first time Luke had access to the Palestinian church. For more about the birth, see note on 2:39.

1:16-17 Luke alluded to Mal 4:1-6 with its prophecy that Elijah will come as a forerunner of the Day of the Lord (v. 76). John coming "in the spirit and power of Elijah" makes explicit the odd statements in Mt 11:14 and Mk 9:11-13 as compared with Jn 1:21.

1:26-38 There is no reason to doubt that an angel announced the virgin birth to both Mary and Joseph (Mt 1:18-24). Because of the arranged nature of marriage in first-century Palestine, we have no idea how much contact Mary and Joseph had with one another prior to their wedding. On the other hand, Joseph's acceptance of the fact that Mary conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit seems next to impossible without his own angelic vision.

1:27 Luke presented Jesus as descended from David through his stepfather, Joseph. As a relative of Elizabeth (v. 36) from the "daughters of Aaron" (v. 5), Mary had Levitical ancestry. It may have been that her bloodlines were mixed with Davidic heritage, but we are nowhere told this (unless Rm 1:3 can be taken as affirming it). Nevertheless, as the adopted son of Joseph, Jesus was legally a descendent of David. The NT consistently understands Jesus as a son of David (vv. 32,69).

1:32 "Son of the Most High" may merely be a designation of the royal Messiah (2 Sm 7:14; Ps 2:7; Mk 14:61), but the further explanation of conception by the Holy Spirit in verse 35 argues that the title refers ultimately to Jesus' divinity.

1:33 God's promise to David that his son would reign forever (2 Sm 7:13) grounded the Davidic messianism in the OT and early Judaism. According to 1 Co 15:24-28, the initial phase of the kingdom will end when the Son hands the kingdom to the Father. The Son will thereafter reign with the Father for eternity (Rv 22:1,3).

1:35 Some scholars have understood the conception of Jesus by the Holy Spirit to be a late invention of the early church, especially since it appears explicitly in the NT only in Lk and Mt. Most contemporary scholars dismiss as baseless, however, theories that the story was developed from or in response to pagan legends of supernatural conceptions, since suggested parallels bear little resemblance to the Gospel narratives. But there was no theological need to invent the virgin birth; other avenues for asserting the divinity of Christ (such as adoptionism, the view that Jesus the man became divine by adoption) were open and less fraught with the danger of inviting the charge that Jesus was illegitimate, which was in fact the pagan and Jewish response to the stories. In the end, the only real reason for rejecting the historicity of the virgin birth is a philosophical denial of the supernatural in general and of the incarnation in particular.

1:46-50,67-80 The style and themes of the hymns of Mary and Zechariah are Semitic and pre-Christian, indicating that Luke incorporated them from a source earlier than his Gospel. Scholars debate the sources, but there is no reason to doubt that either Mary or Zechariah, both familiar with the singing of the psalms, could have composed them and repeated them as reflections on the auspicious events they had experienced. The hymns must then have been written down and preserved by Jesus' and John's family.

1:51 God, as a Spirit (Jn 4:24), has no body. The arm of God is a metaphor for His power (Dt 9:29; Jr 32:17).

1:51-54 This "great reversal" is a common OT motif(1 Sm 2:5-7; Ps 113:7-9; 147:6) and reflects God's justice (Jr 5:27-29). The classes of raised and lowered are not to be taken absolutely but as a reflection of their spiritual condition. Those cast down are the arrogant and self-reliant (v. 51), and those exalted are the humble (v. 52). These two classes are often related in the OT and first-century Judaism to the rich and powerful on the one hand and the poor on the other. See notes on 6:20-23; 6:24-26; Mk 10:19.

2:1 We have no evidence that Augustus ever issued a decree resulting in an empire-wide registration (census), though several censuses were conducted during his reign having this effect. Luke may have been merely summarizing the intention of these registrations or referring to a decree that expressed such an intention. Evidence exists that the Romans sometimes took registrations of client kingdoms, as Palestine was at this time, and may even point to the existence of tax rolls in Samaria prior to Herod's death. Herod had fallen out of favor with Augustus toward the end of his life, and Augustus may have pressured Herod to conduct the registration in view of his advanced age and the possibility of Roman acquisition of at least some of Herod's territory upon his death.

2:2 The Jewish historian Josephus wrote that Quirinius became governor of Syria and instituted a registration in Judea in A.D. 6, too late for a supposed birth of Jesus under Herod the Great (Mt 2:1; Lk 1:5), who probably died in 4 B.C. Luke clearly knew of this registration (Ac 5:37), so that calling the registration of chapter 1 "the first" (in apparent opposition to the later census) strongly suggests he did not have his facts mixed up here. The verse is to be read as either (1) dissociating Quirinius from the registration (i.e., this was a former registration, taken before the famous one under Quirinius), or (2) positing two registrations administered by Quirinius (i.e., this is the registration taken by Quirinius the first time he was governor [or some other administrator] of Syria). Our knowledge of the relevant historical facts is too incomplete to determine a more definitive solution.

2:3 The Romans did not normally require people to return to their ancestral homes to be registered, so this detail may support a registration under Jewish methods while Herod was still king. Similarly, if Luke were referring to the registraton of Quirinius in A.D. 6, it is unlikely Joseph was required to leave Galilee, ruled by Herod's son Antipas, to register in Judea, administered by a Roman prefect under the authority of the province of Syria. This detail makes much more sense if Galilee and Judea were at the time under one administration, such as during the reign of Herod the Great.

2:7 Some argue that Bethlehem would not have had an inn since it was not on any major road, and that this story is therefore fictitious. But attempting to claim the nonexistence of an inn in Bethlehem is mere conjecture, and besides, the Greek term translated "inn" (*kataluma*) simply means "lodging" and can refer to a guest room in a private home. Animal stalls, with their mangers, were normally located inside the one-room residence of peasant families. Animals were sometimes kept in caves, and an early Christian tradition places the birth of Jesus in a cave.

2:11 The Greek term *kurios* ("lord") in the Bible has the same range of meaning as the English term *lord*, from simple social status to divinity. It is probably intended to explain "Christ" (Gk *christos*, meaning Messiah, meaning "anointed") more fully as "the sovereign."

2:19 In Mk 3:20-35, Mary appeared with other family members wishing to restrain Jesus' ministry, believing Him to be mad. Though Mary mulled over the incredible events of Jesus' birth, she apparently did not come to any firm resolution about them until later in Jesus' life. The 30 years between birth and ministry, with only occasional reminders (Lk 2:51), may have softened the impact of these events.

2:22-24 Luke here combined references to Mary's postpartum purification (Lv 12:2-8) and Jesus' dedication to God (Ex 13:2; Nm 18:1-16). "Their purification" was not due to Luke's ignorance of Jewish custom but instead either means "the Jews' purification law" or, more likely, "the purification sacrifice offered by the family." Others have suggested that the phrase either referred to the two ceremonies performed for mother and child, using the one term "purification" for both, or that Joseph had been defiled in assisting the birth and thus offered a sin offering (Lv 5:11) alongside Mary's purification sacrifice.

2:39 It is difficult to reconcile the birth narratives in Lk and Mt, each of which seems to know nothing of the events of the other. They agree that Jesus was born in Bethlehem and later moved to Nazareth with His parents. In order to integrate the two accounts, the record in Mt of the flight to Egypt must be placed between Lk 2:38-39. The visit of the wise men may also have occurred here. If it occurred before Jesus' temple dedication, Herod took at least a month from his encounter with the wise men to realize he had been tricked, which is not unreasonable. Both birth narratives highlight themes important to their respective authors. Matthew highlighted both Joseph's role as a righteous, adoptive father through whom Jesus obtained Davidic lineage, and the recognition of Jesus as the true King of the Jews in opposition to Herod. Luke highlighted both the role of marginalized characters, women and shepherds, in the joyful recognition of the messianic Savior, and the significance of Jesus for Gentiles as well Jews.

2:42-51 Verses 49 and 51 show that Jesus was not intending to be disrespectful of His parents. At age 12 He had a strong sense of His paternity, and He anticipated that His parents would have the same sense. But, despite the announcement of His birth, 12 years of normal family relations had passed, and this sudden revelation of Jesus' self-consciousness probably brought a flood of confusion to Mary and Joseph about their roles as parents and about Jesus' relationship to them.

3:1 Josephus refers to a Lysanias who was ruler of Chalcis and executed by Mark Antony in 36 B.C., leading some to accuse Luke of error here. But Josephus also appears to have spoken of another Lysanias, one who ruled the city of Abila some time before A.D. 37. Inscriptional evidence from near Abila confirms that a Lysanias was associated with the area around A.D. 14. Luke's placement of the tetrarchy of Lysanias in c. A.D. 26–29 (the fifteenth year of Tiberius is disputed) therefore seems assured.

3:2 Caiaphas was high priest from A.D. 18–36. His father-in-law, Annas, preceded him as high priest but was deposed in A.D. 15. Annas nevertheless remained a powerful figure in priestly leadership for some time, and Luke referred to his de facto high priestly authority as retained during the tenure of Caiaphas. In 1990 an ossuary believed to be that of Caiaphas was discovered in Jerusalem (see Jn 18:13).

3:3 John's baptism was a preparatory rite, not only symbolizing the confession of sin and the intention of the one baptized to live responsibly under God, but also looking forward to the coming Mightier One who would purge His people and baptize them with the Spirit. Acts 19:4 shows that Luke did not envision John's baptism (or the repentance associated with it) would provide salvation; faith in the Messiah was still necessary.

3:6 The standard Hebrew text of Is 40:5 does not contain this phrase, but the Greek translation of this passage does. Presumably the ancient Jewish translator added the phrase as a marginal note for the revelation of God's glory, a justifiable inference from the larger context of Is 40–66. The significance of Jesus as a Savior for all humanity is a recurring theme in Lk (1:76-79; 2:11-14,29-32). Luke did not suggest a form of universalism in which every person will be saved but instead emphasized that salvation will extend beyond Israel to the Gentiles (see Ac 11:18).

3:17 The final judgment is yet future, when "the wheat" will be gathered and "the chaff" burned. But the winnowing process—the process of distinguishing chaff and wheat—began in the ministry of Jesus and continues through His second coming.

3:22 For more on the Father's affirmation of Jesus at His baptism see note on Mk 1:11.

3:23-38 Luke and Matthew differed considerably in their recording of Jesus' genealogy. Some have suggested that Luke gave Jesus' descent through Mary, but this solution has not been accepted by the majority of scholars. Perhaps Matthew gave the legal

line of descent, while Luke gave the physical line of descent (i.e., of Joseph, but not literally of Jesus—see note on vv. 23-24), both with allowances for adoptions, levirate marriages, or transference of inheritance rights from one parallel line to another in the absence of children. Though all harmonizing solutions are conjectural, they demonstrate that the two genealogies are not inherently incompatible.

3:23-24 Though Jesus was not the physical descendant of Joseph, He was the legal heir through adoption. Luke lists Heli as the father of Joseph, but Mt 1:16 lists Jacob. Jacob and Heli may have been near relatives, with Heli's son Joseph becoming Jacob's heir when the latter died childless. Or, if Heli was the father of Mary and if she was his sole heir, then Joseph, his son-in-law, could have been considered his heir.

3:23 The dates of Jesus' birth and initial ministry are disputed. They depend on the date of Herod the Great's death (1:5; Mt 2:1) and the date of the fifteenth year of Tiberius (Lk 3:1). Herod's death is accepted by most as 4 B.C., but some evidence may better fit a date in 1 B.C. Similarly, on a normal Roman reckoning, the fifteenth year of Tiberius was A.D. 28–29. It is possible, however, to date his fifteenth year as early as A.D. 26. The various alternatives allow that Jesus was anywhere from 27 to 33 years old, within range of Luke's "about 30 years old."

3:27 Why does 1 Ch 3:19 list Hananiah, but not Rhesa, as one of the sons of Zerubbabel? Hananiah is probably equivalent to Luke's Johanan. On one the divine name Yah has been added as a suffix, and on the other it has been added as a prefix, to the basic name Hanan (Hanan-Yah, Yo-Hanan). Rhesa is then taken to be an early copying error, where the Aramaic word for "the prince" (*resha*), a title of Zerubbabel (see Ezr 1:8), has been mistaken for his child. The standard Hebrew text of 1 Ch 3:19 lists Zerubbabel as the son of Pedaiah. Whereas other OT passages (e.g., Hg 1:1; Ezr 3:2; Neh 12:1) as well as the Greek translation of 1 Ch 3:19, call him the son of Pedaiah's brother Shealtiel. This is probably a case of levirate marriage (Dt 25:5-10) or adoption. Matthew agreed with 1 Ch 3:17 that Jeconiah (Jehoiachin) was the father of Shealtiel, but Luke named his father as Neri. According to Jr 22:30, Jeconiah's heirs would not rule, so the right of rule presumably passed to the line of Nathan in the person of Shealtiel, son of Neri. The chronicler then followed the legal descent from Jeconiah to Shealtiel.

3:38 Luke was not trying to suggest that Adam was a literal son of God but rather that he was directly created by God. Luke's point is to link the universal significance of Adam, the unique man and progenitor of humanity created directly by God, to the universal significance of Jesus, the second Adam and Savior of humanity conceived by God.

4:1-13 How do we know what happened in the wilderness? Jesus probably recounted the temptation narrative to His disciples. There are no real parallels to this story in Jewish or Greco-Roman literature, and no cogent reason has been given as to why the early church would invent it. Furthermore, the story resonates with other known features of Jesus' self-perception and spiritual practice. These considerations lead even some critical scholars to see at least a core of historicity in the account. On the relation to John, see note on Mk 1:7.

4:1 In the incarnation Jesus did not primarily function in His divine nature (Php 2:6-7) but set aside the independent exercise of His divine attributes. In His human nature Jesus was filled with, or empowered by, the Spirit.

4:2 Though it is possible that Jesus ate nothing for 40 days, Luke's language may merely mean that Jesus subsisted on little or regularly fasted during that time. Matthew used similar language to characterize the lifestyle of John the Baptist in Mt 11:18, clearly not intending total abstinence from food. Either way, the point is that Jesus would have been famished when Satan came to tempt Him.

4:5 The manner in which Jesus experienced these temptations is not made clear. Matthew made this temptation the third in his account, and many think his order was original. Luke may have rearranged the order of the temptations for literary purposes, presumably to have the climactic event occur at the temple, foreshadowing the Passion narrative (note the lack of temporal markers linking the temptations). The different order of the temptations in Mt and Lk demonstrates the freedom assumed by the Gospel writers in structuring their narratives. Though the events they recorded are historical events, the Gospels display principles

of structure other than strict chronology. Modern historiography is far more concerned with chronology than were ancient historians. Only when time indicators are explicit can we be sure of chronological order.

4:14-15 For more on the timing of Jesus' Galilean ministry, see note on Mk 1:14.

4:16-30 This is probably Luke's version of the episode recorded in Mt 13:53-58 and Mk 6:1-6, which Luke has moved forward for thematic purposes. The emphasis at the outset of Jesus' ministry is His understanding of His messianic calling to the marginalized—whether Jews or Gentiles—and the rejection that resulted. According to plan, Jesus focused His three years of ministry primarily on His own people, but as His ministry began, He recognized that there would be no man-made barriers to the mercy God offered through His Son.

4:16 Rabbinic sources give some indication of what a synagogue service in the first century entailed. Part of the service included the invitation for any qualified male present to give a homily—an invitation Jesus accepted on this occasion.

4:18-21 Luke undoubtedly summarized a reading of Is 61:1-2 with an accompanying address by Jesus (cp. v. 22). The reading does not include the final portion of Is 61:2, "and the day of our God's vengeance," because Jesus reserves judgment for His second coming.

4:41 For more on Jesus not using the term *messiah* in the early stages of His ministry, see note on Mk 1:44.

5:1-11 This episode is similar to that in Jn 21:1-14, though different enough to conclude they represent distinct events. If this is the same event as in Mk 1:16-20 and Mt 4:18-22, Luke moved it to this point in his narrative in order to shift from an introduction to Jesus' ministry in 4:1-44 to an introduction of His disciples in 5:1-28. Luke 4:38-39 seems to indicate that the placement of the call narrative was thematic, not chronological.

In 1985 a boat, called "the Jesus boat," was discovered in the depths of the Sea of Galilee between the ancient harbors of Magdala and Ginnosar. Carbon-14 dating places the construction of the boat at about 40 B.C. The boat was likely in service on the Sea of Galilee during the first half of the first century A.D.

5:17 This verse was probably not intended to suggest that Jesus' healing power was intermittent. Luke nowhere stated that the power of Jesus to heal was at any time absent from Him. Luke's point here seems to have been to focus on Jesus' dependence on the power of the Holy Spirit (4:18).

5:19 Houses with tile roofs were uncommon, though not unknown, in first-century Palestine. It is not clear, however, if Luke was actually referring to a roof of baked clay tiles or to something else. The Greek word here translated "tiles" (*keramoi*) can mean "clay," and Luke may have been merely referring to the common mud-clay roof, which seemed to be the case in Mk 2:4. Alternatively, Luke's word choice may be an accommodation to his audience's normal experience of Greco-Roman architecture, which included roof tiles, and only meant to express the idea that the men dug through the roof.

5:24 For more on Jesus' self-designation as the Son of Man, see note on Mk 2:10,28.

5:27 On the call of Levi or Matthew, see note on Mk 2:14.

6:1 Were the disciples stealing grain? No, the disciples were not stealing, as the Pharisees had accused them of doing. In fact, Dt 23:25 permitted the casual plucking of grain in a field, as this incident shows.

6:12-16 On the call of the Twelve, see note on Mk3:13-19.

6:17-49 There are a number of differences between 6:17-49 and Mt 5:1–7:27. Jesus undoubtedly taught similar things on several different occasions, and the different settings (a "level place," Lk 6:17, and a "mountain," Mt 5:1; before [Mt 10:1-4] and after [Lk 6:12-16] choosing the Twelve) and contents of the two sermons lead many to conclude that they represent such a case. Others conclude from the very similar contents and order of the sermons, and from the episode of the healing of the centurion's servant that follows each, that they represent the same sermon, albeit considerably summarized by both Gospel writers. Luke's "level place" (Gk *pedinos*) can refer to a flat spot in the mountains and is so taken in this latter view. Luke omitted much of what is of primarily Jewish concern in the sermon as recorded in Mt and relocated other sayings elsewhere in his Gospel (to times when Jesus presumably repeated such sayings). Regardless of whether we read these as one sermon or two, the introductory and concluding statements in both Lk (Lk 6:17-19; 7:1) and Mt (Mt 5:1-2; 7:28-29) imply that the writers intended for these sermons to be read as historical events and not mere anthologies of Jesus' teaching shaped into sermons for literary purposes.

6:20-23 Since the Beatitudes are worded differently in Mt and Lk, some have claimed that Luke was focusing entirely on socioeconomic categories, as opposed to Matthew's more spiritual focus. However, the word for "poor" (Hb *anawim*) is used in the OT (and first-century Judaism) to describe pious people (e.g., 2 Sm 22:28; Ps 12:5; 69:29; Is 49:13; cp. 1 Co 1:26-29; Jms 2:5). The "poor" are those who have God as their only resource. Thus, in Lk 6:20-23, they are associated with the Son of Man and the prophets and expect end-times vindication on the one hand and are identified with Jesus' disciples on the other. Matthew's use of the phrase "poor in spirit" (Mt 5:3) makes this nuance explicit. Jesus probably said something much as Luke has recorded, and Matthew paraphrased it to bring out this nuance. Jesus' coming is especially good news for the poor and oppressed (Lk 4:18).

6:24-26 Although Matthew omitted these "woes" in his account, it does not mean that Luke was putting words into Jesus' mouth. Similar terminology and syntax between the woes that Luke recorded and the beatitudes that Matthew recorded suggest the same. Either Matthew did not know of the woes or he omitted them as unnecessary to his purpose. Jesus was not condemning all rich, satisfied, joyful, and well-liked people any more than He was commending all poor, hungry, sad, and persecuted people. The former categories stand for the self-satisfied, self-reliant, and ungenerous as the latter stand for those who rely on God.

6:29-35 These are not absolute commands but illustrations of loving one's enemies (v. 27) and dealing with others as one would desire to be dealt with (v. 31). They are stark and concrete examples of the general principles of non-retaliation, impartiality, generosity, and graciousness. The examples are radical and thus intended to shock the audience to consider the radical nature of Jesus' ethic; they were not intended to be applied unthinkingly. For more on hyperbolic expressions see note on Mk 1:5.

6:37 For more on Jesus' command not to judge, see note on Mt 7:1-2.

7:1-10 The differences between this episode and that in Jn 4:46-54 probably indicate that two distinct, though similar, events are described. Matthew 8:5-13 parallels Lk 7:1-10, but whereas Lk has two sets of intermediaries between Jesus and the centurion, Mt has Jesus interact directly with the centurion. Luke probably preserved the actual events, and Matthew summarized them, narrating the effect of the emissaries' mediation as direct speech with the centurion. This illustrates the relative degrees of precision at which the Gospel writers aimed in their reporting of events. For more about broaching delicate issues through intermediaries, see note on Mk 10:35.

7:16 Jesus, like Elijah (1 Kg 17:17-24) and Elisha (2 Kg 4:18-37), raised the dead, leading the crowd to speculate that He was a prophet on par with those great prophets. Elisha's raising of the Shunammite's son took place close to NT Nain, the site of this miracle. It is difficult to tell whether Luke presented their speculation as referring to the prophet of Dt 18:15. Though the verbal parallelism between their remarks and that of Dt is strong, the absence of the article with "prophet" leaves it unclear (see Mt 21:11; Jn 6:14; Ac 3:22).

7:18-23 Did John the Baptist change his mind about Jesus? Though John had earlier identified Jesus as the Messiah (Mt 3:14; Jn 1:32-34), he now expressed doubts. However, this is not surprising. John was languishing in prison for a cause that was centered

on the justice-wielding messianic power of Jesus. But Jesus' ministry was not turning out to be what John expected (Lk 3:16-17). He thus sent emissaries to find out whether he had made a mistake.

7:28 The striking, paradoxical rhetoric of this saying was intended to make the simple point that the new era of the kingdom surpasses the old, preparatory order. The saying is not to be read as denigrating John, although his death coming prior to Jesus' meant he would not live to see the arrival of the kingdom age.

7:34 The accusation that Jesus was a glutton and drunkard came from the Jewish authorities. Though He undoubtedly mixed with the less-than-respectable, there is no indication that the charges of gluttony and drunkenness were anything more than caricature.

7:36-50 For a similar but different event, see note on Mk 14:3-9.

7:47 It is important to note that the woman was not forgiven as a result of her love. Rather, her love was a response to the forgiveness she received from Christ.

8:10 For more on the aim of parables, see note on Mk 4:11-12.

8:18 On the parable of the soils, see note on Mk 4:11-12.

8:19-21 For more on Jesus' relationship with His earthly family, see note on Mk 3:31-35.

8:26 For more on the location of this event, see note on Mk 5:1.

8:27 For more on the number healed, see note on Mk 5:2.

8:32-33 For more on Jesus' sending the demons into the pigs, see note on Mk 5:11-13.

8:46-48 Was everyone who touched Jesus healed? God honored this woman's faith as it was. The relation of faith to healing in the Gospels is complex. Sometimes Jesus responded to people's faith (or refused to heal due to their lack of faith), and sometimes He seems to have acted purely on His own initiative (7:11-16). Faith is explicitly present in about half the miracles in the Gospels. In the other half, miracles strengthen the faith of those who witnessed them.

Faith is not a matter of "name it and claim it." It does not override God's sovereignty. Lack of healing cannot be blamed on insufficient faith. Neither can it be attributed to specific sin (2 Co 12:7-9).

9:1 A distinction is here made between demonic possession and physical disease. The ancients were not as naive in these matters as many critics allege.

9:3 For different accounts of this event, see note onMk 6:8-9.

9:10 For geographical background, see note on Mk 6:32.

9:17 For more on the motif represented in this event, see note on Mk 6:34.

9:20 For more on Peter's confession, see note on Mk 8:29.

9:26 Jesus was not addressing a simple lack of courage on the part of His disciples. Being ashamed of His words is to reject His claims and to refuse to take up one's cross and follow Him.

9:27 For more on what Jesus meant about some seeing the kingdom of God, see note on Mk 9:1.

9:28-36 The historicity of the transfiguration is doubted by some because of its supernatural elements. It is often thought to be a post-resurrection story read back into the life of Jesus. But the story bears no real resemblance to other resurrection appearances (Moses, Elijah, and the glory of Jesus do not appear in any resurrection story). And reference to it in 2 Pt 1:16-18 indicates that the transfiguration was always seen as occurring before Jesus' passion and not after.

9:28 For more on Jesus' transfiguration, see note on Mk 9:2.

9:49-50 Jesus had earlier sent the disciples on a ministry tour with His authority and power to cast out demons (v. 1). That others who accepted His authority but were not part of His entourage were doing the same thing is historically plausible. (For a similar occurrence, cp. Ac 19:13.) Moreover, Lk 11:23 does not contradict Jesus' open attitude here. The question, then, is about the status of ministers not part of the inner circle and seems to be a question of rivalry. In 11:23 it is a question of one's assessment of Jesus, whether He is from God or not. In 9:49-50, not to oppose the work of the apostles was to join it. In 11:23, to refuse to come to a decision regarding Jesus was to reject Him.

9:51 The section from 9:51–19:44 is often referred to as the "travel narrative," since it roughly outlines the final journey of Jesus to Jerusalem. The portions in 10:38-42 and 17:11 seem to indicate that the narrative was only broadly chronological, and this may account for some of the variations with the settings in Mt, though it is also possible Jesus repeated these teachings on multiple occasions.

9:52 Though many of the residents of Sychar believed in Jesus (Jn 4:39), He was not universally accepted by the Samaritans.

9:57-62 Matthew 8:18-22 sets this episode in the Galilean ministry of Jesus. Both Matthew and Luke were ambiguous about the exact location where the event occurred, and both may have chosen the respective locations in the flow of the narrative for thematic reasons.

9:60-61 The burial of the dead, especially of one's close kin, was a sacred duty in first-century Judaism; it took precedence over virtually all other religious obligations. Jesus' response was intended to shock His audience. He was pressing the radical claims of the kingdom above even the most fundamental obligations of kinship. In effect He was saying response to God's call is the most fundamental obligation of all (8:21; 9:23; 14:26). Those unresponsive to the call ("the dead") may bury the dead. That the NT does not advocate the renunciation of all family ties by Christians is made clear by such passages as 1 Co 7:12-13, 1 Tm 5:8, and 1 Pt 3:1-2. Jesus' point was about people's priorities. He didn't set aside the commandment to honor father and mother (Mk 7:7-13). For more on Jesus' teaching concerning the relative priorities of God's kingdom and family, see note on Mk 3:31-35.

10:1 The instructions to the 72 are similar to those to the Twelve (9:3-5), especially in Matthew's version (Mt 10:5-42), prompting many scholars to see a repetition of the mission of the Twelve here. But the purposes of the two missions (besides the number sent) seem sufficiently different to see two different events. It is likely that Jesus gave similar instructions to the groups He sent out and the instructions were here conformed to the same shape. Furthermore, both sets were no doubt summaries of longer discourses by Jesus. Luke 9:51-56 implies that the sending of advance troops was a regular tactic of Jesus.

10:6 Peace, like grace (2:40) and power (8:46), is pictured here as having substantial reality. Jesus referred to a situation in which the Jewish greeting *shalom* was accepted by one disposed to the disciples, allowing them to board at his house. God would honor the blessing offered and give peace to the house. The rejected greeting would not be so honored.

10:10-11 In contrast to the immediate vengeance James and John sought to call down on Samaria (9:51-56), Jesus required a prophetic warning when leaving an inhospitable city.

10:18 Jesus was probably speaking metaphorically here. His point was that the ministry of the 72 was an assault on Satan's authority.

10:19 Though Paul escaped harm after the bite of a viper (Ac 28:3-6), Jesus was speaking hyperbolically. Snakes and scorpions stand for the power of Satan. And though Christians have been harmed by many things, Jesus promised that they are ultimately kept by the power of God (see Ps 91:13).

10:22 The similarity of this saying to the language and theology in Jn has led many scholars to reject its authenticity. But the saying has been shown to have an early Palestinian origin, and the conclusion that it goes back to Jesus seems assured, especially since everyone agrees that Jesus referred to God as His Father (2:49; see Mt 10:33; 11:27; 18:10). Thus we have confirmation here of the basic historicity of John's picture of Jesus, someone who understood Himself as uniquely related to God and as exclusively mediating a relationship with God.

10:25-28 This incident appears from the details to be different from that of Mt 22:34-40. Indeed, the dispute is so basic that it surely occurred more than once in Jesus' ministry. Note, however, that Jesus' commendation of love of God and neighbor as fulfilling the demands for life in the law is not meant to deny salvation by faith or the necessity of a relationship through Christ.

11:2-4 It is not clear whether the prayer here was originally included in Luke's sources as part of the sermon on the plain (see Mt 6:9-13) or whether Luke recorded a separate instance when Jesus taught His disciples to pray. If Luke moved the prayer, he apparently did so for thematic reasons. Set prayers were not uncommon in Judaism, and it is at least plausible that Jesus repeated this model prayer more than once.

11:10 Jesus said here that "everyone" who asks receives, yet experience does not seem to bear this out. Why?Jesus was not giving a magic formula for self-gratification. Jesus used absolute terms to emphasize His point: One is to pray while trusting in God's goodness and willingness to answer. This is particularly true when the object of prayer is spiritual (v. 13). Jesus had just taught the disciples to pray for God's will to be done. One should assume that the caveats of the prayer earlier in the chapter inform the interpretation of a statement like this just a few verses later. For more on the point of Jesus' hyperbolic language, see note on Mk 11:22-24.

11:23 To compare this with a saying that seems to be contrary to this, see note on 9:49-50.

11:29-30 For more on the place of signs in Jesus' ministry, see note on Mk 8:12.

11:34-36 Jesus made an analogy between receptivity to His ministry and the ability to see. Receptivity is like having healthy eyes; one can see well (light enters the body). The warning to ensure that the light in you is not darkness is paradoxical, not illogical. Jesus intended examination of the heart's spiritual receptivity.

11:40 This verse might seem to contradict Jesus' previous injunction against calling someone a fool (Mt 5:22). However, Jesus did not prohibit condemnation of foolishness per se (or anger at injustice). Rather, Jesus condemned meanness or self-centered spite.

11:47-48,50 Jesus asserted that the same spirit that caused the ancestors of the scribes to reject and murder God's prophets animated the scribes' rejection of Him. They demonstrated their collusion by building tombs for the prophets their ancestors murdered. The scribes, of course, would object that their monuments to the prophets implied the opposite.

11:51 For additional details on the identification of Zechariah, see note on Mt 23:35.

12:11 For Jesus' prophecy of the coming persecution, see note on 21:12-13.

12:20 More information on the use of "fool" is contained in note on 11:40.

12:22-34 Was Jesus recommending a passive and unthinking approach to life and the future? Absolutely not. He used dramatic rhetoric to highlight the inconsistency of claiming faith in God while remaining anxious about daily needs. Jesus' advice to sell one's possessions and give to the poor (v. 33) fits into this context. It is not an absolute command but an illustration of the kind of faith that trusts God more than worldly security. For more on worldly security, see note on Mk 10:21.

12:37 That Jesus used parables with slaves does not imply that He endorsed slavery. The parables drew on everyday facts of life in the Greco-Roman world and were not intended as social commentary. Jesus' teaching focused extensively on justice and human dignity, as noted in the Sermon on the Mount.

12:46-48 The punishment of "cutting in two" was not unheard of in the ancient world. To be assigned a place with the unbelievers could mean that the slave's corpse was left unburied, although this could also be a mixed metaphor—Jesus switching from the parable's picture to the significance of the picture. The scenes of dismemberment and beatings are intentionally harsh and do not need to be pressed too far with regard to God's character. Jesus used the most graphic images known to His audience to illustrate the dire consequences of being unprepared for the Day of the Lord.

12:49-53 In other passages, Jesus is said to bring peace (Is 9:6; Lk 2:14; Ac 10:36). There "peace" is applied to the restored relationship Jesus affords between God and man and to the ultimate peace He brings to creation when His messianic work is finished, after His second coming and millennial reign. In His first coming He brings division, since His call to the kingdom of God is heeded by some and rejected by others.

12:50 The parallel in Mk 10:38 is sufficiently distinct to attest to the historicity of this statement, that is, that Jesus predicted His own death. See note on Mk 10:45.

13:1,4 Though no outside sources confirm these incidents, there is no good reason to reject their historicity. Violence by rulers against the people was not an uncommon occurrence, and the historian Josephus told of several incidents of Pilate's bloody suppression of dissent. It is clear, however, this list is not exhaustive, since the Jewish philosopher Philo mentioned other events

not recorded by Josephus. If our knowledge of political disasters is limited, it is even more so with construction disasters like the fall of the tower of Siloam.

13:6-8 For more on the image of the fig tree, see note on Mk 11:12-14.

13:11 Since no exorcism took place, the phrase "disabled by a spirit" used to describe the cause of the woman's condition may be idiomatic. That is, the condition was not caused by direct demonic influence but was a manifestation of satanic opposition to humanity in general (v. 16). See note on 9:1.

13:33 Jesus clearly understood Himself to be a prophet, but this self-understanding does not exclude a royal, messianic self-understanding as well, as the allusion to Ps 118:26 in verse 35 makes clear (Lk 19:29-40).

13:35 This is a prophecy of God forsaking Israel (see Jr 22:5-6). Jesus declared that Israel would remain rejected until it acknowledged Him as its Messiah. The triumphal entry (Lk 19:29-40) did not fulfill this requirement, as the note of rejection continued there (19:41-44; cp. Rm 11:11-32). Luke either moved the saying forward for narrative purposes (see Mt 23:39) or else Jesus made such a remark more than once.

14:13-14 Love for God is seen in love for others. Faith leading to salvation is manifested in love for God and neighbor (see Mt 25:31-46).

14:23 The idea here is not one of force or compulsion but of strong urging or convincing (see Gn 19:3), presumably because the invitees did not know the host.

14:24 It is important not to confuse the details of parables with the realities they represent. God is not petulant, but the outcome of refusing His invitation is nevertheless exclusion from the messianic banquet.

14:26 See notes on Mk 3:31-35 and Lk 9:60-61. Jesus' point is not that all who follow Him must sever all family relations (cp. 1 Tm 5:8) but rather that nothing, not even family, should be allowed to keep one from discipleship. The statement was intentionally shocking to drive the point home (see Mt 10:37).

14:28-32 Salvation is completely free, but it will cost your life.

14:33 For more on Jesus' teachings on possessions, see notes on 12:22-34 and Mk 10:21.

14:34-35 For more on Jesus' use of the image of salt, see note on Mk 9:50.

15:7 Jesus was not suggesting there actually are some needing no repentance. The religious leaders needed to repent, but they were far from recognizing it. Jesus saw their need with clarity, but they didn't (e.g., 11:39; 16:15). On the need of all to repent, see Rm 3:1-31.

15:25-30 The attitude of the older son is completely understandable. Indeed, the listener to the parable is supposed to feel the same sense of injustice that the older son feels, highlighting the distinction between our self-centeredness and God's grace. The point is that God is a gracious Father, and if one is truly to be His child, one should adopt His attitude toward repentance.

16:8-9 Jesus did not commend the manager's dishonesty but rather his foresight. The shrewdness of the manager is typical of the "sons of this age" toward their own kind, and Jesus' audience (and even the master in the parable) could, without condoning his activities, smile at how the fox got himself out of a jam. The manager used what resources he had to prepare for his inevitable demise. The point, then, is to ask, if the unrighteous know how to use money to win friends and secure a future, how much more ought the righteous to do so, albeit righteously, helping those in need, and with a view to God's reward? Verses 19-31 record a second parable illustrating this point.

16:17 For Jesus' high view of the law, see Mt 5:17-20.

16:19-24 The opening to this story ("There was a rich man") indicates that it is a parable (16:1), and thus the details of its picture of the afterlife should not be taken too literally. Certainly, however, Jesus taught life after death, including reward for the righteous and punishment for the wicked (Mt 8:11-12; 18:9).

16:25-26 For more on the pervasive theme of the great reversal, see notes on 1:51-54 and 6:20-23,24-26.

17:1-7 The sayings in this section have different settings in Mt and Mk and are somewhat differently expressed there, indicating that the version in Lk may have come from a unique source. Because of their proverbial character, they were probably used by Jesus numerous times in His ministry, and thus the tradition carried multiple versions of them. On faith, see note on Mk 11:22-24.

17:10 See note on 12:37. The focus is not on God's attitude toward our obedience (as an ungrateful taskmaster) or on the character of discipleship as a cold, thankless endeavor, but on the humble attitude of the disciple, who recognizes that he or she is unworthy of honor for merely fulfilling a duty.

17:11-19 The details indicate that this episode was different from that recorded in 5:12-16 (see Mk 1:40-45). Leprosy was common enough in Palestine, and its need for priestly testimony (Lv 13–14) unique enough, to account for two events in Jesus' ministry as similar as these.

17:11 Many accuse Luke of geographical ignorance here, since one does not pass between Samaria and Galilee on the way to Jerusalem. But Luke merely affirmed that Jesus was ministering in the border region of the two territories as He began His final trip to the religious capital, not that a route along the border takes one there.

17:20-21,24 By failing to recognize that the kingdom of God was present in the ministry of Jesus, the Pharisees wrongly looked for a future sign of its coming. He said in effect, "If you want to find the kingdom, you have to deal with Me now. You have gotten all the signs you need" (11:20). But He did not thereby deny a future "coming" of the kingdom with signs, as verse 24 makes clear. The manifestation of the kingdom began in the ministry of Jesus, continues in the work of the Spirit in the church, and will culminate in the return and subsequent world rule of Christ.

18:7-8 The vindication that God will bring for His saints is judgment of their enemies at the end times. It comes "swiftly," either in the sense that God justifies and condemns even before the judgment day (see Jn 3:18) or in the sense that time is relative in relation to eternity. Verse 8 seems to imply that a perceived delay on God's part may cause some to lose faith, indicating that the promise of immediate vindication probably depends on a relative sense of time. The NT gives only scant evidence that a "delay"

in the second coming caused some concern for the early church (2 Pt 3:1-13). The provision of the Spirit and subsequent participation in the life of the risen Christ seems to have satisfied doubts and sustained hopes.

18:17 For additional explanation of the character of such faith, see note on Mk 10:15.

18:19 For more detail on this encounter, see note on Mk 10:18.

18:22-23 For elaboration of Jesus' call to radical obedience, see notes on 12:22-34 and Mk 10:21.

18:29-30 For further explanation of Jesus' promises to His followers, see note on Mk 10:29-30.

18:31-33 Jesus probably had in mind at least Is 52:13–53:12. Evidence that some first-century Jews understood this passage as a reference to the Messiah is disputed, but the links in Isaiah's "servant songs" to the Davidic messianism of Is 11 justify such a reading. Other passages possibly alluded to by Jesus include Ps 22 and 118:22, Is 50:4-9, and Dn 9:26. ("Prophets" could be used broadly to refer to any in the OT who prophesied.)

18:34 Though Jesus' original disciples were privileged insiders to Jesus' teaching and significance (Mk 4:11), only after the resurrection did they understood the full significance of His death (Jn 2:22). Such a concept did not easily fit their notions of the messianic victory (Mk 8:31-33).

18:35-43 Concerning the question of one or two blind men, see note on Mk 10:46-52.

19:9 Salvation didn't come to Zacchaeus because of his works. Rather, his encounter with Jesus and subsequent change of heart were exhibited by his actions (3:8). Although we are not told of his faith in Jesus as the Christ, presumably Zacchaeus's positive response to Jesus indicates as much. Though the crowd thought Zacchaeus had forfeited access to God's favor because of his greed, Jesus declared he was as much a child of Abraham as they were (see Rm 3:1-2; 9:4-5; 11:28).

19:11-27 This parable is different enough from Mt 25:14-30 so that most scholars think the Gospel writers had independent traditions of an original. But why the tradition would preserve the same story in such different forms is not clear, and it is more likely that Jesus told similar stories under different circumstances.

19:26 The parable is not intended to give insight into God's (or Christ's) character but to warn of unfruitful discipleship. Thus what appears as harsh or unfair in the story is applied in reality either to those who attach themselves to the church without actually being saved (see Mt 7:21-22; Lk 6:46) or to those who make a poor showing of their true discipleship (see 1 Co 3:14-15). Jesus' concern was for His followers to bear fruit for His kingdom.

19:27 The language sounds harsh to modern ears but fits the cultural setting of the story. The situation of those who reject the rule of Christ is dire (Ps 2:10-12; 1 Th 1:6-10; Rv 19:21) and the offer of forgiveness does not last forever.

19:29-40 On the question of the number of animals, see note on Mk 11:2-3.

19:38-40 There is nothing historically implausible about the triumphal entry. It is independently attested by all four Gospels and, with the cleansing of the temple, provides the best justification for Jesus' arrest and execution. Jesus' disciples and Galilean pilgrims familiar with His ministry and convinced of His messianic status would hail His entrance into Jerusalem as they thronged to the city for Passover, particularly if Jesus had now encouraged their acclamation after so long deflecting it in Galilee (see note on Mk 1:44).

19:42-44 Jesus prophesied the destruction of Jerusalem, an event that would occur at the hands of the Romans 40 years later. The vague language is typical of any siege (though it has precedents in the OT; e.g., Is 29:1-4), and this argues against a "prophecy after the fact." One would expect more detail from the actual destruction of the city if the latter were the case.

19:45 For a further discussion of the chronology of these events, see note on Mt 21:12-22.

20:8 For more on the question of Jesus' authority, see note on Mk 11:33.

20:9-18 For additional detail on the parable of the vineyard, see note on Mk 12:6.

20:36 See note on Mk 12:25. "Sons of God" is a way of referring to spiritual or heavenly beings. Angels are referred to in this manner in Jb 1:6.

20:44 For more on expectations of Messiah, see note on Mk 12:37.

21:4 While this verse has doubtless been used by unscrupulous persons to squeeze money out of others, Jesus commended the piety demonstrated by the widow's action. He was not recommending that everyone should demonstrate piety in exactly the same manner as this woman. See note on 12:22-34.

21:12-13 Some scholars think the early church invented this prophecy based on its experience of persecution. But, aside from the question of Jesus' ability to prophesy, it is not hard to imagine that Jesus could predict this based on His own experience of opposition and anticipated crucifixion. However, that He successfully prophesied not only these but also many other events (especially His own resurrection) argues strongly for real supernatural insight and for the future fulfillment of His remaining prophecies. See note on vv. 18-19.

21:14 Should persecuted Christians not prepare for their defense in court? Jesus' point is that they are not to rely on their own ingenuity but on the power of the Spirit.

21:18-19 Jesus prophesied that some of His followers will be killed but they will not be harmed. This seems contradictory. His promise was that though they may be put to death for His sake, ultimately they cannot be harmed (see 12:4-5 for an elaboration of Jesus' meaning).

21:20-28 Here Lk begins to differ most significantly from Mt and Mk. The Olivet discourse began with a question concerning the timing of Jesus' prediction of the destruction of the temple, though Mt 24:3 makes it clear that the disciples understood that event as part of the final events of the age. Jesus' response answered both questions—the timing of Jerusalem's fall and the timing of the end of the age—by using the one event to characterize the other. Luke placed the emphasis on the destruction of Jerusalem, while Matthew and Mark placed it on the end of the age. See note on Mk 13:30.

21:28,31-32 The references to "you," "this generation," and "these things" are interpreted in different ways. Matthew and Mark focused the remarks especially on the original audience and the question of the destruction of the temple. Here they seem to have referred both to the original audience, some of whom were alive at the destruction of Jerusalem, and to the generation of the end, who will witness the signs of the coming of the Son of Man. Presumably the latter generation is spoken of as the former because of the close link Jesus drew between the two events.

22:3 According to Jn 13:27, Satan entered Judas during the Last Supper. But Jn 13:2 notes that Satan had before this inspired Judas's betrayal of Jesus. Thus Satan "entered" Judas twice (see Jn 6:70).

22:7-8 For a discussion of the events related to the Passover celebration Jesus observed with His disciples, see note on Mk 14:12.

22:17,20 Some ancient manuscripts do not have verses 19b-20, and thus in Lk the order of the elements of the Last Supper are reversed, from bread-cup in Mt and Mk to cup-bread. However, because the manuscripts that support this reading come from the same text-type, and because a more viable explanation can be given for the scribal omission of the words than for their later insertion, many conclude that verses 19b-20 are original. Thus Lk mentioned two cups (vv. 17,20). The traditional Passover meal involved at least three (perhaps four) ceremonial drinks. The cup in verse 17 was probably the first of the series, given Jesus' introductory remarks. The cup in verse 20 was then probably the third cup, drunk at the conclusion of the meal.

22:19-20 For a discussion of the different versions of the words spoken as Jesus inaugurated the Lord's Supper, see note on Mk 14:22-24.

22:21-22 On Judas's betrayal of Jesus, see note on Mk 14:21.

22:24-30 John 13:2-17 confirms that Jesus addressed the topic of humility and mutual service at the Last Supper, raising the plausibility of this episode from Lk, especially Jesus' response to it in Lk 22:27. Mark 10:39-45 records a separate event and suggests that the dispute about greatness among the disciples was constantly simmering and surfaced again here as the obviously climactic events in Jesus' ministry were unfolding. This was a major theme of His teaching and makes probable it achieved an established form during his lifetime, accounting for the similar language of Mk 10:42-44 and Lk 22:25-26.

22:34 For the various accounts Peter's denial of Jesus, see note on Mk 14:27-31.

22:36 In contrast to His earlier instructions to depend on the kindness of others when preaching, Jesus now required His disciples to provide for themselves, including for their defense against enemies. He was in effect telling His disciples that their message would be met with hostility.

22:38 Jesus' directive to take a sword does not contradict His ethic of non-retaliation (6:29), since Jesus rebuked Peter for using the sword to defend Him from arrest (22:49-50; Mt 26:52; Jn 18:10-11). Most scholars thus understand this verse as figurative. "Enough of that!" is taken as a rebuke of His disciples for taking Him literally (see Dt 3:26; 1 Kg 19:4).

22:43-44 These verses are missing from many ancient manuscripts, probably indicating they were not originally a part of Lk. The text does not say Jesus sweat blood but that His sweat was like drops of blood, that is, He was sweating profusely, as if He had an open wound.

22:58 Although in Mt 26:71 and Mk 14:69 the second denial was initiated by a woman, Luke recorded Peter responding to a man. This is easy to explain. Perhaps the bystanders began to press Peter as a result of the woman's actions, and Peter could have been responding to one of them. While Mark said that the first woman who questioned Peter was also the one who identified him to the bystanders, Matthew said a second woman did so. The best solution is to assume that the women together stirred up the crowd and Peter responded both to the women and to the men in the group. The point remains the same, however, namely that Peter denied Jesus several times, as Jesus had predicted he would.

22:61 On the various accounts of the rooster crowing, see note on Mk 14:30,68,72.

22:66-71 This is a second, more official trial of Jesus before the Sanhedrin. The preliminary hearing is recorded in Mk 14:53-65 (Mt 26:57-68). See note on Mk 15:1. Jesus' statement did not imply that the council would see His second coming but rather would see Him sitting at the right hand of the Father when the Spirit would be poured out and the church would begin its inexorable expansion from Jerusalem.

23:3 Jesus admitted here that He was the Messiah, but His evasive answer qualified His admission. In effect He said, "I am who you say, but not in the way you think." That is, Jesus was not the political revolutionary that Pilate's question implied.

23:7-12 The historicity of the hearing before Antipas is questioned by many, but it is not clear why Luke would invent the story. (The theory that he wanted to produce the "fulfillment" of Ps 2 found in Ac 4:25-28 does not seem sufficient, especially since both Pilate and Herod found Jesus innocent.) The historical plausibility of a Roman governor seeking the assistance of a Herod in determining questions of Judaism is confirmed by Ac 25:13–26:32. Though the mocking Jesus received in Herod's court was similar to that rendered by Pilate's soldiers in Mk 15:16-20, the version in Lk is different enough to conclude he did not construct the former event from the latter. That is, Luke had a source for this material, perhaps Manaen, foster brother of Antipas (Ac 13:1).

23:12 Sometime early in his career as governor of Judea, Pilate had been opposed before the Emperor Tiberius by a letter from a delegation of Jews that included Herod Antipas. They objected to Pilate's placing of honorific shields in Jerusalem, and Tiberius angrily commanded Pilate to remove them. Pilate's fortunes with the emperor were further damaged when his patron, the anti-Semite Sejanus, was deposed by Tiberius in A.D. 31. Pilate's action in including Antipas in the trial of Jesus may have been intended as an olive branch. But this requires a date of A.D. 33 for the crucifixion, not nearly as likely as A.D. 30.

23:27-31 Many think Jesus would not have stopped to utter these words and that Luke created them. But Luke had already reported Jesus' prophecies of Jerusalem's destruction, so including another here seems to serve no theological or narrative purpose. This, taken with the Semitic elements of Jesus' words, argues that they predate Luke and are likely to be historical.

23:30 Although the phrases "fall on us" and "cover us" come from Hs 10:8, Jesus was not citing the passage directly nor claiming that the future action of the women (and others in Jerusalem) fulfilled Hosea's prophecy in any strict sense. He borrowed the language of terror in the face of judgment from the book of Hs to highlight what the Jerusalemites were to expect in the destruction of the city.

23:34 It is unclear whether the prayer was originally part of Lk. The oldest manuscripts omit it. This prayer seems to be at odds with Jesus' warning to the women of Jerusalem (v. 30). This implies at the least that one or the other was not originally a part of Lk. If both sayings go back to Jesus, then Jesus was not asking that the consequences for His rejection be prevented but that the individual guilt of those involved in His mockery and death be forgiven.

23:36-37 For a discussion of what Jesus was offered as He died, see note on Mk 15:36.

23:39-40 Both Mt 27:44 and Mk 15:32 state that the criminals crucified with Jesus mocked Him. Only Luke tells us of one's repentance. Over the course of a crucifixion that lasted for several hours, the second criminal apparently became impressed with Jesus' demeanor and speech and changed his view of Him.

23:43 This promise does not contradict Jn 20:17. Upon His death, Jesus' spirit went to "paradise," which may mean heaven (2 Co 12:2-4; Rv 2:7) or the place of the righteous dead (called "Abraham's side" in Lk 16:22). Jesus' body remained in the grave until His resurrection, and it was the attempt to hold on to Jesus' physical presence that Jesus admonished in Jn.

23:44-45 Luke was not asserting that a solar eclipse took place (a physical impossibility at Passover, which occurs during a full moon). The word he used (Gk *ekleipo*) merely means the sun was obscured. The physical cause of the darkness may have been thick clouds or a sandstorm, but the Gospel writers were interested in the phenomenon not for its physical but for its theological meaning. Similarly, darkness does not cover the entire "world" but the "whole land," that is, of Judea or of the region of Jerusalem (Gk *ge* can mean "earth" or "land").

23:46 The final words of Jesus are recorded differently in the Gospels. The saying recorded at Mk 15:34 and Mt 27:46 ("My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?") is certainly historical, since the early church would not invent such a saying for Jesus (cp. note on Mt 27:46). The saying recorded by Lk ("Father, into Your hands I entrust My spirit") should also be taken as historical, since it finds echoes in Mt 27:50 and Jn 19:30. John's record of the words, "It is finished!" seems to precede this statement. Thus Jesus apparently first gave the cry of dereliction. Later, immediately before dying, He cried aloud, "It is finished!" and committed His spirit to God.

23:47 Luke recorded the centurion's words differently than Matthew and Mark, both of whom had him declare Jesus to be "God's Son." The centurion may have said both things. More likely, Luke was summarizing the centurion's point, since the term he used (Gk *dikaios*, "righteous, innocent") occurs frequently in Luke's writings, and the motif of Jesus as an innocent sufferer is common in Lk and Ac. Historically, though the centurion may have used Son of God language, it probably expressed his conviction that Jesus truly was a King and thus innocent of the charges upon which He was crucified, see Mk 15:39.

24:1 For some of the chronological issues of the resurrection accounts, see notes on Mk 16:1 and 16:2.

24:4 For a discussion of the number of angels at the tomb, see note on Mk 16:5-7.

24:12 While Jn 20:2-4 notes that Peter and "the other disciple, the one Jesus loved" (John) both went to the tomb to confirm the women's story, Lk mentions only Peter. But in Ac, Luke often focused on Peter, even when he related that others (significantly John) were present (e.g., Lk 9:32; 12:41; 18:28; Ac 2:14; 3:4-6). Verse 24 explicitly notes that others beside Peter witnessed the empty tomb. Thus the mention of Peter here was probably not intended to exclude the possibility of companions. Peter presumably went "home" to his lodging in Jerusalem or Bethany.

24:13-35 Though Luke told this story in his characteristic style and emphasized themes important to him, several factors argue that the story itself is historical and that he received it from an earlier source. (1) It presents the first resurrection appearance as happening to two otherwise unknown, non-apostolic Christians, but(2) it names one of them. (3) The appearance was less than spectacular or immediately convincing, and the travelers were hardly anticipating it—both facts difficult to reconcile with a theory of purposeful invention (see note on Mt 28:17). (4) The wealth of detail (such as the location of Emmaus) is not consistent with a story invented to prove the resurrection but is in keeping with an eyewitness account (Lk 1:2).

24:16 It is not clear why the travelers could not recognize Jesus (see Jn 20:14-15; 21:4), but the text suggests they were prevented from recognizing Him.

24:19,21 The characterization of Jesus as a prophet was common during Jesus' ministry (see notes on 7:16; 13:33), and that assessment would not have been overthrown by His death. These men had hoped He was more than a prophet (1:68-79), but their hopes ended with His crucifixion.

24:27 "In all the Scriptures" does not mean that every verse of the OT is a prophecy about the Christ but that the entire scope of Scripture prophesies about Him. Some passages are directly prophetic, others are typological; but the whole thing is "messianic." The OT says little about a Messiah per se, but read progressively, it has much to say about God's plan to reconcile humanity to Himself and establish His rule over the earth. And it refers frequently to various "messianic" characters, both divine and human, who play a role in this plan. Jesus explained them as culminating in Himself.

24:36-43 The Gospels record several resurrection appearances that are at once similar and difficult to reconcile with one another. Matthew's account seems the most summarized, whereas the accounts in Lk and Jn are the most detailed (they appear to use a common source for some of their material). Any relative discrepancies can be accounted for by the different focuses and the necessary summarizing tendencies of all the Gospel writers.

It is clear from a comparison that the following occurred: (1) A group of women that included Mary Magdalene discovered the empty tomb early Sunday morning (Mt 28:1-7; Mk 16:1-7; Lk 24:1-9; Jn 20:1). (2) The women reported the discovery to the otherdisciples, particularly Peter and John (Lk 24:10-11; Jn 20:2). (3) Jesus appeared to the women sometime after the report to the disciples (Mt 28:8-10; Jn 20:11-18).(4) Peter and John investigated the empty tomb for themselves (Lk 24:12; Jn 20:3-10). (5) Jesus appeared to the group of disciples later that evening (Lk 24:36-43; Jn 20:19-23). Luke added the episode on the road to Emmaus, while John added the appearance to Thomas eight days after the resurrection. Matthew and John then both reported encounters with Jesus in Galilee, the one on a mountain and the other at the Sea of Galilee, both of which must have taken place sometime later. On the relation of Lk 24:44-53 to Mt 28:16-20, see note on Lk 24:44-53.

24:39 Jesus stressed that His body was physical ("flesh and bones") and the same body as that placed in the tomb ("Look at My hands and My feet"). Nevertheless, it was a body that could materialize and dematerialize (in some sense) at will, since He just appeared in their midst. On the nature of the resurrection body, see1 Co 15:35-57.

24:44-53 According to Ac 1:3-11, the ascension of Jesus (Lk 24:50-53) concluded 40 days of resurrection appearances, any number of which included instruction to the apostles, and Mt 28:16-20 presents at least some of that instruction in Galilee (see note on Mt 28:16-20). Thus Lk 24:44-49 may be a summary of that period of teaching, up to and including that presented immediately prior to the ascension (note the lack of time indicators; cp. 24:47-49; Ac 1:4-8).

24:46 See note on verse 27.

24:50-53 That the ascension was recorded only by Luke has led many scholars to doubt its historicity. But whereas the resurrection is sufficient to conclude the other Gospels, Luke's narrative continues in the book of Ac, as he recorded the early history of the Spirit-empowered church. The other Gospel writers had less incentive to narrate the ascension than did Luke, for whom it formed the presupposition to the pouring out of the Spirit. The ascension is taken for granted elsewhere in the NT (Jn 20:17; 1 Co 15:25; Eph 4:8-10; 1 Tm 3:16; 1 Pt 3:22; Heb 4:14).

John Articles

Aren't the Gospels the Product of Greek Thinking?

by Ronald H.Nash

For more than a century, liberal critics of the Christian faith have been claiming that early Christianity was heavily influenced by Platonism, Stoicism, pagan mystery religions, or other movements in the world at that time. A series of scholarly books and articles had refuted most of these claims by the 1940s. But new generations of liberal scholars have revived many of these older discredited positions.

The favorite target among the four Gospels has been the Gospel of John. John 1:1-18 was supposedly influenced by a Jewish philosopher named Philo who lived in Alexandria, Egypt. Rudolf Bultmann made a career of claiming that parts of John's Gospel were influenced by Gnosticism and/or various mystery religions. Such influences allegedly extended to the Apostle Paul as well.

All Christians should ask the following questions of all claims about any alleged dependence of early Christianity upon pagan sources:

(1) What is the evidence for such claims?

(2) What are the dates for the evidence? An embarrassingly high percentage of the alleged evidence turns out to be dated long after the writing of the NT.

(3) Are the alleged parallels really similar, or are the likenesses a result of exaggeration, oversimplification, inattention to detail, or the use of Christian language in the description?

(4) Is the alleged parallel between the NT and a supposed pagan source the sort of thing that could have arisen independently in several different movements?

(5) Is the claim of influence or dependence consistent with the historical information we have about the first-century church?

Can the Gospel Be Presented Across Cultures?

by John Mark Terry

Evangelical Christians respond to this question with a resounding yes. The Bible includes many passages about cross-cultural evangelism. In the Great Commission (Mt 28:18-20), Jesus commanded His disciples to evangelize all the nations of the world. The word translated "nations" is the Greek word *ethne*, which is the root word for the English word *ethnic*. Thus Jesus instructed the apostles to make disciples of all the ethnic groups of the world. At His ascension (Ac 1), Jesus reiterated the command, instructing the apostles to witness even to the "ends of the earth" (Ac 1:8). Clearly the Bible reveals God's concern for all the cultures of the world.

Jesus Himself is the supreme example of cross-cultural ministry. Jesus left heaven to minister on earth. He was the first incarnational missionary as God in the flesh. In a similar way, Christians today should live the gospel among the cultures of the world. Jesus also demonstrated His concern for reaching other cultures by witnessing to the Samaritans, an ethnic group despised by the Jews of His day (Jn 4).

Peter, the leader of the early church, offers another example of cross-cultural ministry. Like most Jews of his day, he avoided contact with Gentiles. But through a vision God showed Peter the error of his prejudice, and Peter traveled to Caesarea to witness and stay in the home of Cornelius, a Roman army officer (Ac 10).

Paul provides a third example of cross-cultural witness. Though he had been raised to segregate himself from Gentiles, Paul met the Lord Jesus on the road to Damascus, and Christ called him to be a missionary to the Gentiles (Ac 9:15). Paul devoted the rest of his life to planting churches among Gentiles.

So the Bible clearly says that, yes, the gospel can be presented across cultural boundaries. Any doubt to the contrary is based upon the false contemporary assumption that at least some vital worldview beliefs (such as the gospel) are incommunicable to other cultures. This philosophical assumption has been shown to be false historically. In *A History of Christian Missions*, Bishop Stephen Neill wrote: "Christianity long has succeeded in making itself a universal religion." Bishop Neill said this doesn't mean that everyone has become a Christian, but Christians can be found in almost every country of the world—among "the most sophisticated of westerners to the aborigines of the inhospitable deserts of Australia."

Are Jesus' Claims Unique Among the Religions of the World?

by Gary R. Habermas

Have all major religious teachers proclaimed approximately the same message? For example, have many of the religious teachers taught that they were God, as Jesus did?

It may surprise many to learn that we have no reliable historical data that *any* of the founders of the world's major religions—apart from Jesus—ever claimed to be God. No early writings attest such a claim on behalf of these persons. For example, Chinese teachers Confucius and Lao-tzu exerted moral, social, and cultural influences on their students but were not theologians. Many of their wise sayings are reminiscent of the Hebrew book of Proverbs. Strangely, Buddha may have been an atheist who did not believe in any kind of divinity!

The Muslim holy book, the Qur'an, definitely does not elevate Muhammad to the place of Allah (God). While we are told that Muhammad is Allah's chief prophet, there is no attempt to make Muhammad deity. To the contrary, Allah has no partners (Surahs 4:171; 5:72, 116).

The OT places no leader or prophet on God's level. Rather, we are told that God will not share His glory with anyone else (Is 48:11). So Abraham, David, and Isaiah are not candidates for godhood.

Perhaps the Hindu figure Krishna comes closest to being understood as God. While he is referred to in the lofty terms of deity in the Hindu sacred writings, the Bhagavad-Gita (e.g., 4:13; 9:18-20,23), scholars are not sure whether Krishna ever really lived or, if he did, what century he lived in. Moreover, these writings do not claim to be historical treatises of any actual teachings and are thought to have been written hundreds of years after Krishna may have lived. Thus tracking any possibility of original claims is fruitless.

Further, being God in the usual Hindu sense would be quite distinct from the Judeo-Christian tradition. In the latter, God is by nature totally apart from His creation; humans do not reach godhood. In the Bhagavad-Gita, however, the process of enlightenment can be attained by those who return to the Godhead and achieve their own divinity (see 18:46-68). In a certain sense, all persons have divine natures.

On the contrary, Jesus claimed dual titles of divinity. Particularly, He said He was both the Son of God (Mt 11:27) and the Son of Man (Mk 2:10-11). He spoke of His Father in familiar ways (Mk 13:36) and even claimed to forgive sins, for which He was charged with blasphemy (Mk 2:5-7).

In perhaps the clearest indication of His claims about Himself, when the high priest asked Jesus if He was the Christ, the Son of God, Jesus plainly declared that He was. Then He further asserted that He was also the Son of Man who would co-reign on God's throne and come on the clouds in judgment. The high priest pronounced these claims blasphemy (Mk 14:61-64).

These sayings of Jesus were recorded in documents that were written just decades after the events, and there are strong reasons to hold that all were composed by authors who were close to the occurrences. Moreover, many of the individual passages exhibit earmarks of historicity. Last, very early creedal texts (e.g., Ac 2:36; Rm 1:3-4; 10:9) also apply titles of deity to Jesus Christ.

Many religious teachers have claimed to present God's way. But Jesus declared not only that He was initiating God's path of salvation (Mk 1:15-20) but also that what His hearers did specifically with *Him* determined their eternal destiny (Mt 10:37-40; 19:23-30). Further, of these religious founders, only Jesus taught that His death would serve as a payment for human sin, achieving what we could not (Mk 10:45; 14:22-25).

Additionally, only Jesus has miracles reported of Him by early sources. Most importantly, according to the Gospels, Jesus taught that His resurrection from the dead would be the sign that evidenced the truth of His message (Mt 12:38-42; 16:1-4; Mk 14:28). For NT writers, Jesus'

resurrection proved His claims were true (Rm 1:3-4; 1 Pt 1:3-6). After all, dead men do not do much! So if Jesus was raised, God must have performed the event in order to approve Jesus' message (Ac 2:22-24; 17:30-31).

Is There Evidence for Life After Death?

by Hank Hanegraaff

Philosophical naturalists (including most evolutionists) believe that death is the cessation of being. In their view, humans are merely bodies and brains. Though they reject metaphysical realities such as the soul, there are convincing reasons to believe that humans have an immaterial aspect to their being that transcends the material and thus can continue to exist after death.

From a legal perspective, if human beings were merely material, they could not be held accountable this year for a crime committed last year, because physical identity changes over time. We are not the same people today that we were yesterday. Every day we lose millions of microscopic particles. In fact, every seven years or so, virtually every part of our material anatomy changes, apart from aspects of our neurological system. Therefore, from a purely material perspective, the person who previously committed a crime is presently not the same person. Yet a criminal who attempts to use this line of reasoning as a defense would not get very far. Such legal maneuvering simply does not fly even in an age of scientific enlightenment. Legally and intuitively, we recognize a sameness of soul that establishes personal identity over time.

Finally, freedom of the will presupposes that we are more than material robots. If I am merely material, my choices are a function of such factors as genetic makeup and brain chemistry. Therefore, my decisions are not free; they are fatalistically determined. The implications of such a notion are profound. In a worldview that embraces fatalistic determinism, I cannot be held morally accountable for my actions, since reward and punishment make sense only if we have freedom of the will. In a solely material world, reason itself is reduced to the status of a conditioned reflex. Moreover, the very concept of love is rendered meaningless. Rather than being an act of the will, love is relegated to a robotic procedure that is fatalistically determined by physical processes.

While the legal and freedom arguments are convincing in and of themselves, there is an even more powerful and persuasive argument demonstrating the reality of life beyond the grave. That argument flows from the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The best minds of ancient and modern times have demonstrated beyond the shadow of a doubt that Christ's physical trauma was fatal; that the empty tomb is one of the best-attested facts of ancient history; that Christ's followers experienced on several occasions tangible post-resurrection appearances of Christ; and that within weeks of the resurrection, not just one, but an entire community of at least 3,000 Jews experienced such an incredible transformation that they willingly gave up sociological and theological traditions that had given them their national identity.

Through the resurrection, Christ not only demonstrated that He does not stand in a line of peers with Abraham, Buddha, or Confucius but also provided compelling evidence for life after death.

More Evidence for Life After Death

by J. P. Moreland

The case for life after death consists in empirical (observable) and nonempirical (theoretical) arguments. The empirical arguments are two: near-death experiences (NDEs) and the resurrection of Jesus. A sufficient body of evidence exists for the view that people have died, left their bodies, had various experiences, and returned to their bodies. Attempts to explain NDEs as natural phenomena fail in those cases where the disembodied person gained knowledge about things miles away (e.g., conversations of family members). One must be cautious about theological interpretations of NDEs, but their reality is well established. Some argue that, even if true, NDEs provide evidence only for temporary existence beyond death. Strictly speaking, this is correct. However, if biological death does not bring the cessation of consciousness, it is hard to see what could do so after death.

Jesus' resurrection is defended in other articles in this Bible. Suffice it to say here that if Jesus rose from the dead, this qualifies Him to speak about life after death because His resurrection provides evidence that He was the Son of God and means that He returned from the afterlife and told us about it.

The nonempirical arguments divide into theistic-dependent and theistic-independent ones. The former assume the existence of God and from that fact argue for immortality. If God is who He says He is, the case is proven beyond reasonable doubt. Three such theistic-dependent arguments are especially important.

The first is two-pronged and argues from the image and love of God. Given that humans have tremendous value as image bearers and God is a preserver of tremendously high value, then God is a preserver of persons. Moreover, given that God loves His image bearers and has a project of bringing them to full maturity and fellowship with Him, God will sustain humans to continue this love affair and His important project on their behalf.

The second argument, based on divine justice, asserts that in this life goods and evils are not evenly distributed. A just God must balance the scales in another life, and an afterlife is thus required.

Finally, there is the argument from biblical revelation. It can be established that the Bible is the truthful Word of God, and it affirms life after death. For this to be an argument, rational considerations must be marshaled on behalf of the Bible's divine status.

Two nontheistic dependent arguments exist for immortality. The first is a three-part argument from desire: (1) The desire for life after death is a natural desire.
(2) Every natural desire corresponds to some real state of affairs that can fulfill it. (3) Therefore, the desire for life after death corresponds to some real state of affairs—namely life after death—that fulfills it.

Critics claim that the desire for immortality is nothing but an expression of ethical egoism. People do not universally desire it, and even when they do, it is a learned, not a natural, desire. Further, even if it is a natural desire, sometimes such desires are frustrated. Thus the desire argument is not necessarily a strong argument, but nonetheless it does have some merit.

The second argument claims that consciousness and the self are immaterial, not physical, and this supports belief in life after death in two ways: (1) It makes disembodied existence and personal identity in the afterlife intelligible. (2) It provides evidence for the existence of God. This, in turn, provides grounds for reintroducing the theistic-dependent arguments for life after death.

The argument for consciousness being nonphysical involves the claim that once one gets an accurate description of consciousness—sensations, emotions, thoughts, beliefs—it becomes clear that

it is not physical. Conscious states are characterized by their inner, private, qualitative feel made known by introspection. Since physical states lack these features, consciousness is not physical.

The case for an immaterial self is rooted in the claim that in first-person introspection we are aware of our own egos as immaterial centers of consciousness. This awareness grounds intuitions that when one has an arm cut off, has a portion of one's brain removed, or gains or loses memories and personality traits, one does not become a partial person or a different person altogether.

While these two arguments provide some grounds for belief in an afterlife, they are far from conclusive. At the end of the day, the justification of belief in life after death is largely theistic dependent.

How Does the Bible Relate to Islam?

by Barbara B. Pemberton

Islam teaches that throughout history God has sent prophets, from Adam to Noah to Jesus and ultimately Muhammad, all with the same message: There is only one God, who desires people to pursue good and to prevent evil. Christians and Jews, "People of the Book," are believed to be the remaining followers of earlier divine, but corrupted, revelations. Islam's scripture, the Qur'an, is understood by Muslims to have restored God's original guidance. The Qur'an includes numerous biblical personalities but recognizes as authentic only three sections of biblical literature: the Torah of Moses, the Evangel of Jesus, and the Psalms of David.

Muslims see many of their beliefs and practices as biblical: the existence of only one God, the prophets, heaven, hell, angels, and a day of judgment. They also see the importance of charity, prayer, and fasting in the Bible. Although Muslims believe that Jesus was only a prophet and not divine, they do believe the accounts of His virgin birth, sinless nature, miracles, and second coming.

The Qur'an accuses Jews and Christians of distorting their earlier revelation by deliberately suppressing the truth or by false interpretation. Muslims charge that the OT and NT contain logical inconsistencies, improbabilities, and factual errors. Charges against the OT include false reports of immorality (David and Bathsheba), missing doctrines (afterlife in the Torah), and incompatibility with science. The Evangel has been corrupted with inaccurate historical references, discrepancies in the Gospel accounts, and fabrications (such as the crucifixion). Christians and Jews allegedly suppressed or removed biblical predictions of Muhammad. For example, Psalm 84:4-6 is said to be about Muhammad, who overcame his childhood disadvantages by God's grace. Jesus supposedly predicted the coming Prophet Muhammad when He spoke of the "Counselor" in John 14.

Islam rejects the concept of human participation in the process of revelation that shows in the varieties of biblical books (Gospels, Letters, etc.). Jesus' original message is deemed lost. Muslims believe that Gospel authors, writing long after Jesus, altered the message to promote their own points of view. Paul's letters are supposed to promote a "mystical" Christ and "false" doctrines such as the resurrection. Another Muslim argument against biblical reliability is the lack of a record that the original texts passed from one generation to the next.

Muslims are, of course, correct that the Bible is older than the Qur'an. But there is not a shred of evidence the Bible has been corrupted. Indeed, the transmission of its text is by far the most accurate of any from the ancient world (see "Has the Bible Been Accurately Copied Down Through the Centuries?" p. 468). The Bible is not compromised by God using human personalities in its writing any more than when He uses human personality in the spoken word of prophets. Moreover, powerful evidence supports, among other things, the historicity of Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection (see "Did Jesus Really Rise from the Dead?" p. 1728). Prayerful Christians can help to correct Muslim misconceptions about the Bible (e.g., by showing that the Bible does not sanction the sinfulness of Western culture). Indeed, Christ's followers should befriend Muslims so the Holy Spirit can bring conviction to their hearts through the powerful Word of God (Heb 4:12).

Can Something Be True for You and Not for Me?

by Paul Copan

I"t's all relative." "That's true for you but not for me." "That's just your reality." "Who are you to impose your values on others?" The relativist believes truth functions more like opinion or perspective and that truth depends upon your culture, context, or even personal choices. Thus evil actions by Nazis or terrorists are explained away ("We don't like it, but they have their reasons"). Relativism, however, is seriously flawed.

Relativism cannot escape proclaiming a truth that corresponds to reality. "The moon is made of cheese" is false because it does not match up with the way things are, with what is the case. As Christians, we claim the biblical story is true because it conforms to the actualities of God's existence and His dealings with human beings. Truth is a relationship—a match-up with what is real or actual. An idea is false when it does not. But what of those making such claims as "Reality is like a wet lump of clay—we can shape it any way we want" (a relativistic idea known as *antirealism*)? We can rightly call such statements into question. After all, these persons believe that their view corresponds to the way things are. If you disagree with them, they believe you are wrong. Notice, too, that they believe there is at least one thing that is not subject to human manipulation—namely, the unshakable reality that reality is like a wet lump of clay that we can shape any way we want to! So we can ask: "Is that lump-of-clay idea something you made up?" If it applies to everyone, then the statement is incoherent. If it doesn't, then it's nothing more than one's perspective. Why take it seriously? And if there's no objective truth or reality, how do we know that our beliefs are not delusional?

Relativism is self-contradictory. If someone claims to be a relativist, don't believe it. A relativist will say that your belief is true for you but his is true for him; there is no objective truth that applies to all people. The only problem is that this statement itself is an objective truth that applies to all people! (Even when he says, "That's true for you but not for me," he believes his view applies to more than just one person!) To show the self-contradictory nature of relativism, we can simply preface relativistic assertions this way: "It's objectively true that 'That's true for you but not for me' " or "It's true that 'There is no truth.' " The bold contradiction becomes apparent. Or what of the line that sincere belief makes something (Buddhism, Marxism, Christianity) true? We must ask, is this principle universal and absolute? Is it true even if I don't sincerely believe it? That is, what if I sincerely believe that sincere belief does not make something real? Both views obviously cannot be true.

The basis and conclusion of relativism are objectively true. Ask the relativist why she takes this view. She'll probably say, "So many people believe so many different things." The problem here is that she believes this to be universally true and beyond dispute. Furthermore, she believes that the logical conclusion to draw from the vast array of beliefs is that relativism must be the case. The relativist doesn't believe that all these different beliefs are a matter of personal preference. The basis for relativism (the variety of beliefs), and the conclusion that relativism obviously follows from it, turn out to be logical and objectively true—for all people, not just the relativist!

Relativism will always be selective. People usually aren't relativists about the law of gravity, drug prescription labels, or the stock index. They're usually relativists when it comes to God's existence, sexual morality, or cheating on exams. But try cutting in line in front of a relativist, helping yourself to his property, or taking a sledgehammer to his car—and you will find out that he believes his rights have been violated! Rights and relativism don't mix. But if "it's all relative," why get mad at anyone?

Relativism is usually motivated by a personal agenda—the drive for self-control. Atheist philosopher John Searle uncovers what's behind relativism: "It satisfies a basic urge to power. It just

seems too disgusting, somehow, that we should have to be at the mercy of the 'real world.' " We want to be in charge. Now, pointing out one's motivation is not an argument against relativism; still, it's a noteworthy consideration. Truth often takes a backseat to freedom. But clearly, when a person shrugs off arguments for the inescapability of objective truth with "Whatever," he has another agenda in mind. Relativism makes no personal demands upon us—to love God, to be people of integrity, to help improve society. Even if relativism is false, it is convenient.

How Should a Christian Deal with Doubt?

by Gary R. Habermas

Doubt might be defined as uncertainty regarding God or our relation to Him. Questions arise in many forms, including factual or philosophical issues, assurance, suffering, or unanswered prayer.

Doubt may be divided into three general areas. *Factual doubt* usually raises issues regarding the truth of Christianity. *Emotional doubt* chiefly concerns our moods and feelings, often posing questions pertaining to assurance of salvation. *Volitional doubt* is a category that ranges from weak faith to a lack of motivation to follow the Lord.

Few subjects are characterized by more misunderstandings than this one. Contrary to popular opinion, doubt is not always sin. Neither is it necessarily the opposite of faith nor the product of weak faith. It is experienced by many believers in Scripture, such as Abraham, Job, David, Jeremiah, and John the Baptist. And almost all believers, as well as unbelievers, experience doubt at times. As strange as it seems, doubt can produce positive results, and many doubters are very much in love with the Lord.

The answer to *factual doubt* is the facts. In other words, questions concerning God, Jesus, the Bible, or the resurrection are answered by the data. No other religion can claim the kind of foundation upon which Christianity is based. A frequent mistake made by factual doubters is to confuse disputed areas among Christians (e.g., sovereignty versus free will, the age of the earth, the sign gifts, or eternal security) with the core truths: the deity of Jesus Christ, His death and resurrection. A remedy for this kind of doubt is to start with these basics: "If you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved" (Rm 10:9). When we believe these basics, our understanding and appropriation of other doctrines will follow.

Emotional doubt is the most common as well as the most painful variety. Frequently, these doubters repeatedly wonder whether they are saved, while exhibiting signs of their obvious love for the Lord. They often tell themselves that what they most desire is just beyond their grasp—hence their pain. Here the chief issue is not what is being said but the distraught moods in the background. The remedy is to treat the latter.

Many passages in Scripture command us to address our unruly emotions (see Ps 37:7-8; 39:2; 42:5-6,11; 55:4-8,16-17,22; 56:3-4; 94:19). Often we must move from our perspective to God's and replace our uncertain feelings with trust in Him.

For instance, in Philippians 4:6-9, Paul tells us to replace our anxieties with prayer and thanksgiving. The apostle promises peace for those who do so (vv. 6-7). Then he commands us to explicitly change our worrisome thoughts to God's truth (v. 8) and to model ourselves after his pattern, again promising the result of peace (v. 9).

The key is to change how we think and behave. Simply diverting attention from our worries can provide temporary relief. The best response, every single time a doubt arises, is to weed out and correct the improper thought by concentrating on God's truth rather than on our shaky beliefs.

Volitional doubt covers a wide range of uncertainty. The more extreme versions are often characterized by formerly committed believers who now seem not to care anymore. Perhaps they even appear to live no differently from unbelievers. This is probably the most dangerous species of doubt, since the individual may be in danger of turning from the Lord. But how do we motivate someone who does not wish to be energized? Friends and loved ones must get involved.

Any biblical means of stirring the dying embers may be helpful here. In Scripture, probably the most frequently prescribed methods are being convicted of sin (Heb 3:12-13) or being challenged by

the truth of heaven. Everyone experiences the lure of living forever (Ec 3:11). Believers more specifically seek heaven (Heb 11:16,35; 13:14). Dozens of times we are challenged to pursue our eternal home, applying its truth deeply to our lives (Mt 6:33). After all, what we do for the Lord after salvation helps determine and shape our capacity for enjoying eternity (Mt 6:19-21; Mk 9:41).

Perhaps the key is to assist the volitional doubter in charging his spiritual batteries. What could be worse than failing the God of the universe and falling short of His kingdom? Conversely, what could be better than living with Him and our believing friends and loved ones for a truly blessed eternity? We need to drive these truths home to those who waver, by the power of the Holy Spirit (Jms 5:19-20; Jd 20-23).

Doubt can sometimes be a positive incentive to change and grow. But other times, intervention is necessary. Members of the body of Christ need to be alert and sensitive, helping each other focus on the Lord and His kingdom.

Introduction to John

AUTHOR

Despite doubts from various quarters, a good case can be made that the fourth Gospel was written by John, the "one Jesus loved" (as he referred to himself throughout his book), brother of James and son of Zebedee, just as early church tradition suggests. That same tradition places John in and around Ephesus, ministering to the churches of Asia Minor, until his death as an elderly man at roughly the end of the first century. The author would thus have been an eyewitness of much of the material he recounted and in a position to provide accurate information. The Gospel appears to be the first of five books he wrote in the A.D. 90s, the next ones being the three NT letters that bear his name and the book of Revelation.

It is possible that John relied on earlier written sources for some of the information in his Gospel, especially for the miracles of Jesus, where a different style and vocabulary at times intrude. In particular, it is possible that he knew one or more of the first three (Synoptic) Gospels. John's Gospel seems to be literarily independent of them, however. More likely he was aware of their contents more from oral tradition and an active preaching ministry and wanted to supplement them by focusing on different information in his account.

Without question, John's writing style, like his selection of content and themes, differs noticeably from that of the Synoptics. As was perfectly acceptable in his day, he would have written his account of what others said in his own distinctive style, being faithful to their meaning if not to their exact wording. His sense of being led by the Holy Spirit (14:26; 15:26; 16:13) would have given him the freedom to couch things in his own words, believing he was being faithful to history at the same time.

THEMES

A list of themes that receive distinctive emphasis in John, as compared with the Synoptics, includes a strong belief in the full deity of Jesus as well as His full humanity, an emphasis on the availability of eternal life to all who believe in Jesus (beginning already in this life), miracles as signs meant to elicit faith in Christ, the beginnings of Trinitarian thought, the unity of disciples, the election and security of the believer, the death of Christ as exaltation and glorification, the Holy Spirit as Comforter (Counselor, Advocate), a playing down of the role of John the Baptist and of the baptism and the Lord's Supper and a strong polemic against unbelieving Judaism.

Many of these themes can be explained by the situation in which John's churches found themselves. The minority of believers from Jewish backgrounds by this time were largely ostracized by the local synagogues and may have begun to wonder if they had made the right choice in following Jesus. John's Gospel provided them with much "ammunition" in their quest to evangelize their non-Christian Jewish friends and family and encouraged them in the belief that Jesus is the true fulfillment of all of the central hopes and aspirations of Judaism. Ephesus, however, was also being infiltrated by the early Gnostic teacher Cerinthus, who taught a form of docetism—the belief that Christ only "seemed" (from the Gk *dokeo*) to be human. Hence, John emphasized Jesus' full deity and His full humanity.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN JOHN'S GOSPEL AND THE SYNOPTICS

The apologist will probably be most interested in the numerous differences between John and the Synoptics and how they can be explained in detail. John includes no parables, few kingdom teachings, no exorcisms, and no pronouncement stories (short debates with hostile questioners

ending in climactic pronouncements). But the parable seems to have been a distinctively Jewish form of teaching not known to the Greeks. The kingdom was an OT theocratic concept that likewise could have misled a largely Gentile church. Exorcisms were viewed almost magically in the Greco-Roman world, and John does include plenty of more extended controversies with Jewish leaders.

More telling are examples of "interlocking" between John and the Synoptics—places where details in one Gospel help explain what might have remained mysterious in another. For example, John refers to the imprisonment of John the Baptist ever so briefly (Jn 3:24), but only the Synoptics narrate the actual story (Mk 6:14-29). John 11:2 distinguishes Mary the sister of Lazarus from Mary the mother of Jesus by alluding to a story John has not yet narrated but that Mark said would be recounted whenever the gospel is preached (Mk 14:9). And the references to Jesus' trial before Caiaphas (Jn 18:24,28) are so short as to presuppose the fuller detail known from the first three Gospels (Mk 14:53-65).

In other instances John clarifies something the Synoptics leave puzzling. Why did the garbled charges against Jesus at His trial claim that He had predicted He would destroy the temple (Mk 14:58-59)? Presumably, because of what He said two years earlier about destroying the temple, when His audience didn't understand He was talking about His own body (Jn 2:19). Why did the Jewish Sanhedrin involve the Roman authorities with Jesus' execution in the first place, since their law prescribed stoning for blasphemy (Mk 15:1-3)? Most probably, it was because Rome prevented the Jews from carrying out capital punishment in most instances (Jn 18:31). How could the Synoptics describe Jesus as often wanting to gather the children of Jerusalem together (Mt 23:37) when they narrate only one trip the adult Jesus took to the holy city—that of His final Passover? Doubtless because He did in fact go there regularly at festival times, as John repeatedly indicates (chaps. 2; 5; 7–9; 10). Indeed, it is only from John that we learn that Jesus' ministry lasted for roughly three years, a claim most scholars accept as accurate. Plenty of additional examples of interlocking in each direction could be given.

A key feature of John's literary genre provides further explanation of the book's distinctives. John was less literal in his reporting than the authors of the Synoptics, in large measure due to writing in a style somewhat akin to ancient Greco-Roman drama. But his recurring emphasis on themes like truth and witness shows that he believed he was faithfully reproducing the life and times of Jesus even through this genre.

A detailed analysis of the historical reliability of John proceeds through the Gospel, verse by verse, looking for compatibility with the Synoptic data and applying standard historical criteria for authenticity to each text in turn. The most helpful criterion is what has been called *double similarity and dissimilarity*. When a teaching or event from Jesus' life fits plausibly into the Jewish world of Israel during the first third of the first century but differs in some respect from most conventional Judaism of the day, it is not likely to have been invented by some Jew other than Jesus. When that same teaching or event also shows some continuity with later Christian belief or practice and yet likewise proves distinctive at some telling point, it is not likely to have been manufactured by any later Christian. Usually at least one central element, if not several, emerge in each passage in John to satisfy this four-part criterion.

Much scholarship today continues to dismiss John as not nearly as valuable for recovering the "historical Jesus" as the Synoptics, but this scholarship rarely interacts in detail with the studies that demonstrate the points briefly summarized in this introduction.

None of this suggests that historical research can "prove" the reliability of every last detail in John (or any other portion of Scripture). But when writers prove repeatedly reliable where they can be tested, they should be given the benefit of the doubt where they cannot be checked. Christian belief in the full trustworthiness, authority, and inspiration or inerrancy of the text requires a leap of faith

beyond what historical evidence alone can demonstrate. But it is not a leap in the dark, flying in the face of the evidence. It is a conscious choice consistent with the evidence that does exist.

John Study Notes

1:1 There is no definite article ("the") in the Greek before "God," so the Jehovah's Witnesses' New World Translation reads, "The Word was a god." But sentences of this form in Greek (two nouns joined by a form of the verb "to be") normally placed the article only before the subject of the sentence, regardless of word order. So the traditional translation, "The Word was God," is to be preferred.

1:4,7,9 Each of these three verses could suggest that all people will be saved. But verses 5, 10, and 11 all make it clear that not everyone accepted Jesus. So John must have meant that salvation was available through Jesus for all people, not that salvation automatically is applied to all people.

1:11 "He came to His own" probably referred first of all to the Jews. But if the Jews rejected the one claiming to be their Messiah, why should anyone else believe in Him? We must remember that throughout the OT period the majority of the Jewish people, more often than not, rebelled against God. But there was always a righteous remnant, as there was in the days of Jesus and the apostles. The number of people who believe something is not always related to the truth of what is believed.

1:14 Ancient Gnostics and modern "New Agers" have often challenged the idea of God taking on human flesh, since "flesh" is seen as inherently corrupt. But Gn 1 stresses that God created the world and everything in it to be completely good. Only later did sin corrupt everything. Jesus, however, was God's "new creation" and free from sin. God Himself became incarnate in order to redeem sinful humanity.

1:17 This verse could suggest a complete dichotomy between OT and NT times, but in the context of verse 16 it must refer to a relative contrast. A literal translation from the Greek of verse 16 says (NT) grace "instead of" (OT) grace. Grace appears throughout the OT. God's deliverance of Israel from Egypt was an act of grace. Comparatively, however, the NT focuses on grace even more because it describes the completed plan of salvation in Christ.

1:18 If no one has ever seen God the Father, how could the Lord appear to OT saints, wrestle with Jacob, show His back to Moses, etc.? Because "God is spirit" (4:24) and because a spirit "does not have flesh and bones" (Lk 24:39), God is not inherently embodied. But He appeared to people temporarily in bodily form in OT times as a precursor to His full incarnation in Jesus.

1:21 How could John deny that he was Elijah, when Jesus called him precisely that in Mt 11:14? Presumably he was denying that he was the literal Elijah returned from heaven that some Jews looked for. Luke 1:17 harmonizes the two texts: John came "in the spirit and power of Elijah."

1:28 The only Bethany we know of was close to Jerusalem, not "across" the Jordan River (to the east). This doesn't mean that John made a mistake, but it highlights our incomplete understanding of the archaeological history of the region. For example, there is a place called Batanea farther to the north, and east of Galilee, which may have been the place John called Bethany.

1:31 How could John have not previously known Jesus, since they were relatives and each had had a special birth (see Lk 1–2)? John must have meant that after years had gone by and Jesus had done nothing extraordinary as a youth, he was not at all sure what the various prophecies about Jesus meant, until God further revealed things to him at Jesus' baptism.

1:36,41,45,49 In a short span of time Jesus was called the "Lamb of God," "Messiah," the "One Moses wrote about," the "Son of God," and the "King of Israel." How could Jesus' first followers know so much about Him so quickly, especially when the other Gospels do not include such understanding until much later in His ministry? Actually, all these titles carried with them the common Jewish expectation of a kingly, militaristic deliverer who would overthrow Rome. A full understanding of who Jesus was came slowly.

1:42 Doesn't this verse contradict Mt 16:18, in which Jesus much later called Simon "the Rock" (Kepha [Cephas] in Aramaic and Petros [Peter] in Greek)? No, because in this verse Jesus used the future tense "will be called" and in the event at Caesarea Philippi He simply said, "You are . . ."

1:45 Jesus' being called "son of Joseph" does not contradict the traditions of a virginal conception. Joseph would have legally adopted Jesus and become His stepfather. Nathanael is probably the same person as Bartholomew (Mk 3:18).

1:46 It is sometimes claimed that we have no evidence of Nazareth existing as a town in Jesus' day. Yet artifacts show evidence of a settlement even before Roman times, as well as during the early Roman period, while a first-century inscription contains the name of Nazareth in Hebrew. But Nazareth was a small, out-of-the-way place that no one later wanting to honor Jesus would likely have made up. It is mentioned because that is where He really lived.

1:51 John's language sounds confused. We might expect angels coming and going from heaven to "descend and ascend," not the reverse. But John was alluding to Gn 28:12, in which Jacob dreamed about a stairway on which angels were "going up and down." Heaven will again open at Christ's resurrection and at His return; angels will accompany Him to heaven and one day usher Him back to earth.

2:4 Jesus' literal words to Mary sound brusque: "What has this concern of yours to do with Me, woman?" But another translation would be "Dear woman, why do you involve me?" It was not yet His time to provide for all the needs of all the world's people through His sacrificial death, but His turning water into wine was a sign that the messianic times had arrived (see Jl 3:13; Am 9:13-14).

2:6-7 Creating this much wine would seem to encourage drunkenness. Worse, this miracle seems to be frivolous from start to finish, hardly meeting any acute human need. On the other hand, wedding festivities often lasted for a week and an entire village could have been involved, so the amounts consumed by any individual at one time may have been quite moderate. Furthermore, one of the points of the miracle was to stress the new joy associated with Jesus' ministry and the kingdom He was inaugurating. Mark 2:21-22 makes much the same point in the parable of the wineskins.

2:13-25 At first glance this passage seems out of place since the other Gospels all have Jesus clearing the temple during the last week of His life (Mk 11:15-17). But John may have thematically relocated this passage as a kind of "headline" over his entire Gospel (there are no precise chronological links with previous or subsequent material in the Greek), or Jesus may have cleared the temple twice—once at the outset of His ministry when He had the people's sympathies and once later when it proved too much for the authorities to tolerate.

2:15-16 Doesn't Jesus' "temple tantrum" show a cruel, vindictive side to Him—abusing animals and exhibiting uncontrollable rage? Actually, the Greek text says He applied the whip only to the wicked people He was confronting. Rabbinic sources suggest that using the temple for trading in sacrificial animals was a recent development; the Kidron Valley below had been the earlier site. Commercial convenience created the change, but it prevented the Court of the Gentiles from being used as God had intended it—as a place of worship. Godly wrath is eternal opposition to what is evil. As such, it is not at all opposed to love but is really the action of holy love in the face of evil. Love for those who are outcast often requires judgment against their oppressors.

3:1 Despite no apparent non-Christian evidence for the existence of this Nicodemus, the rabbinic writings do refer to two different men by that name, one generation on either side of Jesus' life. They are listed as part of the Gurion family and were wealthy, powerful, Pharisaic teachers—just like the character described here. Given the Jewish propensity for reusing favorite names, the name and attributes of this Nicodemus are entirely plausible.

3:2-9 Nicodemus started out so promisingly yet ended up not understanding Jesus at all. Is this conceivable for one who was called a teacher in Israel (v. 10)? Yes, and it was typical of the responses of various Jewish authorities to Jesus. John narrated a number of miracles ("signs") to try to convince people that Jesus was the Jewish Messiah (20:31), but he also recognized that signs by themselves can mislead (2:23-25). That John did not turn Nicodemus into a follower of Jesus (at least in this passage) contrasts with later Christian legends that did, making the historical plausibility of this episode all the greater.

3:3,7 It is sometimes argued that Jesus could not have said, "You must be born again," because this relies on a play on words between "born again" and "born from above" that works only in Greek, not in Aramaic. But whichever phrase Jesus used, He still clearly was talking about a second birth after a person's first, biological birth.

3:16 Muslims claim that God could not have a Son because they think Christians are talking about a literal biological offspring of the Father and Mary. However, throughout the NT, and especially in John, sonship refers to the intimate spiritual relationship between God and Jesus.

3:17 John said that Jesus didn't come to judge or condemn the world (12:47), but elsewhere we clearly read that Jesus will function as Judge on the last day, condemning some to hell (e.g., Mt 25:31-46). This is scarcely a contradiction, since John himself recorded that Jesus had all judgment entrusted to Him (Jn 5:22). The purpose of the incarnation was to offer a plan of salvation for all who would receive it. Those who refuse it simply remain in the condemned state they were already in. Or, in C. S. Lewis's words, "There are only two kinds of people in the end; those who say to God, 'Thy will be done,' and those to whom God says, 'Thy will be done.' "

3:32 Here John made it sound as if no one ever accepted Jesus' testimony. Yet clearly Christ did gain followers. We must understand these words as a sweeping generalization about the growing reaction of Jesus' contemporaries. John was probably echoing Jesus' remark in verse 11 to Nicodemus: "You do not accept Our testimony," referring to the majority of the Jewish leaders.

4:1-2 Some have accused John of contradicting himself in the span of two verses by saying that Jesus baptized and then that He didn't. It is possible, however, that John penned verse 1 referring to Jesus and His followers together and then realized he needed to clarify more precisely that it was the followers who performed the actual ritual. Given that John was more interested in contrasting Jesus and John the Baptist than in comparing them, his Gospel's comment that the two for a time had parallel ministries of baptism is not likely to be without historical foundation.

4:4 Jesus didn't have to go through Samaria. Jews in fact preferred to cross over and travel north on the eastern bank of the Jordan to avoid Samaria. But the compulsion was a theological one; it was God's will that Jesus go this way to have His appointed encounter with the woman at the well.

4:9 Jews associated with Samaritans in numerous contexts, especially for commercial transactions. So either this is another sweeping generalization—Jews preferred to avoid Samaritans whenever they could—or the verb for "associate" should be translated "use the same dishes as," referring to the Jewish laws of ritual purity.

4:21-24 Verse 21 could sound like Jesus was discouraging worship anywhere, when in fact He was encouraging it everywhere. No longer will there be one uniquely holy land or place in God's kingdom. On God as Spirit, see note on 1:18.

4:26 How could Jesus reveal Himself so plainly to this Samaritan woman when He was so coy with the Jewish leaders in Israel, especially as seen in the other three Gospels? Because the Samaritans were not looking for a militaristic ruler but expected a Messiah who would be more like a prophet and a teacher.

4:43-54 How does this episode fit with a similar miracle of healing in Mt 8:5-13 and Lk 7:1-10? It is hard to know for sure. On close examination there are no outright contradictions between the two, even though the Gospel writers have selected different portions to narrate. But they also may be two separate but similar incidents.

5:2 Until the 1890s, critics doubted this detail. Then the pool of Bethesda was excavated in Jerusalem and it turned out to have had five covered colonnades—four around the perimeter and one dividing the water into two compartments down the middle.

5:14 Sometimes this verse is used as a proof text for blaming all illness on someone's personal sin. But John contradicted this in 9:1-3. All Jesus was saying here was that this man's affliction seemed to have stemmed from some sin of his. Times of calamity are always good for personal stocktaking (Lk 13:1-9), but many tragedies are simply the results of life in a fallen world (Rm 8:22).

5:16-30 Throughout this passage it seems as if Jesus went back and forth between claiming He was equal to God and saying He was subordinate to His Father. Actually, both were true. There was essential equality with functional subordination. All three persons of the Trinity are fully divine and united as one God in three persons, but they have distinct as well as overlapping roles. The Son never commands the Father; He only obeys Him.

5:31 Of course, Christ's testimony about Himself was valid because He spoke the truth. But Jesus was here alluding to the Jewish principle that self-witness wasillegitimate on its own, so He went on to cite others who could testify on His behalf.

6:14-15 In addition to specifying that it was Passover (v. 4), the attempt to make Jesus king was one of the distinctive features of John's account of the feeding of the 5,000. But even though these details do not appear in the other Gospels, many scholars (including some who are generally skeptical of John) accept them as accurate, because they fit so well the common Jewish misconception of the role of the Messiah and because no later Christian would likely have invented the unflattering picture of Jesus "running away" from would-be subjects of an earthly kingdom.

6:17 Mark 6:45 had the disciples set out for Bethsaida; John here said it was Capernaum. Yet if they were far enough to the northeast corner of the Sea of Galilee, then given the undulating northern coastline, both cities would have lain in a basically west-southwesterly direction of travel.

6:30 How could the crowds ask for anything more beyond the feeding of the 5,000? In part, this was a different gathering, but more importantly, they were looking for someone to replicate the ongoing miracle of manna from heaven that had sustained the Israelites in the wilderness in the years after the exodus from Egypt(v. 31).

6:52-59 Based on these verses, critics of the early church thought Christians condoned a form of cannibalism. This is not the case. The reference here is twofold, both foreshadowing the Lord's Supper and emphasizing complete submission to Jesus as Lord. To many insiders, it has seemed as if the Lord's Supper was a requirement for salvation. But verse 63 makes plain that only the Spirit gives life; Jesus' flesh does not do so. These are simply striking metaphors for identifying with Christ in His atoning death for the sins of humanity.

6:68-69 It is not clear whether this is a drastically abbreviated version of the same conversation that the other Gospels narrate—Peter's confession on the road to Caesarea Philippi (Mt 16:16-20). More probably it is a forerunner of that later, more extensive conversation.

7:5 If Jesus was truly the Messiah who Christians claim He was, surely His own family members would have believed in Him? Not necessarily, especially if He had seemed like an ordinary boy when growing up. In fact, it's unlikely John would have reported this kind of skepticism if it weren't accurate. In the case of James, it may have taken a personal resurrection appearance to bring him to faith (1 Co 15:7).

7:8 The manuscripts vary as to whether John wrote the word "yet" before "going up to this Feast." But the events imply that Jesus did not go immediately but rather waited until halfway through it before making His appearance (v. 14). As in His response to Mary at Cana (2:3-4), Jesus followed the Father's timing, not the commands of His own family.

7:15 If Jesus hadn't "been trained," does this mean He was illiterate or didn't have the detailed familiarity with Hebrew Scripture that the Gospels claim He did? No, He would have attended an elementary school of some sort in the synagogue, learned to read and write, and memorized much of the OT, like other Jewish boys between the ages of 5 and 12. But He had no formal, subsequent training with a rabbi that would qualify Him to act as an official rabbi.

7:27 If no one was supposed to know where the Messiah came from, how could Jesus—born in Bethlehem and raised in Nazareth—qualify? Actually, the Jewish belief that the Messiah would emerge "out of nowhere" was a tradition with no OT support. That said, it is true that the skeptics didn't know where Jesus truly came from—i.e., from God (v. 28).

7:34-36 How do we answer the authorities' question about Jesus' claim to be going away where no one could find Him? By understanding Him to have been referring to His death, resurrection, and ascension. They would look for Him later, but physically they would not be able to find Him. His Holy Spirit would be with His followers (see 8:21-22).

7:39 The Holy Spirit had been given frequently, but only temporarily, to various people throughout the OT. But He would permanently indwell God's people only after Jesus' death and exaltation (14:17; cp. Ac 2).

7:41-42,52 These verses do not contradict Mt 2:1 and Lk 2:4 on Jesus' being born in Bethlehem. Rather, they point out (ironically) how Jesus was rejected because people mistakenly think He was born in Nazareth, where He grew up. Some prophets did in fact come from Galilee (Hosea, Jonah, Nahum), but not "the Prophet"—i.e., the Messiah, as the textual variant clarifies.

7:53–8:11 This event is not found in the oldest and best manuscripts, It is, however, widely believed to be a true story about Jesus that was preserved in the oral tradition and eventually added by well-meaning scribes.

8:14 Earlier Jesus accepted, for the sake of argument, the Jewish belief that self-testimony was illegitimate (5:31). Here He pointed out explicitly what had been true all along, that He did in fact tell the truth about Himself, whether or not anyone else supported Him. And in verse 18 He did go on to provide another witness.

8:15-16 Jesus was not contradicting Himself in the span of two verses—first not judging, then judging. Rather, He passed judgment on no one of His own accord; His judgment was always mirroring the Father's judgment (v. 16).

8:30-59 In verses 30-31, various listeners seem to have believed in Jesus, but by the end of the chapter they were ready to stone Him. As verse 31 stresses, appearance of belief must be matched by perseverance in following Jesus and His teaching. Much of the belief attested to in verse 30 was probably superficial. There may also have been a narrowing of the audience Jesus was addressing, starting in verse 48—"the Jews" here may include some of the authorities who had never claimed to believe in Him at any level.

8:33 Of course the Jews had frequently been slaves—in Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, and Persia as well as under Greece and now under Rome. Presumably they were claiming here that they were never spiritually enslaved.

8:44 Surely this was the height of anti-Semitism? Actually, Jesus was calling only one specific group of Jews sons of the devil. Jesus was a Jew, as were all His first followers. The OT prophetic books contain many equally sharp rebukes (e.g., Jr 9:7-9), and they are certainly not anti-Semitic.

8:58 This is not bad grammar but an allusion to the divine name "I AM" of Yahweh, God of Israel (Ex 3:14). The Greek text uses the present tense, and thus the Jehovah's Witnesses' New World Translation is wrong to render it, "I have been," as if Jesus were claiming only to have existed some time before Abraham.

9:1-3 If 5:14 is taken to mean that all sick and disabled persons are being punished for their own sin, then we have a contradiction. Rather, this incident shows that 5:14 cannot be made a universal principle. Often God has specific purposes in allowing His people to remain unwell (2 Co 12:9). In this case, God will grant healing, but primarily to bring Himself the glory.

9:6-7 Here and in Mk 7:33-35 Jesus used saliva rather than just His spoken word in healing someone. Spittle was often believed to have medicinal value in the ancient world. God can heal directly or through all kinds of indirect means, including modern medicine (and, occasionally, mud packs). The pool of Siloam is another location, once doubted, that archaeology has confirmed.

9:22; 12:42; 16:2 It is often alleged that these three verses anachronistically refer to a later Jewish practice of excommunicating synagogue members who became followers of Jesus. But even then the practice was at best only sporadic throughout the empire. Indeed, John's references may not refer to anything more widespread than a policy in Jerusalem, precisely where such persecution would have started at a very early date (Ac 4–5).

9:33 Like Gamaliel's advice to the Sanhedrin later (Ac 5:38), this man's logic is not watertight. Satan can counterfeit many miracles. But God providentially used this reasoning to help the man come to faith in this situation. The trustworthiness of Scripture does not mean that every human opinion narrated is true, just that those opinions have been accurately reported.

9:41 All people are sinners, but if these Pharisees acknowledged their spiritual blindness, they would not be guilty of the specific sin of claiming to be innocent when they were not.

10:8 "All who came before Me" obviously cannot refer to godly leaders in OT times. Note that the text says "are thieves and robbers" (as in the Gk), which may suggest that Jesus had just His contemporaries in view.

10:10 In context, this is no promise of health, wealth, or easy living by worldly standards. The abundant Christian life means salvation (v. 9); in this world, however, it may involve martyrdom (15:13).

10:16 When Jesus addressed Jews and spoke about "other sheep," He would have had Gentiles in mind. His church would unite Jew and Gentile (Gl 3:28). There is no reason to believe the Mormon claim that He was speaking here of Native Americans and an appearance in the New World.

10:24 This verse is a good reminder that all of Jesus' "I am" statements—"bread of life," "light of the world," etc.—were primarily metaphors. They were not intended to be unambiguous revelations of His deity, as they seem to Christians today with "20/20 hindsight."

10:30 Jesus' claims to be one with God transgressed boundaries that some Jewish authorities believed no human should ever cross, lest one be arrogating to himself divine prerogatives. That some wanted to stone Jesus (vv. 31-33) shows that His was more than a claim to be one with God in mind, will, or purpose.

10:34-36 This is not an acknowledgement of polytheism or a claim that human beings are gods; it is an argument "from the lesser to the greater." Human judges in Israel were called "gods" because of their exalted (though abused) roles in Ps 82:6, so it could not automatically have been blasphemy for Jesus to refer to Himself as God's Son.

11:6,37 Jesus did not contradict His love for Lazarus(v. 5) by delaying His departure. Instead, Jesus magnified the miracle of raising someone four days dead, and God received even more glory (vv. 4,15). Thematically, John used this miracle as an implied response to the question Jesus posed in 10:36.

11:27,39 There was no Jewish tradition of anyone being resurrected apart from or in advance of the general resurrection of all people on the last day. So Martha could easily hold this view (v. 24), believe in Jesus (v. 27), and still not expect Lazarus to be raised on the spot (v. 39).

11:43-44 It is often argued that the other Gospels could scarcely have left out this greatest of all Jesus' miracles if it really happened. But they do record two other resurrections Jesus performed (Mk 5:21-42; Lk 7:11-17), and by choosing to omit all but Jesus' final journey to Jerusalem, they have no place in their outline for other events in and around the holy city.

11:51-52 It is unlikely that John would view Caiaphas as a true prophet. Rather, he was referring to the Jewish tradition that high priests could prophesy and was pointing out (ironically) how Caiaphas spoke better than he knew. Caiaphas only wanted to protect his people from the Romans; Jesus' death would actually make possible the forgiveness of anyone's sins.

11:53 Does this contradict the claim in the other Gospels that Jesus' cleansing of the temple was the reason the authorities finally decided to take His life (Mk 12:12)? No, because both John and the other Gospels recognize a series of events that eventually sealed Jesus' fate (Mk 3:6; Jn 5:18; 7:32; 8:59; 10:31).

12:1 Mark (14:3-9) and Matthew (26:6-13) seem to place this account on the last night of Jesus' life. But there is no explicit chronological connection there, so they probably relocated this passage thematically because of its message—preparation for burial. John preserved the exact chronology. Luke 7:36-50 is an entirely separate incident with some similar details.

12:3 Did the perfume cover Jesus' feet, as here, or His head (Mk 14:3)? Probably both, since anointinga body for burial required covering the entire corpse.

12:12-19 The way people acted on Palm Sunday contrasted dramatically with the crowd's clamoring for Jesus' crucifixion five days later. Some in the two crowds would have differed, but this was also the last time the onlookers thought that maybe Jesus was going to assume an earthly kingship and free His nation. When it became clear that was not His purpose, disillusionment and hostility reappeared.

12:27-28 These verses sound like an equivalent to Gethsemane reported in Mt, Mk, and Lk. But here the context was public, so this must have been a separate, earlier incident. If Jesus really did believe He was to be crucified (v. 32), He surely would have wrestled with that fact more than once.

12:32 This is not universalism (saving everyone) but the gospel offer to all without distinction—drawing people of every kind to Himself. Some will not receive Jesus, but for all who do, they will have the right to be children of God (1:12).

12:39-40 Is this deterministic predestination? No, for in Is 6 (quoted here) God was responding to prolonged unbelief and rebellion by Israel and still held out hope for a righteous remnant who repented (v. 13). The same was true here, as some did in fact believe (v. 42). For those who didn't, God merely confirmed their freely chosen disobedience.

12:41 In context, Is 6:10 wasn't even a prediction, much less one about Jesus. But Jews recognized typological as well as predictive prophecy. Typology is the repetition of a significant pattern of God's activity in redemptive history that can properly be ascribed only to Him. Isaiah did make predictions about the Messiah on numerous occasions, and the context of Is 6 looked beyond the present, evil generation of Isaiah, so it is understandable why John would believe that Isaiah previewed Jesus' glory.

13:1 If it was just before the Passover feast in verse 1, did John intend for the meal of verse 2 to be a different one from the Passover? Probably not. Verse 1 is a small paragraph that functions as a headline over all of chapters 13–17. Verse 2 then describes the very Passover meal that had just been mentioned. Not only did various details match the accounts from the other Gospels that are more clearly based on Passover, but only on that night would anyone have imagined that Judas was leaving to give something for the poor (v. 29). The feast lasted for a week, so he could also have needed to buy more provisions (v. 29).

13:2-17 Only John describes the foot washing; only the other Gospels present Jesus' words over the bread and the cup. But both fit neatly together as part of the same meal, a Jewish Passover feast, which Jesus reinterpreted as symbolizing His upcoming, self-giving death for the sins of humanity.

13:16 In other contexts, servants can become greater than their masters. But this is not true with Jesus and His followers, especially when the issues are those of menial service or persecution, which naturally we wish we could avoid (15:20).

13:18-30 Jesus would have shared His bread with all of the Twelve, so verse 18 means merely that one of His most intimate followers would betray Him. Verses 23-26 describe what probably were whispered remarks among those seated closest to Jesus. Jesus' words in verse 27 may then have been spoken loudly enough for all to hear—but not to understand.

14:6 Can we really believe that all those who have never even heard of Jesus are lost? This is a question to which orthodox Christians have given several different answers throughout history. However, this verse does not directly answer it. At the very least John affirmed that, if God forgives anyone, it will be because of Christ's atoning work on the cross. As for whether people have to have heard of Jesus for God to apply the benefits of Christ's death to them, that will have to be decided on the basis of other texts and themes.

14:9-11 Two errors are guarded against here. Verse 9 by itself could suggest that the Son is the Father incarnate, that there are no distinctions between the two persons. But verses 10-11 make it clear that is not the case. These verses also guard against fully separating the Father and the Son into distinct gods. Each interpenetrates the other—what the ancient Greeks called *perichoresis*.

14:14; 15:16; 16:23 These are not "blank checks"—promises to supply everything anyone requests. "In My name" corresponds to "according to My character" and thus is parallel to other texts that require us to leave room for God's will to overrule ours (e.g., Mt 6:10; Jms 4:15).

14:26; 15:26-27; 16:13 Two themes are balanced in these texts. The Spirit would lead the disciples into further truth after Jesus was gone, but it would be based on what they already knew about Him and had learned from Him. Denying that the Spirit can still give believers the gift of prophecy is unwarranted, but allegations of such prophecies must always be tested and can never contradict, or be elevated to the same level as, Scripture (see 1 Co 14:29-33).

14:28 This is a clear statement of Jesus' functional subordination to the Father described in the note on 5:16-30. It does not deny the simultaneous essential equality of Father and Son.

14:31 Jesus seems to have been ready to leave the upper room but continued talking for another three chapters. Many see an editorially imposed unity of different sources here, but it may be better to see chapters 15–17 as having been spoken after the group had left the house and was headed for the garden. They would have passed vineyards en route, along with the temple and its golden carving of a vine on it, perhaps inspiring 15:1-8. After all, 18:1 doesn't say they left "the house," just that they "went out." In fact, it sounds like they were already on the edge of the Kidron Valley beneath the temple.

15:2-8 Do verses 2 and 6 deny John's promise that God will protect those who are truly His (6:39; 10:29)? No, but they are reminders that true believers will persevere (v. 4; see note on 8:30-31). Those who don't persevere show that they were never truly Christ's (1 Jn 2:19).

15:22,24 There are different kinds of guilt. Unwitting sins can be excused more readily than intentional ones. All people sin and are guilty in God's eyes as a result, but not all are held equally accountable (Lk 12:47-48; Rm 5:13-14).

16:5 How could Jesus say no one was asking Him where He was going when that was precisely Thomas's question in 14:5? Probably the focus is on the present tense. No one was asking right now, and they should have been, since they still didn't understand. This solution is made plausible by the fact that the disciples, whose questions had punctuated the narrative throughout 13:36–14:22, had fallen silent since then.

16:24 Obviously, the disciples had asked Jesus about and for many things, but here He was referring to arrangements after His death and resurrection. Then, since He would be physically absent, they would ask God "in My name"—that is, through Jesus' power and in keeping with His character. This was even less a blank check than 14:14, 15:16, and 16:23, since Jesus did not specify what God would grant in response to their asking, merely that they would "receive."

16:29-31 Finally the disciples claimed to understand. But verse 31 is either an ironic exclamation or a question, implying that they really still hadn't caught on. They were going to abandon Jesus in the garden that very night (v. 32). Only after the resurrection would they fully understand.

17:1-5 Isn't this the height of mutual self-serving behavior—the Father and the Son glorifying each other for eternity? There are deities in the religions of the world who behave that way, but here it is crucial to observe that what brings glory to the Godhead is the opportunity of eternal life for anyone who believes (v. 2)—an opportunity no other religion provides.

17:7-8 Did they really know so much and "for certain"? This verse does not deny the many things the disciples still did not understand. But compared to those who had not followed Jesus, it is true that they had "received" His "words." The original text of "with certainty" can also be translated "truly."

17:9 That Jesus was not praying for the world on this specific occasion does not mean that He never prayed for fallen humanity or that we shouldn't pray for them either. Indeed, He was praying for those who would come to faith through the apostles' message, that their unity would be a sign to a lost world that would watch what they do (v. 23).

17:12 Judas was not an exception to the principle that Jesus would lose none of those God gave Him (6:39; 10:29), for he was doomed from the outset—never truly one of Christ's followers (6:70-71). Yet even here predestination never overrides free will and human accountability (Mk 14:20-21). No one Scripture is specifically mentioned, though there are echoes of Ps 41:9 and 109:4-13. If Judas had chosen not to betray Jesus, someone else likely would have stepped forward.

17:21-23 Obviously, believers cannot be one with either the Father or the Son in every way the persons of the Godhead are one with each other, for we are not God. On the other hand, the unity among Christians is more than the invisible oneness of all believers; it is something that demonstrates itself in outward, tangible, loving cooperation for powerful evangelistic purposes and results.

18:3 A "company of soldiers" would most naturally refer to Romans. But the other Gospels describe no Romans involved in the arresting party. On the other hand, it is hard to believe the Jews would undertake so strategic an arrest without approval from the Roman governor. If any fear of a mob uprising remained, the Romans would want to be involved.

18:6 It is hard to know if we are to take this as a miraculous event or not. Did Jesus' would-be attackers recoil and unwittingly bow down before Him? Or perhaps the imagery is much more mundane. Surprised by the forthrightness of Jesus' self-disclosure, some soldiers may have stumbled backward on the hillside, causing others to fall down as well.

18:12-14,19-23 John described a hearing before Annas, whereas the other Gospels set the trial before the Sanhedrin. Both are plausible, in sequence. As the prior high priest, deposed by Rome, Annas would have still been respected by the Jewish leaders, since the office was supposed to be for life. "That year" (v. 13) didn't imply that Caiaphas was high priest only that year; it probably carried the force of "that fateful year." John knew the subsequent trial (vv. 24,28) but chose not to narrate it in detail, probably because it was already well known from the other Gospels.

18:15-18,25-27 The identities of those who accused Peter of being one of Jesus' disciples vary a little from one Gospel to the next. In the confused and frantic activity surrounding a nighttime arrest and interrogation, it would be natural for numerous people to confront Peter. But all four Gospels agree that Peter denied Christ exactly three times, even as He had predicted (13:38).

18:28 This verse does not imply that it was still the day on which the initial evening Passover meal would be eaten. Ritual uncleanness would no longer apply on a new day, and a new day began, in Jewish thinking, at every sundown. Jewish leaders, who were worried about defiling themselves by entering a Gentile home (the palace), must have been concerned about the festive lunch that same day. There is no contradiction with the chronology in the other Gospels.

18:31 It has been argued that the Jews did have the right to execute capital offenders—witness the stoning of Stephen (Ac 7:54–8:1) and the execution of James the brother of Jesus in A.D. 62 (Josephus, *Antiquities* 20.197-203). But the former execution appears to have degenerated into a mob action and the latter occurred between Roman procurators occupying the government seat in Judea. Josephus's wording also suggests that, in all but a handful of cases, Rome had taken away the privilege of capital punishment (*War* 2.117; 6.124-126).

18:36 This verse does not mean that Jesus' "kingdom" had no earthly manifestations but that its origin was not of this world.

18:39 Because there is no unambiguous evidence for this "custom" in non-biblical sources, many doubt that it existed. On the other hand, the writings of the Jewish historian Josephus (*Antiquities* 20.209), the Roman historian Livy (5.13), and the rabbinical authors of the Talmud (b. Pes. 91a) may attest to the custom or, more likely, to partially analogous Roman practices, making this biblical account plausible.

19:1 Was Jesus flogged once or twice? Probably only once; He might not even have survived two such punishments. Mark described the incident later in his narrative (Mk 15:15). However, he introduced the incident with "After having Jesus flogged . . . ," allowing for it to have occurred earlier in Jesus' trial.

19:12,15 Jewish authorities were hardly friends of Caesar (v. 12); could they really have affirmed their allegiance to him (v. 15)? Probably only in the sense that they would have said just about anything to get Pilate to crucify Jesus. Pilate would have cared deeply about how the emperor viewed him, so these statements were ploys to get him to look favorably on their request.

19:14,31,42 The Greek of verse 14 reads literally, "Now it was the preparation of the Passover." But in light of verse 31, this must have meant the day of preparation for the Sabbath (i.e., Friday before Saturday) of Passover week. John spoke of the sixth hour, but Mk 15:25 has Jesus on the cross already by the third hour. Some think John was following Roman reckoning of hours, beginning at midnight, and referring to 6:00 A.M., while Mark was following Jewish reckoning, beginning at dawn and thus referring to 9:00 A.M. Others believe both writers were using round numbers, following Jewish reckoning, in a world where the days and nights were often divided into fourths. A midmorning time of roughly 10:30 could then get rounded either down or up to the nearest three-hour marker.

19:17 John said Jesus carried His own cross (as crucified people usually did), but Mk 15:21 describes the authorities conscripting Simon of Cyrene for that task. Presumably, Jesus started out carrying it, but the weight of the wood could have made it difficult for Jesus, weakened by the flogging, to walk far with it.

19:24,36 This is another passage that is typological in the OT (Ps 22:18). Psalm 22 contains numerous details strikingly paralleled in Jesus' life, even though it was originally describing the afflictions of the psalmist. To the believing Jew, this was no coincidence but a sign of God's hand at work

19:25-27 Why would Jesus entrust His mother to "the disciple He loved"—the Apostle John—rather than to her husband, Joseph, or to one of Jesus' half brothers? Presumably because Joseph had died by this time and Jesus' brothers had not yet become His followers. It is possible that John was Jesus' cousin, so they had a biological as well as spiritual relationship. In John's account, Mary and her sister are named as witnesses at the crucifixion. John didn't name Mary's sister, but Mark says that Salome was among the women present. Salome was the mother of Zebedee's sons, James and John (Mk 15:40).

19:39 This is the amount of anointing material that was used at the funeral for a king. Would Joseph and Nicodemus really have brought so much? If they had come to believe Jesus was a true king, then why not?

20:1-2 Who went to the tomb when? All the Gospels agree that Mary Magdalene went along with several other women. She may have run ahead to be the first to see the empty tomb, or else John just didn't mention the other women with her. Verse 2, after all, has Mary saying, "*We* don't know where they have put Him" (emphasis added). Similarly, she may have been the first to get back to the disciples, or else John simply left out Jesus' first appearance to the women as a group. As for going while it was still dark, this scarcely contradicts Mk 16:2 ("at sunrise"), since the minutes before and after dawn always resemble "twilight"—part dark, part light.

20:11 Mary obviously went back to the tomb, this time probably alone, for this separate special encounter with Jesus. That so much emphasis is placed on her witness (vv. 2,18) is doubly significant, since women's testimony was not often admitted in ancient law courts. Early Christians, if they were making up a story about Jesus' resurrection, would not likely have had a woman, and especially not one with a history of being demon possessed (Lk 8:2), as their primary witness.

20:12 Matthew referred to "an angel" (Mt 28:2); Mark, to "a young man" (Mk 16:5); and Luke, to "two men" (Lk 24:4). John harmonized the three accounts. Two angels, appearing like men (as consistently in Scripture), were present. Only one is ever said to speak, so abbreviated accounts could easily have left the second one out. Since no Gospel says that only one angel or man was present, there is no contradiction.

20:17 The Greek reads literally, "Don't touch me," but the sense is "Stop clinging to me." It's not that there was something dangerous about Jesus' body (or that it was not really a body) but that Jesus had not come back to be with Mary permanently in

bodily form. These were temporary appearances en route to His ascension and were not to be prolonged.

20:19-23 Is this John's massively reworked counterpart to Pentecost (Ac 2)? No. Only ten of the disciples were present and nothing "spiritual" happened afterward. They simply went fishing (21:3). More likely, this was a dramatic object lesson or initial bestowal of the Spirit to prepare them for the more dramatic filling that would happen seven weeks later in Jerusalem. The authority He bestowed parallels that given first to Peter (Mt 16:16-19) and then to the Twelve (Mt 18:18). It was fulfilled in the disciples' preaching ministry in Ac. Nothing is taught here about papal infallibility or apostolic succession.

20:25-29 This story depicts Thomas in so poor a light that it was not likely invented by the disciples. It also portrays the disciples cowering behind locked doors for fear of the authorities, hardly in any psychological frame of mind to receive visions of a resurrected Christ. The text also confirms that Jesus was genuinely, bodily raised from the dead. Two theological themes coalesce: This kind of miracle (or sign) should have been adequate to convince people that Jesus was truly Lord and God (v. 28), and the testimony of the disciples should have been adequate to demonstrate that even without firsthand empirical proof (v. 29).

20:30-31 These verses explain the highly selective nature of this Gospel's contents as well as its purpose. The book is one of testimony to the identity of Jesus as Messiah and divine Son. Because these verses seem like an appropriate ending, some have wondered if chapter 21 was added later as a kind of appendix. But it contains numerous references to "unfinished business" from the rest of the Gospel, and other ancient works also exhibit the phenomenon of seeming to end a little bit before they actually do (cp. the location of the purpose statements in John's other writings—1 Jn 5:13; Rv 22:6).

21:1 Why do we suddenly find the disciples back north in Galilee? One week after the beginning of Passover in Jerusalem, the Feast ended. They were heading home. Matthew and Mark described resurrection appearances only in Galilee; Luke, only in Judea. John recognized that Jesus appeared to His followers in both locations.

21:4-14 Is this a doublet (two stories created from one incident) of Lk 5:1-11? Both were miraculous fish catches, but it makes sense to see them as two separate events. The disciples had abandoned Jesus, so He needed to "re-call" them. What better way than via a miracle resembling the one that led to the original call of several of them? Verses 15-19 are, after all, clearly about reinstatement.

21:14 But John already narrated four appearances! Presumably the one to Mary didn't count as "to the disciples," which leaves three—on Easter Sunday night (20:19-23), one week later (20:24-29) and now later still in Galilee (21:1-14).

21:18-19 Jesus' cryptic prophecy seems to have been fulfilled when Peter was martyred by crucifixion during Nero's persecutions of A.D. 64 and 68, as attested by early church tradition.

21:22-23 The dominant early church tradition attests that John was the one disciple who did not die a martyr's death but lived out his life in old age to virtually the end of the first century, ministering in and around Ephesus (including a brief exile in the mid-90s on the island of Patmos, during which he wrote the book of Rv). It is possible that John died shortly after completing a draft of his Gospel and that, because of the misinterpreted report described here, his followers added this closing information by way of clarification.

21:24-25 These verses also read most naturally as an addition of John's followers—note the first person singular and plural pronouns versus the third-person reference to the beloved disciple. At the same time they attribute the book itself to John and certify its accuracy. If this reconstruction is accurate, it means merely that God inspired multiple authors, no differently than with the books of Ps or Pr or with the addition of the account of Moses' death to Dt.

Acts Articles

Can Naturalistic Theories Account for the Resurrection?

by Gary R. Habermas

One of our first thoughts when we hear someone claim to have witnessed a miracle is that there must be some sort of natural explanation. After all, even if they do occur, miracles are not the norm in nature.

In the Gospels we are told there was a similar response relating to Christ's resurrection. When the Jewish priests were told the report of the empty tomb, they spread the tale that Jesus' disciples had stolen His body (Mt 28:12-15).

Even believers reacted this way. When Mary Magdalene initially saw Jesus, she made a natural assumption, supposing He was the gardener (Jn 20:10-15). When the disciples heard the report of the women who had gone to Jesus' tomb, they thought the women were spreading rumors or false tales (Lk 24:11). Later, when they saw the risen Jesus, these same followers thought they were seeing a ghost or hallucination (Lk 24:36-43).

Throughout history many have had similar responses regarding Jesus' resurrection, attempting to come up with naturalistic theories to explain away the resurrection. These attempts were far more common in the nineteenth century than they are today. Even if we were to ignore the majority of the information in the Gospels, appealing only to those historical facts that are acknowledged by virtually every scholar who studies this subject, both conservative and liberal, we still have many major responses to each of the naturalistic theories. Not surprisingly, comparatively few scholars today think any of these alternative hypotheses really works.

For example, few critics have proposed that Jesus never died on the cross but instead "swooned"—fainted and only appeared dead. Dozens of medical studies have shown how death by crucifixion really kills and how this would be recognized by those present. Most of these reports argue that the chief cause of death in crucifixion was asphyxiation (death from being unable to breathe). It is even easy to ascertain when the victim was dead—he remained hanging in the down position without pushing up to breathe. Additionally, a death blow frequently ensured the victim's demise. The prevailing medical explanation of Jesus' chest wound is that the presence of blood and water indicated He was stabbed through the heart, thereby ensuring His death.

But many scholars think another serious problem dooms the swoon theory. If Jesus had not died on the cross, He would have been in exceptionally bad shape when His followers saw Him. Limping profusely, bleeding from His many wounds and probably even leaving a bloody trail, stoop-shouldered and pale, He hardly would have been able to convince His disciples that He was their risen Lord—and in a transformed body at that! Many historical reasons and the near unanimity of scholarly opinion indicate that Jesus' disciples at least truly believed they had seen Him resurrected. On such grounds the swoon thesis is actually self-refuting. It pre-sents a Jesus who would have contradicted the disciples' belief in His resurrection simply by appearing in the horrible physical shape that is demanded by this view!

But could the disciples have stolen His dead body? This approach has been almost ignored for more than 200 years because it would not explain the disciples' sincere belief that they had seen the risen Jesus—a belief for which they were clearly willing to die. Their transformations need an adequate explanation. Neither would the theft hypothesis explain the conversions from skepticism by James, the brother of Jesus, or Paul, occasioned by their own beliefs that they had also seen the risen Jesus. These facts are noted even by critical scholars.

Might someone else have stolen Jesus' body? This approach addresses nothing but the empty tomb. It provides no explanation for Jesus' appearances, which are the best evidence for the resurrection.

Further, it fails to account for the conversions of James and Paul. Besides, many candidates for the body stealers would have had no motivation for taking the body. This alternative accounts for far too little of the known data. It is no wonder that critics virtually never opt for it.

There are myriads of problems with hallucination theories, too. We will mention just a few. Hallucinations are private experiences, whereas our earliest accounts report that Jesus appeared to groups as well as to individuals. Further, the dissimilar personalities witnessing the appearances clearly militate against everyone's inventing a mental image, often at the same time. So do the reactions of those disciples who responded to reports of the resurrection by doubting. The conversions of James and Paul are extremely problematic for this view, since unbelieving skeptics would hardly desire to hallucinate about the risen Jesus. And if hallucinations are the best explanation, then the tomb should not have been empty!

Could the resurrection accounts have developed later as mere stories that grew over time? A few of the potential responses should be adequate. Here again, the fact that the disciples truly believed they had seen the risen Jesus is highly problematic for this view, since it indicates the original accounts were derived from the eyewitnesses themselves, not from some later stories. Further, the fact that these appearances were reported extremely early, within just a few years of the crucifixion, attests that at least the core message was intact from the outset. Moreover, the empty tomb would be a constant physical reminder that this was not just some ungrounded tale. Both James and Paul again provide even more insurmountable problems for this view, for these skeptics were convinced that they had also seen the risen Jesus; tales developing years later fail to account for their conversions.

For reasons such as these, most critical scholars today reject the naturalistic theories as adequate accounts of Jesus' resurrection. They simply do not explain the known historical data. In fact, many liberal scholars even critique the alternatives that are periodically suggested!

Here we have a strong witness to the historical nature of Jesus' resurrection. Naturalistic theories have failed. Further, many historical evidences favor the resurrection. Taking all this together, we have strong reasons to believe that this event actually occurred in history. After all, the more thoroughly the alternative theories fail, the more we are left with the evidences themselves, and they are powerful indicators that Jesus rose from the dead.

Does the Disciples' Conviction That They Saw the Risen Jesus Establish the Truth of the Resurrection?

by Gary R. Habermas

Virtually all scholars studying Jesus' resurrection, whether conservative, moderate, or liberal, acknowledge that Jesus' earliest followers were convinced not only that Jesus was raised from the dead but also that He had appeared alive to many of them on several occasions. Further, scholars also almost unanimously recognize that two former skeptics, James the brother of Jesus and Saul of Tarsus (Paul), became believers after they, too, were convinced that they had seen the risen Jesus.

Multiple grounds support this early Christian conviction. Even today's most critical scholars agree that Paul, the author of undisputed NT letters, provided eyewitness testimony to Jesus' resurrection appearance. Further, Paul included a crucial report concerning other appearances of Jesus in the exceptionally early creed in
1 Co 15, which is usually dated to the A.D. 30s. Paul carefully checked out this material with other key apostles in Jerusalem on at least two occasions (Gal 1:18–2:10). Paul also knew that the other apostles were preaching the same message regarding the risen Jesus (1 Co 15:10-15). Paul's eyewitness testimony at each of these points is crucial.

Moreover, the conversion of James from skepticism, the willingness of the earliest disciples to suffer persecution and even martyrdom, the empty tomb, and the presence of other early reports of Jesus' resurrection especially in Acts are further indications of the apostolic conviction that Jesus had been raised. In brief, the earliest Christian message was that Jesus had appeared to His followers after His death.

Of the many evidences for the resurrection, the most significant is that the earliest disciples were utterly convinced they had seen the risen Jesus. The reason is straightforward. Virtually every contemporary scholar recognizes the strong data showing that Jesus died by crucifixion. So if a number of persons (both individuals and groups) actually saw Him afterward, this would constitute the clearest indication that He had been raised. No other evidence provides such a direct indication of this event. This is clearly what the witnesses proclaimed.

Some critics may counter that, while the early disciples truly *thought* Jesus had been raised, a natural hypothesis explains their beliefs.

However, now the questioner has a major dilemma. Natural theories have been proposed for centuries and each fails by a large margin to explain the recognized historical data. Incredibly, most contemporary scholars even recognize this failure. Few critics even propose alternative hypotheses!

The earliest disciples clearly taught that they saw the risen Jesus, for which there are plenty of supporting details. What happens when these facts are not naturally explained, as even the majority of contemporary critical scholars admit? The resurrection of Jesus becomes the best explanation of the known data.

All the evidence favors the view that the disciples actually saw the risen Jesus. There is no viable evidence to the contrary. So we are left with a succinct conclusion. When the many reasons supporting the conviction that Jesus actually appeared to the early Christians are combined with the failure of naturalistic alternative theses, we are justified in concluding that Jesus was actually raised from the dead.

What is the Christian Identity Movement?

by R. Alan Streett

The Christian Identity movement (CI), formerly called British or Anglo Israelism, teaches that God indeed respects persons based on their bloodline or nationality. Many of these groups are anti-Semitic, claiming that white Anglo-Saxons constitute the Israel of God and that ethnic Jews are the children of the devil. Also, all CI sects make a distinction between Israel and the Jews. They base their beliefs on one of two theories: (1) the ten lost tribes theory, or (2) the serpent seed theory.

According to the former theory, after the fall of Israel (the northern kingdom, consisting of 10 tribes) in 722 B.C., the tribes migrated westward into Europe and eventually to America. None returned to their homeland. They assimilated into the culture and hence lost their identity. They now constitute the Anglo-Saxon peoples of the world. The southern kingdom, consisting of two tribes (Judah and Benjamin), fell to Babylon in 586 B.C. After captivity, many returned to their homeland. According to the CI theory, they became known as Jews. They were responsible for the death of Christ and therefore are the targets of God's wrath.

The lost tribes theory may sound plausible to a biblical novice, but Scripture proves the theory to be bankrupt (see Ezr 3:1; 6:16-17; Lk 1:54,67-68,80; 2:36; Jn 3:1,10; Ac 2:14,22,36; 5:21; 13:24, which indicates that Israel returned to its homeland). Peter said Israel crucified Jesus (Ac 4:8-10). There are no lost tribes. James addressed all 12 of them (Jms 1:1). After the Babylonian captivity, the terms Israel and Jews are used interchangeably. No longer is the nation considered to be divided. In the NT Jew is used 174 times and Israel is used 75 times to designate the same people. The Apostle Paul used both Jew (Ac 21:39; 22:3) and Israelite (Rm 11:1; 2 Co 11:22) to identify himself.

Other CI groups look to the serpent seed theory to validate their anti-Semitic beliefs. According to this scenario, the sexual union between Adam and Eve produced Abel, the father of the Israelite or Aryan people. Those in this godly line are God's children by birth; hence there is no need for a new birth. A second union, this time between Eve and the serpent produced Cain, who became the father of the Jews. After the great flood, his descendants cohabited with beasts, producing a mongrelized race of people, now consisting of Semites, Asians, and Africans. They are the enemies of God.

The problems with this theory are obvious. First, Israel traces its origin to Jacob, not Abel, when the former's name was changed to Israel. Second, Abraham, not Cain, is called the father of the Jews. Third, all must be born again. Fourth, Jesus reminded the woman of Samaria that "salvation is from the Jews" (Jn 4:22). Fifth, and most important, Jesus was a Jew from the tribe of Judah; thus, according to this theory, He would be the enemy, not the Son of God.

Both the ten lost tribes and serpent seed theories are attempts to provide theological and scriptural support for anti-Semitism.

How Should a Christian Relate to Those in Non-Christian Movements and Religions?

by Alan W. Gomes

As we witness to those in non-Christian religions, we must guard against a formulaic approach that would treat them all as if cut from the same cloth. At the same time, we must not ignore the commonalities underlying religious allegiance, whether Christian or not. So long as we are appropriately sensitive to individual differences, we can identify some helpful strategies for winning adherents of non-Christian religious movements.

Address the personal motivations underlying religious commitment. Often people commit to a religion in order to meet personal needs. In new religious manifestations, in particular, there is a focus on the transformation of the self. Adherents of false religions often join to address intellectual, emotional, social, and spiritual needs. People are looking for loving relationships and a sense of connectedness; a family atmosphere (particularly attractive for those who are without family or whose family is dysfunctional); a sense of acceptance and self-worth (sometimes by being part of "God's great work" through the religious movement or false religion); an opportunity to achieve idealistic goals (e.g., doing works of philanthropy and charity); a way to meet deep spiritual longings (e.g., to experience a sense of the "divine" or the "transcendent"); and a belief system that will provide answers to life's deepest questions ("Why am I here?" "What is the purpose of life?").

These aspirations hardly are unique to members in false religious movements. Nor is there anything necessarily sinister in the fact that people have and seek to meet these needs. Indeed many people become involved in biblically based Christian churches for the same reasons—joining our churches, e.g., because of the caring and committed relationships they experience as part of God's family. The problem with false religions, is that they cannot ultimately satisfy the deepest longings of the human spirit; only the true gospel can do that.

One of the most important things we can do in reaching out to those ensnared in false religion is to provide an environment where these spiritual, social, emotional, and intellectual needs can be met. The church should and generally does provide such an environment anyway, but for those emerging from false religions, the need is especially acute. Some new religious movements can be harsh on those who leave, shunning or "disfellowshiping" them. The person who leaves such a group may experience in one fell swoop the loss of his entire support system of family and friends. The church needs to be sensitive to this and be prepared to go the extra mile in embracing such individuals, enfolding them into the body of Christ with loving arms.

Properly classify, understand, and refute the false belief system. As important as the interpersonal factors mentioned above are, it is also necessary to understand correctly and then refute biblically the false belief system.

The first step is to classify accurately the type of belief system in question. A basic distinction should be made between new religious movements dependent upon Christianity and religious groups that make no claim of Christian allegiance. The former claim to be Christian but deny one or more central doctrines of the Christian faith. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons), Jehovah's Witnesses, and Christian Science are such examples. World religions, such as Islam, also deny core Christian beliefs, including the doctrine of the Trinity and the deity of Christ. But unlike new religious movements of Christianity, world religions do not claim to be Christian and in fact would explicitly repudiate such a label.

The distinction between new religious movements dependent upon Christianity and world religions is not merely academic. One would approach a Mormon differently from a Muslim. For example, one

does not have to convince a Mormon that Jesus Christ is the Savior and that Christianity is true. Indeed, the Mormon already thinks that Jesus is his Savior and that his church is the true restoration of Christianity under Joseph Smith. The task is to show that Mormonism is a counterfeit form of Christianity, with a false Jesus who cannot save. A Muslim, on the other hand, not only will have faulty views of what true Christianity teaches but also will need to be convinced that Christianity is the true religion.

We must also understand the non-Christian belief system we are confronting as accurately and in as much detail as is practicable. Failure to do so can quickly short-circuit a witnessing opportunity, for the followers of false religion will soon tune out a Christian who imputes beliefs to them that they do not hold. It is important, as Robert and Gretchen Passantino point out, to observe a kind of golden rule when discussing non-Christian belief systems: represent their belief system as accurately as you would have them represent yours. Only then can we hope to be taken seriously as we confront the errors of the false religions with the claims of Jesus Christ.

What Should a Christian Think About Near-death Experiences?

by Gary R. Habermas

Reports of near-death experiences have occasioned much interest. These reports abound from those who claim to have hovered above their nearly dead bodies and journeyed down dark tunnels toward a beautiful light, often in the presence of deceased loved ones.

The most interesting near-death accounts are the dozens claiming that the dying person, during his turmoil, actually observed events that were later reported and verified. These events may have taken place some distance away and could not have been observed from the individual's location even if he had been completely well. Sometimes the near-death individual had extended periods without a heartbeat during these observations. On a few occasions, no brain activity was reported. A number of blind persons have also produced accurate descriptions of their surroundings.

Attempts have been made to explain these experiences naturally, especially by medical or psychological factors, such as hallucinations. However, none of these subjective approaches can account for the evidential cases just mentioned. For example, internal brain phenomena cannot explain accurate descriptions of events, particularly when they happened a distance away or when the person's heart or brain had failed.

How should Christians think about such accounts? To be sure, some tough questions surround this topic. For example, some non-Christians have declared that they had wonderful experiences during a near-death state. But negative experiences, including graphic visions of hell, have also been reported. Further, these persons were not biologically (irreversibly) dead but only near death. So, how can we be sure of their final state? Last, we are dealing here not with the experiences themselves but with personal interpretations of the experiences, which are notoriously inaccurate during highly emotional times. In these cases, serious evidence is lacking.

What about reports of experiences that have satanic or occultic aspects? Undeniably, such do exist and caution is definitely necessary. But it appears that there is nothing inherently occultic about near-death experiences. People are simply reporting their perceptions.

The carefully observed and documented cases provide some evidence for at least the initial moments of afterlife. This is contrary to the dictates of naturalism, which claims that the material world is all there is to reality. So near-death experiences can be both well evidenced and valuable. At the same time, Christians must be careful not to endorse non-biblical interpretations of these experiences or accept them as revealing truth on a par with the Bible.

Introduction to Acts

AUTHOR

The book of Acts stands at the heart of the NT. Rich in detail, it bridges the gap between the four Gospel accounts and the Epistles that follow. In this long book Luke recounted the history of the growth of the early church, tracing events from Jesus' ascension to the conversion of Paul to the spread of Christianity throughout the Mediterranean region. The book provides an exciting glimpse into the ups and downs, setbacks and struggles faced by the first followers of Christ as they obediently took the message of salvation to the ends of the earth. The many miracles provide solid evidence for God's blessing on their work and the power of His divine plan. Whatever human obstacles may stand in the way, nothing can stop the will of God.

Although the book is technically anonymous, strong evidence points to Luke as the author. Tradition holds that he wrote Acts as a sequel to his Gospel and that the two should be read together. Indeed many scholars refer to Luke's work as a single entity: Luke-Acts. This is supported by the opening paragraph of Acts, where the author refers to a "first narrative" written to Theophilus, presumed to be Luke's Gospel (cp. Lk 1:1-4). Although some of the material in Acts was no doubt collected from different sources by Luke, much of the material comes from his own experiences traveling with Paul (Col 4:14; 2 Tm 4:11; Phm 24). Indeed Irenaeus (A.D. 130–200) was the first to point out the many instances in Acts where the point of view changes from "he/they" to "we," implying that the author himself was there with Paul during those periods. These are commonly referred to now as the "we" passages (Ac 16:10-17; 20:5-15; 21:1-18; 27:1-29; 28:1-16). Although some critical scholars have argued that Acts was not written by Luke and was instead a second-century fabrication intended to unite rival factions of Gentiles and Jews in the early church, the overwhelming body of evidence supports Lukan authorship.

The choice of when we date the book is largely dependent on who we think wrote it. Some critical scholars claim it wasn't written until A.D. 125–30, while others date it to A.D. 80–90. The strongest evidence however dates Acts to the early 60s. The book closes with Paul in prison in Rome (Ac 28:30-31). Given that Luke mentioned several key martyrs in early Christianity, such as Stephen and James, it would be highly unlikely for him to have omitted Paul's martyrdom, which most likely happened in A.D. 63 or 64.

CLASSIFYING THE BOOK OF ACTS

Acts was clearly written in a different style than that of the Gospels, and yet it doesn't fit into the genre of epistle either. How, then, should we classify it? The recounting of various adventures, escapes, and miracles is reminiscent of ancient fictional stories. The scientific details of healings resemble those in scientific treatises. The details about all the people read like a biography. However, the most likely option for the genre of this book is a historical account. Luke recorded eyewitness accounts of real events, real people, and real miracles. It is a vivid account of the power of God at work in the hearts, minds, and lives of the first followers of Christ.

Acts Study Notes

1:1 The reference to Theophilus ("lover of God") links Ac to Luke's Gospel. Luke and Ac were published separately probably due to (a) their different genres (biography of Jesus vs. history of early church [1:8]) and (b) their length (each work was large enough to fill a single scroll). Acts has some literary attributes that are found in the classical Greek historians, Herodotus and Thucydides. Daniel Marguerat argues that Ac has eight of the ten attributes that have been identified as belonging to histories of the Greco-Roman era. The structure of Ac is that of a Greco-Roman history but the content is closer to Jewish history. (See Daniel Marguerat, *The First Christian Historian*, page 16.)

1:6-11 This fuller Olivet ascension account (than Lk 24:50-52) makes the transition from Jesus' life (Lk) to the purpose of the apostles and the Church (Ac).

1:8 Luke's purpose in Ac was the empowerment by the Spirit to be Christ's witnesses in Jerusalem first, but expanding to reach "the ends of the earth"—the furthest extensions of the Roman Empire of the time (Ro 15:19; Col 1:6,23).

1:11 Christ's return will be in the same manner as He departed—bodily and visible.

1:18 Judas's death in Acts—his falling headfirst and bursting open—pictured his hanging (Mt 27:5).

1:26 Although it might seem strange to contemporary Christians, at the time casting lots was an acceptable means of decision-making. The point, however, is that through prayer, the Lord's superintending influence guided the disciples in selecting Judas's replacement.

2:1-12 The supernatural phenomena at Pentecost (rushing wind, tongues of fire, and the filling of the Spirit) marked the church's formal, public beginning.

2:4 Interpretations of "tongues" differ here: (a) a supernatural/divine language given specifically to communicate with the variety of people gathered from throughout the Roman Empire; (b) a variety of known human languages distinctly heard by each individual; or (c) the Greek language, common to all who had gathered.

2:14 None of the major speeches in Acts are entire; they are summaries, accurately preserving the gist of their content. Their rhetorical style is similar to how the ancients delivered speeches.

2:23 Jesus' death was due to God's plan and foreknowledge, but human beings were also held responsible. The NT often affirms both divine purpose and human involvement without necessarily explaining how they work together (or minimizing either).

2:24 Jesus' bodily resurrection is Christianity's fundamental event and the basis of the gospel message.

2:32 Given the centrality of Jesus' bodily resurrection, and that Jesus' disciples/friends were "witnesses," gives crucial support to Christianity's foundations (e.g., 3:15; 4:13,20; 5:32).

2:38 Though repentance/faith and baptism go together in Ac, baptism is an indication of belonging to Christ, not a condition for it. For example, Cornelius and his relatives believed and received the Spirit before receiving water baptism (10:44-48).

2:41 The large number (3,000) who responded to Peter is believable since Jews throughout the empire traveled to Jerusalem at Passover; the city's population grew to several times its normal size.

2:44-45 For a limited time, Jerusalem Christians distributed possessions according to need. This experiment did not last long due to contribution/distribution problems (see chaps. 4–6).

3:1 Peter and John continued practicing Jewish rituals/worship at this time. Christianity was one "sect" (*hairesis*) of several within Judaism (24:5; Josephus used this word of Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes, Zealots)—a form of contemporary Judaism that believed that Jesus was the Messiah. The progressive split with Judaism was to a large extent mirrored in Acts, with a significant split coming by the time of the first Jewish revolt (A.D. 66–70) but made definite at the second one (A.D. 134–135). Between these periods, it was not clear that rabbinic Judaism would prevail as the standard representative.

3:7 Acts presents many healing miracles, but did they really happen? We have plenty of evidence to prove that the ancients understood physiology sufficiently enough to recognize a miraculous cure when they saw one. In this case the miracle was directly linked to God's power through Jesus and to faith that comes through Him(v. 16).

3:18-19 The suffering-Messiah prophecy was likely Is 52:13–53:12. The Servant's suffering for sins (Is 53:10) is the basis for sinners' repentance and forgiveness.

3:21-24 Early Christians anticipated Jesus' return to establish His earthly kingdom. In support, Peter, citing Moses (Dt 18:15-19) and the entire prophetic tradition, presented Jesus as a Moses-like prophet.

4:1-3 Having legal authority over the temple area, the Sanhedrin had the apostles placed in custody for preaching the resurrection. (A Sanhedrin trial was not to take place at night.) The Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection, claiming they did not find it in the OT.

4:9 Peter boldly proclaimed that the lame man had been healed through the name of Jesus. The worshipers who witnessed what happened praised God while the religious leaders were more concerned with how he was healed than that he was well.

4:12 Peter's message of salvation only through Christ echoed Jesus' own words in Jn 14:6.

4:19 Disobedience to the Sanhedrin was based on what the apostles themselves had witnessed. Despite threats, they prayed for divinely empowered boldness (v. 29).

4:32-36 Christians distributing possessions was no problem while their unified purpose was to provide for those in need. The wealthy Joseph (Barnabas) serves as a positive example of this Christian communalism.

5:2-5 Ananias and Sapphira's sin was knowingly withholding part of their land sale proceeds (to be given to the church) while claiming to give the church everything. Their lie to the church and God brought divine punishment, serving as a sober warning to all. Ananias lied to the Holy Spirit in the same way he lied to God (vv. 3-4). The phrasing indicates Peter considered the Spirit to be God and to be obeyed as God. Similar Trinitarian language is found elsewhere in Ac (20:28). F. F.Bruce has compared the hypocrisy of Ananias and Sapphira with that of Achan in the conquest of Canaan(Jos 7). In both cases God's people were at a critical point in His mission. In both cases hypocrisy threatened the mission. Both of these events are graphic reminders of how God perceives sin. For those who see the God of the OT and NT as different, the judgment of Ananias and Sapphira shows that "His burning anger" (Jos 7:26) against all that is unholy is an essential and eternal part of God's nature. It's not that those who haven't experience the judgments of Achan and Ananias are better than they; only God's grace has been the difference. These events at very different times in biblical history serve as reminders of the reverential awe with which we are to live before God. Such was the effect on the early church (5:11) and those who first read Ac.

5:15 Did God heal through talismans? Not exactly. God may heal through various devices: Peter's shadow, face cloths and aprons that touched Paul (19:12), and the hem of Jesus' robe (Lk 8:44) were all mediums for healing. However, the healing power was not contained in the device itself, but came only from God.

5:19 The apostles' angelic release from prison probably involved being transported directly to the temple complex, where they preached again (8:39-40).

5:29 Although Christians should, as best they can, obey civil laws, human laws may conflict with God's law (e.g., proclaiming the gospel).

5:34 Gamaliel (Gamaliel I) was Paul's teacher (22:3), a major rabbinic leader, member of the Sanhedrin, and grandson of Hillel, one of major interpreters of the Jewish law during the Roman era.

5:36-37 Many Jewish revolts against Roman rule, some with messianic dimensions, occurred in the first century, but they all failed. Jewish historian Josephus recorded a number of them. He mentioned this Judas the Galilean (Judas of Gamala) who rebelled against Quirinius's census (Lk 2:1; *Antiquities* 18:1). Both revolts ended in defeat.

6:1-3 These verses are heavily debated and the exact meaning of Hellenistic Jew vs. Hebraic Jew is unclear. The Hellenistic-Hebraic tension perhaps reflected the primary language of those involved. Some Greek-speaking Jews who had converted to Christianity (Paul in chap. 9) were apparently neglected in the Jerusalem church's organization. So that the apostles could devote themselves to prayer and preaching, they appointed seven reputable Greek-speakers to distribute food. Whatever the precise definition, this organization (perhaps the beginning of "deacons") does not imply a late date for the book of Acts, but rather addressed a practical logistical need in the early church at itsoutset.

6:6 The laying on of hands is used in several different ways in Ac (8:17; 13:3; 19:6). Here, as in 13:3, it indicated the recognition that God called particular people for a particular purpose and served to confirm them in their task.

6:11 Stephen's "blasphemous" words reflect themes in his chapter 7 speech: Israel's disobedience, OT fulfillment in Jesus' ministry—including His replacing the temple and law. This would arouse resentment in those not accepting Jesus as Messiah. False witnesses (to rouse the crowd) were called in since Stephen's "blasphemy" was not obvious (6:13).

7:2 Some have argued that Stephen's speech is not authentic, but reflects later Judaic thought (especially after A.D. 70, when the temple was destroyed). However, OT prophets often declared that God cannot be confined to a single space (vv. 49-50 citing Is 66:1-2; Paul in chap. 17).

7:51 Stephen used OT language to condemn Jews for resisting God's Spirit with their uncircumcised hearts and ears (e.g. Lv 26:41; Jr 4:4; 6:10; 9:26; Ezk 44:7,9). Similarly, Paul singled out Jews for relying on outward signs and not having transformed hearts (Rm 2; Gl 5).

7:53 Stephen did not denigrate the law by mentioning angelic mediation (see Gl 3:19; Heb 2:2). He appears to emphasize the law's particular importance because God entrusted its delivery to angels.

7:56 "Son of Man," Jesus' favorite self-designation, interestingly drops from usage in the rest of the NT (suggesting an earlier dating for the book). Jesus considered Himself to be Dn 7:13-14's "son of man." Stephen's claim to see Him alongside God in heaven implied Jesus' divine status and equality with God. It provoked the mob to violence (which overrode any formal trial).

7:58 Saul (Jewish) is not called Paul (Roman) until 13:9. He supported Stephen's death and may have been a member of the Sanhedrin—or simply a young, zealous rabbinic student. Roman citizens (22:28) had three names: Paul (*Paulus*) would have been his "last name," but his first two were unknown.

8:1 As the persecution of the Jerusalem church did not target the apostles, the focus was probably Hellenistic Jewish Christians—a fact consistent with Jerusalem's continuing to remain Hebraic Christianity's focal point.

8:9 Though Simon Magus was well known in post-apostolic Christianity as a heretic and the founder of Gnosticism, little can be drawn from this brief reference. Although he was baptized, his belief seems inadequate, being fixated on signs and miracles (vv. 13,18). Peter later discerned that Simon's heart was not right before God (v. 21).

8:32-33 Reading aloud was commonly practiced in the ancient world; only centuries later did reading to oneself become more common. The Ethiopian was reading Is 53:7-8 (probably in Greek). Philip pointed to Jesus as the servant who suffered humanity's sins.

8:38-39 Baptism—an outward, visible response accepting the gospel—was apparently by immersion. Later, copyists added the Ethiopian's explicit response of faith (v. 37).

9:1 Saul's murderous anger was no exaggeration. Ananias (v. 13) knew it well (see Php 3:6).

9:2 Saul desired to bring Christians from Damascus to Jerusalem, which remained the center of Judaism. "The Way" (Jesus, Jn 14:6) was a common name for early Christians (19:9,23; 22:4; 24:22).

9:5 How did Saul know who spoke to him? Saul recognized this as Jesus' voice (the divine "Lord" [*kyrios*], rather than "sir") since: (1) the voice asked, "Why are you persecuting Me?"; (2) Saul knew he was persecuting Christians; (3) there were sensational phenomena (flashing light, Saul got knocked down); (4) Ananias, recognizing Jesus' voice, also used "Lord" (vv. 10,13). The voice spoke in Aramaic (26:14).

9:7 Paul's other conversion accounts (22:6-11; 26:12-18) revealed that his traveling companions heard something but did not recognize what was said since the comments were directed to Paul.

9:10 Ananias was a Christian in the Damascus church (perhaps begun as a result of Pentecost or those fleeing persecution, 8:1). Saul's travels to Damascus to persecute Christians indicates a known Christian community there.

9:17-18 The ordering of events in Saul's conversion may have been altered from the standard pattern so that baptism was the final event (indicating full initiation into the Christian faith).

9:20 Paul's missionary strategy—from start to finish (28:17)—was to begin in Jewish synagogues to present Jesus as "Son of God" (used here as a messianic title for God's unique representative) to Jews.

9:29 Saul, born in Tarsus with Greek as his first language, engaged in discussion with Hellenistic Jews.

9:32 The gospel may have come to Lydda just after Pentecost (2:9-11) following the persecution that scattered believers throughout Judea (8:1) or through Philip's ministry (8:40).

9:43 Tanners were often considered impure because of contact with dead animals. Apparently, either Jewish law became more relaxed on this trade, or Peter was perhaps enjoying freedom from the Jewish law based on liberty in Christ (10:6,32).

10:1 Evangelized by Philip, Caesarea had knowledge of Christianity. Centurions were distinguished by their leadership abilities (although soldiers often extorted and brutalized local populations). The Italian Regiment was probably an auxiliary force of local soldiers (not Italians or Romans), although the original group may have consisted of Italian soldiers.

10:2-3 God-fearers (like Cornelius) respected Jewish customs and beliefs (e.g., food laws, special days), often associating with them but remaining unwilling to become proselytes (which required circumcision). The book of Acts, along with other ancient documents (e.g., an important inscription from Aphrodisias), reveals significant numbers of God-fearers like Cornelius.

10:19 Divine messages were varyingly communicated: the Spirit directly to Peter; an angel to Cornelius; the Lord's vision to Peter earlier (v. 13).

10:28 Contact with Gentiles meant risking ceremonial uncleanness. Peter indicated that his vision taught him that these standards had been superseded.

10:34-35 God's impartiality means that He does not treat any group of people differently. He seeks out thosewho humbly respond to His grace, whether Jew or Gentile. Sincerity is the result, not the cause, of God's grace.

10:44-47 Belief, receiving the Spirit, and baptism are again equated with "conversion." The Jewish believers who were with Peter expressed surprise that Gentiles had received the Holy Spirit (as at Pentecost, 11:16-17). Salvation is extended fully to Gentiles.

11:1-3 Some Jews emphasized circumcision for all, fearing that association with uncircumcised men would lead to ritual uncleanness. These men were not pleased that Gentile believers were receiving the Spirit. Peter and Paul would confront this recurring source of conflict in the early church.

11:20 Cypriots and Cyrenians (Greek-speaking converts) evangelized Antioch's Hellenists, making it the center for Gentile mission and the church that sent Paul (13:1-3).

11:25 After conversion (c. A.D. 32–33) and initial preaching, Paul withdrew to Arabia (until c. 46; see Gl 1:17) and then to Tarsus and Antioch. He fades from the picture in the book while Peter is again highlighted.

11:26 The Antioch believers were first called "Christians" (little Christs), probably labeled by Romans as those sufficiently recognizable by beliefs and actions in keeping with their Leader.

11:28 A Jerusalem prophet, Agabus (who reappears in 21:10), predicted famine (probably A.D. 46–47). Claudius's reign (A.D. 41–54) was filled with numerous famines throughout the empire (see Suetonius, *Claudius* 18; Josephus, *Antiquities* 20).

11:30 Despite objections that the early church was strictly guided by the Spirit, elders/overseers (by necessity) held formal positions very early on, as did deacons (see 14:23; 15:2,4,6,22,23; 16:4; 20:17; 21:18; Php 1:1; 1 Tm 3:1-13; 4:14; 5:17,19; Ti 1:5-9). Appointed human leaders and the Spirit's leadership are not incompatible (see note on 6:1-3).

12:1-2 King Herod (Agrippa I) ruled from A.D. 37–44. His attack seems focused upon the apostles in Jerusalem. He killed James, the "Son of Thunder" (Mk 3:17) who was John's brother. No reason is mentioned. This anticipates further persecution and Peter's threatened execution (v. 6).

12:6-10 Peter's rescue is different from the previous one, being led out by an angel past the guards. Used to seeing visions, Peter only afterwards realized he had been rescued.

12:15 Some of those inside thought that Rhoda was seeing things, while others thought that she was seeing the angel or ghost of the executed Peter. Peter's persistence led them to answer the door and see that he was, in fact, still alive, having been rescued by God.

12:17 James (Jesus' brother) was not a follower of Jesusduring His ministry (Jn 7:5); he became a believer upon Jesus' resurrection (Ac 1:14; 1 Co 15:7) and later emerged as a leader in the Jerusalem church (Ac 21:18; Gl 2:19).

12:23 Herod Agrippa's arrogance resulted in God justly striking him down. Estimations of the disease range from appendicitis to poisoning to an intestinal blockage. Josephus also recounted this incident (*Antiquities* 19).

13:1 Prophets and teachers were likely functions (possibly offices) in the early church. Teachers continued the apostolic function of transmitting the message of Jesus (6:2); prophets conveyed divine revelation (reporting what God brought to mind), either interpreting the OT or giving new insights (11:27-28). Teachers are only mentioned here in Acts, although the function of teacher is known elsewhere in the NT (e.g., 1 Co 12:28,29; Eph 4:11; 1 Tm 1:7; 2:7; 3:2; 2 Tm 1:11; 2:24).

13:4 Paul's three missionary journeys began in Antioch, a center for Christianity (especially for Gentile evangelization). The exception (third journey) ended with Paul's arrest in Jerusalem (chap. 21). Paul's letters do not provide a travelogue; they deal with specific issues in the churches.

13:6 Peter's confrontation with a magician (Simon; chap. 8) parallels Saul's confrontation in Cyprus. Scholars have noted Peter-Paul parallels in Ac: healing a lame man (3:2-8 and 14:8-10; cp. 5:15 and 19:12), exorcising (5:16 and 16:18), being divinely freed from prison (12:6-11 and 16:25-26), receiving the Spirit by the laying on of hands (8:17 and 19:6), and raising the dead (9:36-41 and 20:9-12). Though not parallel lives, they experienced similar events related to the spread of early Christianity, with Paul continuing and expanding the work the original apostles began.

13:8 Bar-Jesus (v. 6) is now called Elymas without explanation. It has been suggested that Elymas, like Bar-Jesus, was an Aramaic word meaning "sorcerer."

13:9 From here Paul is no longer called Saul (except when recounting his conversion in chaps. 22 and 26) since his missionary ventures moved him outside of a more distinctly Jewish context and into the larger Greco-Roman world.

13:13 John Mark (12:12,25), nephew of Barnabas, left Paul and Barnabas—probably under unfortunate circumstances, and Paul refused to take him on the next missionary journey (15:37-38). The Jerusalem church met in the home of John Mark's mother, Mary.

13:14 Antioch in Pisidia actually refers to Antioch near (not "in") Pisidia. Pisidia then was a region of the Roman province of Galatia; Antioch was actually located in the adjoining region of Phrygia. The Greek phrasing in the best manuscripts makes this clear.

13:15 Despite the debate regarding OT canon formation, "the Law and the Prophets"—with the third part, "the Psalms" (Lk 24:44)—were likely fixed. Josephus (*Against Apion* 1) mentions "22 books," and 4 Ezra 14 (c. A.D. 100) mentions "24 books"—perhaps referring to the same body of Scripture. Today these same books are categorized in such a way that there are 39. In the listing of 22 books, the 12 minor prophets were counted as one book. The following pairs of books were counted as one book each: Jdg and Ru, 1 and 2 Sm, 1 and 2 Kg, 1 and 2 Ch, Ezr and Neh, Jr and Lm.

13:16-41 Paul's first public speech recorded in Ac took place in a Jewish synagogue. This speech was probably representative of Paul's evangelistic style: Jesus' coming fulfilled God's promises as revealed in the OT (v. 23), and His resurrection confirmed His identity (v. 33).

13:46-47 There is no anti-Semitism here. The Gospel writers emphasized that Jesus proclaimed the gospel to the Jews first. Luke reinforced this in the book of Ac. Paul and Barnabas recognized their duty to bring the good news to Jews first. When the Jews rejected the gospel, Paul and Barnabas took the message to the Gentiles (anticipated by Is 49:6). Gentile believers received the good news with great joy. Rejection of the gospel by Paul's kinsmen was a source of profound grief for him (Rm 9–11).

14:11 Confusion stems from the fact that some Lystrans spoke Lycaonian—one of many indigenous languages that continued to be used in this region until the second century.

14:12 Lystra apparently had a mythological tradition of previous visitations by Greek gods—such as Zeus and Hermes (Roman: Jupiter and Mercury)—whom they continued to worship (v. 13). Barnabas may have been equated with Zeus and Paul with Hermes because (1) Barnabas was the leader of the group (Zeus was Hermes's father and leader of the Greek pantheon),(2) Barnabas appeared to be a more imposing figure than Paul, or (3) the messenger god Hermes may have more aptly described Paul, the group's spokesman.

14:15-18 Paul used arguments based on natural theology in his speech to the pagans—arguments derived from God's self-revelation in creation (cp. similarities with 17:16-32). This approach was especially fitting because these pagans saw their (Greco-Roman) gods as part of nature. Similarly, in Rm 1:18-32, Paul addressed a mixed audience with the same kind of arguments.

14:19 In 2 Co 11:23-5, Paul may be referring to this event of stoning—a severe bodily trauma (he was left for dead).

14:21 The churches founded in this first journey were all in the province of Galatia (and most likely whom his letter to the Galatians addressed). The problems addressed in Galatians were consistent with the reaction Paul and Barnabas incited when evangelizing there.

14:23 Paul and Barnabas appointed elders—a necessary function within the early church (20:17). There is no reason to doubt this development.

15:1 After Paul reported God's blessing upon Gentile evangelization (14:27), some came from Judea, teaching circumcision to become a Christian. They were likely people without direct or official authorization, which prompted a meeting in Jerusalem with the apostles, who appeared unaware of the controversy.

15:2 Though some doubt the historicity of this Jerusalem meeting, the conditions depicted suggest otherwise: (1) these issues had already been raised regarding the conversion of Jews and then Gentiles in the early church, (2) the response Paul and Barnabas elicited on their first journey, (3) though shifting the missionary center from Jerusalem to Antioch, Jerusalem remained the mother church, as Paul indicated in his later visit (chap. 21).

15:5-6 The central issue was whether Gentiles had to be circumcised and keep the Mosaic law (become Jewish first) to become Christians: the first Christians (and Jesus) were Jews, and Jews first evangelized Gentiles. However, faith in Christ was the common criterion for salvation: Peter witnessed Gentile conversion by faith (vv. 7-11); Paul and Barnabas concurred (v. 12); James noted OT precedent (vv. 16-18, citing Am 9:11-12).

15:20 Although salvation for all is by faith (v. 19), restrictions were introduced (v. 29; 21:25) either to provide Christian Jews and Gentiles with a common basis for contact or, more likely, to lift up Gentile moral standards by prohibiting practices associated with pagan temple worship (idolatry, sexual immorality, and sacrifices of animals).

15:28 Luke underscored the apostles' recognition of the relationship between the Holy Spirit and human initiative in arriving at this important decision. Throughout the NT, there is a complex interplay of divine guidance working together with human action that accomplished God's purpose. The complex interplay between divine guidance and human action is harmonious when humans (as here) humbly and trustingly respond to the Spirit's guidance.

15:36,39-40 This marks Paul's second missionary journey, parting with Barnabas over taking John Mark (13:13). Paul took Silas, who had helped take the Jerusalem letter to Antioch (vv. 23-29). Paul later reconciled with John Mark (Co 4:10; Phm 24; 2 Tm 4:11).

16:1,3 At Lystra, Paul took Timothy (Rm 16:21; 1 Co 4:17; 16:10; 2 Co 1:1,19; Php 1:1; 2:19; Co 1:1; 1 Th 1:1; 3:2,6; 2 Th 1:1; 1 Tm 1:2,18; 6:20; 2 Tm 1:1; Phm 1) as a protégé. Timothy was the son of a Jewish mother and Greek father. Being a Jew to the Jews (1 Co 9:20), Paul had Timothy (who was half-Jewish) circumcised for the sake of contextualized witness to Jews.

16:6-8 Paul and his companions passed through Phrygian Galatia. They were prevented by the Spirit from speaking the word of God in Asia. The hindrance need not have taken place earlier, as some have thought. The Greek syntax indicates this could have taken place as they completed their journey through Phrygian Galatia and entered into Asia. Mysia was a part of the province of Asia, so this verse may indicate that although Paul and his companions traveled through Asia, they were not permitted to preach; or it may have taken a more narrow definition of Asia based on earlier usage, distinguishing it from Mysia. They were also prevented by the Spirit of Jesus from going north to Bithynia. The purpose was to get them to Troas in as direct a way as possible.

16:10 Here begins the first "we" section (see the Introduction), indicating that Luke joined the journey in Troas.

16:12 Philippi was a leading city in Macedonia and aRoman colony where many veterans lived; Thessalonica was Macedonia's capital; Amphipolis was the lead city of its administrative district. (Some have amended the text based on later Latin manuscripts to indicate that Philippi was in Macedonia's first district.)

16:13 "Place of prayer" indicated where Philippi's Jews gathered. Apparently the Jewish population of Philippi was too small to have a synagogue. Ten males were required to have a synagogue.

16:14 Lydia, indicating a personal name (or that she was from the city of Lydia), apparently was a prominent woman (as she sold purple cloth, which had important uses in the empire).

16:15 Household baptisms are mentioned in Ac (11:14; 18:8); what was involved is not known. Probably the household leader converted and other members (adults and servants) responded similarly. Faith appears to precede such baptism (v. 31).

16:17-18 The fortune-telling slave girl (v. 16) was not inaccurate in what she shouted; rather, Paul was bothered by her apparently uncontrolled manner (and that her prophetic utterances profited her owner).

16:21 Practicing various religions was not in itself illegal in the empire, but the Romans greatly feared civil disturbances. Any unrest was usually severely crushed.

16:27 If their prisoners escaped, Roman guards would likely pay the same penalty as the prisoner.

16:35 Some speculate that since the magistrates showed no awareness of either the earthquake or the jailer's conversion, v. 35 naturally follows immediately after 24. The intervening verses are therefore considered to be a later insertion from a body of mythological literature involving natural phenomena. However, this is an argument from silence. The magistrates' action to release Paul and Silas may very well have been in response to the earthquake and its possible consequences.

16:37 Paul's Roman citizenship is first mentioned here (22:25-29; 23:27; 25:11), though understandably not in his letters since Paul only invoked his citizenship at places where his legal rights were threatened and due process was ignored. Paul's citizenship was probably registered in Tarsus, but citizens also often carried small wooden tablets like "passports" (some of which have been found) to prove their identification. Paul may well have carried such a document, producing it at key times.

17:6 Turning "the world upside down" was a phrase used of Jewish nationalists causing riots in the empire. Here it referred to the effects of spreading the gospel.

17:7 Declaring another king besides Caesar was a serious crime; Romans feared any competing ruler. Jesus was condemned by Pilate for this (note the inscription on the cross, Lk 23:38).

17:16 Athens was a center of intellectual, philosophical, and religious discussion. Many of its monuments were connected to pagan worship (e.g., the Parthenon), which greatly dismayed Paul, who knew the one true God and His Son Jesus Christ.

17:18-19 Two leading philosophical schools—Epicureans and Stoics—attracted many followers who discussed contemporary issues. Epicureans were practical materialists, believing that gods were uninvolved in human affairs, that humans should pursue

pleasure, and that there was no afterlife/judgment. Stoics were pantheists (God was the Soul of the universe) and determinists (virtue consisted in dispassionately enduring life's inevitable hardships). Some listeners—with noticeable arrogance—considered Paul a pseudo-intellectual, a "seed-picker," picking up a few insignificant ideas here and there.

17:19,22 Paul's informal speeches and conversations in Athens resulted in an invitation to address the Areopagus—originally a court. Paul was not on trial in a formal sense. At this time in the history of Athens the Areopagus was a place where new ideas where heard and tested.

17:22-31 A model apologist, Paul developed an argument (natural theology) based on God's self-revelation in nature (natural revelation; see Rm 1:19-32) to build bridges—and to challenge prevailing beliefs. He complimented the Athenians' evident religious inclinations, drew upon observable data from the natural world regarding the God's nature, identified this God for them, established a relationship between God and humans, announced the coming judgment by God of the world, and even marshaled evidence from the pagan (Stoic) poets for his analysis (Epimenides; Aratus, who hailed from Paul's own Cilicia).

17:23 Although no inscription with the singular "to an unknown god" has been found, Paul likely saw such an inscription in Athens. Many parallels exist in inscriptions and literary writers to unknown gods in case any gods were overlooked.

17:27 Paul proclaimed in terms understandable to Athenians that God was near to each human, who (through God-given faculties) could get some indication of who God is.

17:34 Though the response to Paul was less dramatic than elsewhere (partly due to the disparity of Paul's worldview with that of the Athenians) and no church was apparently founded, some of the converts included Dionysius (a member of the prestigious Areopagus) and Damaris (a woman of distinction, being singled out by name). Some charge that Paul's visit was a dismal failure, prompting Paul to change his methods. However, this is most likely incorrect because: (1) this is an argument from silence; (2) Paul had utilized a similar tactic—which appealed to natural revelation—at Lystra (14:15-17); (3) why would Luke have devoted so much space to a failed approach?

18:2 Aquila and Priscilla had recently been expelled from Rome with the other Jews. Although sorting out the evidence for dating is complex, in A.D. 41 Claudius prohibited Jews from gathering together (as historian Dio Cassius observed). In A.D. 49 he expelled them altogether, probably because the earlier measures did not work (according to the historian Suetonius). Paul then arrived in Corinth about A.D. 50.

18:3 A "tentmaker" worked with leather; Paul may have worked with a variety of materials, including goats' hair cloth made in Cilicia, Paul's home region. Later rabbinic writing confirms the importance of a teacher having a trade or other means of support. In Greco-Roman circles, trades and trade associations were deemed important.

18:4 An inscription "synagogue of the Hebrews" (i.e., Jews) was found in Corinth, dated probably after Paul.

18:12 The date of Gallio's time as proconsul of Achaia (Corinth was its capital) is a firm one in NT chronology. An inscription dated to A.D. 52 refers to him when he was no longer proconsul. Thus, Gallio was installed as proconsul in early A.D. 51 and Paul appeared before him later that year. Gallio noted nothing that defied Rome's tolerant religious laws.

18:18 Paul's going to Jerusalem (chap. 22) may have included completing the Nazirite vow, giving his cut hair as an offering. Although unusual for Paul, especially outside of Judea (21:26), it was consistent with Paul as a faithful Jew in the midst of Gentile missionary efforts.

18:19-20 Paul's visit probably lasted less than a week. His initial visit to the synagogue in Ephesus was apparently without incident. The discussions he had with the Jews showed promise. They urged him to stay. He promised to return if God willed. Paul would stay in Ephesus (19:10) longer than most other cities. The work there would impact not only Ephesus itself but the entire province of Asia. Paul had been prevented from staying in Asia earlier (16:6). He gave evidence of having envisioned an extensive work in Ephesus because of its strategic location. Paul planned and strategized but was under the authority and guidance of the Holy Spirit. He would come to Ephesus on God's timetable.

18:22-23 Paul greeted the *Jerusalem* church, having gone down from there to Antioch, marking the second missionary journey's end and the third journey's beginning (see textual footnote on v. 22).

18:24-26 Being from Alexandria (the most important city of letters in the Greco-Roman world), Apollos is depicted as learned and eloquent. Christianity had already reached Alexandria by this time. As with the Ephesians Paul encounters in chapter 19, Apollos's knowledge was deficient; he knew only John's baptism and had not yet received the Spirit or been baptized into Christ. Apollos was then given more accurate instruction.

19:9 Perhaps Tyrannus owned the hall or regularly taught there. The name Tyrannus is known in inscriptions from Ephesus during this time, although the actual lecture hall has not been discovered.

19:10 After three months of regularly speaking in the Ephesian synagogue (v. 8), Paul spent another two years teaching there; this had a significant impact throughout the Asian province. Some believe many events unrecorded here but taking place during this time may be referred to elsewhere in Paul's letters, including temporary imprisonments and beatings (2 Co 1:8-10; 11:23-25).

19:11-12 God's power through faith was at work in these healings, even if physical devices were a part of the process, see note on 5:15.

19:13-14 The magical tradition of the ancient world often involved invoking names of divine figures (as magical papyri and amulets indicate). There are numerous Jewish magical texts that attest to the interplay of magic and Judaism. Here some itinerant Jewish exorcists, apparently traveling around the countryside in search of money for performing magical acts, stumbled upon the (unsuccessful) use of Jesus' name.

19:19 Ephesus had a reputation for magical practices so notable that magical texts were called "Ephesian letters" (Athenagoras). When these magicians became believers, they burned their magical texts.

19:21 As in Rm 15:23-29, Paul believed his missionary work in the East was done—and after taking the collection to Jerusalem, he proceeded to Rome and possibly as far west as Spain.

19:22 Though disputed, some think that the Erastus here is the same Erastus mentioned in Rm 16:23. Indeed, it is possible that this same Erastus is mentioned in a Corinthian inscription. However, it should be noted that Erastus was a popular name at that time.

19:24,27 The Artemis cult here was part of a larger Greek Artemis cult (the "Great mother"). Small silver artifacts honoring Artemis have been found in Ephesus. In the 1950s, several large Artemis statues—with clear fertility associations—were also discovered here. Typical in the ancient world, money was to be made or lost by those associated with the cult, and Paul's preaching clearly jeopardized their practices (vv. 25-26). This temple of Artemis (its foundations dating to the eighth century B.C.) was considered one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. The temple eventually fell into disrepute and ruin—what these Ephesians wanted to avoid (v. 27); it was rediscovered in the nineteenth century, with an altar uncovered in 1965.

19:29 The Ephesian amphitheater (seating 24,000) was thoroughly remodeled in the first century A.D.—a suitable place for a large crowd.

19:33-34 Wanting to distance themselves from the controversy Paul and his followers caused, the Jews shoved forward one of their own, Alexander (a Hellenistic Jew, as indicated by his name), to offer an apology on their behalf. Since the Jews would have had the same view of the Artemis cult as Paul and his followers, the Ephesian crowd clearly rejected him when it was recognized that he was a Jew.

19:35 Perhaps the Artemis cult in Ephesus was started when a meteorite fell there, or maybe the reference to falling from heaven included any divine cult that was thought to originate with the gods.

19:40 The city clerk (v. 35) urged the disbanding of the disorderly gathering, appealing to Rome's fear of public unrest and its decisive response to it. No mention of further legal action indicates that Paul and his followers did nothing unlawful; they simply upset those profiting from the Artemis cult.

20:3,6 This plot by Jewish opponents prompted Paul to change travel plans from taking a ship from Greece (Achaia) to Syria to traveling overland from Greece to Macedonia, where he got a boat in Philippi.

20:5 The "we" narrative resumes (to v. 15).

20:9-10 Like Peter (9:36-41), Paul apparently raised a person from the dead (though, possibly, he was merely stunned).

20:16 Miletus was 30 miles from Ephesus, so how did going to Miletus and then summoning the Ephesian elders save him time, since he wished to get to Jerusalem for Pentecost? Perhaps Paul wanted to avoided Ephesus because, among other reasons: (1) there may not have been a ship going to Ephesus for some time (21:3); and (2) further unrest would have been generated by his presence (19:23-41).

20:17 Ephesian church leaders were called elders here, but overseers in verse 28. These apparently interchangeable terms (Ti 1:5,7) designated a functional and formal title of leadership in the Ephesian church.

20:18 Although Paul's speech differed from his others in Ac, note that (1) this was the only speech delivered to already-believing Christians; (2) it had many parallels with language in Pauline letters (e.g., reference to his serving the Lord, his persecution, his not shrinking from teaching them, his ministry to both Jews and Greeks, the need for repentance, his not caring about his own life, and language regarding finishing the course, etc.).

20:25 Either Paul realized things might go badly for him in Jerusalem, or he had no intention of returning to this part of the Mediterranean. Instead, after Jerusalem he intended to head to Rome and beyond.

20:28 Reference to redemption through Jesus' blood (i.e., death) is unique in Ac, though reflecting Paul's language in his letters (e.g., Rm 3:25; 5:9; Eph 2:13).

20:35 This saying ("it is more blessed to give than to receive") is not found in the Gospels—only here—although it is like some of Jesus' sayings (Lk 6:38). Obviously, Jesus said more than what the Gospels record, and some of the *agrapha* (sayings of Jesus not included in the Gospels, such as this one) originated with Jesus.

21:1 This third "we" section extends until verse 18.

21:4 The Christians in Tyre had knowledge from the Holy Spirit that Paul would have trouble in Jerusalem, and hence he should not go—though Paul was convinced he must go (v. 13). Unlike the authority of Christ's apostles, the NT prophetic gift—reporting what God brings to mind—was not infallible, but needed to be weighed and sifted. While the revelation that Paul would have trouble in Jerusalem was accurate, Agabus misapplied it by saying Paul should not go there. Paul knew he had to go (20:23).

21:8 Philip—likely called "the evangelist" to distinguish him from other contemporary Philips of the time—was one of those designated to serve in the Jerusalem church (6:5). Later, they apparently went their own way; Philip settled with his prophetess daughters in Caesarea. Some have thought he was one of the original Twelve (Mt 10:3; Mk 3:18; Lk 6:14).

21:10 Here Agabus (11:28) explicitly announced Paul would fall into Gentile hands in Jerusalem (21:30-36, where he was delivered by Gentiles out of Jewish hands).

21:18 While it is not clear how many original apostles were still in Jerusalem (they do not appear in the ensuing events), James is noted as the Jerusalem church leader.

21:19-25 Paul told James and his elders of God's work among the Gentiles. Although they glorified God in response, they claimed thousands (lit. "myriads") of Jews had believed (something of an overstatement since Jerusalem had 25,000–50,000 inhabitants). These were zealous for the law, reflecting a more restrictive (Pharisee-like) view of it. They heard that Paul taught dispersion Jews not to follow the Mosaic law. Thus, they were concerned that Paul display devotion to the law by taking four men into the temple and paying for their Nazirite vow—although this action seemed to confuse matters in light of what Paul had done among the Gentiles. James was unfortunately apparently succumbing to pressures from those in Jerusalem and setting Paul up for betrayal (v. 27).

21:28-29 Paul was apparently with Trophimus, an Ephesian (20:4; 21:29). Despite his views on the optional nature of circumcision, Paul, a Jew, was not consciously ignoring it. He well knew this would have endangered Trophimus's life. This is attested by temple inscriptions that put Gentiles on notice that they would have only themselves to blame for their deaths if they transgressed the boundary of the sanctuary. Josephus (chap. 15, *Antiquities of the Jews*) describes this inscription. In 1877, two archaeologists discovered what has come to be called the Soreg Inscription.

21:31-32 The Romans had a cohort of soldiers stationed in the Antonia Fortress, located on the west side of the temple area, for just such eventualities. They desired to keep peace in Jerusalem and would restore peace at the first sign of trouble.

21:37-38 The Roman commander thought Paul was an Egyptian rebel, an unnamed messianic pretender who, according to Josephus, had gathered a number of people at the Mount of Olives to attack Jerusalem (c. A.D. 54). The Romans put them to flight, but the leader escaped. This commander thought the rebel perhaps had reappeared. Instead, Paul spoke to the commander in Greek, his native language, entirely appropriate and to be expected for the Hellenistic Jew that he was. However, he also knew Aramaic and addressed the crowd in that language, not because they would not possibly have known Greek, but because the politically sensitive situation demanded use of the "native" language (v. 40; 22:2).

21:39 Paul gave an apt, accurate presentation of himself: a Jew by ethnicity and religion, a citizen of Tarsus in Cilicia, a city of importance in the Greco-Roman world (which accounted for his knowledge of Greek), noting later his Roman citizenship (22:27-29).

22:3 Paul offered four further facts in temporal sequential order: He was born in Tarsus of Cilicia, brought up in this city, taught at the feet of Gamaliel according to the strictest order of the patriarchal law, and zealous for God. Was "this city" Tarsus or Jerusalem? Most scholars interpret it as Jerusalem since Paul apparently spent much of his youth there (26:4), had relatives there (23:16), and was educated as a Pharisee and hence in Jerusalem.

22:9 Acts 9:7 says Paul's traveling companions heard the voice but did not see anyone, but here Paul himself said that they did not hear the voice of the One who was speaking to him. The grammar here supports the idea that Paul's traveling companions may have *heard* the voice but did not understand it—or at least did not understand it as the voice of the Lord speaking to him. The charge that Paul flagrantly contradicted himself is unnecessarily uncharitable and unlikely given Luke's concern for precision.

22:12 Paul indicated that Ananias was a devout Jew who followed the law, which is confirmed in v. 14.

22:18-21 Paul's vision in the temple was related only here, though still consistent with his treatment in Jerusalem (9:26-29). Mention of ministry to Gentiles revived the crowd's ire.

22:28 In this episode, in which Paul relied upon his Roman citizenship so that he was not punished without due process, we gain insight into how citizenship was secured. In the first century, a number of different ways for gaining citizenship were opened up, including the payment of large bribes to appropriate officials (equal to as much as a year's wages), the emancipation of slaves, and the granting of citizenship to entire cities. Other means included people performing honorable or meritorious service for the empire. Whereas the centurion had purchased his citizenship, Paul had inherited his. One of Paul's ancestors may have performed such service, including having served in the army or having provided supplies for the army, such as making tents.

22:30 This verse indicates that Paul was either released from his chains or released from Roman imprisonment while the Sanhedrin convened in order to try Paul on charges regarding Jewish law. In either case, he remained under the protection of the Romans.

23:1 The use of "conscience" here was in a manner similar to the way the word is currently used, that is, as an internal judge of good or bad behavior.

23:5 Paul's failure to recognize the high priest (who presided over the proceedings) included: (1) not knowing the current high priest, (2) not thinking the command to be struck was appropriate behavior for the high priest, (3) not seeing clearly because of his possibly poor eyesight. Paul's comment, however, may have been ironic, actually condemning the high priest's actions.

23:6 Paul's belief in the resurrection of the dead divided his accusers. The Pharisees, like Paul, believed in the resurrection, while the Sadducees, of which the high priest Ananias was a member, did not. Resurrection was fundamental to Paul's theology, as his letters (e.g., 1 Co 15) and Ac (e.g., 24:15; 26:6-8; 28:20) indicate. Some scribes associated with the Pharisees claimed to find no basis for charges against Paul (23:9).

23:8 Scholars acknowledge that the Sadducees did not believe in resurrection. Some think that this passage indicates that they did not believe in an angelic or spiritual intermediate state between death and resurrection either. The Greek syntax indicates that the Sadducees were said here not to believe in all three—resurrection, angels, or spirits, in other words, any spiritual state or spiritual beings—while the Pharisees acknowledged the existence of them all.

23:16 It is unclear how many of Paul's family members were in Jerusalem (vv. 17,22). The term "son of Paul's sister" could indicate a man in his twenties or even older, although it is possible that he was younger (see v. 19, where the commander took him by the hand). It is likely that Paul's sister also resided in Jerusalem. The fact that this relative of Paul may have been present during the plotting against Paul's life (the grammar can be taken this way) has led some scholars to wonder whether Paul's family itself may have been strongly opposed to him.

23:23 Paul was to be accompanied by two centurions and troops, including infantrymen, cavalry, and a group of soldiers over which there is debate, since the word used for them is found only here in the NT. Scholars speculate that they may have been spearmen or javelin throwers.

23:24 Felix, the governor, originally a slave, became procurator of Judea in A.D. 52, succeeding Cumanus. He was eventually removed from office c. A.D. 59 for bungling Jewish-Gentile conflicts in Caesarea. He was brother to one of the most important civil servants of the time.

23:25-30 How did the author get a copy of this letter (with standard greetings, body, and closing)? Most likely, Luke heard it when it was read before Felix (and Paul) in Caesarea (v. 34); at least Paul heard it and communicated its contents to Luke. Possibly, Luke reconstructed the letter from knowledge of the events or saw the official documents for Paul's trial.

23:27 Some have questioned whether the commander had enhanced his account by claiming to have learned that Paul was a Roman citizen before he rescued him, and thus this knowledge served as the basis of the rescue. The grammar of the passage, however, indicates that the commander rescued Paul and then learned he was a Roman citizen, which is exactly what happened in the account.

23:31 A Roman road connected Jerusalem with Antipatris—a distance of 35 miles. This was not too great a distance to travel in a single night; there is substantial evidence that much longer distances were traveled by troops. Also, the trip from Jerusalem to Antipatris would have been downhill.

23:35 Felix told Paul he would give him a hearing when his accusers arrived, and then (as the grammar indicates) he ordered that Paul be kept in custody in the procurator's palace, originally built by Herod the Great.

24:1 Luke's report of the case against Paul followed standard Roman legal procedure. Included in this was the prosecution brought by a "rhetor" (lawyer). Tertullus (a well-known Roman name) may have been a Jew (v. 6), although he referred to the Jews (in vv. 5,9) more objectively. He delivered his speech, though abbreviated by Luke, with the conventional concessions to Felix.

24:5-7 Tertullus accused Paul of far more than simply bringing a Gentile into the temple: he was, the Jews charged, an agitator of Jews throughout the empire, a ringleader of the Nazarene sect (on this, cp. 3:1), and a desecrater of the temple. Although the first two would have aroused a Roman governor's curiosity and suspicion, only the last would have had real significance. Tertullus implied that the Jewish authorities in Jerusalem would have been able to handle the situation if the Roman commander, Lysias, had not interfered. Perhaps so, but this clearly glossed over Paul's innocence and that he would have been unfairly convicted by a lynch-mob.

24:11 The twelve days Paul mentioned did not include the time he spent in Caesarea.

24:14 "The Way" is used throughout Ac as a self-designation by Christians (9:2; 19:9,23; 24:22), while Jews apparently referred to them as a sect of Judaism. The spread of Christianity to the Gentiles eventually led to its independence from and rejection by

the Jews.

24:17 The charitable gifts and offerings Paul brought to his nation probably refer to the collection that he had been gathering for the Jerusalem church. Although the collection is significantly mentioned in Paul's letters (e.g., Rm 15:25-6; 1 Co 16:3; 2 Co 8:1–9:15; cp. Gl 2:10), it is not emphasized in Ac.

24:22 How Felix gained his knowledge of Christianity is uncertain—perhaps through his wife, Drusilla, the daughter of Herod Agrippa (v. 24), but we cannot be sure. Just as likely is that, as procurator for over five years, he had heard about this new movement.

24:25 Felix was not known for his righteous practices, including taking Drusilla from her first husband Azizus. Paul possibly focused his comments regarding righteousness, self-control, and the coming judgment specifically on Felix.

24:26 Further evidence of Felix's corruption was his desire for a bribe—even though he was both attracted to and repulsed by what Paul told him. Though bribery was illegal according to Roman law, it occurred in many cases.

24:27 Paul remained in Roman custody (particularly Felix's) for two years. Given the reason he was relieved of office (23:26), Felix understandably wanted to curry Jewish favor. As a result, he left Paul (who committed no punishable offense) in prison. Festus became the new proconsul c. A.D. 59–62.

25:1-3 The new governor went from Caesarea to Jerusalem, no doubt to get a sense of the most important Jewish city in the realm. While there, Jewish leaders made their case to him so that they could get the chance to try Paul in Jerusalem. The real reason was so that they could ambush and kill him.

25:6-8 This passage encapsulates the conflict between Paul and the Jewish leaders to date. Paul was accused of many different charges that he refuted by pointing out that he had not violated Jewish law, the temple, or Roman law.

25:9-11 When Festus suggested, as a favor to the Jews, that Paul be tried in Jerusalem, Paul invoked his right as a Roman citizen to appeal directly to Caesar. Not all appeals to Caesar were granted by local governors, but Paul's was. The Caesar himself did not always hear cases, depending upon the level of involvement of the individual emperor. Nevertheless, this was an avenue open to a citizen. Festus was probably glad to shift this long-standing case to another jurisdiction—and to relieve himself of Jewish pressure (26:32).

25:13 Herod Agrippa II—the last of the Herodian rulers—visited Caesarea with his sister Bernice. His territory generally expanded during his lifetime (he died near the end of the century). Bernice had a checkered sexual and marital history. The reason that Herod was brought into this situation by Festus was not only because they happened to be in the area, but because Herod had responsibility for the temple and appointing the high priest, among other duties. He would have had an interest in the charges against Paul as one who had violated the temple.

25:19 Festus's description of the heart of the matter—especially as an outsider would look on it—was apt. Disagreements between the Jews and Paul concerned whether a certain dead man, Jesus, had been resurrected.

25:25-27 Festus had not publicly made known that he could find nothing against Paul. Festus intended to have Paul tried in Jerusalem when Paul made his appeal to Caesar (v. 9). Once the appeal to Caesar had been made, Festus was free to admit that the

charges were groundless (and perplexing). Festus hoped Agrippa (perhaps because of Agrippa's ties to the Jews and his responsibilities regarding the temple) would help him send an informed letter with Paul, specifying the charges.

26:3 Perhaps Agrippa had a reputation for being informed about Jewish customs and practices (and the controversies they aroused), or perhaps Paul was simply addressing him in an honorable way befitting his position in order to get a fair hearing.

26:5 Paul may have been emphasizing the strictness of the Pharisees to highlight his own background, but calling it the strictest sect (even in relation to theEssenes or Sadducees) is consistent with Josephus's descriptions of these groups (*Antiquities* 18, where he said Pharisees shed themselves of all luxury).

26:10-11 What Paul did to oppose Jerusalem Christians is not known (except being at the stoning of Stephen). Clearly he did more than is recorded in Ac, including going to foreign cities to persecute Christians (chap. 9 gives one instance of this).

26:14 Only here are we told that the heavenly voice spoke in a Semitic language—most likely, Aramaic—which is consistent with Paul being addressed by his Jewish name Saul. The Lord's words—"It is hard for you to kick against the goads"—were not Aramaic, but probably reflected the classical literature of the time. Though some suggest that Paul was troubled by a bad conscience over persecuting Christians, more likely it indicated that Paul should not resist the divine force moving him in another direction.

26:16-18 These verses were not included in earlier conversion accounts (chaps. 9; 22), even though mention of Paul's ministry to the Gentiles was declared to Ananias (9:15; 22:15). Many scholars think the essence of Paul's mission was given to him during his conversion experience. This would have included his mission to the Gentiles, as well as to his own people, even if they would both ultimately reject him. Nevertheless, God had promised Paul his protection (26:22).

26:22-23 Paul insisted his message of Christ's suffering, death, and resurrection did not go beyond what was found within the OT itself. He probably had in mind passages such as Is 52:13–53:12.

26:24 Paul's interruption can be interpreted variously: (1) Festus may have thought that Paul had lost his mind because of what he was saying. (2) With reference to Paul's knowledge, it may mean that Paul's learning or writings had driven him to speculation beyond what Festus as a judge of the facts could accept. (3) Jewish sacred writings—the OT—had driven Paul to conclusions that went beyond a naturalistic worldview. In any case, Festus was not willing to follow Paul to his logical conclusion. Perhaps Paul had moved outside Festus's area of competence. He was a judge and not a theologian. Or Festus may have seen where Paul was going but was not prepared to adjust his life to the truth that Paul presented so compellingly. The emotion behind Festus's interruption may be a clue that he was understanding more than he wanted to.

26:26 Paul's declaration that what he was talking about did not take place "in a corner" indicates Paul's public and open preaching of the gospel in synagogues and elsewhere—unlike some other religious groups of the time (e.g., Mediterranean mystery religions). Only two decades had passed since Jesus' arrest, conviction, crucifixion, and resurrection. A number of eyewitnesses of these events were available to give testimony to what they had experienced.

26:27 Paul asked Agrippa whether he believed the prophets, implying they had foretold Jesus' coming. If he was a good Jew, Agrippa should then have accepted the prophets and the implications regarding Jesus.

26:28 Before Paul could go further, Agrippa interrupted Paul—perhaps in a sarcastic or jesting manner, out of anger, or seriously (in light of Paul's logic). Given the "short" amount of time (or perhaps the modest amount of evidence presented), Agrippa claimed that he was not ready to become a Christian.

26:32 Like Festus, Agrippa concluded there was no sustainable charge against Paul; he went further, suggesting Paul should be released. Both Roman and Jewish authorities found the charges groundless. Nevertheless, Paul's appeal to Caesar put his case in a special category that was now to be discharged by Caesar himself.

27:1 This is the fourth "we" section, which extends through verse 29. It is entirely possible that the author of the "we" passages was in some way linked to the journey, since there were a number besides Paul and the other prisoners on the boat with the centurion, including Aristarchus (v. 2).

27:2 The ship was from Adramyttium, located in western Asia near the island of Lesbos and the cities of Mitylene, Assos, and Troas. The ship was probably a small grain ship, which would have stayed relatively near the coast, here working its way from Caesarea along the coast until it reached Adramyttium.

27:3 Though Acts does not tell us when Sidon was evangelized—perhaps through Pentecost (2:9) or the result of persecution (11:19), Christians were there. We have no record of Paul visiting there, but he appears to have had friends there who provided for him, possibly friends made during an unrecorded visit as he traveled between Jerusalem and Antioch.

27:6 At Myra, on the southern coast of Asia Minor, the centurion put the men on a ship from Alexandria that was going to Rome; he did this as opposed to putting them on a ship bound for Adramyttium, which would have taken them out of their way. The Alexandrian ship would have been part of the grain supply trade from Egypt to Rome. Rome was heavily dependent upon Egypt for its grain, and so the fleet of ships that were conscripted for such service was well organized and very important. The route from Alexandria to Rome went by way of Myra due to the winds.

27:7-9 The ship was having difficulty along its voyage because the journey was being undertaken at the end of the sailing season, and the winds were already unpredictable. The sailing season was deemed to be dangerous from mid-September to mid-November, and the waterways closed for travel from then until February, a period of about three months (28:11). It appears that Paul's journey was taking place in roughly mid-October. Fair Havens, despite the name, was not a suitable place to stay the winter since the harbor was exposed to the open sea (27:12).

27:11 The centurion chose to pay more attention to the captain of the ship, who was determined to make his destination during the sailing season, than to Paul's warning. The centurion did not realize that Paul had divinely-given insight into the situation, nor did he understand that as an experienced traveler Paul was well acquainted with the potential dangers.

27:12 Luke mentioned Phoenix, a port on the island of Crete; it had two inlets to its port, one on the southwest and another on the northwest.

27:17-19 Caught in the wind, the sailors virtually lost control of the vessel. In efforts to save the ship and themselves, they took preventive measures, which are well known from other ancient sources: tying ropes around the ship's hull so that it did not come apart, lowering an anchor, jettisoning some of the cargo (although probably not the grain).

27:22-26 An angel gave Paul insight into their situation. Despite their attempts, the angel made clear that Paul had a greater destiny than death by shipwreck. The divine plan was not going to be thwarted.

27:27 The Adriatic Sea mentioned here was not the (now called) Adriatic Sea between Italy and the former Yugoslavia, but apparently the sea between Crete, Malta, Italy, and Greece that extended into the midst of the Mediterranean.

27:28-29 The soldiers took soundings by letting down lengths of rope with weights on them; they determined that they were approaching land at a fast pace, even though they could not see it. In an effort to slow down the ship, they took the unusual measure of lowering four anchors all from the stern, rather than dropping anchors from the bow, which would have swung the ship around.

27:30-32 The danger prompted some sailors to plan an escape. Paul's wisdom in not permitting these sailors to abandon ship is seen in the next episode, when all of the sailors were needed. However, the soldiers probably acted unwisely by cutting the ropes to the skiff in an attempt to thwart any further escape plans by the sailors, as this eliminated a useful means of escape when the occasion warranted.

27:35 Following Jewish custom, Paul gave thanks to God for the food that they ate. It is unlikely that Paul's thanksgiving and breaking of bread is a celebration of the Lord's Supper, given the pagan context. Paul was simply encouraging all to eat in preparation for the rigors of abandoning ship.

27:38 At this point, the crew threw out the grain, which had served as ballast for the ship, so that they could run it aground (v. 39).

27:41 The attempt to beach the ship was thwarted by hitting a sandbar before they had reached shore, rendering the bow immovable. The pounding waves began to break up the stern, requiring them to abandon the ship.

27:42 The soldiers' intention to kill the prisoners was probably motivated by their personal responsibility for the prisoners. If any of the prisoners got away while they abandoned the ship, the soldiers feared being punished in their stead.

27:44 Everyone miraculously got to shore, some by swimming and others by holding on to pieces of debris from the ship.

28:1 This is the fifth "we" section, extending to verse 16. The shipwreck took place on Malta, a small island south of Sicily.

28:3-4 Although there are reportedly no poisonous snakes on Malta today, that does not mean that there were none then. Apparently everyone (apart from some modern critical scholars) knew that there were. Note that the people thought that Paul had been singled out by Justice, the Greek goddess, to be bitten (v. 6).

28:6 Once it became clear that Paul was not affected by the snakebite, sentiment changed from thinking him a criminal to saying he was a god. This quick reversal of fortune appears to have been just as easily shrugged off by Paul as he shrugged off the snake. Nothing more was made of it.

28:7 Publius is referred to as the "leading man" or "first man" of Malta, a title reflected in inscriptional evidence from the island. He may have been a leading citizen or even a political leader. He entertained at least some of those from the boat, including the author of the "we" passage.

28:8-9 Publius's father may have been suffering from what has been called Malta fever, caused by impure goats' milk. This healing involved both prayer and laying on of hands. As a result, a number of others with diseases were brought and cured.

28:10 The honors that Paul received may have been monetary rewards or even payment, as the same word is used elsewhere in Ac to indicate money (4:34; 5:2-3; 7:16; 19:19).

28:11 This indicates that, probably in February or shortly thereafter, the journey recommenced, this time aboard another Alexandrian grain ship headed for Rome. (The first one had been torn apart by the sea.) The "Twin Brothers" were Castor and Pollux (Gemini), the patrons of sailors. The ship would have wanted to be underway as soon as possible since it had been delayed due to the winter break.

28:12 Syracuse was a port on the eastern side of Sicily.

28:13 Puteoli was a major port in southern Italy with a very important shipping harbor for bringing grain from Egypt to Rome.

28:14 Luke wrote that they found "brothers" in Puteoli—probably Christian believers (rather than Jews). It is not known how believers came to be in Puteoli, just as it is not known how Christians came to be in Rome itself. Apparently there was a Jewish community there, and they may have had contact with Christians elsewhere. A seaport would also have been a natural place for such contact to be made. In answer to the question of how it is that the centurion would have allowed Paul to stay with the believers in Puteoli for seven days, when one recounts how Paul helped the centurion at several key junctures and proved himself a reliable and trustworthy person, it is not surprising at all. The centurion probably had business to attend to in the area, perhaps related to the journey itself and what had happened along the way.

28:15 "Brothers" had come to meet Paul from as far away as the Forum of Appius and Three Taverns, both small towns along the Appian Way on the way to Rome. The Appius Forum was about 43 miles and Three Taverns 33 miles south of Rome.

28:16 The statement "when we entered Rome" is thought by some to be redundant of v. 14: "And so we came to Rome." There is the possibility that v. 14 refers to entering the general region of Rome, and v. 16 to Rome proper. There is also the possibility that v. 14 is to be understood as "in this way we came to Rome," with v. 16 indicating the actual arrival. While in Roman custody, Paul appears to have been staying on his own and at his own expense (vv. 23,30), guarded only by a common soldier. This may reflect the fact that Paul's case was already at this stage—perhaps because of the description of the case provided by Festus—considered of little importance, and Paul of little danger. We know nothing more of Paul's contact with the Roman government or the disposition of his case from the book of Ac.

28:17 This is the final episode in Acts in which Paul began his ministry in a new city with contact with the Jews. Since he was in custody, instead of visiting a synagogue he invited the Jewish leaders to come to him and explained his situation.

28:21-22 The Jews in Rome had clearly heard of the "sect" of Christians, but they had not received word regarding Paul. This may have been because communication from Jerusalem to Rome had been delayed, or it may indicate that the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem had lost interest in Paul's case, since he was now out of their sight.

28:25-28 Paul's citation of Is 6:9-10 aroused disagreement among some of his listeners because it implied that the coming of Jesus Christ was foretold in the OT and that He would be rejected by his own people. Paul's conclusion from the OT passage was that God's saving word had then been extended to Gentiles, who would listen and understand.

28:30-31 Acts ends with Paul still a prisoner after two years of captivity, during which time he lived at his own expense and was allowed to have visitors, to whom he proclaimed the gospel of Jesus Christ. The book of Ac ends at this point, and it may be that he was convicted and died in Rome at this time. There is testimony from other early church writers, however, that Paul was

released, presumably because his case was either dismissed or found to be without merit, and that he engaged in active ministry for another several years before he was re-arrested and sent to Rome, where he died under the persecution of Nero.

Romans Articles

What Is Natural Law?

by Paul Copan

From a jail in Birmingham, Alabama, Martin Luther King Jr. discussed civil disobedience, noting that "there are two kinds of laws: just and unjust" and that there is a "natural law" to which we are subject. He was right: We shouldn't say we know right and wrong only because "the Bible says so." Romans 2:15 states that God's moral law has been written on the hearts of *all* human beings. This innate or intuitive awareness is beautifully illustrated in C. S. Lewis's *Abolition of Man*. There he lists various universally recognized moral laws and virtues—impartial justice, truthfulness, kindness, mercy, marital fidelity, respect for human life. They have been regarded as true for all from ancient Babylon and Greece to Native America, from Jews and Christians to Hindus and Confucians. Yet while humans are capable of recognizing basic moral principles, they *may* suppress their conscience, harden their hearts, and become morally dull.

Medieval theologian Thomas Aquinas spoke of certain "laws." He said there is an *eternal* law, which God alone knows and by which God created and governs the universe. Because God created us in His image (as moral, reasoning beings), we are capable of recognizing a self-evident *natural* law, the reflection of God's eternal law in the created order. This law is known by all human beings whether or not they are aware of God's special revelation through Israel and Jesus Christ, as inscripted in the Bible. God has placed within us a disposition to have moral knowledge. Unless we suppress our conscience, we naturally know basic moral truths. General virtues and vices, Thomas Reid wrote, "must appear self-evident to every man who has a conscience, and has taken the pains to exercise this natural power of his mind"
("Of Morals").

Some will respond, "There can be moral atheists. We don't need God for morality." However, atheists have been made in the image of God. Though they deny God's existence, they have still been designed by God to function properly and even to create human law for the good of society—the law that, to varying degrees, applies the natural law placed within us. Atheists ignore the very basis of goodness—God, who created them and who is the highest Good. (See J. Budziszewski, *The Revenge of Conscience* and *Written on the Heart*.)

Does the Moral Argument Show There Is a God?

by Paul Copan

Here's a good rule of thumb about morality: *Never believe those who say murder or rape may not really be wrong.* Such people haven't looked deeply enough into the basis for moral belief—and just aren't functioning properly. (Usually, when personally threatened with murder or rape, they change their tune!) Color-blind persons need help distinguishing red from green. Similarly, morally malfunctioning persons (those denying basic moral truths) don't need arguments; they need psychological and spiritual help. Like logical laws, moral laws and instincts are basic to well-functioning humans.

As part of God's general self-revelation, all people—unless they ignore or suppress their conscience—can and should have basic moral insight, knowing truths generally available to any morally sensitive person (Rm 2:14-15). We instinctively recognize the wrongness of torturing or murdering the innocent or committing rape. We just know the rightness of virtues (kindness, trustworthiness, unselfishness). A person's failure to recognize these insights reveals something defective; he hasn't looked deeply enough into the grounds of his moral beliefs.

Philosophers and theologians past and present have noted the connection between God's existence and objective moral values. A moral argument for God's existence goes like this: (a) If objective moral values exist, then God exists. (b) Objective moral values do exist. (c) Therefore, God exists. If objective moral values exist, where do they come from? The most plausible answer is God's nature or character. Even many atheists have admitted that objective moral values (which they deny) don't fit an atheistic world but would serve as evidence for God's existence.

We live in a time when many claim everything is relative, yet ironically they believe they have "rights." But if morality is just the product of evolution, culture, or personal choice, then rights—and moral responsibility—do not truly exist. But if they *do,* this assumes humans have value in and of themselves as persons, no matter what their culture or science textbooks say. But what, then, is the basis for this value? Could this intrinsic value just emerge from impersonal, mindless, valueless processes over time (naturalism)?

An Eastern philosophical approach to ethics is monism (sometimes called "pantheism"): because everything is one, no ultimate distinction between good and evil exists. This serves to support relativism. A more natural context for ethics is the theistic one, in which we've been made by a good God to resemble Him in certain important (though limited) ways. The Declaration of Independence correctly notes that we've been endowed by our Creator with "certain inalienable rights." Human dignity isn't just "there." Dignity and rights come from a good God (despite human sinfulness).

Can't atheists be moral? Yes! Like believers, they've been made in the image of God and thus have the ability to recognize right and wrong.

Doesn't God Himself conform to certain moral standards outside Himself? No, God's good character is the very standard; God simply acts and naturally does what is good. Universal moral standards have no basis if God doesn't exist.

Notable Christian Apologist: Cornelius Van Til

by John M. Frame

Cornelius Van Til (1895–1987), Reformed theologian and apologist, was born in the Netherlands and completed his Ph.D. at Princeton University in 1927. He taught apologetics for one year at Princeton Theological Seminary but left when the board voted for a reorganization to allow for liberal viewpoints. Van Til and other conservative professors who left Princeton founded Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia. Van Til taught at Westminster from its beginning in 1929 for roughly a half century.

Van Til's studies of philosophical idealism convinced him that all human thought is governed by *presuppositions*. (Hence Van Til is sometimes called a "presuppositionalist," though he was not enthusiastic about that label.) Ultimate presuppositions, he believed, cannot be proved by usual methods, since they serve as the basis of all proof. But they can be proved "transcendentally," by showing that they are necessary for all rational thought and must be true if there is to be any meaning or order in the world. Van Til sought to reconstruct Christian apologetics so that it would establish the Christian God as the presupposition of human thought, rather than as one rational conclusion among many.

He disparaged the "traditional method" of defending Christianity by theistic proofs and historical evidences, because he believed that tradition began with data considered intelligible apart from God and thereby tried to prove God's existence. On the contrary, Van Til argued, if we concede that anything is intelligible apart from the God of Scripture, we have lost the battle at the outset. So we should, rather, use a transcendental method, showing that the various forms of non-Christian thought ("would-be autonomous reasoning," as he put it) reduce to meaninglessness and that only the Christian worldview can make sense of anything.

Some critics said that Van Til left no room for the use of evidence in apologetics. He replied that evidence is useful when employed within a transcendental argument based on biblical presuppositions.

But is this not circular, to prove Christianity on the basis of Christian presuppositions?

Yes, said Van Til, in a sense. But he offered two arguments in defense of his view. First, every system of thought is circular when arguing its most fundamental presuppositions (e.g., a rationalist can defend the authority of reason only by using reason). Second, the Christian circle is the only one that renders reality intelligible on its own terms.

Non-Christian thought, he argues, collapses into meaninglessness because of the effects of sin on human mental powers. The unbeliever knows God but suppresses the truth (Rm 1:18-32). There is therefore an antithesis between Christian thought and unbelieving thought, between the wisdom of God and the wisdom of the world. Although the unbeliever knows and states truth occasionally, he does that only by inconsistency with his presuppositions and by relying inconsistently on the Christian worldview.

What About Those Who Have Never Heard About Christ?

by William Lane Craig

The conviction that salvation is available through Christ alone permeates the NT (see, e.g., Ac 4:12; Eph 2:12). This raises the troubling question of the fate of those who never hear the gospel.

What, exactly, is the problem here supposed to be? The universalist alleges that the following statements are logically inconsistent:

1. God is all powerful and all loving.
2. Some people never hear the gospel and are lost.

But why think that 1 and 2 are logically incompatible? There is no explicit contradiction between them. If the universalist is claiming that they are implicitly contradictory, he must be assuming some hidden premises that would bring out this contradiction.

Although universalists have not been forthcoming about their hidden assumptions, the logic of the problem would suggest something akin to these points:

3. If God is all powerful, He can create a world in which everybody hears the gospel and is freely saved.
4. If God is all loving, He prefers a world in which everybody hears the gospel and is freely saved.

But are these premises necessarily true?

Consider 3. It seems incontrovertible that God could create a world in which everybody hears the gospel. But so long as people are free, there is no guarantee that everybody in such a world would be freely saved. In fact, there is no reason to think the balance between saved and lost in such a world would be any better than is that balance in the actual world. Hence 3 is not necessarily true, and the universalist's argument is false.

But what about 4? Is it necessarily true? Let us suppose for the sake of argument that there are possible worlds that are feasible for God in which everyone hears the gospel and freely accepts it. Does God's being all loving compel Him to prefer one of these worlds over a world in which some persons are lost? Not necessarily, for these worlds might have other, overriding deficiencies that make them less preferable. For example, suppose that the only worlds in which everybody freely believes the gospel and is saved are worlds with only a handful of people in them. Must God prefer one of these sparsely populated worlds over a world in which multitudes believe in the gospel and are saved, even though other persons freely reject His grace and are lost? No. Thus the universalist's second assumption is not necessarily true, so that his argument is doubly invalid.

As a loving God, God wants as many people as possible to be freely saved and as few as possible to be lost. His goal, then, is to achieve an optimal balance between these, to create no more of the lost than are necessary to attain a certain number of the saved. It is possible that in order to create this many people who will be freely saved, God also had to create this many people who will be freely lost.

It might be objected that an all-loving God would not create people whom He knew will be lost but who would have been saved if only they had heard the gospel. But how do we know there *are* any such persons? It is reasonable to assume that many people who never hear the gospel would not have believed the gospel if they had heard it. Suppose, then, that God has so ordered the world that all persons who never hear the gospel are precisely such people. In that case, anybody who never hears the gospel and is lost would have rejected the gospel and been lost even if he had heard it. Thus, it is possible that:

5. God has created a world that has an optimal balance between saved and lost, and those who never hear the gospel and are lost would not have believed in it even if they had heard it.

So long as 5 is even possibly true, it shows that there is no incompatibility between an all-powerful, all-loving God and some people's never hearing the gospel and being lost.

(For another perspective, see the article in Luke 10.)

How Does One Develop a Christian Mind?

by J. P. Moreland

"I want to develop a Christian mind, but I don't know how." This attitude is both common and understandable. That we are to develop our minds as Christians is not in doubt. We are admonished to love God with our mind (Mt 22:37), be transformed by its renewal (Rm 12:2), and be prepared to give thoughtful answers to questions about the faith (1 Pt 3:15).

A mature Christian mind has two aspects to it. First, it is a mind that has formed the habit of being focused on God constantly throughout the day. It is a mind preoccupied with God and directed regularly toward Him in prayer and meditation
(Ps 16:8; Is 26:3; Lk 18:1; Rm 12:12; 1 Th 5:16-18). But how can one do this and still perform one's daily tasks? Fortunately, people can do more than one thing at the same time. While driving or centering one's attention on a task, one can still be aware of God in the boundaries of one's attention. And one can bring God to the center of prayerful focus at various times throughout the day.

Two habits can make it easier for you to focus on God constantly. First, memorize four or five Bible passages that really speak to you. Each passage can be from one to several verses in length. Now, make it a practice to pray these passages to the Lord throughout the day. As you pray through a passage phrase by phrase, use it to pray about things of concern to you. Second, regularly ponder these passages or other scriptural readings, thinking of what they mean, of how you can internalize them, and of how you can promote them to others.

The second aspect of a mature Christian mind is one that sees all of life in light of a Christian worldview and is growing in intellectual excellence. A worldview is the sum total of all the things one believes, especially in regard to reality, truth, knowledge, and value. A Christian worldview is a biblically grounded set of beliefs about all of life, from work, recreation, and finances to God, life after death, and morality. One tries to think of all of life in light of the teachings of holy Scripture and, more specifically, of the Lord Jesus. There is no secular/sacred separation in such a mind.

All of life is an occasion for discipleship and worship for a mature Christian mind. Further, an intellectually excellent mind is one that is informed, that makes important distinctions when a less mature mind fails to do so, and that has deeper and deeper insights into issues of importance. To develop such excellence, one must regularly read, listen to tapes, and expose oneself to excellent teaching. One must also be willing to engage others—believers and unbelievers—in conversations about important worldview issues. Such regular practice, if combined with a growing ability to listen nondefensively, will bring motivation and opportunity for regular growth in intellectual excellence.

Introduction to Romans

DATE

Paul penned this, his most influential letter, while staying in Corinth during his third missionary journey in A.D. 57 (Ac 20:2-3). Though Paul had not yet visited Rome, he knew many people there (chap. 16) and hoped he might visit soon (1:10-15; 15:32). He welcomed an opportunity to serve them and for them to speed him on his way to further ministry in the west (15:23-24,28-29). Before this rendezvous, however, he needed to deliver collected contributions from Macedonian and Achaian Christians for Jerusalem's believers (15:25-28), and he solicited their prayers for the success of these plans and for protection from his enemies (15:30-32).

Some wonder how Paul could know so many Roman Christians—26 mentioned in chapter 16—without ever having visited the city himself. That can be explained. The huge imperial capital, Rome, attracted large numbers of people. During his years of ministry, Paul became acquainted with many believers who now resided in Rome. So naturally he greeted them in a letter designed to solicit the church's aid in his ministry. Priscilla and Aquila illustrate the phenomenon. We know from the book of Acts and Paul's letters that he had spent time with this couple in Asia and in Greece (Ac 18:1-3,18-19; cp. 1 Co 16:19; 2 Tm 4:19), and now they were in Rome (Rm 16:3-5).

ORIGIN OF THE CHURCH IN ROME

The origin of the Roman church is unknown. It may have started as a group of Jewish believers and may even have begun not long after Pentecost. Over the years it had grown and was made up of sizeable Jewish and Gentile constituencies.

This important letter gave Paul the opportunity to instruct the believers in the essentials of salvation. Some specific issues existed among the mixed racial makeup of the church, so he spoke both to Jews (2:17–4:25) and Gentiles (e.g., 1:13-15; 11:13; cp. 14:1–15:13). Yet the message of salvation is the major theme of Romans. From 1:18–8:39, Paul described the human condition from God's perspective and set forth what God has done to forgive and restore human beings to right relationship with Himself. Not only that, God has given His Spirit to those who trust His grace. Through the Holy Spirit those who have been justified by faith are able to live holy lives, walking in ways that are pleasing to God. After discussing how Jews and Gentiles fit into God's overall plan for the ages (chaps. 9–11), Paul spelled out some ethical implications of salvation in Christ (12:1–15:13).

Romans Study Notes

1:6-7 "Call" refers not to God's selection of some individuals rather than others for salvation but to His identification of those whom He names as His own. Later, Paul quoted Hs 2:23, that says God will call them "My-People" who were not His people; they will be called children of the living God (9:26). Thus, God Himself called the Roman Christians to belong to Christ.

"Saints" ("holy ones") does not designate some rank of Christians superior to others but describes all those God has set apart for Himself. In the NT it designates believers in Christ. All Christians are saints—those who belongto Him (Ac 9:13; Rm 8:27; 15:25-26; 16:2; 1 Co 14:33).

1:17 "Righteousness" is blamelessness before God. Contrary to the widely held view that righteousness is a human achievement, Paul's position is that righteousness is a gift that can't be earned. God declares guilty sinners righteous and so puts them in right relationship with Himself. Those who respond to God's gracious offer to be made right with Him receive the Holy Spirit. Through the Spirit's power those who have been declared righteous are in the process of being transformed into the image of Christ (8:29).

1:18 God's wrath is not an uncontrollable, destructive emotion directed against those God dislikes. Wrath describes His just, holy response to sin and rebellion. From human perspective shaped in a world permeated by sin and injustice, wrath and love are seen as polar opposites. In God, however, there is no conflict between His great love and His terrible wrath. Most human beings know that something is wrong with the world, and there is a deep longing that it be put right. The multiplicity of religions and sects give a variety of explanations of why the world isn't as it should be. They also prescribe a variety of logically incompatible solutions to right the wrongs. Both God's love and His wrath are the guarantors that what is wrong will be put right. To deny or minimize God's wrath is to obscure what He revealed in the death of His Son who bore God's wrath in our place.

1:20 Is everyone really without excuse? What about remote tribal people who never hear the gospel? This seems unduly harsh, doesn't it? Paul was clear that no one can claim ignorance of God's existence and power. Why? God has clearly revealed many of His attributes in the natural world, enough for people to respond in some manner. Certainly people cannot know all there is to know about God from nature. However, they can know enough for God to hold them accountable for responding to this knowledge. Paul affirmed that God will render just judgment to each person according to whatever light that person received—whether natural revelation, the Jewish law, or the gospel of Christ. No Scripture hints of a second chance to trust in Christ after death; equally, the NT is clear that salvation resides solely in Christ (Jn 14:6; Ac 4:12). If God is willing to go to such great lengths to reveal Himself and rescue us from sin, then surely we can be confident of His just, loving attitude toward the unevangelized.

1:24 Does God cause people to sin? At some point He may "deliver them over" to their sinful choices, giving them what they want (cp. also vv. 26,28). They abandon God's ways, and He abandons them, further intensifying their awful condition.

1:26-27 Is homosexuality wrong? Paul appealed to what is "natural" (*physis*—used in 2:27; 11:21,24; Gl 2:15) to contrast *natural* sexual relations—men with women with same-sex acts. His reasoning is not solely biological, however. Rather, the problem is people abandoning God's created order—the topic in this context (v. 20). Those engaging in homosexuality are not simply abandoning what is "natural," biologically speaking; they are rejecting the way God intended all of His creation to operate. Paul was not discussing pederastic or homosexual acts merely in connection with idol worship (cp. 1 Co 6:9-11), but instead was saying that human beings are created for natural, heterosexual relationships—the only kind of sexual relationships the Bible recognizes as acceptable.

2:6 God's judgment is not based on people's action toward others but on how people act toward Him. Those who do good in relation to God obtain eternal life (vv, 7,10,13), while those who do evil toward God receive God's wrath (vv. 8,9,12). Since justification comes by faith, not works (3:21-24) and because "there is no one righteous, not even one" (3:10), Paul could not mean that people secure salvation by self-effort. Rather he appealed to the principle: "Actions reveal a person's heart." Jesus noted that righteous actions will emerge from within (Mt 12:35).

2:14-15 One of two options is likely in understanding this difficult section, which people have sometimes interpreted as saying that a salvation exists outside of Jesus Christ. One option is that Gentile Christians are those who have the "law" written on their hearts, corresponding to Jeremiah's depiction of the new covenant (Jr 31:33). Gentiles do what the law requires without having it. Though not ethnic Jews, they are the "true Jews" because of their circumcised hearts (Rm 2:28-29). They obey the law and are declared righteous (v. 13). A second option is that Paul was speaking of Gentiles in general who respond positively to their moral sense and the light they have in ways that correspond to God's intentions, which correspond to the law Jews received.

3:10-18 That no one is righteous indicates human inability to secure salvation apart from God's provision. This does not mean that people are as bad as they can be, or that they cannot do good things from a human perspective. However, as to eternal salvation, their situation is hopeless so long as they are left to themselves. God's initiating grace must come first. Righteousness must come from God (vv. 21-22).

3:25 What sins has God passed over? In Eden God threatened death as punishment for disobedience and sin (Gn 2:17). In the fall Adam and Eve died *spiritually*, being separated from God and subject to sin and death even though they did not immediately die *physically*. Implementing His plan to redeem His lost creatures, God sought out those who obediently trusted Him (e.g., Abel, Gn 4:4; Enoch, Gn 5:24; Noah, Gn 6:9; Abram, Gn 15:6; and their spiritual successors). Though they were sinners, God spared them from eternal damnation, the just punishment for their sin. Paul explained God's justice in passing over these sins: In due time, Christ would die in their place (Rm 5:6). Christ's death covers the sins of all believers both prior and subsequent to His atoning death.

But what kind of God (Father) sends His Son to such a horrific death to satisfy His own sense of justice? First, Jesus voluntarily gave His life (Jn 10:14-18). So this was the eternally agreed-upon plan by Father, Son, and Spirit. Second, the triune God—not just the Son—is involved in this world's suffering. The Father and Spirit were not undetached observers but were intimately involved with the Son's suffering on the cross. Third, consider God's holiness and sin's offensiveness to such a perfect, unsullied, personal Being. Sin elicits His just, wrathful response—the removal of all traces of both sin and sinner. Fourth, we must grasp God's limitless love for His human creatures made in His own image. Though He could justly write us off forever, in love God acted to save those who trust in Him. So while His holiness required the just payment of death for sinners, in love He paid the penalty Himself in the person of His only Son.

4:6 God considers those who trust Him as righteous. Expressing it in economic terms, God puts their sins on Christ's account and credits Christ's righteousness to their account (vv. 23-25). Believers are not suddenly made morally pure to live sinless lives thereafter; rather, they are now considered "in Christ," with all the blessings and benefits of that position.

5:12 Employing the concept of corporate solidarity, Paul explained that when Adam sinned all humanity was profoundly affected through that act of rebellion. There is a corresponding corporate solidarity in Christ. Whereas "in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive" (1 Co 15:22). Therefore, Paul said later that "no condemnation" comes to "those *in Christ Jesus*" (Rm 8:1, emphasis added). So while the damaging consequences of Adam's sin, including an inherited tendency to sin, were passed on to all of Adam's descendants, justification likewise passes on to all who receive God's gift of righteousness secured through Christ's death (vv. 17-19). Note, however, that Paul did not teach universalism here. God forces His righteousness on no one; people must receive the offered gift through faith.

6:1 Paul opposed the prevalent idea (which some espouse even today) of antinomianism. That is, since God saves people by grace (5:21), it does not matter how people live. Paul found this idea abhorrent—completely inconsistent with salvation's purpose, which is to produce holy lives. The result of entering into Christ should be victory over sin—ultimately but also presently. This mandates every effort to counter sin's effects in a believer's life.

6:16,22 Paul's positive use of the metaphor of slavery may strike Christians today as offensive. However, slavery's pervasiveness in the ancient world helped convey his point graphically. In fact, everyone is a slave either to sin—an evil, malicious slave master —or to God. God grants His slaves eternal life and freedom from sin's destructive power. Sin pays death as wages; God grants life (v. 23).

7:15-25 This section is hotly debated. In one view, the internal struggle was Paul's (and others') personal Christian experience. In Christ, all Christians want to do what pleases God (vv. 18,22) but find themselves frustrated in their efforts because of the lingering presence of sin's power within (vv. 17,20,23). The struggle continues in this age, with progress and victory possible only through the power of the Holy Spirit (8:2,5,11) and ultimately when Christ returns (8:23). Alternatively, some scholars argue that

here Paul spoke of the position of Jewish people (and thus of himself as a formerly unbelieving Jew) living in frustration under the law. In this view Paul described the unbeliever's struggle, experiencing defeat apart from Christ. He was a slave to the law of sin (cp. 7:25 and 8:2) and struggled with the body of death (cp. 7:24 and 6:6).

8:9 Paul identified the indispensable constituent of those in Christ: the Holy Spirit (vv. 15-17). There are no Spiritless Christians. They are no longer "in the flesh" but are freed from a merely human, powerless life. The Spirit grants spiritual life to believers at the point of salvation. The Spirit indwells believers (v. 11) and provides to believers the capacity to please God and to put to death the sinful behaviors opposed to the life of Christ (v. 13).

8:20-23 Evil in the world resulted from human sin and selfishness (Gn 3:17). Now the creation struggles in "bondage of corruption" and groans, awaiting its restoration. Christians still corrupted by sin await the redemption of their bodies. Christians value the creation as God's handiwork and groan with it in eager anticipation of the better days of the new creation (see 2 Pt 3:13; Rv 21:1).

8:28 Paul did not say all things *are* good—an absurd claim in view of both natural tragedies and human atrocities. When suffering, Christians might conclude either that God does not love them or that He is not sufficiently protecting them. Paul thus insisted that in all things God works to accomplish what is good for His people. Clearly God does not always spare His people from tragedies, illnesses, and other adverse circumstances of life, or even shield them from their opponents' persecution (v. 36). In any of these difficulties—and Paul listed some awful ones (vv. 35,38-39)—God is working for His people's good.

Prosperity theology maintains that "good" means God always physically heals or protects trusting, praying believers from tragedies. But this teaching runs counter to the tenor of this passage. In fact, to say that God always prospers His people borders on heresy, calling into question God's working of His sovereign purposes through His people's suffering (5:3-5; see Jms 1:2-4,9-11). Rather than promising escape, Paul intended here to provide hope for the afflicted. God will accomplish "good": His loving purposes for His creation and glory to His people. The "good" concerns their final salvation.

Despite any alleged evidence to the contrary, nothing can separate God's people from His perpetual love.

8:29-30 Paul assured his readers that God would accomplish His saving purposes for them. Paul listed five distinct aspects of salvation, each building on the former. "Foreknew" denotes possession of prior knowledge, which humans or God may possess. God has previously known who His people will be. Some argue that when predicated of God, this is a special knowledge, equivalent to election: the Hebrew "knowing" implies establishing an intimate relationship. While God knows His people in a special way, it is not certain Paul here intended "foreknew" to equal "elect," since he knew and used terms for election elsewhere in Rm (8:33; 9:11; 11:5). Besides, how might God have had a special relationship with people before they even existed? In either case, certainly God intimately knows His church (see 2 Tm 2:19).

Beyond God's foreknowledge of His people, He has "predestined" a general outcome for them: being "conformed to the image of His Son," so that at His coming Christ will exult with His many brothers and sisters who bear His family resemblance. So God "calls" these His own people (9:24-26); He invites them to be His. Before the bar of justice, God declares them "not guilty." They are "justified." At Christ's return, God will "glorify" His people, restoring the glory diminished by sin (3:23; 8:17).

9:6 Here, and in what follows, Paul distinguished two kinds of Israel and two kinds of election. God chose physical, historical Israel by selecting Abraham and his descendants (the "election" mentioned in v. 11). God chose the historical nation Israel, through which He accomplished many purposes, including the establishment of both Scripture (v. 4; 3:2) and the line of the Messiah (v. 5). But not all of elect, ethnic Israel constitutes elect, spiritual (saved) Israel (v. 8). Paul distinguished two kinds of election: (1) the election of the nation Israel to achieve certain tasks (also why God chose individuals—the patriarchs and Pharaoh, v. 17), and (2) election to salvation. To be in the latter group (that is, to attain righteousness) requires faith in Christ (vv. 30-33; recall what makes a true Jew in 2:28-29).

9:13-14,21 These verses may give the impression that God acts arbitrarily and apart from human cooperation, suggesting God disregards human freedom, and consequently could not hold people responsible for their actions. None of this fairly represents Paul's point here. God's gracious and merciful plan does not violate human freedom. To select Jacob over Esau reflects God's choice to have the nation Israel come through Jacob's descendants, not Esau's. In saying God "hated" Esau, Paul did not imply that God excluded him from salvation.

For Messiah's line, God chose the tribe of Judah (not the most noble of characters), rather than the descendants of Joseph (a true believer). (In that sense, he "hated" Joseph but "loved" Judah.) God executes His redemptive, gracious plan as He pleases. Humans have no claim on God. So, on the national level, God sovereignly decided to have mercy on Israel (including the patriarchs). Nevertheless, Abraham's physical children cannot claim they are automatically "elected" for salvation and are therefore "righteous" apart from genuine faith in Christ (vv. 31-32). Yet God's gracious election also operates for salvation: God

has determined to save those who trust in His Son. God will have mercy on whom He wills to have mercy, and no claim even of Jewish descent will override what the divine Potter chooses to do.

Interestingly, the prophet Jeremiah also used the potter as an illustration of how God works, clearly acknowledging that God may vary His response, given human reaction to His words (Jr 18:5-10). God desires people to repent and turn to Him. The potter illustration shows that God is not immovable nor impassive and that He does not carry out His plans willy-nilly.

9:22-23 Three interpretations diverge here. (1) Paul taught "double predestination": before creation, God determined to save some and damn others (a view often associated with Calvinists). God fixed the number He will glorify and the number He will destroy. Given that all sinners deserve condemnation, God's choice to save some demonstrates His mercy. (2) God elects some to save, leaving the rest to their deserved fate. In both of these views the non-elect, objects of His wrath, justly deserve their fate; so God is not unjust by not electing them. (3) God predetermined the general outcomes—either wrath or glory—but the saved or the destroyed determine their own fate (in response to God's initiating grace). In this view the criterion for inclusion or exclusion in "My-People" is whether sinners pursue righteousness by faith or in self-reliance (v. 32; 10:3-4,9-10). That is, those destroyed prepared themselves for their destruction. People are predestined to condemnation so long as they choose to continue in their ways and resist God's grace.

10:9-10 Merely mouthing "Jesus is Lord" and proclaiming that Jesus rose from the dead cannot secure salvation. Presumably the devil (see Jms 2:19) and many people (Mt 7:21-23) could meet these requirements and not be true followers of Christ. A heartfelt confession of Jesus' lordship designates a lifelong commitment that issues from the center of a person's being, the heart. What matters is not *saying* Jesus is Lord but *making* Him Lord at the core of one's existence. This is what Paul really meant by calling on the name of the Lord to be saved (10:13).

10:14-15 Since salvation comes by confessing Jesus as Lord, Christians must preach this good news. But what about those to whom no preacher came? Paul did not deal with that question here. His concern centered on God's message to the Israelites, to whom the message did go and who did hear, but who also, tragically, rejected the message (vv. 16-21).

Two points remain. First, those who know the truth must spare no effort to proclaim it to others, for salvation is at stake. Second, the fate of the unevangelized rests in the hands of a loving and just God who will judge people on the basis of the light they received. (See article on "What about Those Who Have Never Heard about Christ?" p. 1696.)

11:7-8 Though most Jews have rejected the message of salvation in Jesus, a remnant within the total population—the elect—did obtain salvation (vv. 5-6). The rest were "hardened"—a curious term. Since the entire point of 9:30–10:3 and 10:16-21 is that Israel was responsible for its rejection of God's salvation despite the prophets' best efforts to call them to repentance, Paul did not mean that God determined their obstinacy. If God Himself hardened some Jews' hearts so they could not believe, it makes no sense for God to say through Isaiah, "I spread out My hands all day long to a rebellious people who walk in the wrong path, following their own thoughts" (Rm 10:21; Is 65:2). This passage from Isaiah that Paul cited goes on to castigate Israel for provoking God and repudiating His laws.

Other uses of the hardening metaphor (a calcifying or callous-building effect) often make clear that hardening of the heart is a self-induced state (e.g., Mt 13:15; Mk 6:52; 8:17; 2 Co 3:14). Even the explicit statement that God hardened Pharaoh's heart follows a series of events showing that Pharaoh was hardening his own heart (Ex 8:15,19,32; 9:7,34-35; 1 Sm 6:6; cp. Ex 9:12; 10:1; 11:10; 14:8). Therefore, though God may indeed solidify people's resolve to reject the truth, apparently He does so because they have first resolved themselves to do so. God does not harden hearts that would otherwise have been responsive to Him. Jesus' quotation of Is 6:9-10 made this very point (Mt 13:14-15).

11:22 Paul's warning extends to the Christian church as a whole. On the one side, God's election of Israel did not guarantee each individual Jew's salvation. On the other side, we cannot presume that all members of a church are saved. The same God is both kind and stern—kind to those who follow Him but stern to those who wander off. Paul issued the warning to "remain in His kindness" or risk being cut off.

11:25-26 Paul showed here that hardening is not a permanent sentence against Israel, even though it resulted from their rejection of the message about Christ. First, he reaffirmed that only a part of Israel was hardened. That is, many Jews of Paul's day did acknowledgeJesus as Lord and were saved. Nevertheless, at the end of the age, the Jews will turn en masse to Christ (or some believe that Jews throughout the church age will respond to the gospel). When Paul stated that *all* Israel will be saved, he did not intend "all" without exception but "all" as in a very large number (see 1 Sm 25:1;1 Kg 12:1; 2 Ch 12:1; Is 45:25; Dn 9:11; Mk 1:5; Lk 3:21; Ac 13:24). Paul used similar connotations for "all" and "many" in Rm 5:18-19 (cp. a similar usage of "all" in 11:32).

12:19-20 Paul rejected revenge as a Christian response to injustice, but did he then imply another kind of revenge after all—heaping fiery coals on an enemy's head (perhaps an image of hell)? The first two lines of the quotation and its final statement of God's reward that Paul did not cite here (from Pr 25:21-22) argue for a positive meaning to this. The next verse confirms this: "Conquer evil with good." More likely, then, "fiery coals" envision a positive effect: shaming the enemy into repentance. The burning coals may refer to an Egyptian ritual during which one demonstrated genuine repentance by carrying hot coals in some container. Paul urged Christians to do good to enemies so they see their sins and repent. Obviously, repentance will not always follow, but this is the Christian response when injured (recall Mt 5:44-47).

13:1 Paul urged Christians to be submissive and model citizens because God has installed the governing authorities to keep the civil order and punish wrongdoers. Peter gave similar instructions about submission (1 Pt 2:13-14,17). However, submission to authorities is not absolute. Both Jesus and the writer of Ac established this central Christian principle. Jesus said, "Give back to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's" (Mt 22:21). Peter and the apostles declared that they must obey God rather than human beings (Ac 5:29). Any submission to the authorities must pass through the filter of God's will and call upon a believer's life.

The difficulty here involves discerning God's will and call in those areas to which Scripture does not speak, which requires determining and applying biblical principles rather than explicit biblical statements. This is the Christian's crucial duty, for a failure to discern carefully God's will risks disobeying God and incurring His displeasure. Of course, obeying God against the government may result in incurring the government's anger—as the NT and subsequent church history well attest—but this puts a Christian in good company (Mt 5:10-12).

13:11-12 The "daylight" evokes the common biblical idea of the "Day of the Lord"—used in both testaments to refer to God's appearance, often to judge as well as vindicate (e.g., Is 13:6,9; Jl 2:1-2,11,31-32; Am 5:18-20; 1 Co 5:5; 1 Th 5:2; 2 Pt 3:10). Paul did not set a date for the "day" to arrive but instead asserted that soon God would assess all of their deeds (Rm 14:10). This is the time to live righteously in anticipation of the Lord's return and judgment. By "nearer" Paul did not mean "at any moment," since in chapter 11 he envisioned a long interlude until the end (e.g., 11:11-32).

14:4,13-14 When he forbade judging, Paul did not mean Christians must not call a sin a sin. (See the article "Who Are You to Judge Others?" p. 1417) The context concerns Jewish practices such as dietary regulations, Sabbath keeping, and feasts—"doubtful issues"(v. 1)—that troubled many new (especially Jewish) Christians. Some believed they should remain kosher, while others thought differently. Paul insisted these are individual, non-moral matters for each believer to decide, for each one will give an account to God, not to other Christians (vv. 10-11). Since Jesus declared that nothing is unclean in itself (see Mt 15:11; Mk 7:19), what one chooses to eat or not eat is a matter of personal preference.

But we cannot take Paul's conclusion to cover any and all actions. That is, we cannot say that believers may engage in anything they wish as long as they hold the personal opinion that it is acceptable. Sin is never permissible for a Christian. At the same time, mature Christians have a responsibility not to flaunt what they are free to do before God in ways that harm other Christians (14:15,20-21; 1 Co 8).

16:1-2 Paul called his helper Phoebe a *diakonos* of the church. Bible versions differ on whether to translate this term as "servant" or "minister" or to transliterate it as "deacon[ess]," since by the time Paul wrote to the Romans this term could already have designated the office of deacon (Php 1:1; 1 Ti 3:8,12). Probably the latter is more likely, though it is far from certain.

16:7 Many claim that Junia (or Junias), designating one of Paul's relatives, could be either a man's or a woman's name. In fact, the masculine form, Junias (as a contraction of Junianus), has not been located elsewhere, whereas the feminine Junia is common. Of course, if this person was a woman, this would be an intriguing fact, particularly since Paul called Andronicus and Junia "apostles." J. D. G. Dunn suggests they were husband and wife—a reasonable assumption.

The precise status of all who are called apostles isn't clear. Some were close associates of the apostles, such as Barnabas (Ac 14:14) and James (Gl 1:19), but also see the Greek term *apostolos* in 2 Co 8:23 and Php 2:25.

16:17 The term "the doctrine" implies that by this time the gospel had already been taught to the point that it could be followed and understood and also should have been defended against corruption (see 2 Th 3:6).

1 Corinthians Articles

Why So Many Denominations?

by Charles Draper

If you look in the telephone directory, you will find a huge diversity of churches. Even within individual denominations there often exists great variation. Jesus once prayed that His followers would be one (Jn 17). But what we see today is anything but unity. What are we to make of this disunity? Does this not demonstrate that Christianity is hopelessly divided? Perhaps. Then again, there may be another way of looking at it.

It is important to ask whether denominations are a good thing. Denominations generally developed out of churches seeking fellowship with one another and joint ministry. That is certainly a biblical idea (Ac 11:27-30).

Often denominations began as renewal movements. So the Reformed movements of the sixteenth century arose to restore teachings about justification by faith and God's sovereignty in salvation—teachings that had been eclipsed in the church for a long time. Later, some Presbyterians caved in to the pressures of liberalism and newer conservative Presbyterian groups emerged to preserve the traditions. Other denominations had similar experiences. Baptists came along within the Reformed tradition, contending that the Reformation principles of justification by faith ought to be applied to the church. In the twentieth century Pentecostals and charismatics formed new unions based on their view of the Spirit and spiritual gifts.

So is this diversity among the churches a good thing or a bad thing? It is always vital to avoid false teaching in the church. Often in the NT false teachers were either disciplined or left churches of their own accord (1 Tm 1:19-20; 1 Jn 2:19). In other cases the early church leaders predicted a future time of apostasy when false teachers would gain great influence (2 Tm 3:1-9). In such cases, it might be necessary for genuine Christians to separate themselves from the false church.

That is not to say that all denominational separations have been for the right reasons. The most important thing to do is to examine a church's teaching and practice to see if it is consistent with Scripture. And finally we have to realize that in this life Christians will not agree on everything.

How Does the Holy Spirit Relate to Evidence for Christianity?

by Gary R. Habermas

It is often assumed that the Holy Spirit's witness to a believer is not very helpful in a study of apologetics. After all, this testimony is given only to Christians and it is not verified or falsified by evidences. So does it follow that this witness is no more than a subjective conviction?

In the few NT passages that address this subject, we are told that, at a minimum, the witness of the Holy Spirit is a personal word to believers that they are children of God (Rm 8:15-17). The Holy Spirit testifies to believers as family members (Gl 4:6-7). So the believer will experience the presence of the Holy Spirit (Jn 14:16-17). This is one way to know that we are truly believers (1 Jn 3:24; 4:13).

Since the unbeliever cannot understand things pertaining to salvation (Jn 14:17; 1 Co 2:14), one might question the value of the Holy Spirit's witness in an apologetic context. But this seems to assume that dealing with unbelievers is the only purpose for defending the faith. Apologetics may have even more value in strengthening the faith of believers through a variety of avenues.

Since the chief purpose of the Holy Spirit's witness is to provide personal assurance of the believer's salvation, the resulting confidence can play a valuable role in convincing believers of their own relationship with the Lord. This might provide assistance, for example, in dealing with religious doubt.

Moreover, the witness of the Holy Spirit provides indirect confirmation of the truth of the Christian gospel. After all, if we are the children of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ as we suffer and are glorified with Him (Rm 8:17), then it would follow that God's gospel path—the basis of this assurance—is likewise true.

So when people become Christians and experience the Holy Spirit's presence, it ought not surprise them, since this is precisely what Scripture teaches! It should be normal fare for the believer. Briefly stated, the study of apologetics indicates that Christianity is true; the witness of the Holy Spirit performs the related function of identifying those who are members of the faith.

What Does the Bible Teach About Homosexuality?

by Scott B. Rae

In the OT, homosexuality is unequivocally condemned. Homosexual sex is prohibited in the law (Lv 18:22; 20:13) and called an abomination. However, of all the illicit sexual relations listed in Leviticus 18, homosexuality is not singled out as being any different or any more worthy of condemnation than any other sexual sin. God's attitude toward homosexuality is portrayed in the judgment on Sodom and Gomorrah (Gn 19). Ezekiel includes among the sins of Sodom "immoral acts," using the same term as in Leviticus 18 to describe homosexual acts (Ezk 16:43; cp. Jd 7). The law condemns all homosexual sex and does not distinguish between perverted and wholesome homosexual relationships.

The central NT passage that addresses homosexuality is Romans 1:24-27 (cp. 1 Co 6:9; 1 Tm 1:10). It is set in the context of the condemnation of those who reject God as revealed in creation, or through natural law. It is part of Paul's broader argument for the universality of sin and judgment, setting the need for the believer to be justified by faith in Christ's atoning death on the cross, outlined in Romans 4–5. Those who rejected the available knowledge of God and chose instead to worship the Greek and Roman idols faced lifestyle consequences. One of these consequences was homosexual behavior. Paul appealed to the natural order of creation to condemn homosexual behavior (Rm 1:27).

What's natural is objective and based on creation, not dependent upon an individual's sexual orientation. Male and female were created with an innate tendency toward opposite-sex attraction, but because of sin the human race developed the potential for homosexuality. This potential is often realized when certain developmental factors are present. Because of the reality of sin, every person has the potential for homosexuality, in the same way that we have the potential for any other kind of sin Scripture describes.

Some have suggested that Paul intended to condemn only certain types of homosexuality. For example, given the context of idolatry, some have argued that Paul was only condemning homosexuality in the context of idolatrous worship. Others have suggested that Paul intended to condemn perverse homosexuality, such as having multiple partners and engaging in nonconsensual homosexual sex. Still others argue that Paul was objecting to persons' reversing their natural sexual orientation and acting sexually in ways that violate a person's orientation.

There is little evidence in the text that Paul intended to limit his teaching to certain kinds of homosexual activity. Rather, Paul's appeal to a universal truth about sexual relations linked to the order of creation (cp. Jesus' teaching in Mt 19:4-6) should prevent us from seeing this passage as limited to certain kinds of homosexual behavior and from seeing Paul as culturally outdated in his teaching. His teaching provides an appropriate context for a judgment on all same-gender sexual relationships

In applying these passages that forbid homosexuality, some suggest that it is important to make a distinction between homosexual *attraction* and homosexual *sexual relations*. And indeed there is a difference between being attracted to a person of the same sex and acting sexually on that attraction. For a straight, married person to be attracted to someone of the opposite sex other than his or her spouse is not sin per se. It becomes sin when that attraction is acted upon, either in lust (the process of mentally having sex with a person) or in sexual overtures. Likewise, it may be that the homosexual attraction is not sin per se, though at variance with the order of creation. But when that attraction gives way to lust and ultimately to sexual activity, it is sin.

Some argue that what the Bible condemns in homosexual relationships is what it also condemns in heterosexual relationships—that is, lust and sexual involvement outside marriage. Thus the options for the Christian homosexual would be the same as for the Christian single person: either abstinence or heterosexual sex in marriage. Some Christians who struggle with their sexual identity have grasped this distinction and have rejected the gay lifestyle while attempting to work out issues related to their sexual identity.

It may be that failure to recognize a distinction between feeling a homosexual attraction and acting homosexually has kept the church from being a more accepting place for those struggling with their sexual orientation.

How Should a Christian Relate to Culture?

by Charles Colson

One writer in a psychological journal pondered what makes humans distinct from beasts. After discarding several possibilities—tool usage, language, ability to think—the author concluded that humans seem to be the only creatures who care about what makes them distinct.

On the surface, the outstanding trait of humanity is culture. Not everyone agrees. Some claim beasts have cultures: chimpanzees "harvest" termites with a "tool"—a stripped tree branch wrought by their own hands; termites cultivate mushrooms for consumption; birds create species-specific nests; whales sing. But such simple, largely instinctive practices (which neither change nor improve over time) hardly compare with humankind's achievements. Beasts haven't any arts or technologies, scientific institutes or historical archives, philosophers or physicians. Apparently culture is a distinguishing mark of humankind.

But what makes humans creatures of culture? Why has every recorded human society—however primitive—indulged a level of culture beyond anything beasts might produce? Whence this penchant for culture?

Scripture teaches that humanity's attachment to culture derives from two sources. First is *the image of God*. Humans aren't like beasts; we've been created in the image and likeness of God (Gn 1:26-28). We have a spiritual essence, being made for conscious communion with our Creator. God Himself is a being of culture. He communes within Himself in His triune being (Gn 1:26; Jn 17:5); He fashioned a universe of great wonder and diversity (Gn 1:1; Jn 1:1-3); and He continues to sustain that universe in exhaustive detail (Col 1:17; Heb 1:3). It shouldn't surprise us that a creature made in the likeness of such a God would be drawn toward cultural activities as well.

Second, humans have a *mandate* for culture, which, along with other works of God's law, is written on every human heart (Rm 2:14-15). God has created people to exercise dominion over other creatures (Gn 1:26-30)—the "cultural mandate." Rather than giving a license to tyranny and plunder, God intends that humans exercise the kind of responsible stewardship that allows for creatures to realize full potential and for God's goodness, beauty, and truth to flourish. In the process of carrying out this mandate, people create culture—language for communication; families for love and nurture; agriculture for sustenance; resource development for tools and pleasures; governments for social order; procedures, protocols, and practices; things useful and things beautiful—all part of our in-built, God-given drive to order our world and develop the beauty and potential of our environment.

Humans are made to employ hearts, minds, and hands in the creation, maintenance, and propagation of those artifacts, institutions, and conventions by which we define, sustain, and enrich our lives. Culture can be a rich means of bringing honor and glory to God, as God Himself knew in providing a specific and glorious design for His tabernacle and temple; as the psalmists showed in their skillful use of poetry and song; as Solomon demonstrated in government and public works to the astonishment of the world; and as Jesus showed through His powerful use of storytelling.

No human can be indifferent to culture. The key question for the disciple isn't *whether* to be involved in culture but *how*. Since Christ has been exalted as Lord, all culture must be put to use in a way that serves His interests and promotes His glory. Even down to the mundane details of table manners—"eating and drinking," we might say (1 Co 10:31)—all of culture is to be engaged and used for God's glory. The Christian church's heritage includes a vast repository of cultural firsts (hospitals, universities, musical notation); signal achievements (the music of Bach, the paintings of Rembrandt, the poetry of Hopkins); and everyday delights (hymns, books, inspiring stories). Such artifacts, institutions, and conventions—the stuff of culture—are the fruit of patient, deliberate labors

of faithful believers who, understanding their duty as image bearers of God, and submitting to their Lord's cultural mandate, point the way for the rest of us to follow obediently in the path of culture to God's glory.

Does Scripture call us to engage culture? It certainly does. How can we ignore Scripture—the most significant cultural artifact in all of human history? And as God's image bearers, how can we ignore the calling to take every thought captive and offer all that we are and have to God's service and glory (2 Co 10:3-5;
Rm 12:1-2)?

Did Jesus Really Rise from the Dead?

by William Lane Craig

To answer our question from a historical standpoint, we must first determine what facts concerning the fate of Jesus of Nazareth can be credibly established on the basis of the evidence and second consider what the best explanation of those facts is. At least four facts about the fate of the historical Jesus are widely accepted by NT historians today.

Fact 1: After His crucifixion, Jesus was buried by Joseph of Arimathea in a tomb. This fact is highly significant because it means that the location of Jesus' tomb was known in Jerusalem to Jews and Christians alike. New Testament scholars have established the fact of Jesus' entombment on the basis of evidence such as the following:

1. Jesus' burial is attested in the information (from before A.D. 36) that was handed on by Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:3-5.
2. The burial story is independently attested in the source material that was used by Mark in writing his Gospel.
3. Given the understandable hostility in the early Christian movement toward the Jewish national leaders, Joseph of Arimathea, as a member of the Jewish high court that condemned Jesus, is unlikely to have been a Christian invention.
4. The burial story is simple and lacks any signs of being developed into a legend.
5. No other competing burial story exists.

For these and other reasons, the majority of NT critics concur that Jesus was in fact buried by Joseph of Arimathea in a tomb.

Fact 2: On the Sunday after the crucifixion, Jesus' tomb was found empty by a group of His women followers. Among the reasons that have led most scholars to this conclusion are the following:

1. In stating that Jesus "was buried, that He was raised on the third day," the old information transmitted by Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:3-5 implies the empty tomb.
2. The empty tomb story also has multiple and independent attestation in Mark, Matthew, and John's source material, some of which is very early.
3. The empty tomb story as related in Mark, our earliest account, is simple and lacks signs of having been embellished as a legend.
4. Given that in Jewish patriarchal culture the testimony of women was regarded as unreliable, the fact that women, rather than men, were the chief witnesses to the empty tomb is best explained by the narrative's being true.
5. The earliest known Jewish response to the proclamation of Jesus' resurrection, namely, the "disciples came during the night and stole Him while we were sleeping" (Mt 28:12-15), was itself an attempt to explain why the body was missing and thus presupposes the empty tomb.

For these and other reasons, a majority of scholars hold firmly to the reliability of the biblical testimony to Jesus' empty tomb.

Fact 3: On multiple occasions, and under various circumstances, different individuals and groups saw Jesus alive after His death. This fact is almost universally acknowledged among NT scholars for the following reasons:

1. Given its early date as well as Paul's personal acquaintance with the people involved, the list of eyewitnesses to Jesus' resurrection appearances that is quoted by Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:5-8 guarantees that such appearances occurred.

2. The appearance narratives in the Gospels provide multiple, independent attestations of the appearances.

Even the most skeptical critics acknowledge that the disciples had seen Jesus alive after His death.

Finally, fact 4: The original disciples suddenly and sincerely came to believe Jesus was risen from the dead, despite having every predisposition to the contrary. Consider the situation the disciples faced following Jesus' crucifixion:

1. Their leader was dead and Jewish messianic expectations did not expect a Messiah who, instead of triumphing over Israel's enemies, would be shamefully executed by them as a criminal.
2. According to OT law, Jesus' execution exposed Him as a heretic, a man accursed by God.
3. Jewish beliefs about the afterlife precluded anyone's rising from the dead to glory and immortality before the general resurrection of the dead at the end of the world.

Nevertheless, the original disciples suddenly came to believe so strongly that God had raised Jesus from the dead that they were willing to die for that belief.

We come now to our second concern: What is the best explanation of these four facts? In his book *Justifying Historical Descriptions,* historian C. B. McCullagh lists six tests historians use to determine the best explanation for a given body of historical facts. The hypothesis given by the eyewitnesses—"God raised Jesus from the dead"—passes all these tests:

1. It has great explanatory scope. It explains why the tomb was found empty, why the disciples saw postmortem appearances of Jesus, and why the Christian faith came into being.
2. It has great explanatory power. It explains why the body of Jesus was gone, why people repeatedly saw Jesus alive despite His earlier public execution, and so forth.
3. It is plausible. Given the historical context of Jesus' unparalleled life and claims, the resurrection makes sense as the divine confirmation of those radical claims.
4. It is not ad hoc or contrived. It requires only one additional hypothesis: that God exists.
5. It is in accord with accepted beliefs. The hypothesis "God raised Jesus from the dead" does not in any way conflict with the accepted belief that people do not rise naturally from the dead. The Christian accepts that belief as wholeheartedly as he accepts the hypothesis that God raised Jesus from the dead.
6. It far outstrips any of its rival theories in meeting conditions 1 through 5.

Down through history, various alternative explanations of the facts have been offered—the conspiracy theory, the apparent death theory, the hallucination theory, and so forth. Such hypotheses have been almost universally rejected by contemporary scholarship. No naturalistic hypothesis has, in fact, attracted a great number of scholars.

Therefore, the best explanation of the established facts seems to be that God raised Jesus from the dead.

We have firm historical grounds for answering our question in the affirmative. The historical route is not, however, the only avenue to a knowledge of Jesus' resurrection. The majority of Christians, who have had neither the resources, training, nor leisure to conduct a historical inquiry into this event, have come to a knowledge of Jesus' resurrection through a personal encounter with the living Lord
(Rm 8:9-17).

Introduction to 1 Corinthians

AUTHOR

The first letter to the Corinthians was written by the Apostle Paul. Few scholars debate his authorship. Moreover, evidence from second-century manuscripts leaves no doubt about the integrity of the text as a whole.

Setting authorship and textual issues to one side, it should be noted that the initiative to write this letter was not entirely Paul's. The church in Corinth was in some degree of turmoil, and Paul wrote this letter in response to some disturbing reports he had heard from the church as well as by way of reply to a set of questions the church had sent to him. Paul used these questions and concerns to set the agenda for this masterly letter. He addressed the issues of wisdom (chaps. 1–4), sexual practices (chaps. 5–7), pagan sacrifices (chaps. 8–10), behavior in church (chaps. 11–14), and the resurrection of the body (chap. 15). As in other letters, Paul touched on personal issues in his final chapter.

DATE

Since Acts includes references to two datable events in the Roman world, we can use those to date the letters to the Corinthians. The first event was the expulsion of Jews from Rome in A.D. 49 by the Emperor Claudius (a date we can find reference to in the writings of the historian Suetonius, *Claudius* 25.4). This mass exodus brought Aquila and Priscilla to Corinth (Ac 18:2). The second datable event was the appointment of Gallio as governor of the province of Achaia in mid A.D. 51 (based on the Gallio inscription found at Delphi). Luke noted in Acts 18:12 that "Gallio was proconsul of Achaia" while Paul was in Corinth.

We are able to say, therefore, that Paul arrived in Corinth sometime in A.D. 50 and left about the middle of A.D. 52 (Ac 18:11). Some months later Paul came to Ephesus, where he remained for around three years. Toward the end of his ministry there, he wrote 1 Corinthians, most likely dated A.D. 54, although it appears that Paul also wrote an earlier letter that has not survived (1 Co 5:9).

THEMES

Many have observed that the powerful pagan culture of the city of Corinth affected the values and behavior of these new Christians and that 1 Corinthians is Paul's corrective to these pressures. In chapters 1–4 Paul engaged in debate over the "wisdom of this world"; in chapters 5–7 he addressed Corinth's prevalent sexuality and lawsuits; in chapters 8–10 the issue is the city's idol worship; in chapters 11–14 he confronted them for allowing worldliness into the church in the rich/poor division and the love of personal display in the church meetings; finally, in chapter 15, Paul responded to Greek skepticism about the resurrection of the body. In a sense, then, 1 Corinthians is about the clash in Greco-Roman Corinth between the gospel of the crucified and risen Christ and the multifaceted pagan culture of that day.

Perhaps not so often noticed is the likely underlying problem in Corinth and the reason Paul needed to write: this was a young church, and Paul had now been absent from them longer than he had been with them. The church appears to have been unsettled by visits from the gifted Apollos and the apostolic Peter—unsettled, that is, in regard to Paul's role as their "father" in the gospel. It also seems that local leaders had arisen in the past two or three years and were taking pride in their eloquence ("wisdom") and objecting to Paul's ongoing apostolic oversight exercised from a distance. Paul wrote to counteract these problems and to provide a clear vision for the direction of the young church.

1 Corinthians Study Notes

1:1-17 Here Paul identified three issues that dominate1 Co: (1) With his reference to the church as "sanctified in Christ Jesus" (v. 2), he anticipated the Corinthians' ongoing involvement with cult prostitutes. (2) His thanks to God for their gifts of "speaking" and "knowledge" sent an early signal for an issue to be addressed later (vv. 4-9). (3) His rebuke over divisions—both amongst them and against him—introduced a theme repeated throughout the letter (vv. 10-17).

The items mentioned—being desensitized in sexual matters, preoccupied with their gifts of knowing and speaking, and myopically focused on their favored leaders—were symptoms of a deep malaise among the Corinthian Christians. They were fascinated with themselves to the exclusion of one another and, more importantly, of God and His rule in their lives.

1:14-17 That Paul baptized only a few in Corinth does not imply that he had a low view of baptism or that he was somehow disobedient to the Great Commission—"Make disciples . . . baptizing them" (Mt 28:19). The gospel was Paul's priority, without which there can be no baptism; the "sign" depends on the "word." Paul did not say the Corinthians were not baptized, only that he himself did not baptize many. Presumably local elders baptized new converts.

1:18-25 Paul's theological response to the Corinthians' self-absorption (vv. 1-17) was as offensive to religious people ("Jews") and to intellectuals ("Greeks") then as it is now. The former seek miraculous "signs" in the heavens, and the latter demand "proof." God accommodates neither expression of self-centeredness. Rather, God has displayed His wisdom and power in the most unlikely place—the terrible crucifixion of the Messiah. In the message of the cross, God has reached down and dirtied His hands, revealing His inner character of love, mercy, and forgiveness and in the process humbling the proud and overturning human opinion about greatness. Ironically, God's greatness is evidenced by the depths to which He is willing to go to rescue humans from sin. To use John's language, the "lifting up" of Jesus (Jn 3:14; 12:32) in the literal sense (on the cross—a place of public shame and God's curse) is also the exaltation or "glorifying" of Jesus (Jn 12:23) in a spiritual sense (the cross magnificently displaying God's love).

1:26-27 God's unimaginable humility in identifying Himself with a crucified outcast Jew was reflected in the generally "ordinary" character of those who received this message and who assembled in the name of Jesus. "Not many [were] wise . . . powerful . . . ofnoble birth." Yet in the Lord they boasted due to their "righteousness, sanctification, and redemption" in Him (v. 30).

2:1-5 The slick, impressive style of speaking that dazzled some Corinthians was inappropriate to the message of Christ crucified. In repudiating "brilliance of speech or wisdom" (v. 1), Paul was not condemning effective speech or rigorous thinking per se. After all, elsewhere he exhorted his audience to be mature in their thinking (14:20; Eph 4:14). But rather he was saying that the flowery, pretentious rhetoric so much loved by the Greeks was inconsistent with the God whose word it was that men like Paul spoke. Paul was far more concerned with the message than with the medium.

If the "wisdom" of God for human history is the message of the crucified Messiah, then the hope for humanity arising from it is, by contrast, indescribably glorious (vv. 6-13). Paul knew firsthand what it was like to be blinded to the glory of Jesus Christ. Although there is no record he was part of those who called for Jesus' death, he was of the same mind in the early days of the church. God had been merciful to him and by the Spirit's special illumination, Paul had glimpsed—but only just glimpsed—the glory of Jesus Christ that far surpassed what humans are able to see apart from the Spirit's illumination.

3:1 Paul commented on three responses to the message of glory following crucifixion (2:14–3:4). First, there are those called "unspiritual"; the Greek term (*psychikos*) means "devoid of the Spirit" or "merely natural" (Jd 19). These are the typical citizens of the fallen age, the children of Adam blinded to God by Satan, the "god of this age" (2 Co 4:4), who fail completely to grasp the message of the cross. Second, at the opposite extreme, are those Paul called "spiritual" people; that is, they have the Spirit of God and should be expected to live lives submitted to the Spirit. Because they have the Spirit, they *are* "spiritual." Sadly, Paul could not address the Corinthians as "spiritual" since they were operating on a purely human level (v. 4). They were immature believers, "babies in Christ"—ready only for milk, not solids. Despite having gifts of the Spirit, they were troublingly like the outsiders, the rank unbelievers, in their values and behavior. This is evident in their preoccupation with the personalities who had preached to them (v. 4).

3:5 The way forward for the "babies" in Corinth was to grow up by adopting sensible, godly attitudes toward their ministers, who were merely "servants through whom [not *in* whom] you believed," according to the role God had assigned to them. Paul called the congregation "God's field" in which he and Apollos had their important functions co-working with God while being utterly dependent upon God for the growth.

Changing the imagery (vv. 10-15), Paul called the congregation a "building" for which he had laid the foundation. He implied that some builders who had come after him had not built with materials of the quality of the foundation. Paul had preached Christ as the only foundation of a church, implying that the superstructure must be of the same material. What is built on the foundation will be tested by fire, and that test will reveal the quality of the work. There is no contradiction here with Jesus' words to Peter as the "rock" on which He would build His church (Mt 16:18). Jesus was observing that Peter's confession of Jesus as the Christ would prove to be the "foundation" of the church. Historically, Peter was the first to identify Jesus as the Christ, the first to preach that message soon after the first Easter and to lay the foundations of Christianity in Israel. Paul's words are in complete agreement with those of Jesus.

3:16-17 Paul's reference to the church as a "building" prompted him to call it the "sanctuary" with a severe warning to the divisive Corinthians about destroying it by their factions. This is not to contradict the biblical teaching of "the endurance of the saints" (Rv 14:12). God causes His children to "persevere" by giving warnings, as here, but also by giving encouragements.

3:18-23 Paul rebuked those who were wise in their own eyes and were fascinated by various leaders. Let them understand God's good purposes for them, providing such ministers as Paul, Apollos, and Cephas (Peter). This called for humility and maturity, that the Corinthians might become the "spiritual" believers God intended them to be and not act like outsiders.

4:1-7 Continuing to address the nature of true Christian ministry, Paul directed attention to himself. This he did to save face for the local preachers in Corinth, who were clearly at fault in cultivating partisan support. Let them be like Paul—a "servant of Christ" and a "manager of God's mysteries" (that is, the gospel).

4:8-13 The Corinthians arrogantly believed their wisdom of speech was of such an order that (somehow) the kingdom of God had come already. They assumed no further need for Paul whose gifts and strength seemed to pale beside theirs. Paul had to return to the theme of Christ crucified, and applied that theme to himself as one who was suffering for the word of God. God's servant represented his God in faithfulness and humility, not with showy bravado. Let them—his children—be like him, their only father in the gospel. When he came, their big talk would melt away.

5:1 Corinth straddled a narrow isthmus between two waterways, with ports on each side bustling with seafarers. Aphrodite, the sexual goddess, was the city's patron deity. Inevitably, the promiscuity of the city shaped the minds and hearts of its citizens. So pervasive and deep was this influence that even when a person became a Christian, it did not easily go away. In chapters 5–7 Paul urged sexual purity in a city of low moral standards. Here a form of incest that caused even pagans to blush had to be confronted. A man was living with his father's wife—apparently his step-mother.

5:5 What did turning over the sexual offender "to Satan" mean? It was Paul's code for the exclusion of an unrepentant offender from the circle of redemption (the congregation) to the sphere where Satan dominated the children of Adam (the outside world), where this man indicated he really belonged. This exclusion, however, was redemptive in intent. Let the bitterness and darkness of the world outside bring its own impact on the man so that he might repent and be restored (cp. especially 2 Th 3:6,14-15).

6:1-11 Apparently Corinthian believers were quick to rush to the courts. They could not simply fall in with the litigious practices of their city but needed to sort out their differences among themselves.

6:12-20 While it was customary for Corinthian men to have sex with prostitutes at local temples, Paul argued that this should not be the practice of the followers of Christ.

Paul mentioned same-sex eroticism among the vices that bar the practitioners from the kingdom of God (vv. 9-11). The Greek words *malakos* ("soft [one]") and *arsenokoites* ("one who has coitus with a man") make clear that Paul was not talking about sexual inclination or orientation, but sodomy—the act of sexual penetration between men. Elsewhere Paul cited the homosexual/lesbian way of life as symptomatic of humanity's rejection of God and His design at creation (Rm 1:24-27). Unholy sexual practice easily becomes entrenched behavior; disengaging from it is difficult. Nonetheless, in Paul's words "some of you *were* like this" (italics ours), we see that such disengagement is both possible and necessary (v. 11). (See the article, "What Does the Bible Teach About Homosexuality?" p. 1716.)

7:8-16 The issue here relates to Paul's teaching about remarriage. In giving his own teaching, was he contradicting Jesus? Jesus' general teaching on lifelong marriage (Mt 5:31-32; 19:1-9) inevitably did not address the specific situations Paul encountered in Corinth, where a husband or wife had been converted to Christ out of paganism. Thus, if the unbelieving spouse abandoned the believer, then the believer should let that person go. If an unbelieving spouse wanted to continue with the believer in the marriage, the believer was not to send the unbeliever away. So Paul was not contradicting or adding to Jesus' teaching; he was applying it in a particular context.

Scripture presents two clear violations of the marriage covenant (Gn 2:24; Mt 19:5): desertion (which violates the command to "bond") and adultery (which violates the command to be "one flesh"); breaking of these are legitimate grounds for divorce (and thus remarriage). Where there has been no such rupture, remarriage after divorce is not an option. When possible, however, reconciliation is the ideal.

7:21-23 Are Paul's encouragements to slaves to seek freedom in contradiction to his (apparent) acceptance of slavery (e.g., Eph 6:5-8)? While Paul valued freedom (and here encouraged slaves to obtain freedom if they had opportunity), he knew any attempt by slaves to abolish slavery would mean certain death. The Romans were ruthless at suppressing slave revolts like the uprising led by Spartacus in 73 B.C. (see note on Phm 16).

8:5 Paul's comment that there were "many 'gods' and many 'lords' " in Corinth is confirmed by the travel writer Pausanias, who visited Corinth soon after Paul. Temples and shrines were everywhere. Pagan priests offered sacrificial animals to the gods; leftover meat was sold in shops. Family dinners were held in rooms attached to the temples in the presence of the statues of deities. The religious culture of Corinth was simultaneously the city's civic culture. To disengage from the one was to disengage from the other, with serious social and financial consequences.

8:6 In a remarkable affirmation, Paul called Jesus Christ the "one Lord." Paul the Jew was echoing but reconfiguring the thrice-daily prayer known as the*Shema*: "Listen, Israel . . . the LORD is One" (Dt 6:4-6). He added later, "If anyone does not love the Lord, a curse be on him" (1 Co 16:22). The "Lord Jesus" is being identified with Yahweh, the God of Israel. Other Jewish NT writers routinely made this astonishing identification (e.g., 1 Pt 3:15; see Is 8:13). It is important to keep in mind that Paul, the monotheist, wrote this a mere 20 years after Jesus' crucifixion, indicating a high view of Jesus very early on in the church. This high view of Jesus is taken for granted and beyond dispute in the NT.

Jehovah's Witnesses and Christadelphians, who sit between Judaism and Christianity but belong to neither, must take seriously Christ's divine lordship based on such passages. Similarly, Mormons, by taking the words "for us" (1 Co 8:6) and thus allowing for the recognition of other gods, misunderstand Paul's intent. By saying "even if there are so-called gods" (v. 5), he meant they existed only in the minds of Corinthian idolaters. However, the words "for us there is one God, the Father . . . and one Lord, Jesus Christ" point to the new reality these readers have come to know through the gospel. Corinthian believers had acknowledged and appropriated this reality ("for us").

8:7-9 Paul addressed a pastoral problem related to food sacrificed to idols. Some believers felt there was nothing wrong with eating this meat that, following the sacrifice, was sold in shops near the temple. Such believers knew that the gods to whom the

meat had been offered were nonexistent. God had created this food and there was no problem with purchasing and eating it. On the other hand, some believers who had believed in these gods prior to their coming to Christ, would have a bad conscience about eating meat offered to idols. Paul's primary concern was that believers look to the good of fellow believers, the brothers or sisters with weaker consciences. Paul himself was willing to relinquish personal rights (9:1-27) to encourage the stronger Christians to make concessions for the weaker believers. In 10:14-22 he wrote that one should not attend temples where sacrifices to pagan deities were being made since this would mean being in spiritual fellowship with demons.

9:1-18 Chapters 8–10 raise important questions. Paul's primary test in dealing with these issues was, "What is best for the church? What is best for other believers?" He subordinated a number of legitimate possibilities—all good in themselves—in order to do what was best for the church and for his fellow believers. This was a reversal of attitudes prevalent in the Corinthian church where members were looking to their own good and not asking about the good of others or the good of the body of Christ.

9:19-24 Paul was no chameleon, changing colors to adapt to different environments. His message in all contexts was the same but his manner of communication differed according to the understandings of his audience.

10:8 Why is there an apparent discrepancy between the 23,000 who died arising from sexual sin and the 24,000 mentioned in Nm 25:9? The most likely explanation is that Paul was relying on a version of the Greek Bible not known to us.

11:1 Was Paul being arrogant when he called for others to imitate him? Not at all. Living in a preliterary age, he was adopting a deliberate teaching strategy—calling on new converts to imitate the patterns of behavior he modeled for them. Working to support oneself was one such pattern, and relinquishing liberties for the sake of others was another. In fact, 1 Th 2:14 speaks of persecuted Thessalonian believers being imitators of suffering Judean churches—just as they had imitated both Paul and Christ in how they received the gospel (1 Th 1:6).

11:3 Does calling God the Father the "head" of Christ suggest the Son's subordination to the Father and deny the doctrine of the Trinity? Indeed not! Rather, Paul was echoing Jesus' own words, that though the Son is equal in "substance" with the Father (and the Spirit), the Son is (eternally) submissive to the will of the Father (see Jn 5:17-24).

Jesus' apostles taught that a husband is the family's "head" and that wives are to acknowledge this (Eph 5:22-33; 1 Pt 3:1-7). For their part, Christian men are to love their wives sacrificially as Christ loved the church. Earlier, in the context of sexual purity and conjugal obligations, Paul pointed out that wives have authority over their husbands' bodies and that husbands and wives should not deprive one another sexually (1 Co 7:3-5).

11:5 Paul admonished women prophets for speaking in church without their marriage veil (or neatly arranged hair). Also in this chapter, Paul taught that masculinity and femininity should be clearly visible in the self-presentation of men and women. This, however, merely updates the concerns to differentiate the sexes along the lines reflected in the OT. In public worship, women's voices were heard in both "praying" and "prophesying," although the nature of the latter is somewhat uncertain (see 14:34).

12:1 As Paul began this letter, he gave thanks for God's grace evident among the Corinthians in the fact that they did "not lack any spiritual gift" (1:7). And yet, they were not handling this spiritual endowment well. Some wisdom and instruction were needed in the exercise of spiritual gifts and in recognizing the spiritual gifts of others of the body.

12:3 The evidence of having God's Spirit is confessing (at baptism), "Jesus is Lord."

12:4-7 Speaking in tongues and prophesying are just some gifts among others in the multi-gifted membership of the body of Christ. Gifts are not evidence of spirituality or superiority. In fact, gifts not employed in other-centered, self-forgetting love are useless. Gifts are God's provision for this present age only; love is what matters in the end (12:31–13:13). In fact, the displays of some of the believers were contributing to chaotic noisy meetings that failed to build up believers and scandalized visiting unbelievers (14:20-36).

14:34 Why did Paul allow women to pray and prophesy (11:5) but here called for women to "be silent"? Apparently, wives were calling out questions to their husbands, perhaps while their husbands were prophesying or speaking in tongues. This contributed further to the noisy chaos of the meetings. Paul's call for silence, therefore, was not absolute but specific; he wanted wives to wait to ask their husbands their questions at home. In both 11:5 and 14:34, the real issue is the wife's recognition of her husband's God-given role of "head" in relation to her. For this reason, she was to wear a marriage veil (or something like that) when prophesying and to keep quiet when her husband was speaking in church.

14:37 Those who prophesied or reported some revelation from God were still subject to the authoritative words of the apostle, who spoke as from the Lord Himself.

15:1 This chapter addresses Corinthian skepticism about the future resurrection (vv. 12,35). At issue was the difference between the Greek (and Corinthian) and Hebrew understandings of the life to come. Greeks who believed in an afterlife tended to speak of the immortality of the soul. They viewed the soul as something different than matter. In the Greek view, the soul is liberated from the body and lives forever in a non-corporeal state. Christians are in the Hebrew tradition regarding the afterlife, believing in the resurrection of the body. The resurrected Christ is Exhibit A and a glimpse of the life to come. (On the intermediate state, the state between the death of a person and their being raised to life everlasting see 2 Co 5:1-9.)

15:3-7 Paul probably received this confessional statement 20 years earlier at his baptism in Damascus and later handed it over to the Corinthians when he established the church there. This vital summary of Christian belief was formed during the period between Christ's resurrection and Paul's Damascus call and baptism. This formula was carried by fugitives from Paul's persecutions to Damascus, where it was handed over to the new convert at his baptism. This statement may be the earliest formulation of NT Christianity, predating Paul's earliest letters by 15 years.

This section raises some questions. First, the "third day" need not imply three *complete* days; Jews counted partial days as whole days. Jesus was buried on Friday, and the tomb was empty when the women arrived at Sunday's first light. Also, Christ was "raised on the third day according to the Scriptures." Where in the OT is this anticipated? Here it is not clear whetherthe Scriptures prophesy the *fact* of His resurrection or the *detail* of His resurrection on the third day. There are OT passages for both possibilities: Ps 16:10 for the first and Hos 6:2 for the second. Note, too, that help, salvation, or deliverance is frequently associated with the

"third day" in the OT (see Gn 22:4; 40:20; 42:18; Ex 15:22-25; 19:11; 2 Kg 20:5; Est 5:1; Jnh 1:17)—all the more appropriate for God delivering His Son from death on the third day!

Second, Paul did not mention the empty tomb (though each of the Gospels does). The word translated "buried" means "entombed, placed horizontally in a [rock] tomb," not "placed down into the ground." Yet Paul strongly implied an empty tomb; what else could the original words "He was buried . . . He was raised" mean? For the first-century Jew, a resurrection that left a body in the tomb was a contradiction in terms. Furthermore, Paul cited a tradition that Peter also articulated in different words: "They killed Him . . . God raised up this man on the third day and permitted Him to be seen . . . by us, witnesses appointed beforehand by God" (Ac 10:39-41); the empty tomb was assumed. Neither Peter nor Paul specifically mentioned the empty tomb in this commonly held "third day" tradition, whereas it was prominent in the "first day" traditions underlying the Gospels. This is no contradiction, however, but merely points to a number of overlapping early traditions of the gospel that were then current.

The specific place or occasion on which the risen Christ appeared to more than 500 brothers at once is not known. Paul added that most of these witnesses were still alive when he wrote. In effect, Paul was inviting the Corinthians to check this out if they wished. Jesus' resurrection was not just His spirit being received in heaven. His body was raised from death and was seen not only by individuals, by small groups, but by a large group.

15:8-9 Christ's appearance to Paul occurred many months after the appearances to the other named witnesses. The original gospel formulation Paul received clearly did not contain references to Christ's appearance to him. Paul added this afterward.

Paul here wrote of himself as "abnormally born," an unusual expression that may mean "born later than expected." Unlike the Twelve, Paul became an apostle without having had the "gestation period" of knowing Jesus on earth, ministering with Him, listening to His teaching. Rather than being eased into apostleship, Paul was dramatically confronted on the Damascus road. All this, however, only reinforces the proposal that the earlier appearances to Peter and the others were concrete, bodily manifestations on earth. Paul was not in any way implying that he merely "saw" the Lord in his mind or as a subjective vision. Paul saw Christ objectively, outside of himself, raised from the dead and exalted at God's right hand (see Ac 7:56).

15:12 The phrase, "resurrection of the dead" (lit. "the standing up of dead ones") meant just that. The notion of a nonmaterial resurrection—an idea that appeals to so many today—would have been incomprehensible to Jews then.

15:29 Paul's question to the Corinthians about why they were "being baptized for the dead" is puzzling and most unusual, and no parallel reference in the NT exists to clarify this. The context gives some help: Paul spoke of "danger" to him (v. 30) and of being, metaphorically speaking, forced to fight wild animals (v. 32). Life was precarious for the apostle and, we infer, for the local church people also. Our best guess, therefore, is that some believers in Corinth had lost their lives under persecution before an opportunity arose for baptism and that others had been baptized in their place (Gk *hyper*), by substitution. Presumably this was done for pastoral reasons—to assure surviving believers, including family members, that all that baptism signified was true for the deceased.

Note that Paul did not prescribe this practice but merely referred to it. Mormon baptism for the dead cannot be sustained by this obscure reference. The vicarious baptism for thousands of deceased persons (including tracking and storing genealogical records) grossly distorts Paul's teaching. Paul simply said the practice of being baptized on behalf of deceased members was utterly irrational where the resurrection of the dead was being doubted, as it was by some within the Corinthian church.

15:44 Are the *spiritual* bodies believers will have at the coming resurrection *nonmaterial* bodies? If so, it would imply that Christ's risen body was nonmaterial. This, however, was not what Paul meant. Rather, descendants of fallen Adam cannot enter God's kingdom unchanged. The "spiritual body" is a true body—a material body—but a transformed body. The two bodies being contrasted are not "physical" vs. "spiritual" but rather "soul-oriented [*psychikon*]" vs. "Spirit-oriented [*pneumatikon*]." (See 2:14-15, where Paul contrasted the *psychikos* person, or the natural/this-worldly-oriented person, with the *pneumatikos*, or the believer, who has God's Spirit.) Also, Paul's reference to the spiritual body was not to Christ's risen body but to the risen bodies of the descendants of the first man, Adam, redeemed so as to be fit for the kingdom of God (15:42-50).

16:1-3 Two questions remain from the Corinthians' letter. The first pertains to collection arrangements—Paul's plans to come to Corinth to collect money for the impoverished Jerusalem church. The second refers to Apollos's return to Corinth (v. 12). Apparently, Paul kept these answers until the closing stages of the letter to allow him to raise related matters, in particular Paul's own plans to return to Corinth (vv. 5-9), the need to respect Timothy when he came (vv. 10-11), and the importance of submitting to local leaders—Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus (vv. 15-18).

16:21-24 At the letter's end, Paul took the pen from his *amanuensis* (scribe), concluding the letter with these four sentences written in his own hand. Among these is the original Aramaic prayer *Maran atha* ("Come back, Lord"). This likely preserves the very words of the Jerusalem church's invocation to the risen and ascendedJesus. This Aramaic prayer indicates a very early tradition known to Gentile Christians, which strongly supports an early belief of Jesus' sharing God's identity.

Paul's curse on those who do not "love the Lord[Jesus]" (v. 22) picks up 8:6, where Paul christologically reconstructed the *Shema* ("Listen, Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is One. Love the LORD your God," Dt 6:4-6). With Jesus' resurrection and exaltation, the apostles, though Jews, now understood that the Lord Jesus is to be identified with Yahweh, the Lord, the God of Israel—something the Corinthian believers had been taught and indeed had publicly confessed at baptism (12:3,13). So to reject that conviction now would bring God's severe condemnation. Paul was not speaking here about the generality of unbelievers but about disbelieving church members.

2 Corinthians Articles

What Are Self-defeating Statements?

by J. P. Moreland

There are no moral absolutes, so you ought to stop judging the moral beliefs and behaviors of others!" A crucial flaw in one's views is when one makes a self-defeating (also called "self-refuting" or "self-referentially incoherent") statement.

What exactly is a self-defeating statement? It is a statement with three characteristics. (1) It establishes some requirement of acceptability for an assertion (or sentence, proposition, or theory). (2) It places itself in subjection to this requirement. (3) It fails to satisfy the requirement of acceptability that the assertion itself stipulates.

A statement is about a subject matter. The subject matter for "All dogs are mammals" is dogs. When a statement is included in its own subject matter and fails to satisfy its own standards of acceptability, it is self-defeating.

Some examples of self-defeating statements are these: "No sentence is longer than three words." "I cannot utter a word of English" (spoken in English). "I do not exist." "There is no truth." "There are no truths that cannot be verified by the five senses or by science."

In identifying a self-defeating statement, we must exercise great care in making sure that the statement actually refers to itself, that it is a part of its own subject matter. For example, the claim that one cannot utter a word of English is not self-defeating if asserted in French. More importantly, the statement "There are no moral absolutes," though false, is not self-defeating. Why? The statement is a philosophical assertion *about* morality and not a claim *of* morality.

To be a claim of morality, an assertion must be a moral rule such as "Do not kill," "Abortion is wrong," or "One ought to be tolerant of others." "There are no moral absolutes" is not itself a moral rule. Like a statement made in English about all French statements (for example, "No French statement is longer than three words"), "There are no moral absolutes" is false. But since it is not included in its own subject matter, it does not refer to itself and therefore is not *self*-refuting.

Another important example is "There are no moral rules, so one ought to refrain from passing judgment on others." Is this self-defeating? It's hard to tell because the word *ought* is ambiguous and comes with different meanings: A rational *ought* occurs in "Given the evidence, one ought to conclude that the defendant is guilty." A rational ought places an intellectual duty on someone, and a violator is irrational, not immoral. An aesthetic *ought* occurs in "One ought to play this piece with great emotion." This places an aesthetic duty on someone, and a violator is guilty of failing to produce beauty. A moral *ought* occurs in "One ought to keep one's promises." This places a moral duty on someone, and a violator is immoral.

The *ought* in "There are no moral rules, so one ought to refrain from passing judgment on others" is either a rational or a moral ought. If the former, the assertion means "Given all the evidence, there just are no moral rules, so one has an intellectual duty to stop judging that others have violated absolute moral rules when there are none." Though false, this statement is not self-defeating because it is not itself an example of asserting a moral obligation. Rather, it asserts an intellectual duty, and a violator would be irrational, not immoral. But if the *ought* is a moral one, then the sentence is self-refuting: "There are no moral rules, so one has a moral duty to follow this moral rule—do not judge others."

Some statements, such as "2 + 2 = 7," could not possibly be true. Others, such as "There are no dogs," happen to be false but could have been true. Self-defeating statements do not just happen to be false; rather, they are necessarily false. For example, it is impossible for these statements to be true: "There are no truths" and "Only what is testable by science can be true." Among other things, this

means that no amount of future research will show that a self-refuting statement was true after all. This is important, because a statement like "Only what is testable by science can be true" is not itself testable by science, so a skeptic cannot say that, while there may be no current evidence for its truth, someday science will advance to the point of proving that it is true after all.

Are Scientology and the Bible Compatible?

by Philip R. Roberts

Scientology is a cryptic new American religious movement begun in the 1950s. Ron L. Hubbard (1911–1986), a science fiction writer, founded it. Although his parents were largely nonreligious, Hubbard was exposed to Eastern religions, New Age thought, and various spiritistic groups, such as Meister Crowley and the Process.

Scientology makes occasional reference to Jesus Christ in its writings and uses as its symbol a cross with starbursts at each end. But even though it refers to itself as a church and may at times use Christian terminology and symbolism, it is clearly nonbiblical in its view of God, Jesus, Scripture, salvation, and other important doctrines. In fact, it may be challenged whether Scientology is a religion at all. It is largely a pseudo-psychological therapy movement. Ron Hubbard originally sought admission for the movement in the American Psychological Association. After being rejected for membership by the APA, Hubbard framed Scientology as a religion.

Scripture

The Church of Scientology does not subscribe to the view that God inspired a holy book, such as the Bible, that serves as divine revelation. Instead it lists as revelation *Dianetics* (1950), authored by Hubbard, as well as *The Factors* and *The Axioms and Logics*. The former book attempts to instruct adherents in the practice of Scientology, while the latter works are simply statements of the principles and beliefs of the movement.

No elements of Scientology's texts bear the mark of divine inspiration. There are no fulfilled prophecies in them and neither are they a narrative of God's love and redemption as is the Bible.

God

Scientology's earlier writings mention God, but they place their stress mainly on an individual's abilities to gain godlike qualities and become "full cause" over the universe. Hubbard obviously rejected the Christian understanding of God, particularly the concept of the Trinity.

Scientology adheres to a view of deities similar to that of Buddhism, using "allness of all" terminology. Its founder therefore could comment that man is part god and can attain a godlike nature.

Jesus Christ

Scientology does not accept the biblical concepts of Jesus as God the Word incarnate. It also places no emphasis on the substitutionary death and resurrection of Jesus. Rather, it views Jesus as a proponent of reincarnation and other Eastern mystical concepts. Hubbard taught that Jesus was "a shade above clear," or that Jesus met the standards (slightly at best) of living above the negative influences of His previous lives. Scientology's upper-level materials tout the concept of Jesus as God as being a fiction that ought to be removed by "auditing."

Man

Scientology views man's spirit as being the product of evolutionary processes. It rejects biblical concepts of man as being the creation of God and being fallen due to sin, with the need for

repentance, faith, and salvation. Instead, Scientology maintains that we are primarily spiritual beings, that is, "thetans," and creators of the universe. The goal of life is to "clear" oneself of one's reactive mind and become "total cause over life, thought, matter, energy, space and time."

Salvation

The goal of Scientology is to press for the evolutionary improvement of oneself as a spiritual being. The removal of engrams (negative previous life experiences stored in the mind) through "auditing" by a Scientology auditor using an electronic meter makes life improvement possible. The movement rejects all concepts of a biblical understanding of salvation.

Introduction to 2 Corinthians

AUTHOR

Second Corinthians is one part of a chain of correspondence dealing with events surrounding the Christian community at the Greek city of Corinth. It is best understood within this historical context.

Between A.D. 49 and A.D. 51, the Apostle Paul was in Corinth establishing the church there, assisted for a time by Silvanus and Timothy (2 Co 1:19). Then, from A.D. 52 until A.D. 55, Paul was in Ephesus, about a three days' journey by sea from Corinth. Soon after Paul left Corinth, a number of visitors came to the city: Apollos, Cephas (Peter), the Lord's brothers, and possibly Barnabas. During this period, Paul wrote a now-lost letter (1 Co 5:9).

Sometime around A.D. 54, a Corinthian delegation arrived in Ephesus reporting major problems in the church. During this time, a letter was brought from some Corinthian members raising a number of questions. First Corinthians is Paul's initial response to these reports and questions.

Soon afterward Paul dispatched Timothy to bring back news about the letter's reception. Timothy's report was negative—so alarming, in fact, that Paul made an unscheduled journey to Corinth. Paul found the church in disarray, with many members openly rebellious against him. Paul said this second visit to Corinth was a "painful visit" (2:1; cp. 12:21–13:2). Upon returning to Ephesus, Paul wrote a letter (delivered by Titus), sometimes termed "the severe letter" (referred to in 2:3-4; 7:8-12), calling upon the Corinthians to recognize Paul's apostolic authority.

Sometime afterward (c. A.D. 55), Paul left Ephesus, traveling north to Troas (a port city). There he had arranged to meet Titus and hear how the Corinthians had responded to the severe letter (2:12). Not finding Titus there, Paul crossed over to Macedonia to await him in that location. Eventually Titus arrived, reporting the Corinthians' response to the recent letter and bringing news of other developments in Corinth (7:5-7). The book of 2 Corinthians (actually his fourth letter to that church) was Paul's response to the news brought by Titus.

UNITY

While 1 and 2 Corinthians are confidently attributed to Paul, and while 1 Corinthians is widely recognized as a unified whole, many scholars claim 2 Corinthians is an amalgam of fragments. Chapters 10–13 were supposedly written separately and later than chapters 1–9. Chapters 2:14–7:4 may not have originally been part of chapters 1–9. Many believe 6:14–7:1 is a non-Pauline fragment inserted into the text. Some have identified 6:14–7:4 as the now-lost previous letter (1 Co 5:9) and either 6:14–7:1 or chapters 10–13 as the lost "severe letter" (2:3-4; 7:8-12).

In response, we can put matters into perspective by looking at the history of Paul's relationship with the Corinthians and important literary considerations within 2 Corinthians.

We are now in a position to decide the issue of the "previous letter" and the "severe letter." Clearly the "previous letter" predated 1 Corinthians; it has no connection with 2 Corinthians. But what of the "severe letter," which some identify with a fragment within 2 Corinthians (6:14–7:1 or 10–13)?

Neither passage qualifies as the "severe letter." For one thing, 6:14–7:1 is too brief and lacking too many marks of a letter to be considered a letter. For another, the "severe letter" is referred to retrospectively within chapters 10–13, namely at 10:10.

Some suggest chapters 10–13 was a separate letter, written not long after the dispatch of chapters 1–9. By this explanation, chapters 10–13 were editorially attached to the earlier letter as a kind of

appendix at some later time.

This is questionable, as early Christians copying his manuscripts would not have felt at liberty to discard the concluding sentences of one and the opening sentence of another of Paul's letters. The second-century manuscript evidence supports their unity.

Those seeing chapters 10–13 as fundamentally different from chapters 1–9, but whose approach is generally conservative, tend to resolve the problem by supposing Paul received news of a deteriorating situation in Corinth during the writing of the letter, which dramatically affected the character of chapters 10–13. But would Paul have sent a letter, the first part of which would now be redundant?

Moreover, the letter presents a natural progression. In chapters 1–2 Paul updated the Corinthians with his *past* movements after leaving them and explained why he did not directly return. Chapters 6–9 challenge them about *current* issues, particularly their continuing participation at pagan temples and their failure to complete the collection for Judean believers. In chapters 10–13 he anticipated his *future* (and final) visit to Corinth and exhorted his readers to set their house in order before he came. Thus 2 Corinthians presents a chronological logic, moving from past to present to future.

2 Corinthians Study Notes

1:3 Paul's defense of his ethical behavior is found throughout the letter (in particular at 1:3–2:27; 4:1-6; 5:11-13; 6:3–7:16; 11:1–12:19).

1:7 In addition to the arguments set forth in the introduction to this book, further evidence for unity between chapters 1–9 and 10–13 can be found in the vocabulary Paul used within the four "sufferings" passages scattered throughout the whole of the letter (1:7-11; 4:8-10; 6:4-10; 11:23–12:10). Much of the vocabulary common to these passages occurs nowhere else in Paul's writings; this is evidence for the overarching unity of the letter.

1:15 The major theme within 2 Co is Paul's defense of his ministry under the new covenant. Paul's relationship with the Corinthians was now quite strained for three reasons. First, Paul didn't return as promised. Instead, he sent a severe letter (1:15–2:4; 10:10; 12:13-15). Second, a face-to-face visit only deepened the conflict between Paul and the Corinthians (10:1-10; 13:3-4). Third, Paul refused to accept payment for ministry (11:8-9), and some Corinthians believed that Paul had been duplicitous in this matter. He made much of declining payment, but (his detractors said) his co-workers received money for him anyway (12:16-18).

2:13 Paul here mentioned going to Macedonia. The long passage (2:14–7:4) is regarded by some as extraneous on account of references to Macedonia (cp. 7:5: "When we came into Macedonia . . ."). It is far more likely Paul inserted this long, seemingly unrelated passage between two references to Macedonia than that someone else did. It is highly plausible that Paul himself, conscious of a long digression, reintroduced Macedonia to signal that he had resumed his recapitulation of events.

3:1 Further support for the unity between chapters 1–9 and 10–13 is the keyword "commend," which does not occur in a letter written by Paul prior to 2 Co. This word occurs throughout the letter (3:1; 4:2; 5:12; 6:4; 10:12,18); that is, in both parts that are said to have arisen separately. In addition, his "I ought to have been recommended by you"—his plaintive climax to the "fool's speech" (12:11)—ties that part of the letter to all that has gone before.

5:1-9 Paul spoke here about an intermediate state ("at home with the Lord," v. 8) between death (putting off "this tent") and resurrection ("put on our house from heaven"). Of course, the soul's disembodiment is not ideal (it is compared to being "naked"); the fullest, richest existence is an embodied one. This intermediate state is strongly implied elsewhere in the NT (see Lk 20:37-38; 23:43; Php 1:23-24).

5:21 This great atonement text (which is inseparable from the great incarnation text of 8:9) is packed with meaning: (1) Christ was sinless as a qualification, and so (2) in His death God made Him "to be sin" (i.e., an accursed sin offering), (3) "for us" (i.e., in our place, substituting Himself for us), (4) so that "in Him" (through the ministry of the gospel) believers become the righteousness of God.

6:14 Because 6:14–7:1 contains a large number of words found nowhere else in the NT and appears to interrupt the line of Paul's argument, it has been regarded by many as a non-Pauline insertion. Verbal parallels with the Dead Sea Scrolls have led some to argue for its origin in the writings of the Dead Sea sect. But the passage is a powerful call for separation from pagan temple worship and may reasonably be seen as a logical continuation of Paul's exhortations in 1 Co 8–10. The listing of OT texts, some of which were employed by the Dead Sea Scrolls community at Qumran, only illustrates a dependence on the OT shared by the apostle and the Qumran scribes. The demand that the Corinthians break with pagan practice, far from interrupting Paul's line of thought on the subject of the new covenant, is actually his pointed appeal to them. This forms a fitting climax to the passage begun at 2:14.

8:9 This profound incarnational text (see Jn 1:14) reflects Christ's initiative-taking kindness ("grace") expressed in His becoming "poor." Christ voluntarily left heavenly riches and glory for earthly poverty (in birth, life, and death by crucifixion) and being made "to be sin" (5:21). The purpose? That man, impoverished by sin, "might become rich"—abundantly forgiven, reconciled, and blessed by God's Spirit.

10:1 It is sometimes objected that the severe tone in chapters 10–13 is evidence that it is a later and separate letter since chapter 9 ends on a positive note. This is an unnecessary conclusion, however, since it fails to recognize Paul's pastoral method. In chapters 8–9 (the uncompleted collection) and 10–13 (the upcoming final visit), he began quite directly and strongly but ended positively and encouragingly. Changes of tone within and between passages are not evidence of a fragmented letter.

10:3-5 In keeping with his personal strategy in engaging in discussion with Jews in synagogues and Athenians on the Areopagus (Mars Hill), Paul here advocated the importance of depending upon divine resources rather than human methods and strategies. When we use theological and philosophical reasoning in presenting or defending the gospel, we are to do so graciously, humbly, and prayerfully (1 Pt 3:15).

11:5 Paul addressed two problems related to newly-arrived preachers, whom he called "super-apostles" (11:5; 12:11). First, they were peddling a back-to-Moses righteousness (3:1-18; 11:13-15), setting aside "the righteousness of God" based on the death of Christ (5:21). The covenant that came through Moses was one that brought only condemnation and death (3:7,9). An error of the new preaching was that it diminished the person and work of Christ, the activity of the Spirit, and pushed the emphasis back on human achievement. Paul responded to this theological challenge by pointing to (1) the onset of the new covenant in Christ and the Spirit (3:4-18), (2) the magnificent hope of glory in Christ (4:16–5:5), and (3) the sufficiency of Christ's death for the forgiveness of sin (5:14–6:2).

Second, the "super-apostles" proclaimed their superiority over Paul, pointing to their own eloquence (11:5-6).They may well have claimed to have more visions and revelations (12:1). Perhaps, too, they pointed to missionary success and to greater distances traveled. But Paul defended his ministry based on his faithfulness and effectiveness in persuading unbelievers to be reconciled to God (5:11,18–6:2). He argued that his sufferings in ministry were not a sign of his inferiority but were consistent with and an extension of Christ's sufferings at Golgotha (2:13-17; 4:7-12; 6:3-13; 11:1–12:13). He suffered as Christ suffered (though not redemptively) because he came pleading with his hearers on account of the One who became sin in their place (5:18-21). Paul's sufferings for Christ revealed his close identification with Christ and His cross, and God's deliverances identified him with Christ's resurrection (1:10; 4:7-11; 12:7-10). Paul's sufferings served as authentication of his ministry—against the triumphalism of the "super-apostles." His catalog of missionary sufferings (as an extension of Christ's sufferings) is a stunning and ironic subversion of the claim of "super-apostles" to superiority (11:21–12:13).

12:7-9 This "thorn" was likely a chronic illness. Astonishingly, Christ's power—unlike the claims of "super-apostles"—comes to ordinary, broken people. In Gethsemane (which this passage echoes), Christ knew this quiet power as He cried to His Father. Here the exalted Lord gives that strength to those who call out to Him (see Is 57:15: God dwells with the oppressed and lowly of spirit). Contrary to the health-and-wealth gospel, even the godly must expect to face physical disabilities, sickness, and eventually, death.

Galatians Articles

Is Allah Identical to the God and Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ?

by Ergun Mehmet Caner

This is a difficult question, especially in the English language. Linguistically, anyone who uses the term "God" is basically saying the same thing: They are referring to the uncreated Creator of the universe. In this fashion, Muslims, Jews, Christians, Hindus, and all others are referring to the Lord of the universe when they use the term "God."

With regard to Islam, the similarities of Allah and Jehovah are greater for two reasons: (1) Islam embraces monotheism, which means "one God," just like Christianity and Judaism, and (2) Muhammad used many of the people cited in the Bible when he created the Qur'an, such as Noah (Surah 6:84), Jacob (Surah 2:132), and Jesus (Surah 3:45-47).

The similarities end there however. Think of Islam as a form of "medieval Mormonism." Like Mormonism, Islam is based on the faulty premise that the Bible's description of God and Jesus Christ is incorrect. Like Mormonism, Islam teaches that both Christianity and Judaism are false religions, and that Islam through the Qur'an is the only true faith.

Ultimately, this is not an issue of vocabulary; it is an issue of definition. The Allah of the Qur'an is described and defined in a way that clearly shows Muhammad was not presenting the same God. The God of Islam is remote, and not intimate (Surah 112). Allah does not have a son (Surah 2:116), is not a Trinity (Surah 5:72), and does not love unconditionally (Surah 8:53). In Islam, Jesus is simply a prophet, and emphatically is not the Son of God (Surah 5:72), and the angel Gabriel is the Holy Spirit (Surah 2:193).

Remember, when Muhammad was alive (A.D. 570–632), the Bible was already in its complete canonical form. This is not an issue of ignorance. Muhammad, living just over 700 miles south of Jerusalem, knew the Bible and rejected it. Instead, he created a system that changed the nature and attributes of God, but still used the name.

Indeed, these differences cover the entire theology of Christianity. In Islam, there are "angels" that are created from fire (called *jinn*, Surah 72), a Tree of Zaqqum in hell (Surah 3:62-67), and virgin servants in heaven (Surah 4:57). In fact, even the creation in Islam is corrupted. In Islam, Satan's fall was due to his unwillingness to bow to Adam (Surah 2:34).

In summation, one can state it thus: Islam rejects the fatherheart of God, the divinity of the Son, and the person of the Holy Spirit. You cannot change the nature of the God of the Bible without changing the "god" you are presenting. It is not the same God.

How Does the Bible Relate to Judaism?

by Larry R. Helyer

Judaism should not be confused with the biblical religion of ancient Israel. Early Judaism arose in the aftermath of the destruction of the first temple (586 B.C.). The term Judaism originally appeared in the first century B.C. (2 Macc 2:21; 8:1; 14:38) to describe the beliefs, customs, and rituals of Jews during the Hellenistic (Greek-influenced) era.

Judaism has developed considerably over the intervening centuries. For example, official Judaism has been a nonsacrificial religion since the destruction of the second temple (A.D. 70). Observance of the mitzvoth (the commandments) replaces sacrifice, atoning for sin (Tob 4:6-7,9-11; 12:9-10). Judaism's roots, however, are deep in the OT. The fundamental ideas of modern Judaism, in all its diversity, maintain continuity with the biblical revelation at Mount Sinai. These ideas include ethical monotheism (belief in one God), God's gift of Torah ("instruction") to Israel, and the choice of Israel as a light to the nations. A striving for peace, justice, and righteousness for all peoples derives from the Prophets, and a spirituality grounded in everyday life stems from the wisdom and hymnic literature of the OT.

The Torah outlines a way of life for the people of Israel and is nearly synonymous with Judaism. Embedded in the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Bible) are 613 commandments. After the exile in the sixth century B.C., these 613 commandments were adapted, augmented, and hedged by other laws that became part of an ever-growing oral law (cp. Mk 7:5; Gl 1:14). In time the oral law was also attributed to Moses. Eventually (c. A.D. 500), the oral law was codified in the Mishnah ("repetition"). This in turn was commented on and augmented in the Gemara ("completion"). Finally, the Mishnah and Gemara were published in two massive works, the Palestinian Talmud (c. A.D. 400) and the Babylonian Talmud (c. A.D. 500). (Talmud means "learning" or "instruction.") For Orthodox Jews, the Babylonian Talmud, at some 2.5 million words, remains the authoritative guide for Judaism. The foundation of Talmud, however, remains the Torah of "Moses our Rabbi."

Modern liberal Jews reject the belief that the Pentateuch was divinely inspired and written by Moses. While not treating it as an infallible guide for faith and practice, they nonetheless acknowledge its historical and symbolic role in providing Jewish self-identity.

Modern Judaism maintains continuity with the OT in a number of significant ways. The annual festivals are primarily those prescribed in the Pentateuch. The essential ethical teachings of Judaism derive from the Mosaic Law, especially the Ten Commandments. Circumcision, dietary laws, and ritual immersion have their roots in the Pentateuch. The Prophets are appealed to for their emphasis upon social justice and mercy. Throughout the year, in synagogues, the Torah (Pentateuch) and haphtarah (selections from the Prophets) are read in a lectionary cycle. Most Orthodox Jews still anticipate a personal Messiah and a messianic age based upon the Prophets.

For Israeli Jews, the Hebrew Bible (OT) is a national treasure avidly studied in both religious and secular schools. The modern Zionist movement appeals to the Bible as part of its cultural heritage. Archaeology and historical geography of the Bible are national pastimes in Israel. Increasingly, Jewish scholars are also studying the NT as a valuable source for understanding the development of early Judaism.

A key issue distinguishing Christianity from Judaism (though both have the OT in common) has to do with fulfillment. Jesus taught His disciples to read the Scriptures christologically, or in terms of how they relate to Him, since the Scriptures speak of Him and His work (Mt 5:17-18; Lk 24:25-27,44-49; Jn 5:39). Judaism denies that Jesus fulfills the messianic prophecies of the OT. For example, Jewish scholars interpret the so-called Servant Songs of Isaiah (42:1-4; 49:1-6; 50:4-11;

52:13–53:12) as referring to the prophet himself, to an unknown prophet, or (most likely) to the people of Israel viewed collectively as the Servant of the Lord. Traditional Christianity, of course, sees these passages as prophecies of Jesus and His ministry (Ac 8:26-35). Orthodox Jews, who still harbor hopes of a personal Messiah, await a Davidic descendant who will rule as king at the end times. Liberal Jews prefer to interpret these passages metaphorically as referring to an ideal age.

Thus a major factor in the parting of ways between Judaism and Christianity centers on the meaning and mission of Jesus. For Judaism, there is no human failing, whether collective or individual, that requires special divine intervention and that cannot be remedied with the guidance of Torah. Salvation consists of faithful, though not perfect, adherence to the mitzvoth. God in His mercy forgives those whose intentions are upright. The NT, however, unambiguously proclaims the finality of Jesus Christ. He is God's last word to sinners (Heb 1:1-3), the Word who became flesh, dwelt among us, and reveals the Father to sinners (Jn 1:1-18). By His atoning death on the cross, He draws all people unto Himself (Jn 3:16; 6:35-40; 12:32).

Introduction to Galatians

AUTHOR

That Paul is this letter's author is uncontested—even skeptical scholars consider Galatians to be Pauline. As the author, Paul likely used an *amanuensis* (scribe), since his own handwriting began at 6:11. But Paul was indisputably behind all of the letter's content. Of more significance, then, is the question of when the letter was written.

From the fourth through nineteenth centuries, the dominant (North Galatian) view was that Paul wrote to churches in *ethnic* Galatia in north-central Asia Minor (modern Turkey). Paul planted these Galatian churches (Gl 1:2) during his second missionary journey (Ac 16:6) and revisited them on his third journey (Ac 18:23). The result of this theory is a slightly later date for the letter: A.D. 57–58.

The more recent (and more likely) South Galatian view understands "Galatia" in Acts in the typical *political* sense of Roman provincial designations. Paul planted four churches in the south-central province of Galatia during his first missionary journey (Ac 13–14) and wrote to them shortly thereafter. If this theory is correct, it yields an earlier date of writing for the letter: as early as A.D. 49 (before the Jerusalem Council of Ac 15) and no later than A.D. 53–54. In this case Galatians would probably be the first biblical letter Paul wrote.

GALATIANS AND APOLOGETICS

Whether Galatians was written in A.D. 49 or A.D. 58, we are dealing with one of the NT's earliest writings. This is crucial in demonstrating that Jesus' followers *started with* a high Christology, or view of Jesus Christ. Such a viewpoint was not something added later. Paul and the early church saw Jesus as "Lord" (Gl 1:3), as the post-resurrection Revealer (1:12), as the preexistent One sent forth by the Father (4:4), and as the Changer of the world structure (6:14; cp. 2:20-21).

Galatians is also apologetically significant in systematically persuading believers to continue in the true gospel and reject all non-gospels. Paul was emphatic in his confirmation of a single true gospel, with its universal nature open to all peoples through faith (chaps. 1–2). He went on to show that only this true gospel places believers from all peoples in the true people of God and gives them God's identity marker of the Holy Spirit through their faith in Christ (chaps. 3–4). Finally, Paul proclaimed that only the true gospel provides deliverance from sin's power through the giving of the Holy Spirit (chaps. 5–6).

Galatians Study Notes

1:1 While opponents appealed to rabbinical authority chains ("Rabbi So-and-so said . . ."), Paul contrasted his apostleship's source (from God, not men) and means (through Messiah Jesus, not man).

1:4 The true gospel results in a lifestyle delivered from the powers of this present evil age (i.e., freed from Satan's and sin's control; see chaps. 5–6).

1:6-10 God's good news—the gospel—makes Him our Father (v. 3) and delivers us from sin's tyranny (v. 4). Unfortunately, disturbers and distorters of this good news (v. 7) persuade others to desert God, who gives such grace through Christ (v. 6). They preach a different(*heteros*) gospel (v. 6) since there is no other (*allos*) gospel of the same kind (v. 7). Distorting the real gospel with a false gospel is worthy of damnation (*anathema*) in vv. 8-9because of its everlastingly destructive consequences.In Galatians this distortion restricted entrance to salvation by Judaizing—adding traditional Jewish requirements, such as circumcision, food laws, and Sabbath keeping, to Christ's all-sufficient provision.

1:10 Paul's preaching the true gospel did not curry people's favor or please them but brought him great suffering. His opponents' false gospel helped them *avoid* suffering (5:11; 6:12-17).

1:11-12 This thesis statement focused the persuasive point of the 1:11–2:21 narrative on the universal nature of the gospel Paul preached (i.e., without Judaistic restrictions). His gospel was not a human message, nor of human origin, nor transmitted by human (particularly Jewish) means. Rather, he received his gospel by revelation from the resurrected Messiah. Paul contrasted his gospel with the nature and transmission of his opponents' false gospel.

1:13-17 Paul's radically changed life served as powerful evidence of the truthfulness and reality of the gospel he received, altering his insulated identity and behavioral pattern as a zealous, rapidly advancing Jewish rabbi (vv. 13-14). It was not other apostles (vv. 15-17), but rather the universal nature of the gospel, that caused these changes in Paul's life.

1:18–2:21 The gospel's universal nature was repeatedly confirmed by the broader church and the Jerusalem apostles: The first (1:18-24) was in a 15-day visit to Jerusalem followed by the Judean churches confirming Paul's preaching of the faith. The second was 14 years later when the non-Judaistic gospel was confirmed by the Jerusalem apostles (2:1-10 = famine relief visit of Ac 11:27-30). Peter's reception of Paul's rebuke for his Judaistic separation from Gentiles in Antioch confirmed a third time the "truth of the gospel" (2:5,14) that Paul preached in 2:11-21.

2:11-21 Galatians gives a realistic recounting of one apostle's rebuking another for inconsistent behavior in light of "the truth of the gospel" (v. 14). Later, Peter would write respectfully and affectionately of Paul(2 Pt 3:14-16).

3:1-5 Paul appealed to his apostolic miracles in Galatia that authenticated the gospel (v. 5; see Rm 15:18-19;2 Co 12:11-13). The absence of such miracles would have destroyed this section's argument.

3:13 Paul had no reason to invent a crucified Messiah (whom Jews would view as cursed), revealing the humiliating depths to which God is willing to go to rescue humans from sin's curse.

3:17 No chronological problem exists between Gn 15:13 ("400 years") and Ex 12:40 ("430 years"). While 400 could easily be a general, rounded-off time span, the Jewish rabbis' ancient resolution is that Gn 15:13 speaks of Israel's captivity in Egypt and Ex

12:40 speaks of the longer gap from Abraham's entrance into Canaan to Moses' leading the people out of Egypt. Hence, this latter span includes the additional 30 years.

3:28 Christianity did not erase ethnic, slavery, and gender distinctions (e.g., Eph 5:22–6:9); it made them irrelevant to entering into a fully privileged covenantal relationship as a child of God and of Abraham. This was radically different from the Greco-Roman culture that emphasized honor and status based upon one's family or wealth.

4:4 This is Paul's only direct reference to Jesus' virgin birth, implied in "born of a woman." Jesus was born to fulfill the law perfectly in His life and bear its curse in His death.

6:2,5 The Spirit-influenced community must help bear one another's heavy spiritual burdens, while each simultaneously carries his own light (military) pack; that is, all are individually accountable to God.

Ephesians Articles

How Can Jesus' Death Bring Forgiveness?

by Chad Owen Brand

Occasionally stories are told about someone being sentenced for a crime when suddenly another person steps up and says, "I will take the punishment for him." Most such stories are not based in fact. But the NT teaches that Jesus, in His death, has taken the penalty for our sin upon Himself.

Scripture teaches that all humanity is tainted and corrupted by sin, both because of the sin of our forefather Adam (Rm 5:12-21) and because we ourselves are all sinners (Eph 2:1-3). God, as the righteous Judge, cannot and will not simply overlook sin, since sin violates His nature and brings destruction to the perfect world He created. God would be unjust simply to say, "Oh well, boys will be boys." Instead, sin must be punished, and since all of us have broken God's law, we rightly deserve full punishment. Yet, amazingly, Jesus came to take our punishment upon Himself.

The NT speaks of Jesus' death providing forgiveness in at least three ways. First, Jesus' death was a sacrifice for our sins. Christ fulfills the OT sacrificial system in being both high priest and sacrifice (Heb 5–10). On the Day of Atonement, animals were killed before the altar and the blood was sprinkled on the mercy seat in the most holy place. Under that seat were tablets of stone upon which had been written the Ten Commandments. Looking down from heaven God could see the law, but when the sacrificial blood was sprinkled, the law—as reminder of the people's sin—was covered. Without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sin (Heb 9:22).

Second, the NT speaks of Christ's death as a "propitiation" for our sin (Rm 3:21-26). This word, *hilasmos*, carries the meaning of "an offering satisfying God's wrath toward sin," yet remarkably God Himself provides this offering. When Jesus died on the cross, He cried out, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" (Mt 27:46). The Father was pouring out His wrath because "He made the One who did not know sin to be sin for us, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him"
(2 Co 5:21).

Third, and related to both points already made, the Bible speaks of Christ's death as a substitution. Jesus did not come to be served but to serve and "to give His life—a ransom for many" (Mk 10:45). Jesus "gave Himself for our sins to rescue us from this present evil age" (Gl 1:4). Isaiah's predictions of a coming Suffering Servant are fulfilled in the death of Jesus, who "was pierced because of our transgressions, crushed because of our iniquities . . . and the Lord has punished Him for the iniquity of us all" (Is 53:5-6). He died in our place.

By faith, and faith alone, we receive the forgiveness Christ provides through His humiliating and painful death. The result? Eternal life (Eph 2:3-10).

How Can We Know Anything at All?

by Garrett DeWeese

Surely knowledge is crucial in our day-to-day lives. We don't trust a dentist who *believes* he can perform a needed tooth extraction, no matter how sincere his belief; we go to a dentist who *knows* he can. We don't rely on a friend's *hunch* when wondering whether to take an umbrella; we listen to a meteorologist who has *good reasons* for his prediction. The prosecuting attorney (ideally) doesn't try to get the jury to *feel* angry with the defendant; she wants to establish the *truth* of his guilt.

Similarly, in matters of religion, what should matter is knowledge, not merely sincere belief; good reasons for faith, not hunches; truth, not feelings. Christianity is more than ritual or mythology or emotions; it is a knowledge tradition. Christianity claims certain things can be known.

Kinds of knowledge. We use *knowledge* (and the verb *to know*) in at least three different senses. It refers to (1) propositional knowledge—knowing facts; (2) knowledge by acquaintance—knowing something or someone directly; and (3) skill knowledge—know-how.

Here are some examples. A sports fan may know many facts about last year's MVP, or a historian may know all about ancient Rome, and yet neither person's propositional knowledge constitutes the direct knowledge by acquaintance that the player's teammates or Julius Caesar possessed. Someone may have the know-how to ride a bike or play pool without having any propositional knowledge about force, inertia, or angular momentum.

Christianity involves all three types of knowledge. Eternal life, Jesus said, is knowing God (Jn 17:3). This is knowledge by acquaintance and is more than knowledge of Bible facts or systematic theology. (Sadly, it is possible for someone to know a lot about the Bible, or a lot about theology, and yet not know God.) Jesus went on to say that eternal life is knowing "the One You have sent—Jesus Christ." This involves knowing certain facts about Jesus of Nazareth and about His mission as Savior. So both knowledge by acquaintance and propositional knowledge are involved.

What about skill knowledge? Since salvation is not by works, no skill is involved in becoming a Christian. But growing in our faith involves learning certain skills: how to study the Bible, how to think as Christians about decision making, how to pray, how to share our faith, and so on.

Propositional knowledge. All three senses of knowledge are important, but propositional knowledge demands careful consideration. For the vast bulk of what we know is propositional and does not come by direct acquaintance or know-how.

Propositional knowledge may be defined roughly as *justified true belief*. First, obviously, you can't know something if you don't believe it. Second, the proposition you believe must be true if it is to count as knowledge. Sincere (but false) beliefs, even useful (but false) beliefs, are not knowledge. Third, a true belief must be justified; that is to say that you must have the right kinds of reasons for the belief. Even true beliefs do not count as knowledge if they are the result of a lucky guess, a hunch, or a passionate wish that things be so. The right kinds of reasons are those making it probable that the proposition you believe is true. They are truth indicators.

What counts as the right kinds of reasons depends on the nature of the proposition. I believe the sun is shining because I can see it and feel its warmth. I believe I had cereal for breakfast because I clearly remember it. I believe my wife loves me because she tells me so, she shows me in many ways, and she has stuck with me for a number of years. And I believe Tiglath-pileser was a mighty king of Assyria who invaded Israel in 743 B.C. because I read about him in the Bible (2 Kg 15–16) and in reliable histories of Assyria. In all these cases the reasons why I believe what I do are truth indicators. They are the right kinds of reasons to justify those beliefs.

Can we know anything without using our senses? In the examples above, the justifying reasons involved the senses—even beliefs based on memory, for the memories were formed through sensory experiences. It is clear that beliefs based on our senses can be justified (provided, of course, that we are not too tired, the lighting is adequate, our sense organs are functioning properly, and so on). Knowledge based on the senses is called *empirical knowledge*.

The Enlightenment doctrine of empiricism holds that all knowledge of the world is empirical. Today, the spectacular successes of the natural sciences have enshrined empirical investigation as by far the best—and for most people, the only—way to know. But what about things we can't sense? Is nonempirical knowledge possible? The question is crucial, for a great many important things can't be known through our senses—things such as whether we have a soul and whether God exists.

Is empiricism true? No. Notice first that the claim "All knowledge of the world is empirical" is itself not an empirical statement. How could we know *that* through our senses? The claim is self-refuting. But beyond that, there are good reasons to think that at least some knowledge of the world is nonempirical (a doctrine called *moderate rationalism*). Beliefs that certain things exist that cannot be directly observed may be inferred from empirical observations. This is how we justify belief in such things as electrons, gravitational fields, beauty, or love. And similarly for belief in God. Further, the analogy between sensory experience and religious experience provides good reasons for the justification of religious beliefs based on religious experience.

Finally, we can know some things without using our senses at all. For example, we can know much about ourselves through introspection (a nonempirical process). We can know that we have minds that think, believe, hope, fear, and so on, and that we are not identical to our bodies. Many ethicists claim that moral knowledge is accessible through intuition or conscience or pure reason. Following St. Anselm, many scholars have thought that the ontological proof—a nonempirical argument—establishes God's necessary existence. Moreover, we have nonempirical as well as empirical evidence of God's existence (Rm 1:19-20), what has been called the *sensus divinitatis*. And since our belief in God's existence is justified, we also are justified in believing what He has revealed to us. For all these examples, we can point to the right kinds of reasons that justify nonempirical beliefs.

Introduction to Ephesians

AUTHOR AND THEMES

Paul's letter to the Ephesians is a short masterpiece, a mature expression of his theology and its implications for the Christian life. The brevity of the letter can obscure both its scope and spiritual depth. Until the nineteenth century, interpreters took the first verse of the letter at face value, accepting Pauline authorship. Following F. C. Bauer (1845), the majority of critical scholars no longer view this as a letter from Paul. But an argument can be made for Pauline authorship. Convincing reasons have been put forth to support both sides of this issue.

Although it claims to have been written by Paul, Ephesians shows few signs of the personal connections that would be expected in a personal letter. That's especially remarkable since Paul spent close to three years in Ephesus (Ac 19:10; cp. 19:1–20:1; 20:16-38). Thus, many argue that the letter is pseudonymous (written by someone else using Paul's name), citing vocabulary, style, and theological divergences from Paul's other writings, as well as this letter's close parallels to Colossians.

Almost all of Paul's letters addressed to churches were shaped by one or more problems in that church. Ephesians is different. This letter has a timeless quality. Ephesians is the product of seasoned theological reflection that is both concentrated and has taken place over a period of time rather than hurriedly. The letter claims to have been written from prison. During most of his life as an apostle, Paul was on the go. But his imprisonment in either Caesarea Maritima (late 50s) or in Rome (early 60s) may have provided an occasion for him to reflect on and further draw out the implications of the gospel he had been commissioned to preach.

Those who deny Pauline authorship cite the lack of personal references that are present in most of Paul's other letters to churches. But personal information is not altogether lacking. The letter twice states that Paul is author (1:1; 3:1). His being a prisoner is mentioned three times (3:1; 4:1; 6:20).

Moreover, he gave an account of his calling in a way that accords with what we know from other sources about both his calling and his response to it. One idea that has been advanced by some NT scholars is that this letter was written to be circulated among a number of churches. If that is the case, we would not expect a large number of specific, personal references in the body of the letter. Paul may have written notes to each of the churches in which he wanted the letter to be read. Or, there is another alternative that Paul mentioned in closing the letter: "Tychicus, our dearly loved brother and faithful servant [or deacon] in the Lord, will tell you everything so that you also may know how I am and what I'm doing. I am sending him to you for this very reason, to let you know how we are and to encourage your hearts" (6:21-22). At the time of writing it may not have been prudent to put some kinds of information into writing. Paul assured the Ephesians that Tychicus would deliver verbally what Paul could not put in writing.

Structurally, the letter divides in half. After Paul's greetings (1:1-2), the first half consists of a theological exposition that spells out the identity of, and the benefits for, those who are in Christ (1:3–3:21). The letter's second half details Paul's ethical exhortations—the responsibilities of those who find their identity in Christ
(4:1–6:20).

Ephesians Study Notes

1:3 The phrase "in the heavens" occurs at 1:3,20; 2:6; 3:10; 6:12. It appears to be the locale of believers in the first three instances but of malignant spiritual powers in the last two. Paul's metaphor refers to the realm where Christ reigns with the church that He has raised with Him (2:5-6). Yet, living in this age, the church wages war against its spiritual foes (6:12) in this same spiritual realm.

1:4 Debates over whether God has chosen specific individuals for salvation or whether they choose to believe in Christ may miss Paul's point here. He affirmed the corporate election of the church "in Him." Individuals are elect because they are in Christ.

1:5 Paul affirmed predestination—a divine action that determines future realities. God predestined that those in Christ will be adopted as His children so that God will receive praise (vv. 5-6) and that they will live for the praise God's glory (v. 12).

1:11 Paul did not claim that humans have no self-determining free will. As Rm 9 indicates, God is able to use even sinful human choices for His purposes. But the point here is that whatever God does for those in Christ, He does according to a carefully orchestrated plan for their benefit.

1:19-20 In Asia Minor many lived in dread of malign spiritual beings and powers who dominated their lives. Paul prayed that His readers would have an experiential knowledge—the realization and confidence that as believers in Christ they possessed divine power. Christians need not cower in fear of any other spiritual powers.

1:22-23 Paul asserted that Christ fills the church, His very body, with His presence and power (see 3:19). No human institution has greater potential power to effect good than Christ's church.

2:1-6 Being "dead" in sins does not imply that unbelievers can do no good or that they cannot respond to the message of salvation through God's initiating grace. This describes their hopeless condition as separated from God (vv. 11-12). Salvation removes that separation (v. 13) and locates believers "in Christ Jesus."

2:8-9 Faith is the means by which people acquire salvation: It is "through faith." Salvation by grace through faith comes as God's gift, not by works.

2:10 While good works cannot merit right standing with God, good works are the fruit borne in the lives of those whom God has saved. Good works are neither an afterthought nor optional in the lives of believers. God created and saved them for the very purpose of doing good works.

2:13-15 In securing peace through His death, Christ demolished all racial and ethnic barriers in the church. The church should be the world's most racially integrated community.

4:4-6 Since believers *are* one body, they must maintain unity (v. 3). Though current divisions among Christians are embarrassing, organic unity at all costs does not adequately address these schisms. Given departures from orthodoxy and the church's expansion, denominations are not only inevitable but may serve to preserve the truth.

4:8 Probably Paul adapted wording from Ps 68:18. Instead of receiving gifts from humans (the point of the psalm)—which Christ rightly deserves—Christ lavishes gifts upon His people.

4:9 Some think the phrase "the lower parts of the earth" refers to Hades (metaphorically *below* the earth). Most, however, agree that these regions are set opposite the "heavens," from which Christ descended *to earth* to give gifts to His church.

4:26 Though Paul's literal "be angry" may be a genuine command to righteous anger, many versions rightly take the imperative in a conditional way: "In your anger . . ." or "If you get angry . . ."

4:30 Paul thought of the Spirit in personal terms. Those whom God marks as His own (see 1:13) grieve the Spirit when living contrary to His will.

5:3-4 Paul reminded believers that what we talk about and think about will eventually find expression in our behavior. When we are in Christ, our talk will change, as will our actions.

5:5 Paul did not say that no one who ever engaged in immorality or greed can enter Christ's kingdom. Rather he said that no immoral, impure, or greedy person currently *has* an inheritance in the kingdom (1 Co 6:9-11).

5:22,24 Paul's command for wives to submit follows the all-encompassing command to submit "to one another in the fear of Christ" (v. 21)—the last outcome or result of the filling of the Spirit (vv. 18-21). While a submissive wife is counter-cultural today, she was not so in Paul's time. Moreover, while a self-sacrificing and loving husband sounds quite appropriate in our culture, he was radically counter-cultural in Paul's time.

6:5,9 Paul did not condone slavery when urging both slaves and masters to live as responsible Christians; his concern was to change Christians' attitudes toward each other. The gospel is opposed to slavery. Where the gospel permeates lives, the institution of slavery will be undermined and abolished. It is worth noting that the first generation of Christians who had been freed from slavery to sin, gladly called themselves "slaves" of God or of Christ (see 1 Tm 6:1; Phm 16). Paradoxically, this latter slavery is the highest human freedom.

6:11-12 In contrast to modern skepticism toward evil spirits, Paul pictured the church's battle for survival as a struggle against the devil, demons, and malign supernatural beings (see 2:2; 3:10).

Philippians Articles

The Incarnation: Could God Become Man Without Ceasing to Be God?

by James A. Parker *III*

The answer to this question is yes. Not only is it possible, but it happened in time and space. Neo-orthodox theologians (twentieth-century thinkers strongly influenced by Karl Barth) have said that the question is logically unanswerable because faith is an illogical paradox and can be seen only through the eyes of faith. In recent years liberal theologians have denied the reality of the incarnation on the grounds that it is a myth and not true in any objective sense. In the nineteenth century advocates of kenotic Christology (emphasizing the "emptying" of Christ in keeping with Php 2:7) argued that in the incarnation the divine Logos (Word) suspended the characteristics of deity because they were in principle incompatible with human attributes, thus making nonsense of the claim that Jesus Christ was fully God and fully man (as both the Bible and historic Christian confessions have claimed).

Historical, Bible-based theology has argued that God is omniscient (all knowing), omnipotent (all powerful), sinless, and incorporeal (without a body) and that these attributes are essential and necessary to deity. Characteristically, human beings do not exhibit these attributes. So how can Jesus simultaneously be fully divine and fully human? Along these lines, people have attacked the doctrine of the incarnation, claiming that it is illogical and contradictory.

This alleged logical contradiction is based on a fundamental misunderstanding of how human nature is defined, according to Thomas V. Morris in his book *The Logic of God Incarnate*. Morris has argued that the way out of this apparent impasse is to have a clearer understanding of three important concepts: (1) essential versus nonessential properties, (2) essential versus common properties, and (3) the difference between being fully and being merely human.

On the first issue Morris argues that an essential property is a property that, if removed, fundamentally changes the thing in question. So, if God's attributes of omnipotence, omniscience, etc., were removed, then he would no longer be deity. These are essential attributes. While it is a common attribute for a human being to have two hands, this is not an essential property to humanness. The heart of the attack on the incarnation comes from critics on the basis that lack of omniscience, omnipotence, etc., is essential to humanness, since human beings do not have these qualities.

This brings us to Morris's second distinction: essential versus common properties. It is a common property that everyone living on planet earth was born on planet earth, but this is simply a common property; it is not essential to their humanness. Morris then asks the question, on what basis does one know that the absence of the attributes of omniscience and so forth are essential human properties and not just common properties?

Last, Morris argues, "an individual is fully human [in any case where] that individual has all essential human properties, all the properties composing basic human nature. An individual is merely human if he or she has all those properties plus some additional limiting properties as well, properties such as that of lacking omnipotence, that of lacking omniscience, and so on." So orthodox Christians, in affirming the incarnation, are claiming that Jesus was fully human without being merely human.

Ronald Nash summarizes the implications of the argument as follows:

> This means two things: Jesus possesses all the properties that are essential to being a human being, and Jesus possesses all the properties that are essential to deity. The historic understanding of the Incarnation expresses the beliefs that Jesus Christ is fully God—that is, He possesses all the essential properties of God: Jesus Christ is also fully human—that is, He

possesses all the essential properties of a human being, none of which turn out to be limiting properties: and Jesus Christ was not merely human—that is, he did not possess any of the limiting properties that are complements of the divine attributes. In the face of these distinctions, the alleged contradiction in the Incarnation disappears.

Introduction to Philippians

AUTHOR

Philippians is one of Paul's most autobiographical letters. Writing to a church he founded and loved, Paul described his situation in prison and warned his readers of potential theological dangers to the church. At the core of the letter lies a theology of the cross that unites various exhortations to Christian unity and joy in service.

Paul had more than one reason for writing this letter. For one thing, he wrote the letter to thank the church for their material help. The church had sent Epaphroditus to assist Paul while in prison, and they had repeatedly sent money for Paul's needs. Additionally, Paul was concerned for Christian unity. Perhaps he anticipated and feared a potential break in fellowship (4:2-3), knowing the damage such a break could bring (1:12-19).

Few question the claim that Paul wrote this letter. In A.D. 135, a bishop named Polycarp stated the accepted church conviction of Pauline authorship. Internally, the letter also contains the characteristics of Pauline writing. Further, the earliest manuscript containing Philippians (the Chester Beatty Papyrus P, copied c. A.D. 200) contains the same form of the letter that we have today.

Although the letter's authorship is certain, scholars debate both its date and place of writing. (It should be noted that while both issues have historical interest, neither constitutes a major threat to the letter's integrity.) The traditional place of origin for Philippians is Rome, and its traditional date is about A.D. 61–62. Nothing makes that dating implausible. Other suggestions for the place of writing include Ephesus (c. A.D. 55) and Caesarea (c. A.D. 58), though there is little evidence to support either claim. In Philippians, Paul called himself a prisoner (1:13-14), yet we have no evidence to show that he was imprisoned in Ephesus. On the other hand, Paul *was* imprisoned in Caesarea (A.D. 58–60). But again the evidence pointing to this as the prison from which he wrote this letter is slim. Ultimately the arguments for the traditional location and date are preferable.

THE RELIABILITY OF PHILIPPIANS

In spite of Pauline authorship, many have questioned the letter's integrity: Is it a unified document or two or three documents woven into one? The arguments for multiple sources primarily appeal to claims of variation in the style of writing and supposed changes in content. For example, some scholars argue that 3:2–4:1 does not fit the patterns established by the remainder of the letter with its harsh tone and invective argument. They propose that perhaps this was a different letter inserted into Philippians.

Two observations help here. First, Paul's opponents denied the gospel, also harshly criticizing Paul's apostleship. Paul responded energetically to such challenges (see 2 Co 10–12). Second, Paul could not respond in person to the impending threat; so the letter is candid, disclosing inner thoughts and evaluations. Indicative of their relationship, Paul also instructed his original readers by appealing to his spiritual pilgrimage.

Other scholars suggest that 4:10-20 is an insertion, assuming such an important note of thanks would not be delayed to the end. However, modern readers must take care in second-guessing first-century writing forms. Further, Paul naturally included the other expressions of appreciation before turning to financial issues. All forms of support were equally appreciated.

Questions regarding the literary integrity of the letter raise a more central issue. Are contemporary scholars better able to detect supposed seams in the fabric of the letter than could its early readers?

Given the care we know characterized the transmission of Scripture, theories about literary fragments present far more difficulties than they presume to solve.

Philippians Study Notes

1:1 Some say "overseers and deacons" reflects later church organization and cannot have been written by Paul. However, NT churches quickly developed leadership structure. While less developed than the structures evidenced in the time of the apostolic fathers (late first century), early churches had bishops and deacons (see Ac 20:17,28).

1:13 Since Rome had not declared Christianity illegal at this time, Paul had committed no crime. He was imprisoned for Christ's sake.

1:15-17 Paul understood these preachers' motives, which were wrong, but he affirmed the correctness of their message (unlike opponents in chap. 3).

1:16 Paul's circumstances were for the "defense of the gospel." He wanted to make a formal presentation of Christianity's authenticity.

1:19-20 Paul's final salvation would come through remaining true to Christ in the face of difficulties. Paul did not expect to be ashamed (lit. "put to shame"). Christians will be vindicated by persevering in the truth.

2:4 Paul's concern was balance—looking to the concerns of others as well as one's own. There is a place for attending to our basic needs (Eph 5:29).

2:5 To "make your own attitude that of Christ Jesus" means to value what Jesus values. Since Christ gave Himself for us, we give ourselves to one another (Eph 5:1-2).

2:6-7 The "form" (*morphe-*) of God is not a physical or structural form. Jesus shares God's nature; He is not "another god." Before the incarnation, Jesus existed in the form of God. In the incarnation, Jesus takes the "form of a slave." God served us in humility. He became human, surrendering access to His divine prerogatives, and willingly died a shameful death.

2:7 Jesus' self-emptying (*keno-sis*) cannot mean loss of deity or divine attributes; God cannot become less than God. Rather, He emptied Himself of divine privileges by becoming human.

2:9 God highly exalted Jesus, giving Him a new position. He became the visible focus of the Godhead, a position graciously bestowed because of His self-humbling death.

2:10-11 Contrary to what some critics claim, this description does not reflect an outdated cosmology or view of universal reality. Jesus' lordship is comprehensive—over all personal beings in heaven (spiritual beings), on earth (living human beings), and under the earth (the dead awaiting resurrection).

2:12 To "work out" our salvation (which was "worked in" to us) is opposed to "working for" salvation.

3:2 Paul's opponents acted like dogs, traveling in packs, consuming garbage. Circumcision to gain divine favor is futile; it is simply mutilation.

3:8 Heredity and merely human achievements are garbage. Paul's attitude was a necessary expression of repentance. He did not expect to gain righteousness by this attitude (since right standing before God comes through grace); trusting in human achievements prevents one from obtaining righteousness.

3:10-11 The goal of participation in the final resurrection comes from knowing Christ in every dimension of life. Conformity to death—the result of self-surrender—gives way to life. The Christian's experience parallels that of Jesus.

3:15 "Mature" (not "sinless") means thinking and living rightly because of commitment to Christ.

3:20-21 Christ's second coming, unlike His first, will powerfully reveal His deity.

Colossians Articles

Notable Christian Apologist: Athanasius

by Ted Cabal

Athanasius (A.D. 298–373) was born in Alexandria, Egypt, and would eventually become bishop of that city. In 313, Christianity was declared fully legal by the emperor Constantine. Nevertheless, Athanasius still faced persecution for his defense of the full deity of Christ. At the Council of Nicaea (in modern-day Turkey) in 325, Athanasius was instrumental in bringing about condemnation of the heresy of Arianism. Arius taught that the Father created the Son, who thus was only of similar substance (*homoiousios*) with the Father. Athanasius led the way in rejecting this unbiblical notion by stressing the Son's being of the same essence (*homoousious*) as the Father. Leaving out the *i* in this important word meant all the difference, as Athanasius insisted that the Son had no beginning but rather was fully divine. Even though he was exiled five times for his courageous stance, Athanasius faithfully defended the biblical teaching of Christ. Hence, at his death, friends provided this epitaph: "Athanasius against the World."

How Should a Christian Relate to the New Age Movement?

by Ted Cabal

Though the vestiges of a biblical worldview are still in evidence, polls reveal that doctrinal beliefs of perhaps a third of Westerners can be characterized as New Age. The ideas of this New Age Movement (NAM) are widely, and often subconsciously, disseminated through television (e.g., Oprah Winfrey's show) and movies (e.g., *Star Wars*). The NAM also has become big business through its myriads of self-help seminars, journaling/prayer guides (often mimicking Christian tradition), and books.

Adherents of the movement often reject the term New Age due to its connotations. At any rate, it is perhaps better termed "postmodern religion" in view of the assumptions its shares with philosophical postmodernism (see the article, "How Should a Christian Understand Postmodernism?" p. 1385). Generally rejecting a scientific or analytic (modernist) approach to life, adherents believe that knowledge is subjectively constructed and socially determined. Truth is not universal to all humans but may vary according to what "works" for some and not others. Moral values are not universally objective but are only properties of communities choosing to adopt them. People in the NAM view reality as an evolving unified whole; indeed, they often consider God to be one name for this whole. They especially disdain biblical Christianity due to its universal truth claims.

Since the NAM is under the authority of no particular religious text, proponents are best identified by various "symptoms," such as the following. They prefer the practice of spirituality over organized, classical expressions of religion. They believe that no single religious teacher can claim the allegiance of all; claims by Jesus as being *the* Way must be reinterpreted or rejected altogether. According to them, rather than the grace of God revealed in the Jesus of the Bible, "angels," paranormal powers, or even raw human potential serve as "saviors" from the race's predicament. Mixing and matching the objects of worship, they often identify themselves simultaneously in terms such as Buddhist, Jewish, and Presbyterian. Ultimately the NAM represents a return to polytheism, or the belief in many gods.

How, then, should Christians begin sharing Christ with those in the NAM? Frequently a truth discussion must pave the way. If objective, universal truth does not exist, then the claims of the gospel are false. But all people live as if everyday beliefs must correspond to reality (e.g., no one can just choose to live on poison instead of water). So why should anyone hold that belief in God and the afterlife is somehow different? Incoherence in everyday affairs is viewed as dishonest or irrational ("Yes, Officer, that double-parked car is mine, but it's not mine"). Why, then, accept claims such as "Christ can be true for you but not for me"?

At first glance the shoddy handling of truth in the NAM makes it appear more tolerant than Christianity. But actually it condescendingly views the claims of all other religions as wrong, ignorant, and divisive believing that only those in the NAM see the complete picture; other religions, fixated on their traditional teachings, are unaware of the deep, hidden unity of all religions. But is there good reason to believe that many ways to heaven actually exist? How can anyone claim to know this universal truth (especially if there are no universal truths)? Earthly road maps do not assume that just any path can reach a destination. Routes may be chosen by their ease of travel or scenic views, but not all lead to the same place.

Introduction to Colossians

AUTHOR

Some modern critical scholars have expressed doubt about Paul's authorship of Colossians despite the fact it contains autobiographical statements from Paul and even begins with a salutation in which the author names himself as Paul. The misgivings typically have to do with the *style* of the letter (judged to be slightly different from that of other Pauline letters) and the *theology* of the letter (thought to be more developed than that in Paul's other writings). The weight of such concerns diminishes significantly, however, when we consider the letter's setting, which demanded a different theological response than what was called for by a Judaizing faction threatening the church—the danger Paul addressed in other letters. Some of the critical scholars also have too narrow a perspective on the versatility of an ancient author in expressing himself differently on different occasions.

Colossae was located about 100 miles inland from Ephesus in the Roman province of Asia (modern Turkey). Paul wrote this letter sometime between A.D. 60–62, probably from Rome.

THEMES IN COLOSSIANS

Extreme self-denial, the invocation of angels, visionary experiences, and the scrupulous observation of religious rites characterized the practices of a factional group in the Colossian church. In his pastoral concern about this dangerous teaching, the Apostle Paul wrote the church a letter, calling them to a renewed appreciation of their sovereign Lord and Redeemer and urging them to live consistently with the full implications of their relationship to Jesus.

Older commentators identified the opponents' teaching as Gnosticism (the belief that salvation is found through hidden knowledge and that matter is evil whereas spirit is good). Some more recent commentators suggest it was a form of Jewish mysticism. Historical evidence from local folk practices, however, suggests the faction causing trouble was invoking angels as a means of warding off attacks of evil spirits. Paul's bottom-line message to the church, then, was to hold on firmly to Christ rather than rely on angelic mediators and pseudo-spiritualistic practices.

Colossians Study Notes

1:15-20 Most scholars regard this passage as Paul's citation of an early Christian hymn. This presents no threat to the integrity of the biblical text since the inspired apostle cited it with wholehearted approval. In fact, if the passage is hymnic, it provides evidence of a high Christology commonly confessed by the early church.

1:15 Some groups denying Christ's deity (e.g., Jehovah's Witnesses) claim "firstborn" indicates Jesus was a *created* being. The context here, however, indicates "firstborn" is a metaphor for sovereignty or rank. It echoes a psalm of David: "I will also make him My firstborn, greatest of the kings of the earth" (Ps 89:27). Elsewhere, Israel is called God's "firstborn" (Ex 4:22)—clearly not "first in a series."

1:20 This passage does not teach universalism (all will be saved) but instead points forward to Messiah's quelling all rebellion, bringing lasting peace to the universe. The "reconciliation" here entails a pacification of evil powers (as 2:15 makes clear).

1:24 This verse does not imply a deficiency in Christ's atoning sacrifice upon the cross. Behind it stands a Jewish and early Christian conviction of a predetermined amount of suffering to be endured by God's people before the consummation of the age (see Rv 6:9-11). Paul saw his suffering on behalf of Christ as contributing to the sum total.

2:8 The term "philosophy" occurs only here in the Bible. Paul was not making a blanket denunciation of philosophical study or even Greek philosophy (e.g.,Platonism, Stoicism). Nor was he worried that the Colossians' faith would crumble if they subjected it to critical inquiry. The article ("the") appearing before the term in the Greek text suggests that the opponents had characterized their own teaching as a "philosophy"—the specific teaching Paul opposed.

2:8 "Elemental forces" (*stoicheia*) suggests supernatural agencies or spiritual beings.

2:9 Jesus Christ is far more than an inspired prophet, an extraordinary moral teacher, or even some kind of supernatural being. The very substance of God exists in Jesus the Messiah in His incarnation, His life on earth, and His resurrected and ascended body.

2:15 No contradiction exists here between Paul's statement that the principalities and powers have been defeated and his assumption elsewhere that the powers are still virulently active and that believers need to fight against them (e.g., Eph 6:12). The cross of Christ is the point of decisive victory over the powers of evil; believers can now be victorious over them through their union with Christ. They will be vanquished once and for all at the end of the age.

2:18 This probably refers to a magical invocation of angels for help or deliverance.

3:18 The text does not call on wives to render blind obedience to their husbands but rather to offer submission to the husbands' leadership consistent with the ethical demands of the gospel ("as is fitting in the Lord"). The result is a form of male leadership that did not conform to the patriarchal patterns of the day but instead was modeled on the servant leadership of Christ.

3:22 Paul gave slaves perspective on how to live as Christians within this socioeconomic institution of their day (see the notes in Phm).

4:16 This is not a reference to the fourth-century *Letter to the Laodiceans.* It refers to another letter Paul wrote to a church in this region that has unfortunately been lost.

Introduction to 1 Thessalonians

AUTHOR

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THEMES IN THESSALONIANS

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Together, the two letters suggest that one of Paul's major challenges was resocialization—helping new believers to learn, understand, and live by the very different social and ethical code of early Christianity.

1 Thessalonians Study Notes

2:14-16 The accusation that Paul was guilty of anti-Semitism (because he accused "the Jews" of killing Jesus) misunderstands the text. Paul—a Jew himself—was not speaking of all Jews but only of that small minority in Judea involved in anti-Christian persecution. Furthermore, logically Paul could not have meant "all Jews," because many of those who followed Jesus (including himself) were Jews. Paul taught that *our sins* are the reason Jesus died; we *all* share responsibility in his death (Rm 4:25; 1 Co 15:3; Gl 1:4; 1 Tm 1:15).

2:17–3:6 The remarkable correlation between 2:17–3:6 and Ac 17:1-16 with 18:1-5 confirms the historical value of Ac, which adds detail to Paul's comments. Paul and his companions came to Thessalonica from Philippi (Ac 17:1; cp. 1 Th 2:2). Forced out of Thessalonica (Ac 17:5-10; cp. 1 Th 2:17-18), they went to Beroea (Ac 17:10). From there Paul went on alone to Athens (Ac 17:14-16; cp. 1 Th 3:1), leaving instructions for Silas and Timothy (Ac 17:16; cp. 1 Th 3:2-3), and eventually traveled to Corinth (Ac 18:1), where his companions rejoined him (Ac 18:5; cp. 1 Th 3:6).

4:17 Some critics claim that Paul believed he would live to see Christ's return but didn't and that therefore either Paul wasn't inspired or the Bible contains false statements. But while Paul's use of "we" may imply that he expected to be alive, it does not require or prove that he believed this. At 1 Co 15:52-53, Paul expressed virtually the same idea as he did here, yet in the same letter he wrote, "God . . . will also raise us up by His power" (1 Co 6:14). So he apparently considered both options to be possible for him (cp. 1 Th 5:10, "whether we are awake or asleep"). In 5:1-2, Paul implied the same thing that Jesus said about not knowing the time of Christ's return (see Mt 24:36; Mk 13:32; Ac 1:6-7). It would be odd for Paul to contradict himself within a few short verses.

2 Thessalonians Articles

Notable Christian Apologist: Augustine

by Ted Cabal

Augustine (A.D. 354–430) was born in northern Africa (roughly modern Algeria). Monica, his devout Christian mother, raised him in biblical truth, prayed for him faithfully throughout her life, and remained an important influence on Augustine until her death. His brilliant but restless mind, however, wandered away from his Christian roots. This journey away from God (detailed in his classic *Confessions*) included giving himself to sensual pleasures. Augustine, seeking intellectual and spiritual fulfillment, wandered in succession through pagan philosophies such as Manichaeanism and Neoplatonism. Manichaeanism combined elements from several religions, teaching that reality is ultimately grounded in two gods, one evil and one good. Neoplatonism, however, taught that all reality emanated from "the One" (an impersonal, unknowable god).

Augustine eventually realized the intellectual and spiritual failure of his search through paganism. After his soul came to rest through conversion to Christ, Augustine would become the greatest theologian and apologist of the first Christian millennium. He powerfully refuted prevailing pagan philosophies (including Manichaeanism) as well as heresies that threatened to divide and corrupt the church. In *The City of God*, Augustine brilliantly confronted the pagan charge that Christianity was responsible for the downfall of the Roman Empire. He focused the blame where it belonged by exposing paganism's spiritual bankruptcy. Moreover, in so doing, Augustine constructed a grand philosophy of history in observing that the crisis of his day was only part of a larger whole. The "City of the World," comprised of those whose chief love is the self, stands in sharp contrast in every age to the "City of God," comprised of those who love God.

Introduction to 2 Thessalonians

AUTHOR

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2 Thessalonians Study Notes

1:7-9 Essentially, hell is separation from God's presence. For those who refuse God's grace and influence in their lives, He gives them what they want—no experience of God. (See the article "Why Would a Good God Send People to an Everlasting Hell?" p. 1484.)

2:11-12 On the basis of verse 11, God is sometimes charged with deceiving people. But verse 10 sets the critical context: "They perish because they did not accept the love of the truth . . . For this reason" they experience delusion. As in Rm 1:24-25 ("God delivered them over . . . They exchanged the truth of God for a lie"), so here: The delusions certain people experience reflect God's response to a prior decision on their part.

2:13 On the question of God electing or choosing people for salvation, see the article "How Can the Bible Affirm Both Divine Sovereignty and HumanFreedom?" (p. 1850) and the notes in Rm 9 and Eph 1.

3:6,14-15 Refusing to associate with certain so-called believers is not a call to intolerance or avoiding unbelievers (1 Co 5:10-11) but to church discipline (reflecting Jesus' teaching in Mt 18:17). Discipline (removal from fellowship) should be for those boldly and persistently engaging in loveless divisiveness (Rm 16:17), deviant teaching (2 Jn 9-11), or scandalous moral behavior(1 Co 5:1-5). It should always have the goal of restoring the disciplined one to fellowship and changed behavior (cp. Mt 18:15; 1 Co 5:5; Ti 3:10-11; Jms 5:19-20).

1 Timothy Articles

How Should a Christian Understand the Role of Government?

by Charles Colson

Christianity is about much more than salvation; it speaks to *all* of life. "Jesus is Lord" was the earliest baptismal confession. Scripture mandates taking dominion and cultivating the soil (Gn 1) and being salt and light (Mt 5:13-16). Abraham Kuyper, former Dutch prime minister and theologian, famously said, "There is not a square inch in the whole domain of human existence over which Christ, who is sovereign over all, does not cry out 'Mine!' "

No area of cultural engagement is more important than government and politics: We are commanded to submit to governing authorities (Rm 13); Jesus Himself said, "Give back to Caesar the things that are Caesar's" (Mt 22:21). This means Christians must be good citizens, pay taxes, obey laws, and serve (as called) in government. Augustine argued that Christians are to be the *best* citizens: what others do only because the law demands, we do out of love for God.

Because government is ordained by God to preserve order and do justice, we're instructed to honor the king (1 Pt 2:13-17) and pray for those in authority that we might live peaceful lives (1 Tm 2:1-22). The only thing worse than bad government is anarchy.

The authorities are established by God, Paul said. Hence, John Calvin accorded the magistrate's office as having one of the most important roles in any society—working as a servant for good (Rm 13:4). It's a noble calling for Christians to enter public service. Contrary to common caricatures of politicians, some of the finest public servants I've known are serious believers who live out their faith in office without compromising their convictions.

The cultural mandate means the church has an important role to play with respect to political structures—working for justice, speaking prophetically, and often being the conscience of society, even when this means persecution, prison, or death, as it did for many in the confessing church in Nazi Germany. Though there have been times when the church has failed in this responsibility, thankfully today it's at its post, the strongest voice in American society in defense of life and human rights. The church is also the agency that, in this age of terrorism, prophetically holds government to the moral boundaries of the just war tradition (see the article, "Does the Bible Support a Just War?" p. 995). Though in America we observe a strict separation of church and state (the state shouldn't establish a state church or restrict the free exercise of religion), there should never be a separation of religion and public life. The public square needs religious influence; indeed, the Christian faith has played a critical role in shaping our institutions. Reformation doctrines such as sphere sovereignty (government doesn't rule alone; all structures—the family, the church, private associations—have ordained responsibilities) and the rule of law made Western liberal democracy possible. Our Founding Fathers respected the "laws of nature and nature's God," recognizing that without a moral consensus resting upon Judeo-Christian tradition, virtue could not be maintained and self-government would fail. Noted historian Will Durant wrote that he could find no case in history where a nation survived without a moral code and no case where that moral code was not informed by religious truth.

But the church must approach its public role with caution and sensitivity. Pastors and other church leaders, for example, should never make partisan endorsements of candidates (which can divide our ranks and politicize the faith) or allow themselves to be in the hip pocket of any political party. That said, the pastor should never hesitate to speak boldly from the pulpit about pressing moral concerns.

There are clear dangers in dealing with politics. Among my duties as special counsel to President Nixon was winning the support of special interest groups. I found religious leaders easily impressed with the trappings of office. And later, watching from the outside, I saw Christian leaders succumb to

these allures. There's a fine line here. It was wrong when, for most of the twentieth century, evangelicals stood apart from politics; so too it's wrong to allow ourselves to be married to a political party.

Christians individually and through organizations must engage in the political process, always preserving their independence and fulfilling the prophetic office (which may mean calling friends to account). Though Christians are to be the best of citizens, our first loyalty is not to the kingdom of man but to the kingdom of God.

How Is *Jihad* Understood in Islam?

by Ergun Mehmet Caner

In Arabic, the term *jihad* means "to strive," and "to fight." In Islam, the verb carries two levels of meaning that affect the individual Muslim.

First, the individual Muslim must strive *(jihad)* against his flesh. Surah al Tawbah 9:20 says, "Those who believe and suffer exile and strive [*jihad*] with might and main in Allah's cause . . . have the highest rank in the sight of Allah." In this dimension, the *jihad* is against oneself. The Muslim must learn to control his sinful impulses and desires. In this dimension, *jihad* is a means for the Muslim to earn salvation. The aforementioned verse ends with this promise, "they (who *jihad* with might) are the people who will achieve salvation."

Second, however, *jihad* has a corporate dimension. The Qur'an teaches that *jihad* is warfare in the cause of Allah. This fighting (also *jihad* in Arabic) is required for Muslims, even if they do not want to do it (Surah 2:216). The nature of *jihad* is unambiguous in the Qur'an. Surah al Tawbah 9:29 says, "Fight [*jihad*] those who believe not in Allah nor in the Last Day, nor hold that forbidden which has been forbidden by Allah and His Messenger, nor acknowledge the Religion of Truth, from among the people of the Book until they pay the *Jizyah* with willing submission."

In this corporate dimension, *jihad* is clearly seen as warfare. Specifically, Islam teaches that *jihad* is fought against those who do not recognize Islam as the only truth. In the context of Surah 9:29, *jihad*'s purpose is for either the conversion of the infidel, or the control of the non-believer. If a non-believer will not believe, he must pay a tax, called *jizyah*, as a sign of his submission.

Jihad as warfare has parameters in Islam. Muslims who are blind, lame, or terminally ill are exempt from holy war (Surah 48:17). Muslims must give a warning of four months (*fatwa*), telling the infidel to convert or surrender. After these "forbidden months," the Muslim warriors must "seize them, beleaguer them and lie in wait for them, in every stratagem of war" (Surah 9:1-5). Some Muslims cite Surah al Baqarah 2:256 ("there is no compulsion in religion") but earlier in that same chapter, Allah says, "and slay them whenever ye catch them and turn them out from where they have turned you out" (Surah al Baqarah 2:191). Once *jihad* begins, it must be fought until victory or the surrender of the unbelievers (Surah 47:4). The Muslim who dies in *jihad* is promised heaven (Surah 47:4-6).

Introduction to 1 Timothy

AUTHOR

These letters of encouragement and instruction to young church leaders, collectively known as the Pastoral Epistles (letters), claim to have been written by Paul, and the early church accepted this ascription. Indeed, no serious challenge to Paul's authorship arose until the nineteenth century. Critics of Paul's authorship based their rejection on several arguments:

1. The vocabulary, grammar, and style of the Pastorals differ from letters that are almost unanimously viewed as being from Paul.
2. Church organization reflected in the Pastorals looks more like structures seen in a later era.
3. The letters counter Gnostic teachings, which did not arise until after A.D. 100.

There are sound responses to each of the critics' objections.

1. The role of a personal secretary (possibly Luke), the incorporation of earlier material, the letters' personal nature, and the unique subject matter account for linguistic differences.
2. The early church's adoption of the leadership structure of the synagogue accounts for the relatively advanced organization of the church early in its history (Ac 6:1-6; 11:30). Besides, the leadership structure is not as developed in the Pastorals as in the writings of the apostolic fathers at the close of the first century.
3. Paul countered a basically Jewish heresy (1 Tm 1:7; Ti 1:10,14; 3:9) containing some features of asceticism, or self-denial (1 Tm 4:3), with traces of Greek philosophical influence (2 Tm 2:18).

No feature of the teaching Paul combated precludes dating the letters during Paul's lifetime. Recent scholarship is increasingly favorable toward the authenticity of these letters.

1 TIMOTHY

Paul wrote this letter to Timothy probably in the early A.D. 60s. Internal evidence suggests Paul wrote from Macedonia to Timothy in Ephesus (1:3). Paul wrote to help Timothy respond to a dangerous false teaching that threatened the churches of the area.

2 TIMOTHY

Paul, writing to Timothy probably in the mid 60s, faced impending martyrdom. Second Timothy 4:6 suggests the letter was written during Paul's second Roman imprisonment, just before his execution under Nero.

TITUS

Paul wrote Titus, likely from Macedonia, probably in the early 60s. Titus was apparently in Crete where he combated false teaching (1:6,12), similar to that faced by Timothy in Ephesus.

1 Timothy Study Notes

1:4 This verse does not contradict the validity of biblical genealogies (e.g., Gn 10; 1 Ch 1–9; Mt 1:1-17; Lk 3:23-38). False teachers in Ephesus probably emphasized lengthy genealogies, believing salvation was based on having a lineage that could be traced back to Abraham (Mt 3:9; Ti 3:9). The NT teaches that salvation requires sharing Abraham's faith whether or not one shares his bloodline (Rm 4). "Genealogies" may also be virtually synonymous with "myths," referring to legends about OT figures. Paul's command reflects his aversion toward stories fabricated for religious purposes, demonstrating his conviction that Scripture is based on history.

1:10 Paul regarded homosexual actions as sinful behavior. His statement is consistent with the teaching of the Bible as a whole and the divine purpose for the creation of male and female in Gn 1–2. (See the article "What Does the Bible Teach about Homosexuality?" p. 1716.)

1:17 God is "invisible" because He is an immaterial, spiritual being. He may, however, choose temporarily to assume a visible, material form. Thus, Paul's statement does not contradict texts such as Gn 32:30 and Ex 33:11 (see note on Jn 1:18).

2:4 God genuinely desires the salvation of all people(2 Pt 3:9). Nevertheless, not all individuals will be saved (2 Th 1:5-9). See note on 1 Tm 4:10.

2:5 Although this verse emphasizes Jesus' humanity, Paul also affirmed Jesus' deity in this letter. He referred to Jesus' special relationship with the Father (1:1-2; 6:13) who grants Him the divine title Lord (1:2,12; 6:3,14). He implied Jesus' heavenly existence before the incarnation (3:16), and said that Jesus' saving of sinners (1:15) is a divine activity (4:10).

2:9 Paul sought to prohibit extravagant, expensive styles (recognized as immodest and seductive) accompanied by the wearer's neglect of her own character.

2:11-15 Paul was no sexist but rather a champion of the equality of men and women before God (Gl 3:28)—a sharp contrast to the chauvinistic teaching of many of his contemporaries. Paul recognized that male-female equality did not require abolishing all role distinctions, which were defined by God in creation. The woman was created to be a helper for the man (Gn 2:18-25). Eve's exercise of authority over Adam brought disaster, illustrating the dangers of upsetting the family's divinely ordained leadership structure. Evidently the false teachers taught that male authority in church and home and the woman's childbearing role were curses for sin, which Jesus' atoning work had eradicated (Gn 3:16). Paul recognized that Eve's curse involved *oppressive* male leadership and *pain* in childbearing, but male leadership and childbearing were part of God's plan for pre-fall creation (Gn 1:27-28; 2:18). Paul therefore insisted Christian wives were "saved" (restored to their pre-fall state) by submitting to their husband's compassionate leadership and through bearing and raising children. This is one way these Ephesian women could "work out" their final salvation (Php 2:12).

3:2 "Husband of one wife" requires the overseer's marital faithfulness (see note on Ti 1:6). Some critics argue that if churches truly demanded that pastoral candidates satisfy all these criteria, the church would cease to exist due to lack of qualified leadership. This opinion overlooks the gospel's transforming power, which has endowed many potential Christian leaders with these traits.

4:7 This command is another rejection of myth by Paul, demonstrating his commitment to Christianity's factual, historical foundations.

4:8 Paul did not dispute the significant medical benefits of physical exercise. "Limited" means "for a little while" (the benefits of exercise are only temporary). Spiritual training that produces godly character is more important since its results endure throughout the present life and in the life to come.

4:10 Some claim this verse conflicts with other scriptural passages by teaching universalism (all individuals will be saved). However, "everyone" refers to both Jews and Gentiles (all kinds of people rather than every single individual). The word "especially" could be translated "namely." "Everyone" equals "every believer regardless of ethnic background."

5:12 Paul's harsh words against widows who remarry initially appear inconsistent with his command for younger widows to remarry (v. 14) and his teaching elsewhere (Rm 7:1-3; 1 Co 7:39). However, the text probably referred to a widow who remarried an unbeliever(2 Co 6:14), abandoning her faith under the spouse's influence. "Original pledge" (lit. "first faith") refers to the widow's former faith in Christ.

5:23 This does not contradict biblical warnings about the danger of alcoholic beverages (Pr 20:1; 23:29-35; 31:4-5). Paul urged moderation (1 Tm 3:3) but did not require total abstinence. Many first-century water sources were contaminated. Drinking wine helped prevent stomach ailments caused by parasites and other contaminants. Biblical wine was natural wine diluted with water, resulting in a low alcoholic content. Timothy could consume such wine in moderation without seriously risking intoxication.

6:1 Paul did not call for slavery's abolition—a futile endeavor in the ancient Roman world that would have confirmed pagan suspicions that Christianity destroys the fabric of society. Paul urged slaves to embrace freedom if the opportunity came (1 Co 7:21). He also called for slavery reform within the church, urging fair treatment of slaves and generous financial support (Col 4:1). These reforms amounted to a virtual abolition of slavery by Christian masters. Christian masters were to view Christian slaves as brothers (1 Tm 6:2), thus as equals. And Paul described the slaves' service (lit. "kind deeds") as voluntary rather than coerced, see note on Ti 2:9.

6:14 Some claim Paul mistakenly expected the second coming to occur within Timothy's lifetime. However, Paul's words merely expressed the hope of Christ's soon return. Paul was convinced that he was living in the last days (4:1; 2 Tm 3:1; 4:1), a period beginning with Jesus' resurrection. This conviction is balanced by(1) the insistence that the time for Christ's return was in God's hands (1 Tm 6:15 implying that God alone knew that time) and (2) Paul's stated expectation of his own death (2 Tm 4:6-8). Paul described the suddenness and possible imminence of Christ's return (1 Co 7:29-31;1 Th 5:2) while expecting delay since events that would precede the return had not occurred (2 Th 2:3-8).

6:16 On divine "invisibility," see note on 1:17. God's sole immortality does not contradict the believer's immortality through resurrection. The word here translated "immortality" means "not capable of dying"—inappropriate for believers, who may die physically before the resurrection—and carries connotations of eternal self-existence, which non-divine beings do not possess.

2 Timothy Articles

What Does It Mean That God Inspired the Bible?

by Gordon R. Lewis

To say that God inspired the Bible is to say that the Holy Spirit supernaturally motivated and superintended the prophetic and apostolic recipients of revelation in the entire process of writing their scriptural books.

Many other books have coauthors, so we need not imagine that Scripture has to be either a human or a divine production. The Holy Scriptures originated, not with the will of its human writers, but with the will of God the Holy Spirit (2 Pt 1:20-21). Over 3,000 times biblical writers claimed to have received their messages from God. God the Holy Spirit "inspired" (breathed out or originated) the Scriptures through the human writers (2 Tm 3:16).

God prepared these conscious, active prophetic and apostolic spokesmen (and their secretaries) providentially by their heredity, character, vocabularies, and writing styles. At the appropriate time, in all the processes of writing, they were "moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Pt 1:21). This technical meaning of inspiration does not apply to any alleged revelations outside the Bible or to any literature that in a more general sense may be said to be inspiring.

God commissioned His true prophets to write, including Moses (Ex 17:14; 34:27), Joshua (Jos 24:15-26), Samuel (1 Sm 10:25), Isaiah (Is 30:8), Jeremiah (Jr 30:2; 36:2,17,28-29), Ezekiel (Ezk 43:11), and Habakkuk (Hab 2:2). Hence the Bible was not a result of Israel's quest for God; it is God's witness against Israel (Dt 31:26). Zechariah laments the fact that Israel "made their hearts like a rock so as not to obey the law or the words that the LORD of Hosts had sent by His Spirit through the earlier prophets" (Zch 7:12).

The collection (or canon) of biblical books began to be formed as inspired writings were placed alongside the ark of the covenant in which were contained the Ten Commandments (Dt 31:24-26; Jos 24:25-26; 1 Sm 10:25; 1 Kg 8:9; Is 8:20; 29:18; 34:16).

The Lord Jesus Christ validated the OT's inspiration by quoting from all three sections: the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings (Lk 24:44). He endorsed the inspiration and authority of the OT in detail (Mt 5:17-18). The Lord also prepared His disciples for the coming of the NT (Jn 16:12) and so endorsed it in principle. Paul received revelation pertaining to redemption (Gl 1:11-17) and expected his writings to be received as from God (2 Th 2:13,15). Peter classified Paul's writings with the inspired OT (2 Pt 3:16).

What the authors or their close associates originally wrote in Hebrew, Aramaic, or Greek was inspired. Although their original manuscripts have not been discovered, we know what they wrote. In numerous available copies, quotations, and translations, there is amazing agreement. Through some 20 centuries of laborious copying and printing, there have been no substantial variations of any important fact or doctrine.

So, in the twenty-first century, we can rely on serious translations to convey what believers need to be "equipped for every good work" (2 Tm 3:17). The Holy Spirit attests to the truth of this written revelation and uses it like a sword to convict of sin, draw sinners to Christ, build them up, and send them out to bless the world (Heb 4:12).

As a result of its inspiration, all that the Bible affirms is true.

Introduction to 2 Timothy

AUTHOR

These letters of encouragement and instruction to young church leaders, collectively known as the Pastoral Epistles (letters), claim to have been written by Paul, and the early church accepted this ascription. Indeed, no serious challenge to Paul's authorship arose until the nineteenth century. Critics of Paul's authorship based their rejection on several arguments:

1. The vocabulary, grammar, and style of the Pastorals differ from letters that are almost unanimously viewed as being from Paul.
2. Church organization reflected in the Pastorals looks more like structures seen in a later era.
3. The letters counter Gnostic teachings, which did not arise until after A.D. 100.

There are sound responses to each of the critics' objections.

1. The role of a personal secretary (possibly Luke), the incorporation of earlier material, the letters' personal nature, and the unique subject matter account for linguistic differences.
2. The early church's adoption of the leadership structure of the synagogue accounts for the relatively advanced organization of the church early in its history (Ac 6:1-6; 11:30). Besides, the leadership structure is not as developed in the Pastorals as in the writings of the apostolic fathers at the close of the first century.
3. Paul countered a basically Jewish heresy (1 Tm 1:7; Ti 1:10,14; 3:9) containing some features of asceticism, or self-denial (1 Tm 4:3), with traces of Greek philosophical influence (2 Tm 2:18).

No feature of the teaching Paul combated precludes dating the letters during Paul's lifetime. Recent scholarship is increasingly favorable toward the authenticity of these letters.

1 TIMOTHY

Paul wrote this letter to Timothy probably in the early A.D. 60s. Internal evidence suggests Paul wrote from Macedonia to Timothy in Ephesus (1:3). Paul wrote to help Timothy respond to a dangerous false teaching that threatened the churches of the area.

2 TIMOTHY

Paul, writing to Timothy probably in the mid 60s, faced impending martyrdom. Second Timothy 4:6 suggests the letter was written during Paul's second Roman imprisonment, just before his execution under Nero.

TITUS

Paul wrote Titus, likely from Macedonia, probably in the early 60s. Titus was apparently in Crete where he combated false teaching (1:6,12), similar to that faced by Timothy in Ephesus.

2 Timothy Study Notes

1:7 Paul encouraged strength and confidence in God, since cowardice before nonbelievers might thwart gospel witness. His words do not contradict the familiar imperative to "fear" the Lord (Lv 25:17; Dt 6:2,13; Mt 10:28; Lk 12:5; 1 Pt 1:17).

2:8 Jesus' descent from David does not contradict Matthew's and Luke's narratives of Jesus' virginal conception (Mt 1:18-25; Lk 1:34). Jesus was Joseph's legal, not biological, descendant and was thus of David's line. Luke's genealogy of Jesus possibly traces Jesus' lineage back to David through Mary's line, so that Jesus may have been a descendant of David both biologically and legally.

2:18 Arguing that the resurrection had already occurred meant that merely the spirit was resurrected, not the body (implying that death is victorious in the end). Some of Paul's opponents excused immoral behavior. They reasoned that if the physical body had no place in God's plan for the final redeemed state, then the body and its actions did not matter to God (1 Co 6:13-20). Other opponents argued that if God did not resurrect the body, then He must regard the body as innately evil. They responded by embracing a lifestyle that avoided sex, food, and other blessings God meant for His people to enjoy within a proper context (1 Tm 4:3).

3:8 Although the OT never names the Egyptian sorcerers who opposed Moses before Pharaoh (Ex 7:11-12,22; 8:7,16-19), Paul did not claim to quote the OT directly here. Ancient Jewish traditions (Targum of Pseudo-Jonathan, Qumran scrolls, and rabbinic writings) also identify the magicians by these names. No good reason exists to question these traditions at this point.

3:12 Jesus and NT writers warned believers of impending persecution (Mt 5:10-12; 10:16-25; 1 Pt 4:12-16). The warning may seem to conflict with texts like Pr 16:7; however, both the warnings and the proverb are true. This warning must be balanced with Paul's acknowledgment that some unbelievers will respect Christians for their honesty, kindness, and wisdom, all of which produce peace when rightly received (1 Tm 2:2; 3:7;2 Tm 2:22-26). The manner in which Christians responded to persecution, suffering, and death was one of the ways in which Christianity undermined paganism in the Roman Empire.

3:16 Some critics argue that *all* Scripture cannot be divinely inspired since a moral God could not possibly have inspired, say, the story of a horrible rape in Jdg 19:22-30. Scripture does record immoral acts. Inspiration guarantees its accuracy, not its divine approval. God's approval or disapproval of human acts recorded in the Bible must be inferred from the comments of the biblical narrator, the divine response to the action, the purpose of the book as a whole, and biblical principles stated in other sections of Scripture.

4:6-8 See note on 1 Tm 6:14.

Introduction to Titus

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Titus Study Notes

1:2 Some assert that God did lie in 1 Kg 22:23, and Jr 20:7; see notes on those passages to confirm Paul's statement here.

1:6 Some critics argue that since Paul required only an overseer (or elder) to be the "husband of one wife," he implicitly approved of polygamy or infidelity among the laity. And admittedly, church leaders were held to a higher standard than other believers (Jms 3:1). But this does not suggest that polygamy or infidelity was acceptable behavior for laity. Although individuals who had previously behaved immorally and later repented of this lifestyle were gladly received into the church (1 Co 6:9-11), post-conversion infidelity was not casually tolerated. Such behavior constituted grounds for church discipline (1 Co 5:11), including exclusion from the fellowship. See note on 1 Tm 3:2.

1:10 The text is not anti-Semitic but instead refers specifically to Judaizers who taught that, in addition to having faith in Christ, Gentiles must become Jewish proselytes (receiving circumcision) and adhere to OT dietary laws and the ritual calendar to earn salvation. The heresy in the Pastoral Epistles is basically Jewish with ascetic features and certain Hellenistic elements.

1:12 Citing Epimenides may seem like an unfair regional stereotype. However, Epimenides and Paul were in a far better position to describe ancient Cretan society than are twenty-first-century critics. Cross-cultural experience confirms that certain negative behaviors may be endemic to particular cultures (including one's own). Epimenides's characterization was not universally true, but it was true in reference to Paul's opponents.

1:14 See note on 1 Tm 1:4.

2:3-5 See note on 1 Tm 2:11-15.

2:9 Some critics argue that this verse contradicts Mt 23:10. However, Jesus' words refer specifically to calling a spiritual teacher "master," not a slave referring to his owner as master (see note on 1 Tm 6:1).

2:11 Paul was not a universalist, believing that all people go to heaven. Rather, God's grace is for all the kinds of people discussed in verses 1-10 (young and old, men and women, slaves and masters). See note on
1 Tm 4:10.

2:13 Grammatically and contextually, this verse is a powerful reference to Christ's deity. Paul's belief in Jesus' deity was based on his life-changing experience of seeing Jesus clothed in divine glory (Ac 9:3-9), his exegesis of important OT messianic texts (Ac 9:20-22), and Jesus' personal claims and miraculous activities as reported to him by eyewitnesses. Paul also personally saw Jesus' divine power at work in His disciples through the miracles that Paul and other disciples performed. See note on 1 Tm 2:5.

3:5 This verse is consistent with texts affirming the importance of good works. The NT uniformly teaches that although good works are not a requirement for salvation, they are an inevitable result of salvation. The same gospel that saved sinners like Paul, transformed them morally and ethically (v. 3). Verse 8 further insists on the importance of good works as true faith's necessary expression.

3:9 See note on 1 Tm 1:4.

Introduction to Philemon

AUTHOR AND THEME

Paul wrote this brief letter to Philemon, a fairly wealthy businessman who hosted a church in his home in the small city of Colossae (about 100 miles from Ephesus). Philemon's slave, Onesimus, had fled to Rome where Paul was incarcerated. In an extraordinary chain of events, this fugitive slave became a Christian, ministered to Paul faithfully, and was now returning to Philemon. Paul was deeply concerned about how Philemon would receive his runaway slave. He thus wrote a tactful appeal to Philemon to consider the change of life Onesimus had experienced and to receive him back not only as a servant, but also as a fellow believer.

This letter shows the beginning of the impact of the gospel on the unjust institution of slavery. Whereas Paul did not overtly attack slavery here (which would have been inappropriate for the situation), he did draw out the implications of the gospel for changing the relationships between slaves and slave owners. This is exemplified in his appeal to Philemon to receive Onesimus back "no longer as a slave" but "as a dearly loved brother" (v. 16).

Paul wrote the letter sometime between A.D. 60–62 while in custody, probably in Rome.

Philemon Study Notes

10-11 This letter portrays conversion in terms of an authentic relationship with Christ and as a life-transforming event.

16 Given the injustice of the institution of slavery, why didn't Paul directly request that Onesimus be freed? Paul was not addressing the Roman Senate (see 1 Co 7:21-23) but rather a middle-class businessman in a rural village. His priority at this point was to restructure the relationships within the Christian community based on the love and forgiveness of Christ.

Hebrews Articles

What Is Divine Revelation?

by Gordon R. Lewis

Revelation is an activity of the invisible, living God making known to finite and sinful people His creative power, moral standards, and gracious redemptive plan.

First, God discloses Himself and His power to everyone by the marvels of His creation—the amazing life support system of planet earth. We can discover some things about painters from their paintings. Similarly, in the magnificence of creation, with its microscopic complexities and cosmic expanse, we realize our dependence upon the Creator's powerful existence and intelligent design (Ps 19:1-6; Rm 1:19-20).

Second, God makes plain His moral nature and ethical principles for our well-being by implanting *oughts* and *ought nots* in every human spirit. Even people who do not have Moses' Ten Commandments (Ex 20:1-20) feel an obligation to obey those universal principles of right and wrong and suffer guilt when they do not (Rm 2:14-15). God's moral principles restrain evil and prompt all to seek and find Him (Ac 17:27). However, everyone sins, worships, and serves the creation rather than its Creator (Rm 1:25; 3:10-23). Our habitual failure to live up to God's laws demonstrates our need for His mercy and redeeming grace.

Third, God made His merciful redemptive purposes known centuries before Christ both through mighty acts such as delivering Israel from slavery in Egypt (Ex 12) and through the reliable messages of His prophetic spokesmen (Heb 1:1). Criteria by which to distinguish true from false prophets included the logical consistency of teaching with previous revelation (Dt 13:1-5) and the verification of visible signs (Dt 18:20-22). God promised to send His anointed One to defeat Satan's destructive purposes in many ways. The Messiah would be a son of Eve (Gn 3:15), a descendant of Abraham (Gn 22:18) and David (2 Sm 7:12-16), and would be born of a virgin (Is 7:14) in Bethlehem (Mc 5:2). Because those who chose the way of sin chose a way that ends in death, without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness. So believing citizens of Israel pictured Christ's coming sacrificial atonement for sin by animal sacrifices and the Passover.

Fourth, God made His just and loving plan of redemption known supremely in Jesus, the long-awaited Messiah. "No one has ever seen God. The One and Only Son—the One who is at the Father's side—He has revealed Him" (Jn 1:18). To appreciate more fully what God is like, study the life, words, works, and atoning death of Jesus. At Calvary, the guiltless Savior substituted Himself for the guilty. In doing so He defeated Satan and provided the just basis for His reconciling mercy and grace (Rm 3:25). Then the risen Christ demonstrated His saving power over sin, guilt, death, and Satan (Rm 1:2-4; 10:9-10)!

Fifth, after Jesus' ascension to heaven, God communicated His redemptive purposes through spokesmen called apostles. Jesus taught and trained them for three years and they were eyewitnesses of His resurrection (Ac 1:21-22). Through Paul, an apostle who later saw the risen Christ, God revealed His plan to unite both Jewish and Gentile believers in one body, the church (Eph 2:11-22).

Sixth, the King of kings will be revealed in all His power and glory at His second coming.

Seventh, all the above sources of revealed truth have been preserved for us in the Holy Scriptures.

Notable Christian Apologist: C. S. Lewis

by Ted Cabal

Clive Staples Lewis (1898–1963) enjoyed a distinguished career at Oxford and Cambridge. He was also a notable literary critic and author of science fiction and children's literature (including the *Chronicles of Narnia*). In addition, Lewis was arguably the most influential Christian apologist of the twentieth century.

Remarkably, he was a committed atheist before his conversion to theism in 1929, then to Christ in 1931.

Lewis authored a number of important apologetic works, such as *Miracles, The Problem of Pain*, *God in the Dock*, and *The Abolition of Man*. In his most famous work, *Mere Christianity*, Lewis presented powerful arguments for the truth of the Christian faith. Originally broadcast as several BBC talks during World War II, *Mere Christianity* notes that even people who deny objective right and wrong cannot refrain from believing in them. Moreover, people are unable to live out the moral law they know they should. Lewis argued that this moral law, coupled with humanity's inability to fulfill it, allows Christianity to begin to "talk." The forgiveness God offers in Christ makes sense in the real world.

Lewis also maintained that Jesus Christ claimed to be God, undercutting popular notions that Jesus was something like a good teacher. Either He was who He claimed, or else He was a liar or lunatic. But the life of Jesus does not betray the character of a liar or the mentality of a lunatic. Lewis contended that the most reasonable understanding of Jesus is that He is the Lord.

Does the Bible Teach Reincarnation?

by Paul Copan

The simple answer is no. When proponents of reincarnation allege that certain biblical texts teach the soul's preexistence or reincarnation, they are approaching those texts superficially and their interpretations dissolve under further scrutiny.

Reincarnation (Hinduism) or rebirth (Buddhism) is integral to Eastern philosophy. In the *Bhagavad Gita*, Krishna talks of having "passed through many births." And what we reap in this life (*karma*) comes from what we've sown in past lives. Biblical, theological, and philosophical reasons, however, undermine reincarnation.

If one acknowledges the Bible's authority and storyline, one will readily recognize the Eastern doctrine of reincarnation as unacceptable. Many claiming that reincarnation appears in the Bible would go on believing in reincarnation anyway, with or without biblical support. They read reincarnation into isolated verses (e.g., statements about being "born again" in Jn 3) without respecting the biblical context or the worldview of the author. In doing so, they do not respect the biblical text as they would want their own Eastern texts respected. (What if we read bodily resurrection into *their* texts?)

Each of us must die and then be judged by God (Heb 9:27). When God told Jeremiah He knew him before he was in his mother's womb (Jr 1:5), this doesn't demonstrate preexistence or reincarnation; it only indicates God's foreknowledge and sovereignty. Notice Jeremiah did not say, "Before I was in my mother's womb, I knew You, God." That would make a persuasive case for preexistence! Also, the disciples' questioning whether the man born blind sinned before birth (Jn 9:2) does not express reincarnation but rather reflects the rabbinic belief that a fetus could sin while in his mother's womb (cp. *Genesis Rabbah* 63.6).

Furthermore, the historically supportable event of Jesus' bodily resurrection undercuts reincarnation. The biblical view of the afterlife is radically different from that of Eastern philosophies. True immortality is not the eradication or "snuffing out" (*moksha*) of the self nor its absorption with the One, *Brahman,* like a drop in an ocean. To receive immortality is to receive an immortal, imperishable physical body (1 Co 15:53-34). It is a spiritual body (that is, one supernaturally animated by the Holy Spirit) rather than a natural body (animated by a human soul). Immortality means being forever in union with God and living in God's presence with this new body in the new heavens and new earth—without losing individual identity.

Theologically, God's grace and forgiveness undercut *karma*. We need not bear the heavy weight of guilt and shame because Jesus Christ has absorbed all that for us. And if reincarnation is true, why help the underprivileged? Aren't they getting what they deserve—their *karma*?

Despite "evidence" for reincarnation, arguments for a person having lived previous lives could be explained by demonic activity (see Ac 16:16-18). A person having access to information about another's previous life does not imply that this was his own life. A psychic may purport to have knowledge of a crime, but this doesn't mean he committed it!

Philosophical problems with reincarnation are many. (1) Those "remembering" past lives tend to be clustered in the East (where reincarnation is taught), not throughout the world (as we'd expect). (2) If we forget our past lives, what purpose does reincarnation serve for self-improvement? (3) Assuming reincarnation (with an infinite past series of rebirths), then we've all had plenty of time to reach perfection. Why haven't we? (4) Reincarnation doesn't solve the problem of evil, as some claim, but only infinitely postpones it (and in some Eastern schools, evil is just an illusion anyway). (5) Reincarnation makes incoherent the Eastern idea of monism, which says that everything is one

without distinction, by presupposing distinctions between (a) individual souls, (b) the *karmas* of individual souls not having yet reached enlightenment, (c) the enlightened and unenlightened, and (d) individual souls and the One (ultimate reality).

Introduction to Hebrews

AUTHOR

Several books in the New Testament stress Christ's death, but the book of Hebrews is especially known for its emphasis on the doctrine of Christ as both high priest and sacrificial offering to atone for sin. No other book in the New Testament so masterfully combines teaching from both the old and new covenants.

The author of Hebrews, though not named, was almost certainly known to the original recipients of this letter. In the centuries since its writing, the letter's anonymity has fueled speculation. Scholars have suggested a variety of early Christians as the author, including Paul, Luke, Apollos, Clement of Rome, Barnabas, Silvanus, Philip, and Priscilla. No one, however, is sure who wrote this biblical book. Origen, an early church father, said it best: Only God knows who wrote Hebrews.

The evidence from Hebrews, including the title—"Hebrews"—strongly indicates that the letter was written to Jewish Christians. The writer appealed throughout the book to the Old Testament, assumed that his readers knew Jewish sacrificial rituals (e.g., 10:1-2), and warned against relying on rituals that only point to Christ but are not Christ Himself (10:1-4,11-18). Ascertaining an exact date for Hebrews is impossible, but the evidence suggests it was written sometime prior to A.D. 70. First, the author and his readers belonged to the second generation of Christians. They neither saw nor heard Jesus in person (2:3). Second, if the Timothy mentioned in 13:23 was Paul's younger associate, then the letter requires a date sometime during his lifetime. Third, the reference to sacrifices in 10:1-2 seems to indicate sacrifices were still being offered. Some point to the writer's use of the present tense to describe the sacrifices (7:8; 9:6-7,9,13; 13:10) as evidence that the temple was still standing in Jerusalem. Finally, the use of Hebrews in 1 Clement (36:1-6), a document usually dated around A.D. 95 or 96, shows that the author wrote it before this time. To repeat, then, though a date anytime between A.D. 60–96 is possible for Hebrews, the book was likely written sometime prior to A.D. 70.

THEMES IN HEBREWS

The recipients of Hebrews clearly had been undergoing persecution for their faith (10:32-34; 12:4). They were also giving of themselves, busy serving others (6:10). And yet they were immature (5:11–6:12) and needed to be taught again the elementary truths of God's Word (5:12). The warnings issued in this book show that many of these Christians were wavering in their faith and tempted to desert it altogether (2:1-4; 4:12-13; 6:4-8; 10:26-31; 12:25-29). They stood in danger of falling away from Christ, probably to avoid persecution.

A recurring theme throughout the letter is Christ's superiority over everything in the Jewish religion to which they wanted to return. Jesus is far above and beyond the Old Testament prophets, the angels, Moses, Joshua, and the Aaronic priesthood. So why would the Hebrews ever want to go back to that old system when the new had come?

Hebrews Study Notes

1:2 The writer of Heb did not wrongly place us in the "last days." This verse speaks of God's revelation of Himself. In times past God spoke to the fathers by the prophets, but in these "last days" (i.e., the Messianic Age) God has revealed Himself in Christ. Jesus inaugurated the "last days," which stretch between His first coming and His second coming. We are in the last days and will be so until Christ returns. This period of time is also the age of the Spirit (of Jesus) in which He abundantly works and ministers.

Some object to this verse by saying that one cannot be an "heir" unless someone dies, and that therefore, if Jesus is an heir, God must be dead. But this neglects the fact that in the first century an inheritance could be passed on to an heir well before the benefactor's death.

1:8 Some skeptics argue that this verse, which addresses Jesus as "O God," contradicts Jn 8:40 and Ac 17:31 which say that Jesus was a man. Such objections, however, miss the fact that Scripture teaches the concept of the "hypostatic union"—that Jesus is both fully God and fully man.

1:10 Some have claimed that, if God "established the earth," as this verse states, it must not move. But that is false. As the writer of Heb maintained that Christ is superior to the angels, he used Ps 102:25 and the metaphor of a foundation to describe Christ's founding of the earth. Like other biblical writers, the author of Heb described things as they appeared to him.

1:11 Skeptics wrongly see a contradiction between this verse, which says that the earth will perish, and Ps 78:69 and Ec 1:4, which say that it will last forever. However, in Ec 1:3 the Teacher discussed the futility and vanity of humanity's endeavors: "What does a man gain for all his efforts he labors at under the sun?" The author continued this theme in Ec 1:4, where he viewed the earth entirely from a human perspective. In the course of life he saw the earth as abiding forever because that was how it seemed to him. Ps 78:69 was written from a similar standpoint. This verse in Heb, however, is different. Like 2 Pt 3:10, it teaches that the earth will indeed perish before the new heavens and a new earth are made (see 2 Pt 3:13).

2:16 Some people argue this verse teaches that Jesus is a biological descendant of Abraham and then question its veracity in the light of Mt 1:18, which teaches that Christ lacked a biological human father. However, "offspring" in Heb 2:16 refers to the "descendants" of Abraham and not to Jesus. The point in this verse is that the Son, through the incarnation, helps "Abraham's offspring" and not the angels.

4:15 The issue of whether Jesus was not able to sin (impeccability) or able to sin (peccability) is difficult. Suffice it to say that the NT plainly teaches that Jesus never sinned (see 2 Co 5:21; Heb 4:15) even though He was truly tempted (see Mt 4:1-11; Mk 1:12-13; Lk 4:1-13). Moreover, it also affirms, "God is not tempted by evil" (see Jms 1:13). Since Jesus is fully God and fully man, it follows that He could not be tempted with evil. Further, Jesus "has been tested in every way as we are, yet without sin." This phrase does not mean that Christ underwent every single human temptation that is possible to experience in our day, but that He experienced in every way the full force of our temptation yet without yielding to it. Jesus is indeed a worthy high priest who is superior to the OT priests and able to sympathize with our weaknesses.

6:4-6 This passage, with its warning, is controversial and difficult. Some persons believe this text teaches that it is possible to fall out of salvation. Though a cursory look at this text might lead one to think that Christians can lose their salvation, that idea is not the issue. These verses instead speak of the need for believers to persevere in the Christian faith. The verbs "enlightened" (v. 4), "tasted" (vv. 4-5), and "became companions" (v. 4) describe persons who have professed Christ and claim to be believers. To "have fallen away" (v. 6) means to commit apostasy. The writer of Heb admonished his readers not to go back to the OT sacrificial system because Jesus is superior to it in every way. If they were to turn away from Christ, repentance would be impossible because it cannot be found anywhere else once Jesus is rejected (10:26-27). By their actions, such persons disgrace Christ openly and try to re-crucify Him. If they forsake faith in Christ after having professed it and go back (i.e., do not persevere), they never were actually saved to begin with (see Mt 10:22; Mk 13:13).

6:18 Some skeptics see a contradiction in this verse, which says that it is impossible for God to lie, because Jr 32:27 and Mt 19:26 say that nothing is impossible for God. This objection is similar to the well-worn question "Is God so powerful that He can make a rock so big He cannot move it?" Such objections, however, confuse God's character with His power to do things. God cannot lie because it is against His nature to do so—He is infinitely holy and all good.

7:3 Some incorrectly see a contradiction in this verse regarding Melchizedek because they say Gn 3:20 teaches that everyone is descended from Adam and Eve. But in Heb 7:1-3 the author explains Gn 14:17-20 to demonstrate typological links between Melchizedek and the Son of God. The name Melchizedek means "king of righteousness" (from the Hb *melek* and *sedeq*), and the city over which he ruled is called Salem, meaning "peace"; thus he is also "king of peace." The writer of Heb developed a contrast between Melchizedek's priesthood and the Levitical priesthood. Genesis 14 says nothing about Melchizedek's lineage, birth, and death, so his priesthood has neither qualifications nor limitations like those of the Levitical priesthood. Thus the phrases "without father, mother, or genealogy" and "having neither beginning of days nor end of life" are understandable and do not contradict Gn 3:20.

7:11 Some see an inconsistency with this verse because they say that the law was given to the Israelites before the Levitical priesthood ever emerged rather than "under it." However, the preposition *epi* can have several other meanings than just "under." For example, the word can also mean "concerning" or "on the basis of." Thus, this verse could also be translated "for the people were given the law *concerning* it." In other words, God's people in the OT had received directives related to the Levitical priests' ministry through the law.

7:24 Mormonism incorrectly claims Melchizedek's priesthood for its faith. Several high offices of the Mormon church supposedly grow out of the Melchizedekan order. The Mormons' doctrine, however, is false because Heb states clearly that Jesus is the only high priest after the order of Melchizedek (3:1; 5:6,10; 6:20; 7:11,15,17,21,24,26; 8:1; 9:11).

8:9 Some skeptics charge that the writer of Hebrews here misquoted Jr 31:32 because Heb 8:9 reads, "I disregarded them" instead of "I had married them" as in the OT. But the NT writer of Heb simply cited the Septuagint (Gk translation of the OT) instead of the Hebrew Bible, and when he did, it became part of Scripture.

9:4 Some see an inconsistency with this verse because it says that the ark contained the tablets of the covenant, a jar of manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, whereas the OT suggests that the latter two objects were placed in the most holy place in front of the ark (e.g., Ex 16:32-34; Nm 17:10-11). However, the writer of Heb seems to have followed a line of rabbinic tradition that presumes that items were subsequently placed in the ark with the tablets. We should also consider the author's remarks in 9:5: "It is not possible to speak about these things in detail right now." The author apparently did not want to divert his focus from the subject matter at hand (perhaps to spell out the matter). Rather, he wanted to explain the tabernacle and its background in relation to the ministry of the OT priests.

9:27 Some skeptics say that this verse teaches that it is appointed for all people to die and thus that it conflicts with verses such as 1 Th 4:16-17, which refer to living saints being taken directly into heaven, and Heb 11:5, which speaks of Enoch not seeing death. But Heb 9:27 does not say that everyone without exception has experienced and will experience death. This cannot be what the author of Heb meant because Enoch had already been taken up by the time Heb was written. Further, death is indeed the normal way one passes from this life to the next. However, if the Lord wants to take some people out of this earthly life and straight up to heaven, then He is certainly within His prerogative to do so, for He " is in heaven and does whatever He pleases" (Ps 115:3).

10:4,11 Some skeptics charge that, if these verses are true, then much of the OT is false. They need to remember, however, that the OT sacrifices, which prefigured Christ's sacrifice, could "sanctify" and "purify" (9:13,23), but they could never remove sin and its guilt; otherwise, they would not have been repeated. The OT sacrifices were able to make worshipers externally, ceremonially clean, but they could never perpetually and effectively cleanse from sin so as to establish right standing before God. Christ's sacrifice, however, is better—it really does cleanse from sin; it takes away sin and its guilt; it is decisive and does not need to be repeated. Jesus is the perfect sacrifice who appeases God's wrath toward our sin. He atones for our sin, taking it upon Himself so that we might be saved by this wonderful grace of God through faith.

10:5 Some skeptics charge that the writer here misquoted Ps 40:6 (39:6 in the Septuagint Gk translation) because 10:5 reads "body" instead of "ears" as in the OT. But the writer simply cited a version of the Septuagint that differs from the Hebrew Bible. Further, the author of Hebrews used synecdoche (the whole for a part), referring to the entire "body" of Yahweh's servant, with "ears" listening carefully to obey God's command.

10:28-29 Some point out that these verses describe an injustice because they say that those who disobeyed the OT were put to death and that it will be much worse for those who reject Jesus. But there is no injustice here. Under the new covenant, those who reject God's work of grace achieved through His Son face much more serious retribution than mere physical death because they have committed a sin with eternal consequences.

10:37 Christ will return in accordance with God's timetable and perspective and not ours.

11:1 Some people object that this is blind faith. In this verse, however, the writer described faith as a conviction of certainty about what cannot be seen. This kind of faith motivated men and women of faith in the past to live for God and trust Him to fulfill His promises.

11:5 Some see a discrepancy in this verse because Jn 3:13 teaches that no one has ever ascended into heaven. But this assertion neglects the fact that John's Gospel has a different context than does Heb 11:5. John was adamant that no one had ascended to heaven so as to return to explain heavenly things, namely, to reveal God the Father to humanity. But Jesus is able to do so because He came from the Father in heaven (see Jn 1:1,14,18). Hebrews 11:5, on the other hand, says that Enoch was taken out of this world without experiencing death (see Gn 5:21-24); his faith was pleasing to God.

11:13 Some ask, "How can OT persons be saved since they never exercised explicit faith in Christ?" This verse provides the answer. Saints in the OT looked forward to the messianic hope and believed in God's promises, which pointed to the future Messiah, Jesus.

11:17 Some see a contradiction in this verse because they argue it says that Abraham had only one son, Isaac, when it is known from other passages (Gn 16:15; Gl 4:22) that he also had a son named Ishmael. This verse can be explained by remembering that Isaac was the promised son on whom the fulfillment of God's pledge of numerous descendants to Abraham depended (Gn 15:1-6; 22:15-18). Thus, in this sense, Ishmael did not count. This conclusion is further borne out by Heb 11:18: "In Isaac your seed will be called" (see Gn 21:12).

11:26 Some see a discrepancy in this verse and ask where Moses trusted in Christ. But OT saints looked forward to the messianic hope and believed in the promises that pointed to Christ (v. 13). And, because of his belief in the coming Messiah, Moses experienced the same kind of rejection that Christ would undergo later.

11:31-32 Some see a contradiction in verse 31 because it says Rahab was saved by faith, whereas Jms 2:25 says that she was saved by works. However, the word for "save" also means to "vindicate" or "authenticate." Thus, the contextual point in Jms is that Rahab's faith was authenticated by her works—i.e., it was shown to be genuine. These verses address different aspects of salvation and do not contradict each other.

One might wonder why Jephthah is remembered in verse 32 for his acts of faith, given that his vow was rash. One should remember, however, that although Jephthah's vow was foolish, it still showed his faith in, and devotion to, God.

12:6-8 Some people argue that the God of the NT is one of love whereas the God of the OT is one of anger. They have difficulty with the idea that a loving God would punish His children. But these verses teach that God benevolently disciplines His children just like any father who loves his children would do. If any professing child of God does not experience such correction, then he has an unregenerate heart and is not genuinely born of God. Further, Hebrews 12:10 teaches that God disciplines His children for their good, so they may share in His holiness.

13:2 Some people argue that it is absurd to believe "some have welcomed angels as guests." The Bible, however, is replete with examples of people who were visited by angels (Gn 22:15; Jdg 6:22; 2 Kg 1:3; 1 Ch 21:15-16; Zch 3:6; 4:4; Mt 1:24; 2:13; Lk 1:11-20; 1:26-38; 2:8-15; Jn 20:12; Ac 5:19-20; etc.). Belief in angels, whether seen or unseen, is difficult only for those who do not believe in God or the truthfulness of Scripture.

13:4 Some persons wrongly see an inconsistency with this verse, which commends marriage, because elsewhere the apostle Paul commended being single above being married (1 Co 7:1,7-8). Paul, however, nowhere condemned marriage but simply said that being unmarried enables one to devote more undistracted time to the Lord (1 Co 7:32-35).

13:20 Skeptics often object that God cannot be a "God of peace" since the OT portrays Him as a God of war who ordered people to be killed. These characteristics, however, are not incompatible. The Lord loves peace, but He also combats unrighteousness and those who act contrary to His purposes. People can be the same way—peaceful by nature but willing to fight when times call for it.

Introduction to James

AUTHOR

The author identifies himself as "James, a slave of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ," suggesting that he was a humble and yet well-known leader. Taking into account the four men named James who appear in the NT, it seems most likely that this book was written by James the half-brother of Jesus (Mt 13:55), who was leader of the Jerusalem church (Ac 15:12-21; Gl 1:19). Support for this conclusion is found in the fact that James the father of Judas (Lk 6:16; Ac 1:13) and James the son of Alphaeus (Mk 3:18) were rather obscure and insignificant figures, while James the apostle, brother of John and son of Zebedee (Mk 1:19; 5:37; 9:2; 10:35; Ac 12:2), had been martyred by the time of writing (Ac 12:2).

Roman Catholic scholars who argue for the perpetual virginity of Mary believe that James the Lord's half-brother was either Joseph's son by a previous marriage or Jesus' cousin. This view, however, has no scriptural support. Joseph and Mary no doubt had children, but they did so after the virgin birth of Jesus, and no evidence exists to indicate that Joseph was formerly married. Further, the Greek word *adelphos* plainly means "brother" and not "cousin."

DATE

James wrote at an early date, likely in the mid-40s. This conclusion is probable because (1) leaders in the church were teachers and elders (3:1; 5:14) rather than bishops and deacons, contrary to later practice; (2) Christians were apparently still meeting in synagogues (2:2); (3) truths found in later NT letters are not mentioned here; (4) the controversy over the necessity of circumcision for believers had apparently not yet taken place.

The place of the letter's origin is unknown. However, assuming that the Lord's half-brother wrote it, he likely did so from Jerusalem.

The designation "To the 12 tribes in the Dispersion" strongly suggests that the recipients were Jewish Christians outside Palestine. These Jewish believers perhaps were scattered outside their homeland due to early persecutions that had arisen in Jerusalem (Ac 8:1-4; 11:19). Further support that the letter's original readers were Jewish Christians is found in the fact that James never brought up issues such as the assimilation of Gentiles into the church. James encouraged his readers to live consistent Christian lives in the midst of persecution for their faith in Christ.

James Study Notes

1:13 Broadly defined, temptation is the enticement to do evil. Satan is the tempter (Mt 4:3; 1 Th 3:5). Beginning with Eve, Satan successfully tempted Adam, Cain, Abraham, and David to sin. He was less successful with Job, and Jesus was "tested in every way as we are, yet without sin" (Heb 4:15). James explained that God cannot be tempted by evil, and He does not tempt anyone. Temptation may be for the purpose of destroying a person through sin leading to death and hell. This is Satan's intent. God may allow testing for the purpose of bringing forth faith and patience, which ultimately honor Him, as in the case of Job. James further explained that a blessing awaits the one who endures temptation (v. 12). The Greek verb, *peirazo,* means both "tempt" and "test."

2:14-26 Many skeptics argue that a contradiction exists between Paul's statement that "a man is justified by faith apart from works" (Rm 3:28; cp. 4:5-6; Gl 2:16) and the teaching of James that "a man is justified by works and not by faith alone" (Jms 2:24). However, these positions actually complement one other.

First, Paul and James addressed different situations. On the one hand, Paul refuted a Jewish legalism holding that one must observe the law's requirements in order to be saved. On the other hand, James opposed an antinomianism that was twisting faith in Christ so much that no expression of works was necessary.

Second, when Paul used the word "justified," he meant "saved" or "declared righteous," whereas James meant "vindicated" or "authenticated." By "works," Paul meant "works of the law," whereas James meant works that faith produces.

In the light of the above, Paul was saying that one is declared righteous by God apart from the works of the law. James, by contrast, was saying that a person's faith produces works that vindicate his faith in Christ as genuine. James used Abraham's willingness to sacrifice Isaac (vv. 21-23; cp. Gn 22:9) and Rahab's protection of the spies (Jms 2:25; cp. Jos 2) as examples to show that their works authenticated the reality of their faith in God. For James, faith without works was clearly worthless; it must be more than words (Jms 2:14-19,26). Authentic faith will bear the fruit of good works.

4:5 Some worry that James was wrong when he quoted an OT scripture that says, "The Spirit He has caused to live in us yearns jealously," because no such verse exists in the Bible. However, he was not citing an OT verse word for word but rather giving a broad summary of several OT statements. Plenty of passages in the OT describe God as jealous and as One who forbids idolatry (e.g., Ex 34:14; Dt 4:23-26; 6:14-15; Jos 24:19-20).

5:12 Skeptics argue that when James stated, "Above all . . . do not swear," he was saying that taking an oath is the worst sin a believer may commit. However, James was instead instructing his readers not to use oaths flippantly to guarantee the truth of their statements (cp. Mt 5:34-37). James's readers were being persecuted by the wicked rich (5:1-6). Consequently, he urged them to be patient until the Lord returned (vv. 7-8) and provided them with three examples of patience to emulate: the farmer (v. 7), the prophets (v. 10), and Job(v. 11). James admonished his readers not to snipe at and complain about one another while enduring trials (v. 9). These believers, above all, were not to deny their Lord in the face of persecution. When asked whether they were Christians by those who would persecute them, James's readers were not to swear to God, to heaven, or to earth, using oaths to support their claims. Rather, when interrogated about their faith, they were simply and sincerely to say yes or no (v. 12). In this way they would not fall under judgment for their sin.

This understanding acts as a climax to James's statement on endurance in verse 11 and makes good sense of the problematic phrase "above all" that he used initially in verse 12.

1 Peter Articles

How Can the Bible Affirm Both Divine Sovereignty and Human Freedom?

by William Lane Craig

The biblical worldview involves a strong conception of divine sovereignty over the world and human affairs even as it presupposes human freedom and responsibility (cp. the accounts of Saul's death in 1 Sm 31:1-6 and 1 Ch 10:8-12). An adequate doctrine of divine providence requires reconciling these two streams of biblical teaching without compromising either. Yet this has proven extraordinarily difficult. On the one hand, the Augustinian-Calvinist perspective interprets divine providence in terms of predetermination, God choosing in advance what will happen. It is hard to see how this interpretation can preserve human freedom or avoid making God the author of sin, since (for example) it would then be He who moved Judas to betray Christ. On the other hand, advocates of revisionist views (e.g., open theism) freely admit that as a consequence of their denial of God's knowledge of future contingent events a strong doctrine of providence becomes impossible. Ironically, in order to account for biblical prophecies of future events, revisionists are often reduced to appealing to the same deterministic explanations that Augustinian-Calvinists offer.

Molinism offers an attractive solution. Luis Molina (1535–1600) defined providence as God's ordering of things to their ends, either directly or indirectly through secondary causes. In explaining how God can order things through secondary causes that are themselves free agents, Molina appealed to his doctrine of divine middle knowledge.

Molina analyzed God's knowledge in terms of three logical stages. Although whatever God knows, He knows eternally, so that there is no temporal succession in God's knowledge, nonetheless there does exist a sort of logical order in God's knowledge in the sense that His knowledge of certain truths is conditionally or explanatorily prior to His knowledge of certain other truths.

In the first stage God knows all possibilities, not only all the creatures He could possibly create, but also all the orders of creatures that are possible. By means of this so-called natural knowledge, God has knowledge of every contingent state of affairs that could possibly be actual and of what any free creature could freely choose to do in any such state of affairs.

In the second stage, God possesses knowledge of all true counterfactual propositions (statements of the form "If *x* were the case, then *y* would be the case"), including counterfactuals about what creatures would freely do in various circumstances. Whereas by His natural knowledge God knew what any free creature *could* do in any set of circumstances, now in this second stage God knows what any free creature *would* freely do in any set of circumstances. This so-called middle knowledge is like natural knowledge in that such knowledge does not depend on any decision of the divine will; God does not determine which counterfactuals are true or false. By knowing how free creatures would freely act in any set of circumstances He might place them in, God thereby knows that if He were to actualize certain states of affairs, then certain other contingent states of affairs would be actual as a result. For example, He knew that if Pontius Pilate were the Roman procurator of Judea in A.D. 30, he would freely condemn Jesus to the cross.

Intervening between the second and third stages of divine knowledge stands God's free decree to actualize a world known by Him to be realizable on the basis of His middle knowledge. By His natural knowledge, God knows the entire range of logically possible worlds; by His middle knowledge He knows, in effect, the proper subset of those worlds that it is feasible for Him to actualize. By a free decision, God decrees to actualize one of those worlds known to Him through His middle knowledge. In so doing He also decrees how He would freely act in any set of circumstances.

Given God's free decision to actualize a world, in the third and final stage God possesses so-called free knowledge of all remaining propositions that are in fact true in the actual world, including future-tense propositions about how creatures will freely behave.

Molina's scheme effects a dramatic reconciliation of divine sovereignty and human freedom. In Molina's view God directly causes certain circumstances to come into being and brings about others indirectly through either causally determined secondary causes or free secondary causes. He allows free creatures to act as He knew they freely would when placed in specific circumstances, and He concurs with their decisions in actualizing the effects they desire. Some of these effects God desired unconditionally and so wills positively that they occur. Others He does not unconditionally desire but He nevertheless permits due to His overriding desire to allow creaturely freedom, knowing that even these sinful acts will fit into the overall scheme of things, so that God's ultimate ends in human history will be accomplished. God thus providentially arranges for everything that happens by either willing or permitting it, and He causes everything that does happen, yet in such a way as to preserve freedom and contingency.

(For another perspective, see the article in Isaiah 45, page 1054.)

What Are the Three Laws of Logic?

by J. P. Moreland

There are three fundamental laws of logic. Suppose P is any indicative sentence, say, "It is raining."

The law of identity: P is P.
The law of noncontradiction: P is not non-P.
The law of the excluded middle: Either P or non-P

The law of identity says that if a statement such as "It is raining" is true, then the statement is true. More generally, it says that the statement P is the same thing as itself and is different from everything else. Applied to all reality, the law of identity says that everything is itself and not something else.

The law of noncontradiction says that a statement such as "It is raining" cannot be both true and false in the same sense. Of course it could be raining in Missouri and not raining in Arizona, but the principle says that it cannot be raining and not raining at the same time in the same place.

The law of the excluded middle says that a statement such as "It is raining" is either true or false. There is no other alternative.

These fundamental laws are true principles governing reality and thought and are assumed by Scripture. Some claim they are arbitrary Western constructions, but this is false. The basic laws of logic govern all reality and thought and are known to be true for at least two reasons: (1) They are intuitively obvious and self-evident. Once one understands a basic law of logic (see below), one can see that it is true. (2) Those who deny them use these principles in their denial, demonstrating that those laws are unavoidable and that it is self-refuting to deny them.

The basic laws of logic are neither arbitrary inventions of God nor principles that exist completely outside God's being. Obviously, the laws of logic are not like the laws of nature. God may violate the latter (say, suspend gravity), but He cannot violate the former. Those laws are rooted in God's own nature. Indeed, some scholars think the passage "In the beginning was the Word [logos]" (Jn 1:1) is accurately translated, "In the beginning was Logic (a divine, rational mind)." For example, even God cannot exist and not exist at the same time, and even God cannot validly believe that red is a color and red is not a color. When people say that God need not behave "logically," they are using the term in a loose sense to mean "the sensible thing from my point of view." Often God does not act in ways that people understand or judge to be what they would do in the circumstances. But God never behaves illogically in the proper sense. He does not violate in His being or thought the fundamental laws of logic.

Introduction to 1 Peter

AUTHOR

First Peter claims to be written by the Apostle Peter (1 Pt 1:1), and there is no good reason to doubt Petrine authorship. The early church fathers also supported Petrine authorship, and there is wide and early evidence to support such a view.

The most debated introductory question for 1–2 Peter and Jude is whether Peter actually wrote 2 Peter. Almost all non-evangelical scholars claim Peter did not write the letter and some who identify themselves as evangelicals agree. Petrine authorship is denied for the following reasons:

(1) Peter used Jude as a source, and the letter of Jude was composed too late to have been used by Peter who died in the 60s. Furthermore, some think that Peter would have never borrowed from a writer like Jude.

(2) The Greek vocabulary and theology in the letter demonstrate that Peter, a Galilean fisherman, could not be the author. The author must be a person familiar with Greek culture. In addition, the style of the letter differs from 1 Peter, demonstrating a different author from the first epistle.

(3) The false teachers in the letter are identified as second-century Gnostics, and obviously Peter could not have written the letter in the second century.

(4) Paul's letters are recognized as Scripture (2 Pt 3:15-16), but Paul's letters could not have been collected together and viewed as Scripture while Peter was alive.

(5) The letter is not quoted by church fathers in the second century, and even in the fourth century its canonicity was under attack.

THE RELIABILITY OF 1 AND 2 PETER

Despite the above arguments, Petrine authorship is still the most convincing view, and is supported by the following arguments.

(1) As good historians, we begin with what the letter itself says, and we discover that the letter claims to be written by the apostle Peter (2 Pt 1:1) himself. He claims that his death is very near (2 Pt 1:14). Even more striking, he claims to have heard and seen Jesus' transfiguration (2 Pt 1:16-18). The author is obviously open to the charge of deception and lying if he was not the apostle.

(2) It is possible that Jude used Peter as a source instead of vice-versa. It seems more likely, though, that Peter did use Jude. In the first century, footnotes were not appended when using other sources, and Peter may have used some of Jude because he thought its contents applied well to his readers.

(3) The claim that the adversaries were second-century Gnostics is not supported from the text of 2 Peter. Gnostics posited cosmological dualism, rejected the material world, and had a defective Christology. None of these elements is clearly present in 2 Peter.

(4) Second Peter 3:15-16 does not indicate that all of Paul's letters were collected and considered to be canonical. Peter obviously knows some of the Pauline letters and thinks they are authoritative, but that should not be equated with a collected canon of Pauline writings. Those who think that praise of Paul by Peter is impossible are too influenced by the old Tübingen hypothesis advanced by F. C. Baur.

(5) The vocabulary and style of 2 Peter are different from 1 Peter, and he does use Hellenistic terms. But this is not a decisive argument against Petrine authorship. We need to remember that the body of Petrine writings is very small. Therefore, judgments about "Petrine style" should be made with the recognition that we do not have enough writings from Peter to form a solid judgment about his style. Peter may have changed his style to address the situation of his readers, just as Paul did in Athens

(Ac 17:16-34). Also, Peter may have asked a secretary to compose the writing, and this may account for the stylistic differences.

(6) The argument that Peter uses a different theology is not convincing either. We need to recall that the letter addresses a particular situation in the life of the churches, and therefore is not a summary of Peter's theology. There is no solid evidence that pseudonymous letters were accepted as canonical. In fact, they were rejected because they were fraudulent and fundamentally deceptive.

THE RELIABILITY OF JUDE

For Jude, the author is identified in the first verse as "Jude, a slave of Jesus Christ, and a brother of James." The James mentioned is almost certainly James, the brother of the Lord Jesus Christ and the author of the letter from James (cp. Ac 15:13-21; 1 Co 15:7; Gl 2:9). We can conclude from this that Jude was well known by his association with his famous brother who played a significant role in the apostolic church. Hence, Jude was also the half-brother of Jesus Christ (Mt 13:55; Mk 6:3). External evidence from the early church also supports the view that Jude, the brother of Jesus, wrote the letter.

Some scholars have argued that another Jude wrote the letter. Calvin identified the author as the Apostle "Judas of James" (Lk 6:16; Ac 1:13). But if this were correct, the author would call himself an apostle. Others have speculated that the writer is "Judas Barsabbas" (Ac 15:22,27,32), but there is no evidence that the latter was James's brother. Even more unlikely is the theory that the author was the apostle Thomas. Still others maintain that the letter is pseudonymous, but support for psuedonymity in canonical writings is lacking. To sum up, there are good reasons to accept the view that Jude, the brother of Jesus, is the author of the letter.

1 Peter Study Notes

1:3-9 Karl Marx complained that religion was the opiate of the people. Did Peter support the comfortable life of oppressors by pacifying those who are suffering with the idea of a heavenly inheritance in the next world?

In answering this question, we need to recall that Peter himself suffered as a Christian, and the tradition that he died for the faith is likely accurate. What we find in 1 Pt, therefore, are not the words of someone with power telling those who are suffering to endure injustice because heaven awaits. We hear the words of someone who suffered along with those he taught. The early Christians did not have political power but rather were at the mercy of governing authorities if the latter turned against them.

What Peter wrote provides no justification for injustice. We distort Peter's words if we say to those suffering under our authority, "Don't worry about suffering. You will be rewarded in heaven." On the other hand, Marx's objection assumes that the heavenly hope is not real. Millions of Christians throughout history have suffered and have had no prospect of worldly happiness. Peter's words provide genuine comfort to all believers who face oppression, for they remind us that unspeakable joy awaits those who belong to Jesus.

2:13-17 Peter, like Paul in Rm 13:1-7, called upon believers to submit to the government. Do words like these support an evil structure such as the racist apartheid system formerly practiced in South Africa?

We need to recall what we noted above. Peter did not address believers who ran the government but believers who lived under the governing authorities. The few short verses here do not constitute a full-scale treatise on the Christian and government. Surely, Peter would have included other admonitions about the need for justice if he had directed his words to political leaders.

Neither should we conclude from these verses that governing authorities are to be obeyed without exception. Peter gave the general principle here, namely that believers should submit to the laws of the land and to the authorities enforcing those laws. But we know from the rest of the Scriptures that exceptions exist. Daniel refused to obey the law prohibiting prayer to Yahweh (Dn 6). The apostles rejected the words of those who tried to prevent them from preaching the gospel (Ac 5:29). Peter did not simplistically endorse whatever the government prescribes.

2:18-25 People today often ask why NT writers did not criticize the institution of slavery or advocate its overthrow. But we must recall the social situation of the young churches in the Roman Empire. They lacked political power and could do nothing to dismantle the institution. In addition, NT writers were not social revolutionaries (see 1 Co 7:17-24). They did not believe that overhauling social structures would transform culture. Their primary concern was the relationship of individuals to God, and they focused on the sin and rebellion of individuals against their Creator. New Testament writers, therefore, did not complain about the oppression imposed by others but concentrated instead on the godly response of believers to mistreatment.

If enough individuals are transformed, of course, society as a whole benefits and the Christian faith begins to function as a leavening influence. We are keenly aware from history that Christians have too often failed to live righteously, and yet we may also fail to see that the Christian faith has been a force for good in Western civilization. History demonstrates the impact of Christian faith upon social structures. One of the consequences, under Christian influence, was the eradication of slavery. Christians, of course, have inflicted evil on others throughout the centuries as well. As sinners, we have left a legacy that is disappointing. A realistic appraisal of history, however, includes both the evil and the good that Christians have accomplished.

It is crucial to note that the NT nowhere commends slavery as a social structure. It nowhere roots it in the created order, as if slavery were an institution ordained by God. The contrast with marriage is remarkable at this point. God ordained the institution of marriage, but slavery was invented by human beings. The NT regulated the institution of slavery as it existed in society, but it did not commend it per se. Hence, Peter's words on slavery should not be interpreted as an endorsement for the system, even if he did not denounce the institution.

3:1-6 Did Peter commend unrighteousness in enjoining wives to submit to their husbands? It may sound that way to modern ears, but submission to another does not signal inequality. The Scriptures clearly teach that women and men are both made in the image of God (Gn 1:26-27); they have equal access to salvation (Gl 3:28); and they share an equal destiny in heaven (1 Pt 3:7). Having a different role from men does not mean that women are inferior to men. Christ, after all, submitted to the Father (1 Co 15:28), but He is equal to the Father in dignity, worth, and essence. Similarly, the submission of wives to husbands does not suggest that they are second rate.

Isn’t That Just Your Interpretation?

by Paul Copan

Few things are more frustrating than carefully presenting reasons for the meaning of a text—biblical or otherwise—only to be casually dismissed with “That’s just your interpretation!” Whether Scripture, history, literature, or politics is under scrutiny, we witness people reducing meaning to personal interpretation or perspective. Who hasn’t heard the Friedrich Nietzche’s line, “There are no facts—only interpretations”?

But isn’t that statement presumed by the speaker to be a fact, not an interpretation? Many claim that conclusions about abortion are just matters of “interpretation” or “perspective,” but they give the impression that if you disagree with them, you’re wrong. To deny objectivity is to assume something is objectively true for all people: “Everything is a matter of interpretation, whether or not you agree with my statement.” We have only two alternatives: triviality (“It’s all perspective, including mine”—so why believe it?) or incoherence (“Everything’s a matter of perspective, except mine”—making a person an exception to his own rule).

Most people appeal to “interpretation” because they don’t like another alternative. “Interpretation” is often a smokescreen for pursuing one’s own agenda or autonomy. To better discern whether this is so, we can ask, “Do you mean that you don’t like my interpretation or that you have good reasons for disagreeing with it?” Other questions worth asking are these: “Can a perspective ever be correct?” “Are some things not a matter of perspective (such as a flat earth versus a round earth)?” “How can you know that your interpretation and my interpretation are actually different?”

Even if we don’t always get things right, we can discern that some perspectives better approximate the truth than others. We generally trust the Wall Street Journal over tabloids, even though good newspapers may be wrong at points. The fact that we can recognize that some interpretations are more plausible than others (and thus are more likely true) indicates that not everything is a matter of interpretation. Therefore, we must be willing to give reasons for the most plausible position. After all, if everything is perspective, how can we distinguish between reasonable and wacky ideas?

Despite our limitations, we still cannot escape objectivity. To deny its possibility is to affirm its actuality. Even the “perspectivist” believes that those disagreeing with him are objectively wrong.

Introduction to 2 Peter

AUTHOR

First Peter claims to be written by the Apostle Peter (1 Pt 1:1), and there is no good reason to doubt Petrine authorship. The early church fathers also supported Petrine authorship, and there is wide and early evidence to support such a view.

The most debated introductory question for 1–2 Peter and Jude is whether Peter actually wrote 2 Peter. Almost all non-evangelical scholars claim Peter did not write the letter and some who identify themselves as evangelicals agree. Petrine authorship is denied for the following reasons:

(1) Peter used Jude as a source, and the letter of Jude was composed too late to have been used by Peter who died in the 60s. Furthermore, some think that Peter would have never borrowed from a writer like Jude.

(2) The Greek vocabulary and theology in the letter demonstrate that Peter, a Galilean fisherman, could not be the author. The author must be a person familiar with Greek culture. In addition, the style of the letter differs from 1 Peter, demonstrating a different author from the first epistle.

(3) The false teachers in the letter are identified as second-century Gnostics, and obviously Peter could not have written the letter in the second century.

(4) Paul's letters are recognized as Scripture (2 Pt 3:15-16), but Paul's letters could not have been collected together and viewed as Scripture while Peter was alive.

(5) The letter is not quoted by church fathers in the second century, and even in the fourth century its canonicity was under attack.

THE RELIABILITY OF 1 AND 2 PETER

Despite the above arguments, Petrine authorship is still the most convincing view, and is supported by the following arguments.

(1) As good historians, we begin with what the letter itself says, and we discover that the letter claims to be written by the apostle Peter (2 Pt 1:1) himself. He claims that his death is very near (2 Pt 1:14). Even more striking, he claims to have heard and seen Jesus' transfiguration (2 Pt 1:16-18). The author is obviously open to the charge of deception and lying if he was not the apostle.

(2) It is possible that Jude used Peter as a source instead of vice-versa. It seems more likely, though, that Peter did use Jude. In the first century, footnotes were not appended when using other sources, and Peter may have used some of Jude because he thought its contents applied well to his readers.

(3) The claim that the adversaries were second-century Gnostics is not supported from the text of 2 Peter. Gnostics posited cosmological dualism, rejected the material world, and had a defective Christology. None of these elements is clearly present in 2 Peter.

(4) Second Peter 3:15-16 does not indicate that all of Paul's letters were collected and considered to be canonical. Peter obviously knows some of the Pauline letters and thinks they are authoritative, but that should not be equated with a collected canon of Pauline writings. Those who think that praise of Paul by Peter is impossible are too influenced by the old Tübingen hypothesis advanced by F. C. Baur.

(5) The vocabulary and style of 2 Peter are different from 1 Peter, and he does use Hellenistic terms. But this is not a decisive argument against Petrine authorship. We need to remember that the body of Petrine writings is very small. Therefore, judgments about "Petrine style" should be made with the recognition that we do not have enough writings from Peter to form a solid judgment about his style. Peter may have changed his style to address the situation of his readers, just as Paul did in Athens

(Ac 17:16-34). Also, Peter may have asked a secretary to compose the writing, and this may account for the stylistic differences.

(6) The argument that Peter uses a different theology is not convincing either. We need to recall that the letter addresses a particular situation in the life of the churches, and therefore is not a summary of Peter's theology. There is no solid evidence that pseudonymous letters were accepted as canonical. In fact, they were rejected because they were fraudulent and fundamentally deceptive.

THE RELIABILITY OF JUDE

For Jude, the author is identified in the first verse as "Jude, a slave of Jesus Christ, and a brother of James." The James mentioned is almost certainly James, the brother of the Lord Jesus Christ and the author of the letter from James (cp. Ac 15:13-21; 1 Co 15:7; Gl 2:9). We can conclude from this that Jude was well known by his association with his famous brother who played a significant role in the apostolic church. Hence, Jude was also the half-brother of Jesus Christ (Mt 13:55; Mk 6:3). External evidence from the early church also supports the view that Jude, the brother of Jesus, wrote the letter.

Some scholars have argued that another Jude wrote the letter. Calvin identified the author as the Apostle "Judas of James" (Lk 6:16; Ac 1:13). But if this were correct, the author would call himself an apostle. Others have speculated that the writer is "Judas Barsabbas" (Ac 15:22,27,32), but there is no evidence that the latter was James's brother. Even more unlikely is the theory that the author was the apostle Thomas. Still others maintain that the letter is pseudonymous, but support for psuedonymity in canonical writings is lacking. To sum up, there are good reasons to accept the view that Jude, the brother of Jesus, is the author of the letter.

2 Peter Study Notes

1:21 Peter claimed that prophets were carried by the Spirit when speaking God's oracles. Some might think this suggests a dictation theory of inspiration. Such a claim can be easily rejected, however, for the verse in 2 Pt does not constitute a complete explanation of inspiration. Further, the verse also emphasizes that *men* spoke from God. Their own personalities were not suppressed in the process. They spoke with all their distinctiveness as human beings and yet also uttered God's words. B. B. Warfield rightly identified what occurred as *concursus*. Both God and human beings were fully involved in the communication of God's Word, and the product is perfect because of God's inspiring work.

3:3-10 One of the earliest apologetic problems in the early church was the issue of Christ's second coming. The apparent delay caused some to question whether He would ever return. Apparently, Peter's opponents asserted that the world would go on as it always had, with no interventions from God. Peter effectively punctured their objections. He reminded them that the world is not eternal. God acted decisively at creation by bringing the world into existence. Moreover, the cataclysm of the flood demonstrates that God does not sit idly by while history progresses. We now await, said Peter, the future destruction of the universe by fire. Finally, the apparent delay is not a postponement from God's perspective since He does not reckon time as we do. A thousand years are like one day to Him, and in any case, the interval before Christ's coming gives people opportunity to repent.

1 John Articles

Notable Christian Apologist: Irenaeus

by Ted Cabal

Irenaeus (c. A.D. 130–200) was born of Greek parents in Asia (modern-day Turkey). In his youth he learned under Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna, who had been a disciple of the Apostle John. As a teenager Irenaeus served as a missionary to Gaul (France), where he later filled the office of bishop. Some later Christian authorities indicate that he was martyred during the reign of Septimius Severus.

Irenaeus was the most important defender of essential Christian doctrine in the second century. He was especially effective in combating the heresy of Gnosticism, a cult that stressed secret knowledge (*gnosis*) as the way to salvation. Irenaeus contended with the gnostic leader Marcion, who taught that the OT and NT reveal two different gods. The god of the OT was the creator of matter, which, according to gnostic teaching, was evil. Thus, according to Marcion, the OT was useless. The NT God, as the God of love, was unknown before the coming of Jesus Christ. Irenaeus powerfully refuted Marcion by demonstrating the interrelationship of the Testaments. He detailed how the OT accurately predicted the coming of Christ. Moreover, Irenaeus stressed the literal resurrection of Jesus. The Redeemer's physical body is not only *not* evil but in fact was raised from the dead for our salvation—precisely as the OT prophets had predicted.

Can a Christian Have Assurance of Salvation?

by Chad Owen Brand

Scripture teaches that Christians are saved by God's grace, which we access by placing our faith in Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of our sins (Rm 3:21-26; Eph 2:8-9). It also teaches that we can persevere in that faith since we are "protected by God's power through faith for a salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time" (1 Pt 1:5). But can we know with assurance that we truly do belong to the Lord and in the end will be resurrected to eternal life? The answer is yes.

The NT writers were convinced that assurance is available to believers. Paul wrote in Romans 8:1, "No condemnation now exists for those in Christ Jesus," and then concluded that chapter's remarkable discussion with this statement in verses 38-39: "I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing will have the power to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord!" John was also convinced that believers can have assurance. He wrote, "This is how we are sure that we have come to know Him: by keeping His commands" (1 Jn 2:3). And again: "We know that we have passed from death to life because we love our brothers. The one who does not love remains in death" (1 Jn 3:14).

How can we receive this assurance? Just as medical technicians test vital signs to look for indicators of health, so there are several "vital sign indicators" in Scripture for spiritual health.

1. The Bible says we are to examine ourselves to see whether we are in the faith (1 Co 9:24-27; 2 Co 13:5). There is nothing wrong, and everything right, with a Christian stopping from time to time and asking the question "Am I doing okay, spiritually?" We are not looking for perfection at such times, just signs that God is making a difference.

2. Are we walking in obedience to God? Those who love Him obey Him (1 Jn 2:3). This is an objective test. Again, we are not looking for perfection, since becoming like Christ is a process that lasts a lifetime (Rm 8:29-30; 1 Jn 3:2). The question is, is obedience to Him what I want more than anything else?

3. Do we have a sense that we truly belong to the Lord and He to us? Scripture teaches that if we are Christians, we have the indwelling Holy Spirit (Rm 8:9), a Spirit who "testifies together with our spirit that we are God's children" (Rm 8:16). It is this same Spirit who enables us to cry out, "*Abba*, Father," to our Father in heaven (Rm 8:15; Gl 4:6).

Scripture gives both objective and subjective vital signs. When it comes down to it, as John Calvin once noted, assurance comes with faith. If we are trusting Jesus alone for salvation, that brings assurance with it.

Is Christian Science Compatible with the Bible?

by Robert B. Stewart

Christian Science (Church of Christ, Scientist) is a religion based primarily upon the New Thought metaphysical theories of Christian Science founder Mary Baker Eddy (1821–1910). It is a rebirth of the ancient gnostic heresy that matter, including disease, is illusory. Still, to the casual observer, it often sounds biblical because of Christian Science's propensity to use (while redefining) Christian terms. For instance, Eddy says in *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* that "the Bible has been my only authority" (126:29-30), that "Divine Science derives its sanction from the Bible" (146:23), and also that the Bible is the "inspired Word" and "our sufficient guide to eternal Life" (497:3-4). Nevertheless, Christian Science rejects the Bible's plain sense in favor of the spiritual interpretations recorded in Mrs. Eddy's writings, *Science and Health*, *Miscellaneous Writings,* and *Manual of the Mother Church*. This becomes clear when she states, "The material record of the Bible . . . is no more important to our well being than the history of Europe and America" (*Miscellaneous Writings*, 170).

A brief perusal of *Science and Health* reveals many contradictions between Christian Science and the Bible. Mrs. Eddy's religion not only reinterprets biblical names (Adam becomes "belief in original sin" [579:8-9], while Abraham refers to "faith in the divine Life and in the eternal Principle of being" [579:10-11]) but also denies key doctrines. It replaces the biblical concept of a triune personal God with a triple principle of "Life, Truth, and Love" (331:26-27). It denies sin: "Man is deathless, spiritual. He is above sin or frailty" (266:29-30). It rejects Christ's sufficient atonement: "The material blood of Jesus was no more efficacious to cleanse from sin when it was shed upon 'the accursed tree,' than when it was flowing in his veins as he went daily about his Father's business" (25:6-9). It even denies Jesus' deity, as it distinguishes between the Christ, "the divine manifestation of God, which comes to the flesh to destroy incarnate error" (583:10-11), and the historical person of Jesus.

By redefining biblical terms, Christian Science denies virtually every cardinal doctrine of Christianity. In no meaningful way can Christian Science be considered compatible with the Bible.

Introduction to 1 John

AUTHOR

First John is anonymous, though the early church consistently ascribed it (as well as 2 and 3 Jn) to the Apostle John. The early church never suggested anyone else as its author. Evidence of John's authorship is strong and consistent, with these as some of the key facts to remember: (1) The author claimed to be an eyewitness of Jesus (1:1-3). (2) First John displays numerous similarities with the Gospel of John in terms of theology, vocabulary, and syntax. (3) Early church leaders Papias, Polycarp, Irenaeus, and Clement of Alexandria all affirmed John the apostle as the author.

In both 2 and 3 John, the author identified himself as "the Elder," and tradition affirms this to be John the apostle, the same person who wrote the first letter of John. Indeed, the obvious similarities in vocabulary, theme, and language have led most modern scholars to argue for common authorship of these three letters, even if they reject the Apostle John as that author. However, the writing style in the two smaller letters is so similar to that of 1 John and the Gospel of John as to assure common authorship.

THEMES OF 1 JOHN

First John was written to a group of churches in crisis—churches being attacked by false teaching (cp. 2:18-28; 4:1-6; 5:6-7). Some individuals once associated with the Christian community had adopted heretical doctrine, particularly as it related to beliefs about Christ, and had left the church (2:19). In response John wrote his first letter with two primary objectives. First, he wrote to combat the propaganda of the false teachers. Second, he wrote to reassure believers.

Doctrinally, the false teachers compromised the person and work of Jesus Christ, refusing to confess Jesus of Nazareth as the Christ (2:22) and denying that the Son had come in the flesh (4:2-3). Most likely these false teachers were influenced by early gnostic ideas. Although Gnosticism took many forms, it usually emphasized the essential goodness of spirit and the inherent evil or inferiority of matter. Influenced by this type of understanding, these false teachers may have viewed Christ as some type of spirit or phantom. Combined with this faulty view of the person of Christ was a deficient view of His death. First John contains specific statements that emphasize the atoning results of Christ's death (2:2; 4:10).

Morally, the false teachers minimized the seriousness of sin (1:6-10). They claimed that it was possible to have fellowship with God regardless of one's behavior (1:6). In contrast, John insists that one's relationship to God has serious ethical implications (cp. 2:3-4).

Socially, these heretics failed because their spiritual pride resulted in a lack of love (2:9,11). John argues that love for other believers is a manifestation of genuine Christianity (3:14; 4:7-21).

Turning to his objective of reassuring believers, John reminds his churches of the truthfulness of Christianity that they had received in the beginning. He wants them to know that they have eternal life (5:13). He provides his readers with tests by which they can reassure themselves that they are in the truth (1 Jn 1:5–2:2; 2:3-11; 3:7-10,14-15; 4:4-6-8,13-15; 5:13,18-20).

John addresses assurance with both an objective and a subjective apologetic. Objectively, believers know the historicity and reality of Jesus Christ's life and work. The events of His life were observed by eyewitnesses and passed on (1:1-3). Similarly, those who have trusted God's Son possess eternal life (5:12). Subjectively, Christians know that their lives have been transformed through faith in Christ (5:13).

THEMES OF 2 JOHN

Second John is the second shortest book in the NT. It is only 245 words in the Greek text, and it would easily fit on a single piece of papyrus. Today we might call it (and 3 Jn) a "postcard epistle." It is an excellent example of hortatory (or exhortation) discourse. The "elect lady," most likely a

reference to a local church, must continue to walk in the truth, love one another, and be on guard against false teachers (the deceiver and the antichrist of v. 7). They must not extend hospitality to those who deny "the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh" (v. 7).

John builds this epistle around key words that tie the letter together. He utilizes a very rare word, "antichrist," which appears in Scripture only in 1 and 2 John (1 Jn 2:18,22; 4:3; 2 Jn 7), as a term describing false teachers.

John tells his children to (1) walk in the truth, (2) obey the commandments,
(3) love one another, and (4) guard the teachings of Christ and they will not be deceived by the antichrist. The spiritual safety of the believing community is confidently affirmed, as John begins and ends his letter with a reference to their chosen position (vv. 1,13).

THEMES OF 3 JOHN

Third John is the shortest book in both the NT and the Bible. It is only 219 words in the Greek text. It and 2 John are rightly described as "twin epistles," though they are rightly viewed as fraternal and not identical.

Third John is a personal letter that revolves around three individuals: Gaius (the recipient), Diotrephes (the troubler), and Demetrius (probably the bearer of the letter). It contains a word of exhortation to Gaius encouraging him not to imitate the bad example of Diotrephes but to continue the good work he is doing of receiving and supporting the traveling teachers/missionaries.

The elder is understandably concerned that his authority is being challenged. He fears the power play of Diotrephes may succeed and that others might be influenced by him. He will come if necessary for a face-to-face meeting where he will personally deal with the situation. In the meantime, John seeks to enlist the support of Gaius. He praises him for his past performance and encourages him to keep it up. Demetrius comes to Gaius both as the bearer of the letter and as a reinforcement in the crisis. Third John provides insight into a personality conflict that arose at the end of the first century and the strategy adopted by the elder to resolve it.

1 John Study Notes

1:1-3 John affirmed both Jesus' humanity and His deity. His defense is empirical. John was an eyewitness of Jesus of Nazareth. He had heard, seen, and touched Him. This latter idea of touching may seem somewhat strange, but not when it is considered against the backdrop of the heresy about Jesus that John was countering. Doceticism (from the Greek word *dokein*, meaning "to appear") denied the incarnation of the Son of God. John countered this with an apologetic rooted in the fact that he had carefully observed the life and ministry of Jesus.

1:5 John claimed his teaching came from Jesus Himself. The message affirms that the God who is morally pure and holy has revealed Himself to humanity. It is possible to know the true God (5:20).

1:6–2:17 John here addressed what could be called a lifestyle apologetic. He recognized that the credibility of the message cannot be separated from the lives of those who proclaim that message. This lifestyle includes walking in the light (1:7), confessing sin (1:9), growing in holiness (2:1), keeping God's commandments (2:3-6), loving one another (2:7-11), and hating the things of the world and the flesh, or sinful nature (2:15-17).

2:1-2 Jesus Christ is both our advocate and our atonement. The word "propitiation" is the Greek work *hilasmos,* and it occurs only here and in 4:10, but a related Greek term occurs in Rm 3:25 and Heb 2:17. Some interpreters prefer the term "expiation" (meaning "remove"), rejecting any idea of God's wrath against sinful persons as pagan and unbecoming of the Christian God of love. However, it must be pointed out that (1) propitiation (or satisfaction) is the most basic meaning of the word and (2) it is God who propitiates Himself. God's justice demands satisfaction. God's love provided that satisfaction.

2:8 This world or age of darkness is already passing away (v. 17), having been dealt a deathblow by the death and resurrection of Jesus. Those who live in the realm of light (1) love others (v. 10), (2) know forgiveness (v. 12), and (3) have overcome Satan (vv. 13-14).

2:18 The "last hour" is an eschatological term referring to the time that began when the Son of God entered this world. The end of this hour will commence with the coming of the Antichrist (v. 22; 4:3; 2 Jn 7). In the meantime "many antichrists" are seeking to subvert the message of Christ.

2:20 John used "anointing" to refer to the work of the Holy Spirit in conversion.

2:22-23 Those who do the work of antichrists are always wrong in their Christology. They will deny the reality of the incarnation and Jesus as the God-man, and they will attack His work of atonement on the cross. The exclusive nature of salvation in Jesus could not be more clear (see Jn 14:6; Ac 4:12; 1 Tm 2:5).

3:1-3 The Christian hope is rooted in the resurrection. Christianity is not a dualism, viewing the spirit as good and the body as evil. We will be raised with Christ and will be granted a resurrected, glorified body just like His (see 1 Co 15).

3:8 John, like Jesus, believed in the reality of the devil.

4:1-6 John saw a war raging in the unseen world between the Spirit of God and the spirit of Antichrist.

5:1-5 Real Christianity is evidenced by (1) right belief (vv. 1,5), (2) obedience to God (vv. 2-3), and (3) love (vv. 1-3).

5:13 John began this final section by restating his purpose statement. He wrote 1 Jn to Christians. He wanted them to have assurance that they possessed eternal life.

5:21 With this warning against idolatry, the author could have been warning his audience against deception by the false teachers (2:26; 3:7; 2 Jn 7). Since these heretics had adopted an inadequate view of Jesus Christ, they had in essence replaced orthodox Christianity with a form of idolatry. Thus John concluded this letter with encouragement for believers (5:18-20) and a warning against heresy (v. 21).

2 John Articles

What Are Common Characteristics of the New Religious Movements?

by Leonard G. Goss

New religions" or "alternative religions" are breakaways from larger, more traditional religions. They break down into self-improvement groups, Eastern religions or thought systems, unification groups, and Christian deviation sects. Many of these new religions had Christian roots, but have departed from historic biblical Christianity and discarded one or more of Christianity's basic beliefs. What they have left behind is something that decidedly is not Christianity. Jesus said, "Beware of false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravaging wolves" (Mt 7:15).

Viewed through the lens of biblical teaching, each new religion abandons orthodox Christian tenets at one point or another (and usually at many different points). Latter-day Saints (Mormons), for example, have parted company with the Christian tradition in multiple ways, but perhaps the most dramatic is their teaching that the church founded by Jesus and the apostles was destroyed from human history by the time of Constantine. Hence, the LDS church was founded to once again represent the exclusive truth and to rescue the Christian religion from total apostasy. The Unification Church (Moonies) also departs from biblical teaching and undermines Christian thinking in dozens of different ways, most notably in claiming their founder is God's messiah and messenger who will fulfill the work of Jesus. This is a serious heresy found in many of the new religions, and the Apostle Paul warned about following after "another Jesus" who is not the same Jesus revealed in Scripture (2 Co 11:4). Other examples are The Way International, a group where the leader's interpretation of the Bible is considered the only valid interpretation and is in fact *the* Word. The Children of God, sometimes called the Family of Love, believes all mainline Christian churches are as anti-Christian as organizations that do not profess Christianity. The basic belief of this sect is that its members are the only true Christians and obedient servants left on earth. Many other new religious groups could be mentioned, but one last example would be Eckankar, one of the mystical new religions, which teaches out-of-the-body travels (bilocation) and replaces Jesus Christ with the group's founder as the incarnation of God on earth and teaches that only through their group can an individual find ultimate truth.

This small sampling of new religions shows how very different these movements can be, and therefore it is not easy to suggest that each new religion looks the same or possesses the same theological, sociological, psychological, and moral characteristics. Although each new religious belief system deviates drastically and in individual ways from conventional, historic Christianity, still there are some common characteristics to look for in the new movements. Here is a list of warning signs and danger zones, along with some representative groups displaying these characteristics noted in parentheses:

(1) The group is almost always outside the mainstream of dominant religious forms and culture and displays an oppositional style and substance, meaning it is elitist and exclusionist. (Church of Scientology, Global Family, Unification Church, The Walk/Church of the Living Word, The Way International)

(2) Often there is a "new authority" or new revelation besides the Bible from which adherents to the group must find ultimate truths. (Christian Science, International Community of Christ/the Jamilians, Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormonism, Unification Church)

(3) On the other hand, some groups do not claim to have a new, extra-biblical revelation; instead, a group may claim "all we use is the Bible." But the Bible is reinterpreted to justify and defend false

teachings. (Alamo Christian Foundation, Children of God/Family of Love)

(4) The group is comprised of lay people; there are no paid clergy or professional religious functionaries. (Fundamentalist Army, Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormonism)

(5) The group is focused around a central figure who is a prophet-founder "chosen" by God to deliver a special message to the modern world that is not found in the Bible, has not been known to genuine Christians throughout all church history, or to recover the teaching of the ancient church that has been lost through the centuries. (Christian Science, The Farm, Jehovah's Witnesses, Scientology, Unification Church)

(6) This leader is usually a charismatic figure, and often the style of his or her leadership is authoritarian. (Children of God/Family of Love, Church of the Living Word, Yahwism)

(7) Often the group teaches that the Bible foretold the coming of its particular group or leader. (Branch Davidians, Children of God/Family of Love, The Farm, Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormonism, Unification Church, The Walk/Church of the Living Word)

(8) The group thinks of its belief system as the last bastion of God's work on earth. The adherents are God's "final and last group" and they play a central role in the last things. The truth of all things spiritual is exclusive with them and the world is doomed without them. (Jehovah's Witnesses, University Bible Fellowship)

(9) The group believes its adherents are being persecuted. (Alamo Christian Foundation, Healthy Happy Holy Organization, the Truth Station, Unification Church)

(10) The group might engage in some form of predatory and destructive recruitment of new members with vigor, zeal, and high pressure, often deceiving recruits or not revealing their whole theology. (Alamo Christian Foundation, Unification Church, the Way International)

(11) The group sanctions wayward and rebellious members. (Church of Armageddon, Divine Light Mission, Jehovah's Witnesses, People's Temple)

(12) The group believes that God is a force or power, not a person who relates to the creation. (Christian Science, Unity School of Christianity)

(13) The group is fixated on eschatology (end times) and is usually apocalyptic in its teaching. (Branch Davidians, Children of God/Family of Love, Jehovah's Witnesses, People's Temple)

(14) The lifestyle of the group's members is highly legalistic. (Alamo Christian Foundation, the Christ Family, Church of Armageddon, Maranatha Christian Church)

(15) Sometimes the group has a notion that a communal organization is necessary to fulfill the human calling. Therefore, there is usually a tightly maintained autocratic organization which governs both spiritual and everyday life. Some dictate modes of dress, length of hair, the type of personal adornment that is permitted, and sometimes even marriage partners. (Alamo Christian Foundation, Forever Family/Church of Bible Understanding, Church Universal and Triumphant, Forever Family/Church of Bible Understanding, The Walk)

(16) The group engages in strange rituals and mindless chanting. (Church Universal and Triumphant, Penitentes/Brothers of Our Father Jesus)

(17) The group emphasizes secondary issues and minor points of theology. (Christian Science, Jehovah's Witnesses)

(18) The group members are very often taught that they can have direct revelations and visions from God. (Mormonism, Swedenborgianism, Unification Church)

(19) The group claims that it is compatible or in harmony with the Bible and traditional Christianity, but in fact it reduces and discounts the Bible or otherwise adds to the revelation of Scripture. (Christian Science, Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormonism, People's Temple, Unification Church)

(20) The group has usurped traditional Christian vocabulary, but has redefined and reinterpreted terms and concepts from the Bible—making its words do "double-duty" in order to defend aberrant doctrines. Their language is pliable and has no fixed meaning. (Christian Science, Mormonism, Unity School of Christianity)

(21) The group denies at least one central truth of Christianity—such as the work of Christ on the cross, the authority of the Scriptures, salvation by grace through faith, the bodily resurrection, the doctrine of eternal punishment, etc. (Alamo Christian Foundation, Branch Davidians, International Community of Christ/the Jamilians, Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormonism, Swedenborgianism—the Church of the New Jerusalem, Unification Church, Unitarian Universalists)

(22) The group denies both the doctrine of the Trinity and the Incarnation. (Anthroposophical Society, Children of God/Family of Love, Christian Science, Eckankar, Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormonism, United Pentecostal Church, The Way)

(23) The group recognizes Jesus as a great teacher and leader, an avatar, a wise man, even as the most important of God's created beings—but does not believe that Jesus is both fully human and fully divine. (Unification Church, The United Pentecostal Church, The Way International)

(24) The group teaches a "salvation through works" system whereby members must ultimately save themselves. (Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormonism)

(25) The group emphasizes experience over basic Christian doctrine. (Alamo Christian Foundation, Children of God/Family of Love, Divine Light Mission, est, Lifespring, Mormonism, Urantia, The Walk/Church of the Living Word)

(26) The group is mystical and individualistically oriented. (Church Universal and Triumphant, Foundation of Human Understanding, New Testament Missionary Fellowship)

(27) The group dabbles in the occult and spiritism. (Anthroposophical Society, Children of God/Family of Love, Mormonism, Unification Church, The Walk)

Christians must recognize that our spiritual enemy is not the new religion but, rather, Satan (2 Co 11:12-15).

Introduction to 2 John

AUTHOR

First John is anonymous, though the early church consistently ascribed it (as well as 2 and 3 Jn) to the Apostle John. The early church never suggested anyone else as its author. Evidence of John's authorship is strong and consistent, with these as some of the key facts to remember: (1) The author claimed to be an eyewitness of Jesus (1:1-3). (2) First John displays numerous similarities with the Gospel of John in terms of theology, vocabulary, and syntax. (3) Early church leaders Papias, Polycarp, Irenaeus, and Clement of Alexandria all affirmed John the apostle as the author.

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THEMES OF 1 JOHN

First John was written to a group of churches in crisis—churches being attacked by false teaching (cp. 2:18-28; 4:1-6; 5:6-7). Some individuals once associated with the Christian community had adopted heretical doctrine, particularly as it related to beliefs about Christ, and had left the church (2:19). In response John wrote his first letter with two primary objectives. First, he wrote to combat the propaganda of the false teachers. Second, he wrote to reassure believers.

Doctrinally, the false teachers compromised the person and work of Jesus Christ, refusing to confess Jesus of Nazareth as the Christ (2:22) and denying that the Son had come in the flesh (4:2-3). Most likely these false teachers were influenced by early gnostic ideas. Although Gnosticism took many forms, it usually emphasized the essential goodness of spirit and the inherent evil or inferiority of matter. Influenced by this type of understanding, these false teachers may have viewed Christ as some type of spirit or phantom. Combined with this faulty view of the person of Christ was a deficient view of His death. First John contains specific statements that emphasize the atoning results of Christ's death (2:2; 4:10).

Morally, the false teachers minimized the seriousness of sin (1:6-10). They claimed that it was possible to have fellowship with God regardless of one's behavior (1:6). In contrast, John insists that one's relationship to God has serious ethical implications (cp. 2:3-4).

Socially, these heretics failed because their spiritual pride resulted in a lack of love (2:9,11). John argues that love for other believers is a manifestation of genuine Christianity (3:14; 4:7-21).

Turning to his objective of reassuring believers, John reminds his churches of the truthfulness of Christianity that they had received in the beginning. He wants them to know that they have eternal life (5:13). He provides his readers with tests by which they can reassure themselves that they are in the truth (1 Jn 1:5–2:2; 2:3-11; 3:7-10,14-15; 4:4-6-8,13-15; 5:13,18-20).

John addresses assurance with both an objective and a subjective apologetic. Objectively, believers know the historicity and reality of Jesus Christ's life and work. The events of His life were observed by eyewitnesses and passed on (1:1-3). Similarly, those who have trusted God's Son possess eternal life (5:12). Subjectively, Christians know that their lives have been transformed through faith in Christ (5:13).

THEMES OF 2 JOHN

Second John is the second shortest book in the NT. It is only 245 words in the Greek text, and it would easily fit on a single piece of papyrus. Today we might call it (and 3 Jn) a "postcard epistle." It is an excellent example of hortatory (or exhortation) discourse. The "elect lady," most likely a

reference to a local church, must continue to walk in the truth, love one another, and be on guard against false teachers (the deceiver and the antichrist of v. 7). They must not extend hospitality to those who deny "the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh" (v. 7).

John builds this epistle around key words that tie the letter together. He utilizes a very rare word, "antichrist," which appears in Scripture only in 1 and 2 John (1 Jn 2:18,22; 4:3; 2 Jn 7), as a term describing false teachers.

John tells his children to (1) walk in the truth, (2) obey the commandments,
(3) love one another, and (4) guard the teachings of Christ and they will not be deceived by the antichrist. The spiritual safety of the believing community is confidently affirmed, as John begins and ends his letter with a reference to their chosen position (vv. 1,13).

THEMES OF 3 JOHN

Third John is the shortest book in both the NT and the Bible. It is only 219 words in the Greek text. It and 2 John are rightly described as "twin epistles," though they are rightly viewed as fraternal and not identical.

Third John is a personal letter that revolves around three individuals: Gaius (the recipient), Diotrephes (the troubler), and Demetrius (probably the bearer of the letter). It contains a word of exhortation to Gaius encouraging him not to imitate the bad example of Diotrephes but to continue the good work he is doing of receiving and supporting the traveling teachers/missionaries.

The elder is understandably concerned that his authority is being challenged. He fears the power play of Diotrephes may succeed and that others might be influenced by him. He will come if necessary for a face-to-face meeting where he will personally deal with the situation. In the meantime, John seeks to enlist the support of Gaius. He praises him for his past performance and encourages him to keep it up. Demetrius comes to Gaius both as the bearer of the letter and as a reinforcement in the crisis. Third John provides insight into a personality conflict that arose at the end of the first century and the strategy adopted by the elder to resolve it.

2 John Study Notes

1 The author stated that he loved "in truth." The author's love was consistent with the truth of the Christian message that he and his readers had received. This emphasis on truth shows that authentic Christian love involves more than sentimentality.

4 To walk in truth includes accepting the truth of the Christian message and obeying it. Here it refers specifically to loving one another (vv. 5-6) and confessing Jesus Christ as come in the flesh (v. 7; cp. 1 Jn 4:3).

7 John confronted the danger of false teachers. Believers must not simply love (vv. 5-6), they must also maintain the truth (vv. 7-11). John described these "antichrists" as people with an inadequate understanding of Jesus Christ.

8 John warned his readers, "Watch yourselves," which means "Watch out." He stated the purpose of this vigilance both negatively and positively: to avoid losing "what we have worked for" and to "receive a full reward" for faithful service.

10 "Do not receive him into your home" refers to hospitality that goes beyond a mere greeting and includes the provision of lodging and other necessities. Rudeness is never appropriate. However, we are not to lend aid to false teachers. The prohibition includes exclusion from fellowship as well as the refusal to ask God's blessing upon such a heretic.

Introduction to 3 John

AUTHOR

First John is anonymous, though the early church consistently ascribed it (as well as 2 and 3 Jn) to the Apostle John. The early church never suggested anyone else as its author. Evidence of John's authorship is strong and consistent, with these as some of the key facts to remember: (1) The author claimed to be an eyewitness of Jesus (1:1-3). (2) First John displays numerous similarities with the Gospel of John in terms of theology, vocabulary, and syntax. (3) Early church leaders Papias, Polycarp, Irenaeus, and Clement of Alexandria all affirmed John the apostle as the author.

In both 2 and 3 John, the author identified himself as "the Elder," and tradition affirms this to be John the apostle, the same person who wrote the first letter of John. Indeed, the obvious similarities in vocabulary, theme, and language have led most modern scholars to argue for common authorship of these three letters, even if they reject the Apostle John as that author. However, the writing style in the two smaller letters is so similar to that of 1 John and the Gospel of John as to assure common authorship.

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3 John Study Notes

1 The letter is addressed to a man named Gaius. Since this was one of the most common names in the Roman world, he is impossible to identify.

4 To walk in truth implies a course of conduct or life, that is, "living in the truth." The importance of both doctrinal integrity and spiritual vitality is evident in John's affirmation that nothing brought greater joy to him than to know that his children were "walking in the truth."

6-8 John encouraged Gaius to continue his hospitality toward these missionaries. Such a ministry was important because these ministers were laboring on behalf of God. Underlying this discussion is a contrast between Christian missionaries and false teachers. An individual who welcomes a false teacher basically shares in his evil deeds (v. 11), but those who receive Christian missionaries are "co-workers with the truth" (v. 8).

9-10 Most likely the words "I wrote" refer to a previous letter that is now lost. This letter probably contained instructions from John that Diotrephes disregarded. Diotrephes, a man of influence and authority in the church, evidently was hostile to the Apostle John. The nature of his rebellion was observable in three distinct areas: (1) he loved to be in the first position; (2) he spread malicious gossip about John; and (3) failing to be content with those evil actions, he refused to receive believers from other assemblies and cast out of the church those who did receive the brethren. The sins of pride, gossip, and intolerance are frequently found together, and they compromise our witness to thegospel.

Jude Articles

Isn't Christianity Intolerant?

by Paul Copan

Unless we're talking about language development, it's a good idea to understand words before we use them, especially when they may be emotionally charged. One commonly used—and abused—word describing Christians is *intolerant*. Of course, some prickly, pugnacious persons call themselves Christians but deny this claim by their lives. True Christianity shouldn't be equated with abuses committed in Christ's name. Think of Mother Teresa, not the Inquisition! Without compromising their convictions, all Christians should—as much as possible—live at peace with everyone (Rm 12:18).

Today people assume *tolerance* means "accepting all views as true." And because genuine Christians don't do this, they are charged with being *in*tolerant.

Whenever you hear Christians criticized as intolerant, ask, "What do you mean by 'intolerance'?" True tolerance doesn't mean accepting all beliefs—the good and the goofy—as legitimate. After all, one who disagrees with Christians doesn't accept Christianity; he thinks Christians are wrong! Historically, tolerance has meant putting up with what you find disagreeable or false. You put up with strangers on a plane who snore or slurp their coffee. Similarly, you put up with another person's beliefs without criminalizing him.

Tolerance differentiates between beliefs and persons. While disagreeing with certain beliefs, we can show respect to persons holding those beliefs, since all humans are made in God's image and inherently deserve respect. Furthermore, Christianity's truth doesn't imply that non-Christians are 100 percent wrong. Christians can agree with non-Christians about, say, certain ethical truths and scientific findings. All truth is God's truth. Truth is more basic than tolerance since tolerance itself presupposes belief in truth.

Tolerance operates at different levels. What can be tolerated in one area may not be tolerated in another. I'll tolerate certain behaviors in other children that I won't tolerate in my own. Christians shouldn't tolerate adultery within the church (ecclesiastical intolerance), but this doesn't mean we seek to have the adulterer imprisoned (legal intolerance).

Condemning arrogance, Christianity emphasizes grace and humility. Some "Christians" think they're superior to non-Christians. But this violates the spirit of the gospel. We gratefully receive God's gift of salvation, being like beggars telling other beggars where to find bread. Unlike the manager of some exclusive country club, God lovingly invites everyone to participate in His family—and not at the expense of truth.

Introduction to Jude

AUTHOR

First Peter claims to be written by the Apostle Peter (1 Pt 1:1), and there is no good reason to doubt Petrine authorship. The early church fathers also supported Petrine authorship, and there is wide and early evidence to support such a view.

The most debated introductory question for 1–2 Peter and Jude is whether Peter actually wrote 2 Peter. Almost all non-evangelical scholars claim Peter did not write the letter and some who identify themselves as evangelicals agree. Petrine authorship is denied for the following reasons:

(1) Peter used Jude as a source, and the letter of Jude was composed too late to have been used by Peter who died in the 60s. Furthermore, some think that Peter would have never borrowed from a writer like Jude.

(2) The Greek vocabulary and theology in the letter demonstrate that Peter, a Galilean fisherman, could not be the author. The author must be a person familiar with Greek culture. In addition, the style of the letter differs from 1 Peter, demonstrating a different author from the first epistle.

(3) The false teachers in the letter are identified as second-century Gnostics, and obviously Peter could not have written the letter in the second century.

(4) Paul's letters are recognized as Scripture (2 Pt 3:15-16), but Paul's letters could not have been collected together and viewed as Scripture while Peter was alive.

(5) The letter is not quoted by church fathers in the second century, and even in the fourth century its canonicity was under attack.

THE RELIABILITY OF 1 AND 2 PETER

Despite the above arguments, Petrine authorship is still the most convincing view, and is supported by the following arguments.

(1) As good historians, we begin with what the letter itself says, and we discover that the letter claims to be written by the apostle Peter (2 Pt 1:1) himself. He claims that his death is very near (2 Pt 1:14). Even more striking, he claims to have heard and seen Jesus' transfiguration (2 Pt 1:16-18). The author is obviously open to the charge of deception and lying if he was not the apostle.

(2) It is possible that Jude used Peter as a source instead of vice-versa. It seems more likely, though, that Peter did use Jude. In the first century, footnotes were not appended when using other sources, and Peter may have used some of Jude because he thought its contents applied well to his readers.

(3) The claim that the adversaries were second-century Gnostics is not supported from the text of 2 Peter. Gnostics posited cosmological dualism, rejected the material world, and had a defective Christology. None of these elements is clearly present in 2 Peter.

(4) Second Peter 3:15-16 does not indicate that all of Paul's letters were collected and considered to be canonical. Peter obviously knows some of the Pauline letters and thinks they are authoritative, but that should not be equated with a collected canon of Pauline writings. Those who think that praise of Paul by Peter is impossible are too influenced by the old Tübingen hypothesis advanced by F. C. Baur.

(5) The vocabulary and style of 2 Peter are different from 1 Peter, and he does use Hellenistic terms. But this is not a decisive argument against Petrine authorship. We need to remember that the body of Petrine writings is very small. Therefore, judgments about "Petrine style" should be made with the recognition that we do not have enough writings from Peter to form a solid judgment about his style. Peter may have changed his style to address the situation of his readers, just as Paul did in Athens

(Ac 17:16-34). Also, Peter may have asked a secretary to compose the writing, and this may account for the stylistic differences.

(6) The argument that Peter uses a different theology is not convincing either. We need to recall that the letter addresses a particular situation in the life of the churches, and therefore is not a summary of Peter's theology. There is no solid evidence that pseudonymous letters were accepted as canonical. In fact, they were rejected because they were fraudulent and fundamentally deceptive.

THE RELIABILITY OF JUDE

For Jude, the author is identified in the first verse as "Jude, a slave of Jesus Christ, and a brother of James." The James mentioned is almost certainly James, the brother of the Lord Jesus Christ and the author of the letter from James (cp. Ac 15:13-21; 1 Co 15:7; Gl 2:9). We can conclude from this that Jude was well known by his association with his famous brother who played a significant role in the apostolic church. Hence, Jude was also the half-brother of Jesus Christ (Mt 13:55; Mk 6:3). External evidence from the early church also supports the view that Jude, the brother of Jesus, wrote the letter.

Some scholars have argued that another Jude wrote the letter. Calvin identified the author as the Apostle "Judas of James" (Lk 6:16; Ac 1:13). But if this were correct, the author would call himself an apostle. Others have speculated that the writer is "Judas Barsabbas" (Ac 15:22,27,32), but there is no evidence that the latter was James's brother. Even more unlikely is the theory that the author was the apostle Thomas. Still others maintain that the letter is pseudonymous, but support for psuedonymity in canonical writings is lacking. To sum up, there are good reasons to accept the view that Jude, the brother of Jesus, is the author of the letter.

Jude Study Notes

9,15 Jude alluded to traditions found in pseudepigraphal works (*The Assumption of Moses* and/or *The Testament of Moses*) in recounting a dispute over the burial of Moses in verse 9. And in verses 14-15, he cited a text from the pseudepigraphal 1 Enoch. (A pseudipigraphical work is one written under the name of another—in these cases, Moses and Enoch.) We will concentrate on the citation from 1 Enoch here since the issue is more difficult because Jude actually quoted from the book and claimed that "Enoch . . . prophesied" (v. 14).

Some think that Jude actually quoted from the historical Enoch, a man who was taken up to heaven before death (Gn 5:23-24). It is difficult to see, though, how Jude could have cited an actual oral tradition from the historical Enoch since the book of Enoch was in circulation in Jude's day and was well known in Jewish circles. Jude almost certainly derived the citation from the book of 1 Enoch, and the latter is clearly pseudepigraphical. We would be faced with having to say that Jude knew that this specific quotation from 1 Enoch derived from the historical Enoch. It is better to conclude that Jude quoted the pseudepigraphical Enoch and that he also believed that the portion he quoted represents God's truth. Jude's wording does not demand that he thought we have an authentic oracle from the historical Enoch.

We do not need to conclude, however, that the entire book should be part of the canon of Scripture (cp. Augustine, *City of God* 15.23). Jude probably cited a part of 1 Enoch that he considered to be a genuine prophecy. Perhaps he referred to Enoch because the adversaries treasured the work, and therefore he used their ammunition against them. It is possible that the false teachers rejected Christian tradition about Christ's coming and hence Jude cited the prophecy from Enoch. Indeed, the content of the prophecy is not remarkable, assuring the readers that the Lord will truly judge the ungodly.

Citing a quotation from another source does not indicate that the entire work is inspired, even if the saying drawn upon is true. For instance, Paul quoted Aratus (*Phaenomena* 5) in Ac 17:28, and he surely did not intend to teach that the entire work is inspired Scripture. Similarly, he quoted Epimenides in Ti 1:12, without any notion that he accepted the truth of the whole work.

Some might think that the citation here is different because Jude said Enoch "prophesied." The verb "prophesy" is sometimes used to designate canonical Scripture (Mt 15:7; 1 Pt 1:10). But the verb is also used to say that a certain utterance or saying is from God. For example, Caiaphas prophesied regarding the fate of Jesus, even though he was an unbeliever (Jn 11:51). Zechariah prophesied when the Spirit filled him at the Baptist's birth (Lk 1:67). Women prophesied when the believing church gathered as well (1 Co 11:4-5; cp. Ac 19:6; Rv 11:3). A prophecy may derive from God and still not be a part of canonical Scripture. We cannot necessarily draw the conclusion from the words "Enoch prophesied" that the work was considered to be Scripture. It would have been more telling if Jude had used the phrase "It is written" with reference to 1 Enoch. Jude simply drew from a part of the work that he considered true.

We know that the Qumran community valued1 Enoch but did not include the book in its canon of Scripture. Nor do any major Christian groups consider 1 Enoch to be inspired Scripture today. Jude cited it for its truth, but he did not claim inspiration for the entire work.

Revelation Articles

Does the Bible Teach That Humans Are More Than Their Bodies?

by J. P. Moreland

Throughout history most Christians have believed in "the souls of men and beasts," to take an expression from Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz. Animals and humans are composed of an immaterial entity—a soul—and a body. The main biblical emphasis is on the functional, holistic unity of a human being. But this unity includes a dualist distinction of body and soul. The human soul, while not by nature immortal, is nevertheless capable of entering an intermediate disembodied state upon death and, eventually, being reunited with a resurrected body. By contrast, animal souls do not reflect the image of God and most likely do not survive death.

There are two main lines of argument for dualism: biblical anthropological terms and biblical teaching about life after death.

1. Old Testament anthropological terms. Biblical anthropological terms exhibit a wide field of meanings, and so we must take care to interpret each occurrence in its context. The two most important OT terms are *nephesh* (frequently translated "soul") and *ruach* (frequently translated "spirit").

Nephesh sometimes refers to God as an immaterial, transcendent self, a seat of mind, will, emotion, etc. (see Jb 23:13; Am 6:8). It is similarly applied to humans (Dt 6:5; 21:14; Pr 21:10; Is 26:9; Mc 7:1). It also refers to a vital entity that makes something alive (Ps 30:3; 86:13; Pr 3:22.). Finally, *nephesh* refers to the continuing center of personal identity that departs to the afterlife as the last breath ceases (Gn 35:18; cp. 1 Kg 17:21-22; Ps 16:10; 30:3; 49:15; 86:13; 139:8; Lm 1:1). The Bible regularly speaks of death and resurrection in terms of the departure and return of the soul. Indeed, the problem of necromancy throughout Israel's history (the practice of trying to communicate with the dead in Sheol; see Dt 18:9-14; 1 Sm 28:7-25) seems to presuppose the view that people continue to live conscious lives after the death of their bodies.

Ruach, frequently translated "spirit," sometimes signifies a vital power that infuses something, animates it, and gives it life and consciousness. Thus the *ruach* in man is formed by Yahweh (Zch 12:1), proceeds from and returns to Him, and is that which gives man life (Jb 34:14). In Ezekiel 37, God takes dry bones, reconstitutes human bodies of flesh, and then adds a *ruach* to these bodies to make them living persons (see Gn 2:7.) There is no *ruach* in physical idols and thus they cannot arise and possess consciousness (Jr 10:14; Hab 2:19). *Ruach* also refers to an independent, invisible, conscious being as when God employs a spirit to accomplish some purpose (2 Kg 19:7; 22:21-23). In this sense Yahweh is called the God of the vital spirits of all flesh (Nm 27:16; cp. 16:22). Here "spirit" means an individual, conscious being distinct from the body. Moreover, *ruach* also refers to the seat of various states of consciousness, including will (Dt 2:30; Ps 51:10-12; Jr 51:11), thought (Is 29:24), emotion (Jdg 8:3; 1 Kg 21:4), and one's moral or spiritual condition (Pr 18:14; Ec 7:8).

2. The OT on life after death. The OT depicts individual survival after physical death in a disembodied form. The dead in Sheol are called *rephaim.* Old Testament teaching about life after death is best understood in terms of a diminished though conscious form of disembodied personal survival in an intermediate state. First, the OT often depicts life in Sheol as lethargic, inactive, and resembling an unconscious coma (Jb 3:13; Ps 88:10-12; 115:17-18; Ec 9:10; Is 38:18). However, it also describes the dead in Sheol as being with family, awake, and active on occasion (Is 14:9-10). Second, the Hebrew Scriptures clearly teach the practice of necromancy (communicating with the dead) as a real possibility and, on some occasions, an actuality (see Lv 19:31; 20:6; Dt 18:11; 1 Sm

28; Is 8:19). Third, according to the OT, the *nephesh*—a conscious person without flesh and bone—departs to God upon death (see Ps 49:15).

3. New Testament anthropological terms. Several NT passages use *pneuma* (spirit) or *psyche* (soul) in a dualistic sense. Hebrews 12:23 refers to deceased but existing human beings in the heavenly Jerusalem as "the spirits of righteous people made perfect." Revelation 6:9-11 refers to dead saints as the "souls" of the martyrs who are in the intermediate state awaiting the final resurrection (20:5-6). Several texts refer to death as "giving up the spirit" (Mt 27:50; Lk 23:46; 24:37; Jn 19:30). Matthew 10:28 says, "Don't fear those who kill the body but are not able to kill the soul; rather, fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." In this text *psyche* seems clearly to refer to something that can exist without the body.

4. New Testament teaching on the intermediate state. Certain NT passages seem to affirm a disembodied intermediate state between death and final resurrection. For instance, there is the transfiguration passage (see Mt 17:1-13) in which Elijah (who never died) and Moses (who had died) appear with Jesus. The most natural way to interpret this text is to understand that Moses and Elijah have continued to exist (Moses was not re-created for this one event) and were made temporarily visible. Thus the transfiguration passage seems to imply a disembodied intermediate state.

In Luke 23:43, Jesus promised the thief on the cross, "Today you will be with Me in paradise." The term "today" should be taken in its natural sense, namely as meaning that the man would be with Jesus that very day in the intermediate state after their deaths.

In 2 Corinthians 5:1-10 and Philippians 1:21-24, Paul referred to a state after death and prior to the resurrection in which people experience a conscious disembodied ("naked," "unclothed") existence in God's presence.

In 2 Corinthians 12:1-4 Paul admitted that, during a visionary experience, he did not know whether he was in his body or temporarily disembodied. Because Paul understood himself as a soul/spirit united to a body, the latter state of being disembodied was a real possibility for him.

Notable Christian Apologist: Justin Martyr

by Ted Cabal

Born in Palestine, Justin (c. 100–167) spent his early years immersed in philosophy. Though a professional philosopher (Platonist), he was impressed with the courage of Christians facing death for their faith. He converted to Christ in A.D. 130 through the witness of an old Christian man who spoke to him of the true "philosophy." This truth was revealed through biblical prophets foretelling events to come and was confirmed by miracles. Justin's heart was stirred and thereafter he spent his days seeking to introduce others to Christ. Faithfulness to his confession of Christ ultimately led to his beheading at Rome—hence the name Justin Martyr.

Justin would go on to write several apologetic treatises, including two addressed to the Roman emperors Antoninus Pius and Marcus Aurelius. In these works Justin sought to prove the injustice of the persecution of Christians. He defended Christians from false charges such as atheism. Their refusal to bow before pagan idols and worship the emperor stemmed from their worship of the true God, who is invisible as Creator of all things. Demons are the true source of the hatred instigated toward Christians. Traces of truth that may be discovered in pagan philosophers writing before Christ were borrowed from the Hebrew Scriptures or else are due to the pre-incarnate Christ as Logos (the rational power guiding the universe) enlightening them. The biblical prophets accurately prophesied the coming of this Christ as the central figure of history.

How Does a Christian Converse with a Buddhist?

by Ravi Zacharias

Attraction to Eastern spirituality, and particularly Buddhism, is powerful because the human spirit craves spiritual answers. Thus, whenever a Christian converses with someone of another faith, including Buddhism, he must attempt to reveal the hungers of the human heart and how Christ alone addresses them.

Gautama Buddha taught that we should free ourselves from illusions of selfhood, God, forgiveness, and individual life hereafter. We should focus on a life wherein good deeds outweigh the bad. Buddha believed that all life is suffering and that to escape from rebirth we must understand our nature. If we extinguish hungers and detach ourselves from desires (namely, relationships), we will then offset all impure acts and thoughts. That is the Buddhist's hope.

But Buddhism's attraction provides no real answers. The self—which is undeniable and inescapable—is lost in Buddhist philosophy, which brushes away the hungers of the soul. Everything is in our care. All losses are ours. There is no "other" to whom we can go, not even a self to whom we can speak. Yet Buddhism's denial of a personal God is unable to prevent its practitioners seeking to relate to and worship a personal being. There is a universal hunger that drives the self to a transcendent personal other of one's making.

Buddha considered one's present life to be payment for previous lives. Each rebirth is due to karmic indebtedness, but without the carryover of the person. In contrast, Christianity sees the individual self as distinctive and indivisible. God's love is personal. Jesus brought God's offer for true forgiveness and eternal life while affirming each individual as uniquely created in God's image. For Jesus, suffering is only symptomatic of the life unhinged from right relationship with God. We have broken away from God, from our fellow human beings, and even from ourselves.

In contrast to karma—where "sin" is nothing more than ignorance or illusion—Christ's forgiveness can provide true appeal for the Buddhist. The gospel proclaims that we have come apart from within, and to this brokenness Jesus brings the real answer. In finding true relationship with God, all other relationships are given moral worth. God, who is distinct and distant, came close so that we who are sinful and weak may be forgiven and made strong in communion with God Himself without losing our identity. That simple act of communion encapsulates life's purpose. The individual retains his or her individuality while dwelling in community.

Moreover, Christ does not prescribe extinguishing one's self—which is not possible—but rather prescribes no longer living for oneself. Hungering after righteousness is good and brings God's fulfillment. Everyone who has surrendered all at the feet of Jesus can confess with the Apostle Paul, "I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to guard what has been entrusted to me until that day" (2 Tm 1:12). Jesus Christ guards all our purposes, loves, attachments, and affections when we entrust them to Him.

Introduction to Revelation

AUTHOR

The traditional author of Revelation is the Apostle John, who contributed the Gospel of John and the three letters of John to the NT. There are good reasons to hold this view. (1) The writer refers to himself as John (1:1,4,9; 22:8). (2) The author had personal relationships with the seven churches of Asia Minor (1:4,11; chaps. 2–3), as did the apostle. (3) His circumstances at the time of writing (1:9) match those of John the apostle. (4) The saturation of the book with OT imagery implies a Jewish writer, such as the Apostle John. (5) Though the author does not claim to be the Apostle John, it seems unlikely that any other first-century Christian leader would have had the authority or was associated closely enough with the churches of Asia Minor to have referred to himself simply as John.

However, because the writing style, vocabulary, and thought patterns of Revelation are quite different from those of the Gospel of John and 1, 2, and 3 John, some interpreters have reasoned the book was written by a different John, someone known in that day as "the Elder." While these observations are correct, traditional authorship is supported by the following considerations: (1) Revelation has many themes and theological ideas in common with John's Gospel and letters. For example, only the Gospel and Revelation refer to Jesus as the Word of God (Jn 1:1; Rv 19:13) and the Lamb. The theme of "witness" is also particularly prominent in all five books. (2) Different wording is to be expected in a book that is largely of a different kind of literature from John's other writings (see below). (3) The early church almost unanimously attributed Revelation to John the apostle.

DATE

Though some have dated the book later and a few earlier, the two most commonly held dates of Revelation are the mid 90s and the late 60s of the first century A.D. Both views are held by evangelicals, but the mid-90s view is perhaps the stronger of the two as well as the majority opinion.

The primary issues involved concern the date of the persecution portrayed in the letters to the churches (2:9-10,13) and whether or not the portrayal of the beast in chapter 13 reflects a myth of the Emperor Nero returning from the dead. Some have suggested that the allusions in the text to Nero imply he was still alive at the time of writing. Furthermore, they claim, there is a reference to the temple in 11:1-2 that suggests that it had not yet been destroyed. Since the temple was destroyed in A.D. 70 and Nero died in about A.D. 68, a case can therefore be made for a late 60s date. That said, all other factors, notably the tradition that John the apostle was exiled to Patmos during a period of intensifying local persecution of Christians by the emperor Domitian, favor a date of about A.D. 95.

THEMATIC CONSIDERATIONS

One of the primary challenges of interpreting Revelation is determining what kind of literature it is. At first glance it appears to be apocalyptic (exotic visions and symbolism; see the Greek *apokalypsis* in 1:1) or prophecy (1:3). However, the reference to the human author and audience, the standard greeting (1:4) and ending (22:21), and the mini-letters in chapters 2 and 3 indicate that we must also view Revelation as a letter. While this may seem more confusing, it actually simplifies things, for we can now view the book as a much longer literary cousin of the letter of Jude, which also contains extensive apocalyptic and prophetic material within an epistolary framework. So we can interpret Revelation in much the same way as we do Jude.

A further question relates to how to decide among the interpretive approaches to the book. Is Revelation depicting (1) the time of the writing of the book, in the first century A.D. (the preterist view); (2) the sweep of church history (the historicist view); (3) principles or ideas that apply equally in any time (the idealist view); or (4) the end of the age (the futurist view)? Of these approaches, the historicist approach has been discredited by the diverse, and highly subjective, understandings of the scholars who have championed the view. The other three views are helpful to one degree or another, especially when used together. It is most effective to interpret Revelation as apocalyptic prophecy primarily referring to the end times, spoken to the problems and needs of first-century churches and yet communicating principles applicable to hearers at any point in history until the end of the age.

Other interpretive challenges are posed by extensive use of the OT and other writings in Revelation and its use of symbolism and numbers. When we realize that echoes of the Hebrew Bible either speak of the ultimate fulfillment of OT prophecies or point back to a key for interpreting the passage found in the OT text, much of the mystery disappears. Similarly, most symbols and numbers are biblical commonplaces, meaning what they mean elsewhere in the Bible, and are not unique to Revelation. The text interprets other images itself (e.g., 1:20).

The immediate context for both the author and the initial hearers of the book of Revelation was a group of churches (1:11; chaps. 2–3) experiencing selective persecution (2:9-10,13) in the midst of doctrinal and practical problems (2:6,13-15,20-23), set against the backdrop of unseen but powerful spiritual warfare (2:10; 9:1,11; 12:3-4,9-10; 20:2).

The teaching that appears focused on events at the end of the age (eschatology) parallels practical (Christian life) choices believers must make in the time ahead. And indeed Revelation provides a virtually complete tour of systematic theology categories. There is much about Christ, mankind and sin, the people of God (both the church and Israel), holy angels, and Satan and the demons. There is important material on God's power, aspects of the work of the Holy Spirit, the nature of Scripture, and the wonder of salvation. The book clearly and eloquently offers the gospel, inviting its readers to enter into grand narrative—(14:6-7; 22:14,17)

The believer can learn much theology from Revelation. However, as John warned the church at Ephesus—to understand, believe, and even persevere and defend the doctrinal purity of the faith is not enough (2:2-6). Whatever temptations and alternatives may emerge (2:4-6,14-15,20-24), it is crucial to passionately love the Lord with all our hearts, placing Him first in our lives. Only in this way can we become "overcomers" (2:4-5,7).

In the body of the book, the ultimate choice for time and eternity is whether one will worship the beast (the Antichrist figure energized by Satan; see chap. 13) or Christ the Lamb (chap. 14). The strikingly placed command in 18:4 for God's people to "come out" of Babylon implies that both unbelievers and compromised professing Christians are, even if subconsciously, in league with the diabolical spiritual force that has martyred many of God's saints throughout the ages (17:6; 18:20,24). For either group—unbelievers or sinning church members—the answer is to repent to gain the victory (2:5,7; 9:20-21). The warning from Revelation is thus clear: those who refuse the Lord's offer of salvation will face a climactic judgment and eternal consequences of their choice (20:11-15; 21:7-8).

Revelation Study Notes

1:1 "Revelation," meaning "unveiling," translates the Greek *apokalypsis*, indicating that the book is apocalyptic literature, like Dn in the Hebrew Bible. "The revelation of Jesus Christ" could mean either the "unveiling about Jesus Christ" or the "unveiling by Jesus Christ," or both.

1:1,3 The idea that what is recorded in Rv "must quickly take place" and that "the time is near" has been used to try to prove these are false prophecies, given that it has been more than 1,900 years since the book was written. However, while it is true that Christ's coming is potentially near at hand, the wording in verses 1 and 3 means something different. John said that when the events of the body of the book begin to take place, the prophecies will be fulfilled quickly.

1:3 It is a gross misunderstanding to think one is blessed simply for reading or studying Rv. It is necessary to heed what is written and apply it in one's life. This is the first of seven significant blessing statements, or beatitudes, in the book (14:13; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6; 22:7,14).

1:4 The presence of the name of an author ("John"), an audience ("the seven churches"), and a characteristic greeting ("Grace and peace") indicates that Rv has much in common with the other letters in the NT and is not an exotic or other-worldly work that cannot be understood. "The One who is, who was, and who is coming" (v. 8) indicates that God not only exists now but always has and always will. The term translated "seven spirits" may refer to the angels of the seven churches (chaps. 2–3), other angels (8:2), or possibly the fullness of the Holy Spirit described in Is 11:2.

1:5 Jesus being "firstborn from the dead" looks back to His resurrection, the guarantee of the future resurrection of all believers and unbelievers (1 Co 15:20,23; Rv 20:4-5). The idea that He "set us free from our sins by His blood" does not mean a person is automatically saved by Christ's death on the cross. Revelation clearly recognizes the need for proper response to the gospel (14:6-7) and repentance (9:20-21) by unbelievers.

1:6 The wording here does not mean that believers are already functioning as royalty or priests. Rather, it reflects the certainty believers can have that they will serve as priests (7:15; 20:6) and reign with Christ (5:10; 20:4,6).

1:7 This is the theme verse for Rv. The wording is a collage of Dn 7:13 and Zch 12:10. The mourning is often understood as the response of those for whom it is too late to be saved. The context of Zch 12:10 indicates that the mourning will include true saving repentance.

1:9 Historical tradition indicates the Apostle John was exiled by the Roman Emperor Domitian to the isle of Patmos about A.D. 95, then released after Domitian's death in 96.

1:11 The seven local churches listed were not the only churches in Asia Minor at that time (see Col 1:2; 4:13). These churches were chosen as examples of what was happening in their midst at the time and because they were located on the connecting roads of a circular postal route.

1:12-18 John had seen Jesus Christ in a similar glorified state at His transfiguration (Mt 17:2), and he had seen His resurrection body after He was raised, until the ascension (Jn 20; Ac 1:2-11). In this vision, the veil was lifted and John saw the One he had known in the flesh. Even though John had been as close as any of the disciples to Jesus, John had not begun to comprehend the majesty of the One with whom he had walked during Jesus' three years of ministry. The impact ofJesus' appearance was overwhelming.

1:19 The wording is an expansion of the command in verse 11 to encompass the whole book of Rv. The things already seen are the vision of verses 12-18. "Things that are now happening" refers to the present state of affairs in the churches in chaps. 2–3. "What will take place after this" refers to the body of the book (chaps. 4–22). Revelation should not be viewed as a subjective grouping of random visions. Its orderly structure is laid out in advance.

1:20; 2:1,8,12,18; 3:1,7,14 It is possible that the "angels" of the churches were human messengers, since the Greek *aggeloi* was occasionally used that way (e.g., Jms 2:25). However, the overwhelming usage of *aggeloi* in the book of Rv is in reference to spirit beings (e.g., 1:1; 5:2). Perhaps these angels functioned like so-called guardian angels (Heb 1:14).

2:1–3:22 Some have held that the seven churches chosen to receive mini-letters represent seven stages in church history. But given the different interpretations of these stages, it is unlikely the view has validity. More likely, the churches were chosen because of the lessons they provide for "all the churches" (2:23). In general, each letter includes the following elements: (1) a description of the risen Christ drawn from the vision in 1:12-18; (2) commendation of the church; (3) rebuke of the church's shortcomings (although there is no criticism of the churches at Smyrna and Philadelphia) and instruction about how to correct them; (4) a command to "listen to what the Spirit says to the churches"; and (5) promises to the persevering spiritual "overcomer" (Gk *nikao*, "to win, conquer").

2:1-7 A timeless concern facing the church at Ephesus was dead orthodoxy. Though commended for persevering in zeal for proper belief (vv. 2-3), these church members had left the "love" they had "at first" (v. 4). This probably means love for God, since the greatest commandment is to love the Lord with all one's being (Dt 6:5; Mt 22:36-38). Having "fallen" (Rv 2:5) does not mean losing one's salvation, though ceasing to love God is a serious spiritual matter requiring soul-searching repentance. The significance of the Nicolaitans (v. 6) is clarified in the letters to the churches at Pergamum (vv. 14-15) and Thyatira (vv. 20-21,24).

2:8-11 The church at Smyrna, against whom Christ voiced no criticism, was facing suffering related to spiritual warfare and imprisonment for their faith. A local Jewish synagogue was making blasphemous charges (v. 9) that would result in church members being thrown in jail for a short time ("10 days") and causing some to die (v. 10). They "say they are Jews and are not" does not deny the Jewish lineage of the persecutors but instead mirrors Paul's assertion that, ultimately, Jewishness is not just outward but inward, related to the circumcision of the heart by faith (Rm 2:28-29).

2:12-17 In the church at Pergamum, things were worse than at Smyrna. Though the church members seem to have been facing similar spiritual warfare from Satan (v. 13), a faithful one named Antipas had already died(v. 13). Also, a viewpoint called the teaching of Balaam (v. 14; see Nm 22–25), which is equated with the teaching of the Nicolaitans (v. 15), had a strong foothold in the church. Those involved were to repent of their sinful behavior of eating things sacrificed to idols and engaging in immorality (v. 14).

2:18-29 In the church at Thyatira, things had reached a crisis point. A false prophetess, called Jezebel (v. 20), had involved her followers in the same sins as those infecting the church at Pergamum (vv. 14,20). Here this view/lifestyle is unmasked as the "deep things of Satan" (v. 24). This false belief and behavior originated with the devil. As discipline for this waywardness, there would be maximized suffering (the Greek is *thlipsis megale*, "great tribulation," which refers to the end of the age in 7:14), which serves as a dire warning to "all the churches" (v. 23). The strong parallels between Jezebel and Babylon, the great harlot, in chapters 17–18, as well as the startling usage of "great tribulation" (v. 22), suggests Jezebel was a first-century preview of Babylon the Great.

3:1-6 The church at Sardis was an example of congregations that had basically quit walking with the Lord and standing for Him. They may have still been going through the right motions, but in God's eyes they were about to die (v. 2). There was a faithful remnant (v. 4), but it was time for the spiritually lethargic majority to wake up (v. 2) and repent (v. 3) or face serious consequences from the Lord.

3:7-13 The church at Philadelphia was the only other congregation besides that at Smyrna not to be criticized by the glorified Christ. Even though they were facing intense spiritual warfare, no one had denied the Lord (vv. 8-9), and they stood as examples of spiritual purity. As a result, they were promised protection from the hour of testing (v. 10), which refers to the great tribulation (7:14), designed for the judgment of the earth dwellers (see also 6:10) at the end of the age. "I will also keep you from the hour of

testing" (v. 10) may mean (1) being removed before the time of tribulation or (2) being supernaturally protected within the tribulation.

3:14-22 The church at Laodicea was in even worse shape spiritually than the church at Sardis, because nothing positive was said to its members at all. Their spiritual lukewarmness made the Lord want to vomit (vv. 15-16). Their well-to-do status, materially, had blinded them to their utter spiritual destitution (vv. 17-18). The Lord had been pushed to the outside of this congregation and was now seeking to reenter (v. 20) through their repentance (v. 19). What the devil or false doctrine does not accomplish in the church, self-centered materialism often will.

4:1-2 It is not clear whether John was actually taken up (v. 1) into the heavenly throne room (v. 2) or was still "in the Spirit" (v. 2) on the isle of Patmos (1:9-10). Either way, what he saw of the heavenly throne room in chapters 4–5 is still trustworthy, since the vision came from the Lord. Some evangelicals believe the command to "come up here" in verse 1 refers to the rapture of the church, though this refers to only one person.

4:3-4 The "24 elders" could be angels. However, since "elders" refers to leaders in both Israel (Nm 11:16) and the church (Ti 1:5), it is more likely that 12 represent the tribes of Israel and 12 the apostles of Christ, mirroring the reference in the new Jerusalem (21:12,14).

4:5 This lightning and thunder are not just soundand fury in the heavenly throne room. As the book of Rv proceeds, the phenomena intensify and spill overas God's just judgment on the earth (8:5; 11:19; 16:18,21).

4:6-8 The "four living creatures" are angels. They are similar to—if not the same as—the cherubim in Ezk 1 and 10. Those angels were in proximity to a throne and accompanied the Shekinah glory as it departed the temple before the Babylonians destroyed it. Since the divine glory is to return to some future temple (Ezk 43:1-5), perhaps the four living creatures remain in the presence of God's glory, awaiting that return.

4:8-11 The heavenly throne room is characterized by unceasing joyful praise, thanksgiving, and worship toward the Lord by all the creatures present. As believers here on earth consistently engage in similar worshipful living (e.g., 1 Th 5:16-18), we prepare to live in the presence of the Lord.

5:1-7 Divine insight into the future is not available to those who are merely curious or clever. It is available only through Jesus, the Lion-Lamb, who has overcome (vv. 5-6) through the cross and the tomb. The Greek word *biblion* refers to this scroll with seven seals (v. 1) on the outside. It is not open for viewing until all seven seals have been removed.

5:8 The preciousness of all believers' prayers ("the prayers of the saints"; 8:3) to the Lord is emphasized as they are described as filling gold bowls in the presence of God.

5:9-10 The "new song" sung in heaven after Christ is declared worthy to open the scroll has to do with His redemptive work on the cross (v. 9). Its target group is the same as the Great Commission, which is for all the nations (Mt 28:19).

5:11-14 Worship of the Lord will eventually characterize all of creation (v. 13; Php 2:10-11), even as it already does heaven (vv. 11-12,14).

6:1–8:1 The scroll in the Lamb's hand (5:7) is not open for viewing until all seven seals have been removed. Six of those seals are removed in chapter 6. The two scenes in chapter 7 (7:1-8 and 7:9-17) form an interlude prior to the removal of the seventh seal (8:1). There is much parallelism between this section and the section of Jesus' Olivet discourse (Mt 24:4-14). If both passages are referring to the same events and timing, the unsealing sequence in Rv 6:1–8:1 occurs prior to the great tribulation (7:14).

6:1-8 The lifting of the first four seals is portrayed as four horsemen. There is debate as to whether any or all of what is pictured here has already taken place. While conquest (v. 2), widespread warfare (v. 4), and devastating effects from famine on economies (vv. 5-6) have occurred throughout history since the first century A.D., no catastrophe has devastated a full fourth of the earth (v. 8).

6:9-11 The martyrs plead for divine vengeance on those who live on the earth (3:10), and who shed the blood of the martyrs. Since the hour of testing (3:10) is focused on the earth dwellers, the delay here ("rest a little while longer"; 6:11) implies the hour of testing has not begun at this point in the book. Vengeance for the martyrs is not completed until 19:2.

6:12-17 The effects that occur when the sixth seal is lifted from the scroll are those of Jl 2:28-31, which occur just *before* the Day of the Lord, when the Lord's climactic wrath is poured out (Zph 1:14-15). Because the same Greek word and form (*elthen)* is used in Jd 14 with a futuristic meaning, it is best to translate it here as "the great day of their wrath is about to come." It is striking that the most arrogant people (i.e., the kings, the great men, and the rich) will be as terrified by God's coming judgment as the lowliest of mankind (the slaves).

7:1-3 The unearthly calming of winds on the earth and the half hour of silence in heaven (8:1) form a bookend effect around chapter 7. Special attention is focused on what the Lord is doing with the two groups in view (vv. 4-8 and v. 9) while judgment is being held back. The people of God are to be sealed, indicating God's ownership and protection, before the last seal is lifted from the scroll (8:1) and God's judgments contained in it are released.

7:4-8 The Jehovah's Witnesses teach that the 144,000 represents the total number of those who will reign with Christ. Since there is a much larger group—a "vast multitude . . . which no one could number"—mentioned immediately afterward as taken from earth to heaven (v. 9), the JW view is discredited even in its closest context in Rv. While many believe the 144,000 is symbolic for the church, the tribal names and numbers naturally refer to ethnic Israel. The 12 tribes are numbered as a protective military deployment (e.g., Nm 2), making it plausible that 7:1-8 is implying that this sealing has to do with the new covenant entry of the Holy Spirit into the Jewish remnant returned to the promised land (Ezk 36:27; 37:7-9,14), where the vision describes Israel as "a vast army" (Ezk 37:10).

7:9-12 The reference to the "vast multitude" wearing white robes links them to the martyrs (6:11) and, in the only other place where "vast multitude" is found (19:1,6), to the bride (19:7-8) and the armies (19:14) of the Lamb. As soon as the great multitude arrives in heaven, they begin to worship with all the other heavenly creatures.

7:13-14 The robes of the "vast multitude" (v. 9) being washed white in the blood of the Lamb could speak of martyrdom but probably refers to the redemptive blood of Christ (1:5; 5:9). If that is the case, the "vast multitude" being removed in relation to the great tribulation (referred to in Dn 12:1 and Mt 24:21, and what is meant by the hour of trial in Rv 3:10) could refer to the rapture of the church, even before the great tribulation, if that period does not begin until the events in the scroll are released by the lifting of the seventh seal (8:1).

7:15-17 The multitude's priestly service to the heavenly sanctuary is a partial fulfillment of the promises of 1:6 and 5:10. This passage looks ahead to the equating of the "vast multitude" with the heaven dwellers in 12:12 and 13:6. The wording in 7:16-17 recalls Ps 23 and looks ahead to the new heaven and earth (Rv 21:4; 22:1).

8:1 When the seventh seal is lifted, the scroll is finally completely open (5:1). The half hour of silence in heaven echoes Zph 1:7, "Be silent in the presence of the Lord GOD, for the Day of the LORD is near," indicating the Day of the Lord begins with the trumpets.

8:2-6 Before the blowing of the trumpets begins, the prayers of the saints go up before the Lord (vv. 3-4). This pause implies that God's answer to the prayers for the avenging of the blood of the martyrs (6:10) upon the earth dwellers, the focus of the hour of testing (3:10), begins with the trumpet judgments. The phenomena around the throne in heaven in 4:5 is intensified in 8:5 and poured out in the trumpet judgments.

8:8-12 The first four trumpet judgments bring horrific destruction upon a third of the focus of each judgment. Thus the trumpets are dramatically stronger than the strongest of the seals, in which a fourth of the earth was (selectively) impacted, but not totally destroyed, as with these trumpets.

8:13 The remaining three trumpet judgments will intensify the terror lying upon the earth dwellers, whom God has spotlighted for judgment and vengeance of the martyrs' blood (6:10) during the hour of testing (3:10). Since the seventh trumpet is open-ended, including the bowls of divine wrath (15:1–19:6), these terrors extend to the second coming of Christ (19:11-16).

9:1-11 The fifth trumpet recalls the plague of locusts in Jl 1:4 and 2:25. There is no protection from the extremely painful, but not fatal, scorpion-like stings of the demonic locusts (Rv 9:1-3) except the seal of God on one's forehead (7:3-4,8). Believers are protected in terms of their eternal destiny by the seal of the Holy Spirit (Eph 1:13-14; 4:30).

9:13-19 None of the earth dwellers is allowed to die during the plague of the locusts (v. 6). However, during the sixth trumpet judgment, a third of the human race is killed, in keeping with the first four trumpet judgments (8:7-12). Though some believe the armies of 200 million are human, it is more likely they are demonic, as were the locusts.

9:20-21 The only salvation for those not killed by the plagues of the trumpet judgments is repentance and faith. However, since their names are not written in the Lamb's book of life (17:8), they will not repent.

10:1-4 Chapters 10–11 provide a second interlude in the book, between the sixth and seventh trumpets. The "little scroll" (Gk *biblaridion*) may be either a second scroll or the same scroll, which appears small because the angel holding it is so big. Because the voices of the seven peals of thunder were sealed, God has not seen fit to reveal the contents, as He has in many cases (Dt 29:29).

10:5-7 The pace of divine judgment is about to quicken ("There will no longer be an interval of time," v. 6) with the sounding of the seventh trumpet (11:15-19). The "hidden plan" of God is truth that has not been previously revealed or fulfilled, but is being revealed now (e.g., Eph 3:9).

10:8-11 John eating the little scroll recalls Ezekiel being commanded to do the same thing (Ezk 3:1-3). In John's case, while the eating was sweet, the digesting was bitter (Rv 10:10). The implication here is that, while the Word of God (i.e., John's prophesying) is sweet, the calloused rejection of his hearers is bitter indeed. All ministry of the Word of God is similarly bittersweet.

11:1-6 It is not necessary for the temple to have still been standing in Jerusalem for John to have seen the temple and its court in his vision. This second scene in the second interlude (vv. 1-13) is set in Jerusalem during the times of the Gentiles (Lk 21:24) controlling the holy city. Two unnamed witnesses, who fulfill the imagery in Zch 4 and do miracles like Elijah and Moses, prophesy for a period of 1,260 days (three and a half years), and all who try to stop their ministry are killed. God's spokesmen have often been supernaturally protected until their appointed ministries were complete.

11:7 The beast—the Antichrist figure prophesied elsewhere (2 Th 2:9-11; 1 Jn 2:18)—makes his appearance. It is only because their period of ministry is completed that he is able to kill the two witnesses. The irony of using the word "conquer" to speak of the death of the witnesses is that, while it may briefly look like the beast is victorious (Rv 11:11-12), these witnesses, as martyrs, conquered through the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony (12:11).

11:8-10 Calling Jerusalem, the city where the Lord was crucified, the "great city" (the usual way of referring to Babylon the Great [e.g., 17:18; 18:10] as well as Sodom and Egypt) reflects how wicked most inhabitants of Jerusalem were. The killing of the two witnesses—which is paralleled to Jesus' death—and the desecration of not allowing a proper burial, as well as earth dwellers partying because of the witnesses' death, reflects that depravity.

11:11-12 The phrase, "after the three and a half days" is to be compared with Jesus being resurrected on the third day (1 Co 15:4). Great fear would be the expected response to a double resurrection. Such fear can be a positive thing, since the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom (Pr 1:7). The command, "Come up here," is understood by some to speak of the rapture of the church, though here it is a call to only two people.

11:13 In the midst of the widespread damage and death, fear turns into faith with many who saw the resurrection and ascension of the two witnesses. To fear God and glorify Him is the authentic response to the eternal gospel to be preached to all still alive on the earth (14:6-7). Since this takes place in Jerusalem, where most present would be Jewish, this could be the fulfillment of Paul's prophecy that all Israel will be saved (Rm 11:25-26).

11:15-19 The sound of finality in the wording of the seventh trumpet has caused some to think this is the point of the second coming of Christ and that the following chapters double back to retrace the same ground from a different perspective. Such a recapitulation viewpoint is not necessary, since the seventh trumpet overarches the bowls of wrath, with the seventh bowl telescoping all the way to the preparation for the second coming. This perspective is supported by the phenomena to be poured out on the earth under the seventh trumpet (v. 19) not being poured out until the seventh bowl (16:18,21).

12:1–14:20 Chapters 12–14 function as a prelude to the bowls-of-wrath sequence (chaps. 15–16). They provide a midstream orientation to characters and content that is crucial in understanding the latter part of Rv.

12:1-6 The initial imagery echoes Joseph's vision in Gn 37:9. The description of pregnancy and the pain of childbirth recall Gn 3:15-16, and it is possible the prophecy of the virgin birth (Is 7:14) is also in view. Similarly, the dragon (Satan; Rv 12:9) is tied all the way back to the angelic rebellion against the Lord. The wording in verses 4-5 implies that Herod the Great's attempt to kill the baby Jesus was satanically inspired. Though there is no mention of the death or resurrection of the messianic child, it is implied from other passages in Rv as well as from the parallel to the two witnesses in 11:11-12. The woman is taken care of by the Lord for 1,260 days, the same length of time the two witnesses were protected (11:3-6), though it is probably after the witnesses have ascended, since the "woman" fleeing refers most likely to the converts after the two witnesses were resurrected and ascended (11:11-13).

12:7-10 The sense that the "woman" in verse 6 is faithful Israel is strengthened by Satan's clash with Michael, the archangel assigned to protect Israel (Dn 12:1). Throughout Satan's career of deceiving the world and accusing the brethren (Rv 12:10), he was allowed a place in heaven (Jb 1–2). But now he is cast out. "The evil day" (Eph 6:13) of spiritual warfare will be far more intense, with Satan and his "angels" (demons) thrown down to the earth.

12:11 Sometimes what looks like defeat is victory, as when brethren die for their faith. Satan has killed them, but they have actually conquered him because of the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony.

12:12 Because Satan has been banned from heaven, those who dwell there can rejoice (13:6). However, having been cast down to earth, Satan is infuriated and will take out his rage on the earthly environment.

12:13-16 The devil does his utmost to persecute the "woman" (faithful Israel) for a period of "a time, times, and half a time" (three and a half years; 12:6). But he is completely unsuccessful because of the Lord's protection.

12:17 The devil does not give up easily. Unable to get at the "woman" and enraged, he turns aside to declare war against (i.e., kill) the Gentile saints (13:7). The Gentiles are Jesus' "other sheep that are not of [the Jewish] fold" (Jn 10:16).

13:1-4 The beast here, first mentioned in 11:7, is described in similar terms to the beasts (especially the fourth) in the vision of Dn 7. His power comes from Satan (the dragon). Since the beast had been embarrassed by the resurrection and ascension of the two witnesses (Rev 11:11-12), verse 3 appears to describe either a fake resurrection or a nearly fatal wound. That "miracle" overrides

the raising of the two witnesses, now no longer visible. As a result, the world populace worships the beast and, whether knowingly or not, the devil who energizes the beast.

13:5-7 The beast's worldwide reign of terror is allowed by divine authority for "42 months" (three and a half years), after the witnesses complete their ministry and are taken to heaven (11:3,7,11-12).

13:8 The earth dwellers choosing to worship the blasphemous beast are rooted in the absence of their names from the Lamb's "book of life." Mankind is held responsible for choices that are ultimately attributed to divine election and predestination (e.g., Ac 2:23).

13:9-10 This is the only place in Rv where the wording, "If anyone has an ear, he should listen" is found outside the letters to the churches in chapters 2–3. It probably functions as a call to endurance and faith in the face of the explanation for why the world follows the beast (v. 8).

13:11-15 The second beast, the false prophet (16:13), is empowered to do "all kinds of false miracles, signs, and wonders" (2 Th 2:9), including having power over fire, similar to the two witnesses (Rv 13:13; see 11:5).

13:16-18 The "mark" of the beast is in contrast to the seal (7:3-4) and the name of the Lamb and the Father (14:1) on the foreheads of the 144,000. Many have attempted to calculate not just the number (666) but also the exact identity of the man to whom it refers. Since1 Jn 2:18 states that "many antichrists have come" (i.e., as foreshadowing the ultimate Antichrist figure), there may be some marginal usefulness in noting that names like Nero and Hitler can be shown to have a numerological value of 666 by assigning a numerical value to each letter of the alphabet. However, it is wise to realize that such a numerological calculation will be clear only as the actual events unfold.

14:1-5 The 144,000, first seen on earth in 7:4-8, are now seen on the heavenly Mount Zion with Christ the Lamb. The beast cannot touch them, even though they do not have his mark (13:16-17), because they have the Lord's name on their foreheads. In their purity they are fitting firstfruits of the Lord's final harvest (Rev 14:14-20).

14:6-7 Some say the gospel is not present in Rv. However, the Greek word translated "gospel" (*euangelion*) is found in verse 6, and the content of the climactic preaching is specified in verse 7—to fear, give glory to, and worship the Lord. This response has already been seen in 11:13.

14:8-11 Babylon the Great (and her just judgment) is introduced here and will be expanded in 16:17–19:3. All who worship the beast and take his mark will be judged with eternal torment. Although the torment is pictured as fire and sulfur, this is not earthly flammable material that will eventually burn out, so that the torment will stop (i.e., that the punishment of unbelievers is limited in duration). Nor are those being punished consumed by the flames. Their torment goes on forever.

14:12-13 The second great blessing statement of Rv awaits those who persevere and keep the faith until death, especially martyrs.

14:14-20 This section visualizes the "harvest . . . [at the] end of the age" (Mt 13:39), when the good seed (Rv 14:14-16) and the tares (vv. 17-20) are separated unto their eternal destinies. Some think verses 14-16 refer to the rapture of the church. The imagery in verses 18-20 ties it to the description of the second advent in 19:15.

15:1 Since the seventh bowl fulfills exactly what appears about to take place in 11:19, the bowls-of-wrath sequence (15:1–19:7) unfolds from the end of the trumpet sequence and telescopes all the way to the second coming.

15:2-4 Those who are victorious are martyrs (12:11) who responded properly to the preaching of the eternal gospel (14:6-7) by fearing, glorifying, and worshiping God (15:4). The "song of God's servant Moses, and the song of the Lamb" is a parallel

description of the songs of the children of Israel, safe on the other side of the Red Sea after their escape from Egypt (Ex 15).

15:5-8 The mention of gold bowls links the pouring out of the bowls of wrath to the answering of the prayers of the saints, which are in gold bowls (5:8), especially the martyrs' prayer to avenge their blood on the earth dwellers (6:10).

16:1-7 The first three bowls are focused on those who worshiped the beast and took his mark. The significance of turning the water sources into blood is clarified in verses 5-7. Those who worshiped the beast are being judged for the martyrs' blood, with which judgment the heavenly martyrs under the altar agree (6:9). Since such vengeance was expected for the earth dwellers, the beast worshipers and the earth dwellers are the same group.

16:8-11 Even under the judgment of the most intense heat and darkness, the beast worshipers will not respond positively to the eternal gospel. They will not repent or glorify God (14:6-7).

16:12-16 The sixth bowl of wrath is the preparation for the battle of Armageddon. Many derivations have been proposed for the name Armageddon. It appears to mean "hill of Megiddo." In the midst of this description is the third blessing statement of the book, warning readers to remain spiritually alert (v. 15). Some have seen the stacked references to the dragon and the beast and the false prophet as a counterfeit "trinity."

16:17-21 The final bowl of wrath is focused on Babylon the Great, seen earlier in 14:8. The wording "It is done!" echoes Jesus' declaration on the cross, "It is finished!" (Jn 19:30). The phenomena poured out in judgment have been on hold since 11:19.

17:1-6 The next section (17:1–19:6) is a postlude to the bowls of wrath, expanding the reader's understanding of Babylon the Great, her relationship with the beast, and her just and final judgment. Babylon has essentially the same relationship with the earth dwellers (17:2) as Jezebel did with the sinners in the church at Thyatira (2:20). Babylon also has a close relationship to the beast (17:3; see 13:1). Further, Babylon has the trappings of wealth and royalty (v. 4). The wider mystery of Babylon at least partly has to do with her being the source of harlotry and abominations throughout history, including the martyrdom of God's saints (vv. 5-6).

17:7-8 Another aspect of the mystery of Babylon and the beast is their hold on the earth dwellers whose names are not in the book of life (13:8).

17:9-13 In the second cryptic wisdom statement in the book (13:18), the identity of the beast is clarified as a king who emerges from a group of rulers, apparently after a number of earlier empires or rulers. While it appears to the world that these rulers are dominant, they have received authority from the Lord only for a short time ("one hour"). This wording has caused some to speculate that perhaps the beast is Nero revived or that the beast will emerge out of a revived Roman Empire or the European Union. The details are not clear enough to determine this, however, and readers must exercise caution and not go beyond what is written (1 Co 4:6).

17:14 The battle here takes place at the second coming (note the reversed wording from "King of kings and Lord of lords"; 19:16). This verse clarifies that the armies following the Lamb in 19:14 are believers, since the terms "called and elect and faithful" are not used for angels.

17:15-17 The irony here is that, in the end, the very rulers with which the pseudo-queen (v. 4; 18:7), Babylon the Great, has acted immorally (v. 2), will turn on Babylon and destroy her. This is all according to God's sovereign plan.

17:18–18:3 The description of Babylon's destruction now returns to her being pictured as "the great city" (v. 18; see 16:19). While Babylon could include an actual city in the last times, it is more likely the lament in chapter 18 is modeled after Jr 51, which speaks of the wider Babylonian Empire, represented by the city of Babylon, of which it says that it will "never rise again" (Jr

51:64). It is now revealed that Babylon is not only the woman who has caroused with the nations, kings, and merchants of the earth (Rv 18:3), but she is, at core, demonic: the dwelling place of demons and unclean spirits (18:2).

18:4 The insight into the demonic heart of Babylon the Great causes the Lord to command His people to come out of Babylon. These words clearly echo Jr 51:6,45 and God's call for Lot's family to flee Sodom (Gn 19:15). But for the message to be powerful to John's readers in the churches, it appears to be a wake-up call in relation to those in league with the Nicolaitans, those receiving the teaching of Balaam, and the "children" of the false prophetess, Jezebel (Rv 2:6,14-15,20,24).

18:5-8 Babylon may sit as a queen with a proud sense of security, but the judgment for her mountain of sins is sure and will be strong and swift. Those who doubt Christ's coming in judgment misconstrue God's incredible patience with the unrepentant world for a lack of power to bring about justice (2 Pt 3:3-9).

18:9-19,21-23 The kings (v. 9) and merchants (v. 15) distance themselves from Babylon's sudden and violent destruction. These kings and merchants do not lament Babylon's grievous sins. They are most concerned with the fact that she will no longer generate wealth for them.

18:20,24 Babylon the Great must be an age-long entity, seen in Rv at its end-times manifestation, given that she is held guilty of killing all the martyrs who have been slain on the earth.

19:1-6 The "vast multitude" here pictured as a heavenly choir singing the "Hallelujah Chorus," was taken to heaven in 7:9 and identified as the heaven dwellers by comparing 7:15 and 13:6. They now praise God for the just judgment of Babylon, the notorious prostitute. Earlier it was seen that the beast worshipers were punished for the sins of the earth dwellers (16:5-7; see 6:10). Now, because Babylon is punished for the martyrdoms earlier attributed to the earth dwellers (6:10), it appears that Babylon is somehow also a corporate image for the earth dwellers.

19:7-9 The praise of the heavenly choir now turns to the marriage of the Lamb. His bride's garb is "fine linen, bright and pure," which is interpreted as "the righteous acts of the saints" (clearly in contrast to the gross sins of Babylon). It appears that this is a change in imagery from the "vast multitude" of heaven dwellers being a choir to being the bride of the Lamb. The fourth blessing statement of the book (v. 9) has a twist: By accepting the invitation to the marriage supper one becomes part of the bride.

19:10 It is sinful to worship any being other than the one true God (Ex 20:4-7). Besides false religions, many cults and even "personality cults" (i.e., groups who elevate gifted human leaders to almost godlike status) are often guilty on this front.

19:11-16 This passage portrays the physical second coming prophesied in Ac 1:9-11. The full preterist view, claiming that Christ already came in spirit and power in the judgment of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 and that there is no future second advent, is false. The unrivaled power of God's Word is pictured as a sharp sword coming out of the Lord's mouth (Heb 4:12). Since the armies with the Lord are "wearing pure white linen," it is likely that this is another image for the same group elsewhere called the "vast multitude," the heaven dwellers and bride of the Lamb.

19:17-19,21 The great armies of the earth assembled to make war against the Lamb (apparently at Armageddon; 16:12-14, 16) and end up being slaughtered by a word out of Christ's mouth (v. 15) and are fed to birds at the "great supper of God."

19:20 The beast and the false prophet are thrown *alive* into the eternal lake of fire. That means that they were not destroyed and will suffer conscious torment forever.

20:1-3 Satan (the dragon of Rv) is incarcerated in the abyss for a thousand years. Some evangelicals believe that the reference to "1,000 years" is merely figurative for a long period of time. Others think it speaks of a literal period of a thousand years. Still others think that John saw a vision of a thousand years but that it is impossible to know how the apocalyptic image will actually be fulfilled.

20:4-6 Some evangelicals, following the natural order of the text, believe that the "1,000 years" will come after the second coming of Christ. Others believe that this millennium will be a recapitulation of the time prior to the second coming, viewing it from a different perspective. Among those who take the recapitulation approach, some believe that the reign of Christ is through the church now, spiritually, for a long period of time, taking "1,000 years" as a generalization. Still others believe that the preaching of the gospel will bring about virtual worldwide conversion and a golden era of dominant biblical values lasting a thousand years.

The wording about being priests of God and reigning with Him shows that the "1,000 years" is the ultimate fulfillment of earlier precious promises to believers (1:5; 5:10; 7:15). Though those who reign are not just the martyrs, clearly they have an honored position (20:4). Some have argued that the first resurrection is spiritual (e.g., being born again spiritually) in order to maintain that there is one general resurrection of the dead. There is nothing in the text, however, that indicates that one resurrection is not literal and the other is what it says it is. While the second blessing statement focused on the death of the saints (14:13), the fifth focuses on their resurrection (20:6).

20:7-10 At the end of the "1,000 years," Satan will be released from the abyss and gather a final rebellion against God, related to the well-known Gog and Magog prophecy in Ezk 38–39. Apparently this incident will be the final proof that, even after an extended unrivaled reign of Christ, "Adam's and Eve's disease" (i.e., indwelling sin) will still prompt the overwhelming proportion of mankind alive at that time to follow the devil. When the rebellion is put down by fire from heaven, the devil will join the beast and false prophet in the lake of fire.

20:11-15 There are two sets of "books" at the great white throne judgment. The names of all believers are in the book of life. The names of the earth dwellers are not in the book of life (13:8; 17:8). They are judged according to their works, but no one can ever be saved by works because that would give place for human boasting (Eph 2:8-9).

The eternal dwelling place of all unbelievers is the lake of fire with the devil, the beast, and the false prophet. "Death and Hades" (Rv 20:13), as part of the present creation, are also thrown into the lake of fire.

21:1-6 The new heaven and earth, while like the present creation in some ways, will also be very different. For example, whereas water currently covers the majority of the globe, there will be no sea on the new earth. The bride of the Lamb, introduced in 19:7-9, is now pictured as the holy city coming down out of heaven. All things will be new then, not just the Christian's new spiritual life (2 Co 5:17). God's presence will do away with tears, pain, and death. The water of life will always be available without cost, an image of the free grace that offers life to us even now.

21:7-8 The heirs of the eternal state are the victors, addressed at the end of each of the seven letters to the churches, and the martyrs, who overcome through the blood of the Lamb (12:11). All others whose lifestyles indicate that their names are not in the book of life will live eternally in the lake of fire, the second death, in conscious torment.

21:9-11 As the focus on Babylon the Great shifted from the woman to "the great city" being destroyed because of her sins (chap. 18), so the focus shifts from the bride of Christ to "the holy city," new Jerusalem, showing forth the glory of God.

21:12-21 The 12 gates of the new Jerusalem have written on them the names of the 12 tribes of Israel, while the 12 foundation stones of the wall of the eternal city have the names of the 12 apostles of Christ. This strongly implies that the overall people of God, while more unified than some believe, will in some sense maintain the distinct covenant promises made to Israel and the church.

21:22-27; 22:5 As there was light from the Lord before the creation of the light sources of the universe (Gn 1:3,14-15), so there is no need for light in the new Jerusalem. There apparently will be national distinctions and human rulers in the eternal state, but since all who will be there are in the Lamb's book of life, there can be no sin.

22:1-4 The wording here pictures the new Jerusalem as also the new and permanent Eden which cannot be relinquished because there is no longer any curse. As Adam and Eve walked with the Lord periodically in the garden, so His presence will be constant and all inhabitants will have His name on their foreheads, as had the 144,000 (14:1).

22:6-7 As the body of the book ends, the transition to the conclusion of the book (vv. 6-21) combines the wording of 1:1 and 19:10. The sixth blessing repeatsthe emphasis on the imminence of the events in Rv and the need for application of its prophecies.

22:8-9 John repeated the same mistake of false worship as in 19:10. If the godly and mature Apostle John could repeat such an error, it must be admitted how easy it is to be involved in false worship and practice. Given the concerns over God's people and Jezebel (2:20-24), as well as the command to come out of Babylon (18:4), the tendency to err in such matters is a major practical emphasis of Rv.

22:10-12 The book of Daniel was sealed up until the end time (Dn 12:4,9) to conceal its contents. In clear contrast and in light of the imminence of the events portrayed in Rv, this book is not sealed up (v. 10). Until the events of the book are fulfilled, people will act in keeping with their spiritual nature. But when the Lord comes, He will render unto each person according to his or her works (20:12-13).

22:14-15,17 The final blessing of Rv leads into an elegant presentation of the gospel, initially using the imagery of the eternal city and the new Eden. "Wash[ing] their robes" means faith in the shed blood of Christ. The right to the tree of life is what Adam and Eve were cut off from by their sin. In this case the gates of the city and access to the tree of life are made available to the believer. However, all unbelievers, with their various sinful lifestyles, are excluded from the eternal city. The repeated invitation to "Come" and "take the living water as a gift" (i.e., free grace) means the book ends on a note of passionate evangelistic appeal.

22:18-19 It is doubtful the wording here refers to closing the canon of the Bible. The "book" (Gk *biblion*, "scroll") that is not to be tampered with (as new religions and other groups do, adding to or taking away from the final scriptural form) is the book of Rv. However, in a more subtle manner, the wording does imply a canonical perspective. The context in Rv is of a new Eden (vv. 1-5). In Gn 3, Eve added to the Word of God (Gn 3:3) and the serpent took away from what the Lord had said (Gn 3:4). The bookend effect of Rv 22:18-19 looking back to Gn 3:3-4 infers that this curse for altering Scripture at the end of Revelation should be viewed as the last biblical word on the subject.

22:20 Jesus promised to come quickly, but it has been almost two millennia since He made that promise. John prayed for Jesus to come soon. The amazing patience of the Lord toward the unbelieving world (2 Pt 3:9) is responsible for Jesus' delay and John's unanswered prayer.

22:21 The book of Rv, though made up largely of apocalyptic material (1:1) and prophecy (1:3), begins like a letter (1:4) and, with the concluding "grace," has an epistolary ending.

HCSB BULLET NOTES

The HCSB Bullet Notes are one of the unique features of the Holman Christian Standard Bible®. These notes explain frequently used biblical words or terms. These "bullet" words (for example: •abyss) are marked with a bullet only on their first occurrence in a chapter of the biblical text. Other frequently used words, like •gate, are marked with bullets only where the use of the word fits the definitions given below. A few words in footnotes, like •acrostic, also have a bullet.

Abaddon A Hebrew word for either the grave or the realm of the dead

Abba The Aramaic word for father

abyss The bottomless pit or the depths (of the sea); it is the prison for Satan and the demons.

acrostic A device in Hebrew poetry in which each verse begins with a successive letter of the Hebrew alphabet

advocate The Greek word parakletos means one called alongside to help, counsel, or protect; it is used of the Holy Spirit in Jn and in 1Jn.

Almighty The Hebrew word is El Shaddai; El means God, but the meaning of Shaddai is disputed; traditionally it is translated "Almighty."

Alpha and Omega The first and last letters of the Greek alphabet; it is used to refer to God the Father in Rv 1:8 and 21:6 and to Jesus, God the Son, in Rv 22:13.

Amen The transliteration of a Hebrew word signifying that something is certain, valid, truthful, or faithful; it is often used at the end of biblical songs, hymns, and prayers.

annihilate(d) During periods of war in Canaan and its neighboring countries, this was the destruction of a city, its inhabitants, and their possessions, including livestock.

Arabah The section of the Great Rift in Palestine, extending from the Jordan Valley and the Dead Sea to the Gulf of Aqabah; the Hebrew word can also be translated as "plain," referring to any plain or to any part of the Arabah.

Asaph A musician appointed by David to oversee the music used in worship at the Temple; 12 psalms are attributed to Asaph.

Asherah(s)/Asherah pole(s) A Canaanite fertility goddess who was the mother of the god Baal; also the wooden poles associated with the worship of her

Ashtoreth(s) A Canaanite goddess of fertility, love, and war, who was the daughter of Asherah and consort of Baal; the plural form of her name in Hebrew is Ashtaroth.

Asia A Roman province that is now part of modern Turkey; it did not refer to the modern continent of Asia.

asleep A term used in reference to believers who have died

atone/atonement A theological term for God's provision to deal with human sin; in the OT, it primarily means purification. In some contexts forgiveness, pardon, expiation, propitiation, or reconciliation is included. The basis of atonement is substitutionary sacrifice offered in faith. The OT sacrifices were types and shadows of the great and final sacrifice of Jesus on the cross.

Baal A fertility god who was the main god of the Canaanite religion and the god of rain and thunderstorms; it is also the Hebrew word meaning "lord," "master," "owner," or "husband."

Beelzebul A term of slander, which was variously interpreted "lord of flies," "lord of dung," or "ruler of demons"

Bread of the Presence Bread that was offered in Yahweh's presence, that is, inside His house, not out on the altar (Lv 24:5-9)

burnt offering(s) Or holocaust; an offering completely burned to ashes; it was used in connection with worship, seeking God's favor, expiating sin, or averting judgment.

cause(s) the downfall of/cause(s) to sin The Greek word skandalizo has a root meaning of snare or trap but has no real English counterpart.

centurion A Roman officer who commanded about 100 soldiers

Cephas The Aramaic word for rock: it is parallel to the Greek word petros from which the English name Peter is derived.

cherub(im) A class of winged angels associated with the throne of God who function as guardians and who prevented Adam and Eve from returning to the garden of Eden

chief priest(s) A group of Jewish temple officers that included the high priest, captain of the temple, temple overseers, and treasurers

clean When something is clean, it is holy or acceptable to God. When it is unclean, it is unholy (such as an unclean spirit). The term can be used in a ritual sense to apply to moral standards for living.

company Or cohort; a Roman military unit that numbered as many as 600 men

completely destroy During periods of war in Canaan and its neighboring countries, this was the destruction of a city, its inhabitants, and their possessions, including livestock.

Counselor The Greek word parakletos means one called alongside to help, counsel, or protect; it is used of the Holy Spirit in Jn and 1Jn.

cubit(s) An OT measurement of distance that equaled about 18 inches

Cush/Cushite The lands of the Nile in southern Egypt, including Nubia and Northern Sudan; also the people who lived in that region

Decapolis Originally, it referred to a federation of 10 Gentile towns east of the Jordan River.

denarius/denarii A small silver Roman coin, which was equal to a day's wage for a common laborer

divination An attempt to foresee future events or discover hidden knowledge by means of physical objects such as water, arrows, flying birds, or animal livers

drink offering(s) An offering of a specified amount of wine or beer given along with animal sacrifices; it was poured over the sacrifice before it was burned.

engaged Jewish engagement was a binding agreement that could only be broken by divorce.

ephod A vest-like garment extending below the waist and worn under the breastpiece; it was used by both the priests and the high priest.

everyone Literally sons of man or sons of Adam

family redeemer A family member who had certain obligations of marriage, redeeming an estate, and punishment of a wrongdoer

fear(s) God or the LORD/fear of the Lord No single English word conveys every aspect of the word fear in this phrase. The meaning includes worshipful submission, reverential awe, and obedient respect to the covenant-keeping God of Israel.

firstfruits The agricultural products harvested first and given to God as an offering with more products to come in later harvests; it is also used as a metaphor for the first people to come to faith or for Jesus, the first person to rise from the dead, or for the Spirit who is given to believers as the first portion (or down payment) of our salvation with more to come in eternity.

fellowship sacrifice(s)/or offering(s) An animal offering was given to maintain and strengthen a person's relationship with God. It was not required as a remedy for impurity or sin but was an expression of thanksgiving for various blessings. An important function of this sacrifice was to provide meat for the priests and the participants in the sacrifice; also called the peace offering or the sacrifice of well-being.

gate(s) The center for community discussions, political meetings, and trying of court cases

Gittith Perhaps an instrument, musical term, tune from Gath, or song for the grape harvest

God Almighty The Hebrew word is El Shaddai; El means God, but the meaning of Shaddai is disputed; traditionally it is translated “Almighty.”

grain offering(s) An offering given along with animal sacrifices or given by itself; a portion was burnt and the priests and participant ate the remainder.

guilt/guilty The liability to be punished for a fault, a sin, an act, or an omission unless there is forgiveness or atonement; the term normally concerns an objective fact, not a subjective feeling.

Hades The Greek word for the place of the dead; it corresponds to the Hebrew word Sheol.

Hallelujah! Or Praise the LORD!; it literally means Praise Yah! (a shortened form of Yahweh).

headquarters The Latin word Praetorium was used by Greek writers for the residence of the Roman governor; it may also refer to military headquarters, the imperial court, or the emperor’s guard.

Hebrew Or Aramaic; the translation of this word is debated since some claim Aramaic was commonly spoken in Palestine during NT times. More recently others claim that Hebrew was the spoken language.

hell/hellfire The Greek word is gehenna; it is the Aramaic term for the Valley of Hinnom on the south side of Jerusalem; formerly, it was a place of human sacrifice, and in NT times, a place for the burning of garbage; it is the place of final judgment for those rejecting Christ.

Herod Name of the Idumean family ruling Palestine from 37 b.c. to a.d. 95; the main rulers from this family mentioned in the NT are:

Herod I (37 b.c.–4 b.c.) He was also known as Herod the Great; he built the great temple in Jerusalem and massacred the male babies in Bethlehem.

Herod Antipas (4 b.c.–a.d. 39) The son of Herod the Great; he ruled one-fourth of his father’s kingdom (Galilee and Perea); he killed John the Baptist and mocked Jesus.

Herod Agrippa I (a.d. 37–44) The grandson of Herod the Great; he beheaded James the apostle and imprisoned Peter.

Herod Agrippa II (a.d. 52–ca 95) The great-grandson of Herod the Great; he heard Paul’s defense.

Herodians They were the political supporters of Herod the Great and his family.

hidden plan Translation of the Greek word mysterion; it is a secret hidden in the past but now revealed.

Higgaion Term used for a musical notation, for a device denoting a pause in an instrumental interlude, or for a murmuring harp tone

high place(s) An ancient place of worship most often associated with pagan religions; it was usually built on an elevated location.

horn A symbol of power based on the strength of animal horns

Hosanna A term of praise derived from the Hebrew word for save

Host(s) Military forces consisting of God's angels, sometimes including the sun, moon, and stars, and occasionally Israel

human race Literally sons of man or sons of Adam

I assure you This is a phrase used only by Jesus to testify to the certainty and importance of His words; in Mt, Mk, and Lk it is literally Amen, I say to you; in Jn it is literally Amen, amen, I say to you.

Jews In Jn, the term Jews usually indicates those in Israel who were opposed to Jesus, particularly the Jewish authorities in Jerusalem who led the nation.

justification/justify/justified The act of God as judge that declares sinners (who were in the wrong) to be right or righteous in His sight. God is just in doing this because Jesus died on the cross to take away their sins and to give them His own righteousness (2Co 5:21). The sinner receives this justification by faith and by grace when he trusts Christ's work.

language(s) The Greek word glossa has traditionally (ca 1530) been translated as "tongue" because the Gk word is used for the organ of speech as well as for a language. Some see glossolalia as having a specialized meaning: either ecstatic speech or heavenly languages.

Leviathan Or twisting one; a mythological sea serpent or dragon associated with the chaos at creation; sometimes it is applied to an animal such as a crocodile.

life/lives The same Greek word (psyche) can be translated life or soul.

mankind Literally sons of man or sons of Adam

Mary Magdalene Or Mary of Magdala; Magdala was probably a town on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee, north of Tiberias.

Maskil It is from a Hebrew word meaning to be prudent or to have insight; it could also mean a contemplative, instructive, or wisdom psalm.

men Literally sons of man or sons of Adam

mercy seat Or place of atonement; it was the gold lid on the ark of the covenant that was first in the tabernacle and later in the temple.

Messiah Or the Christ; the Greek word is Christos and means the anointed one. Where the NT emphasizes Christos as a name of our Lord or has a Gentile context, "Christ" is used. Where the

NT Christos has a Jewish context, the title “Messiah” is used.

Miktam A musical term of uncertain meaning; it possibly denotes a plaintive style.

Milcom An Ammonite god who was the equivalent of Baal, the Canaanite storm god

Molech A Canaanite god associated with death and the underworld; the worship ritual of passing someone through the fire is connected with him. This ritual could have been either fire-walking or child sacrifice.

Most High The Hebrew word is Elyon; it is often used with other names of God, such as Hebrew El (God) or Yahweh (LORD); it is used to refer to God as the supreme being.

Mount of Olives A mountain east of Jerusalem across the Kidron Valley

mystery Translation of the Greek word mysterion; it is a secret hidden in the past but now revealed.

Nazarene A person from Nazareth; growing up in Nazareth was an aspect of the Messiah’s humble beginnings.

Negev An arid region in the southern part of Israel; the Hebrew word means south.

offend(ed) The Greek word skandalizo has a root meaning of snare or trap but has no real English counterpart.

offspring This term is used literally or metaphorically to refer to plants or grain, sowing or harvest, male reproductive seed, human children or physical descendants, and also to spiritual children or to Christ (Gl 3:16).

One and Only Or one of a kind, or incomparable, or only begotten; the Greek word can refer to someone’s only child as in Lk 7:12; 8:42; 9:38. It can also refer to someone’s special child as in Heb 11:17.

oracle A prophetic speech of a threatening or menacing character; it was often spoken against the nations.

overseer(s) Or elder(s), or bishop(s)

palace The Latin word Praetorium was used by Greek writers for the residence of the Roman governor; it may also refer to military headquarters, the imperial court, or the emperor’s guard.

Passover The Israelite festival celebrated on the fourteenth day of the first month, in the early spring; it was a celebration of the deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt, commemorating the final plague on Egypt when the firstborn were killed.

people Literally sons of man, or sons of Adam

perverted men Literally sons of Belial; in Hebrew, the basic meaning of Belial is worthless.

Pharisee(s) A religious sect of Judaism that followed the whole written and oral law

Pilate Pontius Pilate was governor of the province of Judea a.d. 26–36.

Pit A term for either the grave or the realm of the dead

proconsul The chief Roman government official in a senatorial province who presided over Roman court hearings

propitiation The removal of divine wrath; Jesus' death is the means that turns God's wrath from the sinner.

proselyte(s) A person from another race or religion who went through a prescribed ritual to become a Jew

Rabbi The Hebrew word means my great one; it is used for a recognized teacher of the Scriptures.

Rabshakeh The title of a high-ranking Assyrian official who was the chief cupbearer to the king

Rahab Or boisterous one; it is the name of a mythological sea serpent or dragon defeated at the time of creation. Scripture sometimes uses the name metaphorically to describe Egypt.

redemption/redeemed The deliverance from bondage by a payment or ransom (Mk 10:45; 1Pt 1:18-19)

Red Sea Literally Sea of Reeds

regiment Or cohort; a Roman military unit that numbered as many as 600 men

restitution offering(s) An offering that was a penalty for unintentional sins, primarily committed in relation to the tabernacle or temple; it is traditionally translated trespass or guilt offering.

sackcloth A garment made of poor quality material and worn as a sign of grief and mourning

sacred bread Literally bread of presentation; these were 12 loaves of bread, representing the 12 tribes of Israel and put on the table in the holy place in the tabernacle and later in the temple. The priests ate the previous week's loaves.

Sadducee(s) A religious sect of Judaism that mainly followed the first 5 books of the OT (the Torah or Pentateuch)

saint(s)/sanctification/sanctify/sanctified The work of the Holy Spirit that separates believers in Jesus from the world; at the time of saving faith in Jesus, the believer is made a saint; therefore, all believers are saints. The believer participates with the Spirit in a process of transformation that

continues until glorification. The goal of sanctification is progressive conformity to the image of Jesus Christ.

Samaritan(s) A people of mixed, Gentile/Jewish ancestry who lived between Galilee and Judea and were hated by the Jews

Sanhedrin The supreme council of Judaism; it had 70 members and was patterned after Moses' 70 elders.

scribe(s) A professional group in Judaism that copied the law of Moses and interpreted it, especially in legal cases

secret Translation of the Greek word mysterion; it is a secret hidden in the past but now revealed.

seed This term is used literally or metaphorically to refer to plants or grain, sowing or harvest, male reproductive seed, human children or physical descendants, and also to spiritual children or to Christ (Gl 3:16).

Selah A Hebrew word whose meaning is uncertain; various interpretations include: (1) a musical notation, (2) a pause for silence, (3) a signal for worshipers to fall prostrate on the ground, (4) a term for the worshipers to call out, and (5) a word meaning forever.

set apart for destruction During periods of war in Canaan and its neighboring countries, this was the destruction of a city, its inhabitants, and their possessions, including livestock.

shekel(s) In the OT the shekel is a measurement of weight that came to be used as money, either gold or silver.

Sheminith A musical term meaning instruments or on the instrument of eight strings

Sheol A Hebrew word for either the grave or the realm of the dead

Shinar A land in Mesopotamia, including ancient Sumer and Babylon; it is modern Iraq.

sin offering(s) Or purification offering; it was the most important OT sacrifice for cleansing from impurities. It provided purification from sin and certain forms of ceremonial uncleanness.

slave(s) The strong Greek word doulos cannot be accurately translated in English as servant or bond servant; the HCSB translates this word as slave, not out of insensitivity to the legitimate concerns of modern English speakers, but out of a commitment to accurately convey the brutal reality of the Roman empire's inhumane institution as well as the ownership called for by Christ.

Son of Man Most frequent title Jesus used for Himself (Dn 7:13; Mt 8:20)

song of ascents A term that probably refers to the songs pilgrims sang as they traveled the roads going up to worship in Jerusalem (Pss 120–134)

soul The same Greek word (psyche) can be translated life or soul.

stumble The Greek word skandalizo has a root meaning of snare or trap but has no real English counterpart.

synagogue This is a place where the Jewish people met for prayer, worship, and teaching of the Scriptures.

tabernacle(s) Or tent, or shelter; a term used for temporary housing.

take offense The Greek word skandalizo has a root meaning of snare or trap but has no real English counterpart.

tassel Fringe put on the clothing of devout Jews to remind them to keep the law

temple complex In the Jerusalem temple, the complex included the sanctuary (the holy place and the holy of holies), at least 4 courtyards (for priests, Jews, women, and Gentiles), numerous gates, and several covered walkways.

testimony A reference to either the Mosaic law in general or to a specific section of the law, the Ten Commandments, which were written on stone tablets and placed in the ark of the covenant (also called the ark of the testimony)

Topheth A place of human sacrifice that was located outside Jerusalem in the Hinnom Valley (Jr 7:31-32)

unclean When something is clean, it is holy or acceptable to God. When it is unclean, it is unholy (such as an unclean spirit). The term can be used in a ritual sense to apply to moral standards for living.

Unleavened Bread A seven-day festival celebrated in conjunction with the Passover (Ex 12:1-20)

Urim & Thummim Two objects used by Israelite priests to determine God's will

wadi A valley, ravine, or stream that is dry except in the rainy season

walk(ed)/walking A term often used in a figurative way to mean "way of life" or "behavior"

wicked men Literally sons of Belial; in Hebrew, the basic meaning of Belial is worthless.

wise men The Greek word is magoi; the English word "magi" is based on a Persian word. They were eastern sages who observed the heavens for signs and omens.

woman When used in direct address, "Woman" was not a term of disrespect but of honor.

world The organized Satanic system that is opposed to God and hostile to Jesus and His followers; it also refers to the non-Christian culture including governments, educational systems, and businesses.

wormwood A small shrub that was used as a medicinal herb and noted for its bitter taste

Yah/Yahweh Or The LORD; it is the personal name of God in Hebrew; “Yah” is the shortened form. Yahweh is used in places where the personal name of God is discussed (Ps 68:4) or in places of His self-identification (Is 42:8).

Zion Originally a term for the fortified section of Jerusalem and then, by extension, used for the temple and the city of Jerusalem both in the present time and in the future

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY IN APOLOGETICS, RELIGIOUS PLURALISM, AND NEW RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS

Douglas R. Groothuis, Ph.D., Denver Seminary

I. RECOMMENDED BOOKS IN CHRISTIAN APOLOGETICS

A. Recommended reference and general books in philosophy and apologetics

These fill out the spectrum of *intellectual difficulty* (not *overall quality*) from basic (B) to intermediate (I) to advanced (A). (I)/(A) means: "intermediate to advanced" or "between intermediate and advanced."

1. Audi, Robert, ed. *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy.* Cambridge City: University Press, 1995; 2nd ed., 1999. Excellent, thorough, one-volume reference work.

2. Campbell-Jack, W. C., Gavin J. McGrath, and C. Stephen Evans, eds. *New Dictionary of Christian Apologetics.* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006. Thorough resource written by qualified writers.

3. Craig, Edward, ed. *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy.* New York: Routledge, 1998. Best contemporary, in-depth, multi-volume reference work. Available in the library. Also comes in a one-volume, condensed edition.

4. Evans, C. Stephen. *Pocket Dictionary of Apologetics and Philosophy of Religion.* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002. Excellent short reference. Ideal for those with little or no background in these areas.

5. Geisler, Norman. *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics.* Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publ.Group, 1999. This must be used with caution. No one person can cover this much material at a high level of quality. Explicitly philosophical topics are often addressed better in other works. (For instance, the entry on "Alvin Plantinga" is inadequate.) However, there is much helpful material, such as the essay on prophecy, the problem of evil, the virgin birth, etc.

6. Kreeft, Peter, and Ronald Tacelli. *Handbook of Christian Apologetics.* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994. Well-written, witty, covers many important topics fairly briefly. Defects include their view of salvation in other religions and an ill-fated attempt to downplay theological differences between Protestantism and Roman Catholicism. The authors are Roman Catholic.

7. Moreland, J. P., and William Lane Craig. *Philosophical Foundations for a Christian Worldview*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003. A comprehensive and tightly argued approach to nearly all the philosophical issues related to Christian theism. (I)/(A)

8. Weston, Anthony. *A Rulebook for Arguments*, 3rd ed. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 2001. A concise guide to philosophical argumentation in writing papers. It is not written from a Christian perspective, and even takes some shots at Christianity; but a helpful resource, nevertheless. This book will help students with no background in philosophy to learn how to write philosophical papers.

B. Recommended periodicals that address apologetics

1. Aeropagus

2. The Christian Research Journal

C. General Books on Christian Apologetics

The following books cover a variety of topics, as I try to explain in the annotation.

1. Archer, Gleason. *Encyclopedia of Biblical Difficulties*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publ. Group, 1982. A respected Old Testament scholar assesses the major problem passages in both Testa-ments. (I)

2. Augustine, Saint. *The Confessions*. Many editions. Classic statement of how and why this great church father came to faith.

3. Beckwith, Francis, et al. *To Everyone an Answer.* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004. Very good collection of apologetics essays. (B)

4. Blamires, Harry. *The Christian Mind*. 1963. Ann Arbor, MI: Servant Publications, 1997. Although some aspects of the author's high Anglicanism won't suit some evangelicals, Blamires laments the lack of a Christian mind, outlines its essence, and contrasts it with secular thinking. A classic. (I)

5. Blomberg, Craig. *The Historical Reliability of the Gospels*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1987. Classic modern defense. (I)/(A)

6. Blomberg, Craig. *The Historical Reliability of John*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002. Major modern defense of the reliability of John. (I)/(A)

7. Burson, Scott R., and Jerry L. Walls. *C.S. Lewis and Francis Schaeffer: Lessons for a New Century from the Most Influential Apologists of Our Time.* Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998. Good exposition of both thinkers, but the authors like things in Lewis that lean in a more liberal direction and do not like Schaeffer's Calvinism very much. Nevertheless, it is worthwhile overall. (I)

8. Carnell, Edward John. *An Introduction to Christian Apologetics*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1948. Pioneering work in the "cumulative case method" of apologetics. The first book by a brilliant young leader of the then young evangelical movement. (I)

9. Carroll, Vincent, and David Shiflett. *Christianity on Trial: Arguments Against Anti-Religious Bigotry*. San Francisco: Encounter Books, 2001. Convincingly argues that Christianity has not been bad news for civilization—despite popular cliches, half-truths, and outright lies to the contrary. It presents a strong case that Christian ideals are behind many beneficial aspects of culture.

10. Carson, D. A., ed. *Telling the Truth*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000. Collection of essays on reaching postmodern culture. Especially excellent are essays by Carson and Ajith Fernando. (I)

11. Carson, D. A. *The Gagging of God: Christianity Confronts Pluralism*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publ. Group, 1996. Comprehensive biblical and theological critique of pluralistic theologies. (I)

12. Carson, D. A. *How Long, O Lord?* 2nd ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publ. Group, 2006. Classic treatment on the problem of evil. Very strong on biblical reflections.

13. Chesterton, G. K. *Orthodoxy*. Many editions. Classic defense of orthodoxy against heresy and confusion. Rare wit and insight from 1908. Available in various editions. (I)

14. Chesterton, G. K. *The Everlasting Man*. Garden City, NY: Image Books, 1955. Important, witty, and wise apologetic work that influenced C. S. Lewis considerably. (I)

15. Clark, David. *Dialogical Apologetics*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publ. Group, 1994. An approach that highlights the person-sensitive and relational aspects of apologetic argument. (I)

16. Clark, Gordon. *A Christian View of Men and Things*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publ. Group, 1953. Attempts to deduce Christian perspectives on various issues with a focus on epistemology. (I)

17. Clark, Gordon. *Thales to Dewey: A History of Philosophy*. Unicoi, TN: Trinity Foundation, 1989. First published by a secular publisher as a textbook, this history, which focuses on epistemology, has an implicit apologetic for Christian theism. It is one of the rare books of its kind to discuss Jesus' philosophy as well. A worthy reference. Republished by the Trinity Foundation in several editions. (I)

18. Clark, Kelly James, ed. *Philosophers Who Believe*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993. Important Christian philosophers, such as Alvin Plantinga, Stephen T. Davis, and Nicholas Wolterstorff, explain why they believe in Christianity.

19. Copan, Paul, ed. *Will the Real Jesus Please Stand Up?* Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publ. Group, 1998. A debate between William Lane Craig and John Crossan, with responses by others (including Craig Blomberg) on both sides of the issue. (I)

20. Copan, Paul, and Ronald Tacelli, eds. *Jesus' Resurrection: Fact or Fiction?* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000. Debate between William Lane Craig and Gerd Ludeman with responses by others on both sides of the issue. (I)

21. Copan, Paul and Paul K. Moser, eds. *The Rationality of Theism.* New York: Routledge, 2003. A collection of top notch essays by Christian philosophers on many topics. (I)/(A)

22. Copan, Paul. *How Do You Know You Are Not Wrong?* Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publ. Group, 2005. Short chapters on common objections brought against Christianity. (B)

23. Corduan, Winfried. *Neighboring Faiths: A Christian Introduction to World Religions.* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998. Includes an important chapter on Native American religion, a topic not usually covered in these sorts of volumes. (I)

24. Corduan, Winfried. *No Doubt About it.* Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman, 1997. An excellent and wide-ranging work of apologetics. Readable and challenging. (B)/(I)

25. Cowan, Steven, ed. *Five Views of Apologetics.* Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1999. Presentations and critiques from William Lane Craig (Classical apologetics); Gary Habermas (Evidentialism); Paul Feinberg (Cumulative Case Method); John Frame (Presuppositionalism); and Kelly James Clark (Reformed Epistemology). (A)

26. Craig, William Lane. *Reasonable Faith: Christian Truth and Apologetics*. Wheaton, IL: Good News/Crossway Publ., 1994. Excellent and thorough treatment by a leading Christian philosopher. Nothing on the problem of evil or creation-evolution, however. (I)/(A)

27. Dembski, William, ed. *Mere Creation: Science, Faith, and Intelligent Design.* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998. Path-breaking material from a major conference on intelligent design. Contributions from Phillip Johnson, Michael Behe, and other notables. (I)/(A)

28. Dembski, William. *Intelligent Design.* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999. Major statement of the theory behind the Intelligent Design Movement. (I)/(A).

29. Dembski, William. *The Design Revolution*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004. Made of many short chapters that answer questions raised about intelligent design theory. (I)

30. Downing, David. *Most Reluctant Convert: C.S. Lewis's Journey to Faith*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002. Excellent assessment of the reasons why Lewis moved from atheism to Christianity. It thus has biographical and apologetic significance. (I)

31. Erickson, Millard. *Truth or Consequences*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001. Thorough and careful assessment of postmodernism. One of the best evangelical treatments available.

32. Evans, C. Stephen. *Philosophy of Religion*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1985. Excellent introduction to the subject offering many important apologetic points. (I)

33. Geisler, Norman, and Paul Hoffman, eds. *Why I Am A Christian: Leading Christians Explain Why They Believe*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publ. Group, 2001. Very good contributions overall by top-notch scholars, such as William Lane Craig, Gary Habermas, and Hugh Ross, on a variety of standard apologetic topics. (B)/(I)

34. Geisler, Norman, and Abdul Saleeb. *Answering Islam*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publ. Group, 1993. Examines Islam theologically and historically and gives apologetic arguments against its claims to usurp Christianity. (I)

35. Geisler, Norman. *Christian Apologetics*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publ. Group, 1976. Gives extensive attention to apologetic methodology, assesses non-Christian worldviews, and develops a neo-Thomist approach to defending evangelical Christianity.

36. Geivett, Douglas R., and Gary R. Habermas, eds. *In Defense of Miracles: A Comprehensive Case for God's Action in History*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997. Excellent contributions from leading scholars, such as William Lane Craig, Stephen T. Davis, and David Clark, on all the important aspects of the question of miracles. (I)

37. Groothuis, Douglas. *Unmasking the New Age: Is There a New Religious Movement Trying to Transform Society?* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1986. An exposition and analysis of New Age thinking now somewhat dated. Nevertheless, it still addresses the main themes of what is now called "the new spirituality" or just "spirituality." (I)

38. Groothuis, Douglas. *Confronting the New Age: How to Resist a Growing Religious Movement.* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988. An apologetic and action-oriented approach to addressing the New Age worldview and its social manifestations. (I)

39. Groothuis, Douglas. *Are All Religions One?* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996. Booklet comparing Christianity, Islam, and nondualist Hinduism in order to show that religions are not all one. (B)/(I)

40. Groothuis, Douglas. *Jesus in an Age of Controversy*. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock reprint, 2002. Defends the biblical view against mostly New Age alternatives. (I)

41. Groothuis, Douglas. *On Pascal*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning, 2003. A short overview of Pascal's philosophy, science, and apologetics. (B)

42. Groothuis, Douglas. *On Jesus*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning, 2003. Treats Jesus as a philosopher and explains his worldview. (B)

43. Guinness, Os. *The Dust of Death.* Wheaton, IL: Good News/Crossway Publ., 1994. Originally published in 1973 (by InterVarsity) and now updated, this study of the philosophy of the counterculture still has apologetic value in its critique of secular humanism and Eastern mysticism. (I)

44. Guinness, Os. *The Gravedigger File.* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1983. Explains the social conditions—privatization, pluralization, secularization—that tend to impede Christian witness. Written in a kind of *Screwtape Letters* format. Takes important material from the sociology of religion and makes it more accessible. (I)

45. Guinness, Os. *Fit Bodies, Fat Minds.* Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publ. Group, 1994. A short but powerful assessment of anti-intellectualism in American evangelicalism and what can be done about it. (I)

46. Guinness, Os. *God in the Dark.* Wheaton, IL: Good News/Crossway Publ., 1994. Classic treatment of the problem of doubt in the Christian life. Originally published by InterVarsity Press as

In Two Minds. (I)
47. Guinness, Os. *Long Journey Home.* Colorado Springs, CO: Waterbrook, 2001. A rare apologetics book oriented toward the person who has some inkling that there is something more to life, but is not yet drawn to Christianity. (B)
48. Guinness, Os. *A Time for Truth.* Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publ. Group, 2000. Short, but cogent critique of the postmodern loss of truthfulness and a call to restoration. (I)
49. Guinness, Os. *Unspeakable*: *Facing up to Evil in an Age of Genocide and Terror*. San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 2005. A wise Christian response to the problem of evil. (I)
50. Habermas, Gary. *The Historical Jesus.* Joplin, MO: College Press, 1996. Excellent on historical and extra-biblical evidence for Jesus. (I)
51. Habermas, Gary. *The Risen Jesus and Future Hope*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2003. An historical apologetic for the resurrection and an exploration of the implications of that doctrine.
52. Halverson, Dean, ed. *Compact Guide to World Religions.* Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House Publishers, 1996. Excellent introductory exposition and apologetic engagement on major religions. Supplemental apologetic material also. (B)
53. Henry, Carl F. H. *God, Revelation, and Authority.* 6 vols. Wheaton, IL: Good News/Crossway Publ., 1999. This monumental, erudite, and wide-ranging work of philosophical theology covers many pertinent apologetic topics. Written by a pivotal evangelical intellectual who helped spark and sustain modern evangelicalism. (I)/(A)
54. Jenkins, Philip. *Hidden Gospels: How the Search for Jesus Lost Its Way.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2001. A critical look at the impetus behind the reconstructions of Jesus by liberal scholars. (I)
55. Johnson, Phillip E. *Darwin on Trial*. Rev. ed. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993. A penetrating critique of naturalistic theories of macro-evolution on the basis of the logical and evidential problems with the theory itself. (I)
56. Johnson, Phillip E. *Reason in the Balance: The Case Against Naturalism in Science, Law, and Education*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1995. Traces the wider implications of naturalism and its philosophical problems. (I)
57. Johnson, Phillip E. *Defeating Darwinism by Opening Minds.* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997. Simplified version of Darwin on Trial with an emphasis on spotting logical problems in Darwinism. (B)
58. Johnson, Phillip E. *Objections Sustained.* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998. Collection of essays on evolution and culture. (I)
59. Johnson, Phillip E. *The Wedge of Truth.* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000. Explains the rationale of the Intelligent Design Movement's attempt to overthrow the domination of naturalism in modern science. (I)
60. Keener, Craig, and Glenn Usry. *Defending Black Faith: Answers to Tough Questions About African-American Christianity.* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997. A follow-up volume to *Black Man's Religion* (see 95 below). (I)
61. Komoszewski, J. Ed, M. James Sawyer, and Daniel B. Wallace. *Reinventing Jesus: What the Da Vinci Code and Other Novel Speculations Don't Tell You.* Grand Rapids, MI: Kregal Publications, 2006.
62. Lewis, C. S. *Mere Christianity.* Many editions. Good on the moral argument and the deity of Jesus; weak on some theological points, such as the atonement. Marvelously written, of course.

(B)/(I)

63. Lewis, C. S. *The Abolition of Man.* New York: Macmillan, 1947. Brilliant attack on relativistic naturalism. (I)

64. Lewis, C. S. *Miracles: A Preliminary Study.* New York: Macmillan Publishing, 1978. A classic study of the supernaturalism of Christianity in relation to naturalism and pantheism. (I)

65. Lewis, C. S. *God in the Dock.* Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1970. Superior collection of essays, many related to apologetics. See especially the essay, "Christian Apologetics." (I)

66. Lewis, Gordon. *Testing Christianity's Truth Claims.* Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1990. An excellent analysis of various modern apologetic methodologies, with special emphasis on E. J. Carnell. (I)

67. McDowell, Josh. *Evidence for Christianity.* Nashville, TN: Nelson Reference & Electronic, 2006. This is a treasury of apologetics resources from one of the most influential and effective Christian apologists of the last four decades.

68. McGrath, Alister E. *Intellectuals Don't Need God and Other Modern Myths.* Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1993. A generally helpful approach to modern apologetics and much better than *A Passion for Truth*, which I critique in my book, *Truth Decay*. (B)/(I)

69. Montgomery, John Warwick. *Faith Founded on Fact.* Nashville, TN: T. Nelson, 1978. Montgomery is one of the leading evidentialist apologists with a long and distinguished career of debates and publications. An excellent collection of essays.

70. Moreland, J. P. *Scaling the Secular City: A Defense of Christianity.* Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publ. Group, 1987. A powerful apologetics for Christianity covering natural theology, the reliability of the New Testament, and the relationship of Christianity and science. (I)

71. Moreland, J. P. *Love Your God With All Your Mind.* Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1997. Excellent introduction to developing a Christian mind, with many practical suggestions (about the church and personal spiritual disciplines) as well as philosophical arguments. (I)

72. Moreland, J. P. *Christianity and the Nature of Science.* Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publ. Group, 1989. High-level work on the relationship of philosophy of science and the Christian worldview. Excellent material on how the biblical view of creation is not unscientific. (I)/(A)

73. Morris, Thomas V., ed. *God and the Philosophers: The Reconciliation of Faith and Reason.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1994. Collection of essays by leading philosophers, such as Arthur Holmes and George Mavrodes, who are also theists (mostly Christians), which addresses the rationality of theism and Christianity.

74. Murray, Michael J., ed. *Reason for the Hope Within.* Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999. Collection of essays on apologetics written by younger Christian philosophers. Many of the essays tend to be a bit timid apologetically, but it is encouraging and instructive to find Christian philosophers early in their careers joining the apologetic cause. (I)

75. Nash, Ronald. *Faith and Reason: Searching for a Rational Faith*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1988. Survey of the philosophy of religion from an evangelical perspective. Strong material on the reality of miracles.

76. Netland, Harold. *Dissonant Voices: Christians and Religious Pluralism.* Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991. Excellent discussion of the teachings of major world religions and how Christians should assess other religious worldviews theologically and apologetically. Descriptively accurate on the nature and teachings of religions as well as philosophically acute.

77. Netland, Harold. *Encountering Religious Pluralism.* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001. Elaborates and further develops themes from *Dissonant Voices*, but also contains new material

on modernity, postmodernity, and other issues. Clearly written and penetrating. (I)

77. Pascal, Blaise. *The Mind on Fire*. Ed. James Houston. Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House Publishers, reprint 1997. An edited collection of Pascal's works. Excellent introduction by Os Guinness. For the complete *Pensées*, see the Penguin edition (1966), edited by A. Krailsheimer. (I)

78. Phillips, Timothy, and Dennis Okholm, eds. *Christian Apologetics in the Postmodern World.* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1995. Essays are mixed in quality (the Kenneson piece is abysmally atrocious), but all give an understanding of the postmodern challenge. (I)

79. Plantinga, Alvin. *Warranted Christian Belief.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2000. Major work defending the "Reformed epistemology" perspective on apologetics. Excellent critiques of the anti-Christian theories of Freud, Marx, postmodernism, etc. (A)

80. Powell, Doug. *Holman QuickSource Guide to Christian Apologetics.* Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2006. This volume may be the most accessible introduction to and overview of Christian apologetics. Lucid presentation with beautiful, well-chosen graphics for the visual generation.

81. Ramachandra, Vinoth. *Faiths in Conflict: Christian Integrity in a Multicultural World.* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999. Challenges the idea that religious conflict is the major cause of all conflict between cultures. (I)

82. Reppert, Victor. *C. S. Lewis's Dangerous Idea: In Defense of the Argument from Reason*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003. An superb updating of Lewis's famous argument from *Miracles*. (I)

83. Samples, Kenneth. *Without a Doubt*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publ. Group, 2004. Superb apologetics overview.

84. Schaeffer, Francis A. *The God Who is There*, 30th anniversary ed. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998. First published in 1968. A prophetic book that roused many from their anti-apologetics slumbers. Still worth pondering. A pivotal book in my journey into apologetics and Christian witness. (I)

85. Schaeffer, Francis A. *The Collected Works of Francis Schaeffer*. Five vols. Wheaton, IL: Good News/Crossway Publ., 1985. From the late 1960s until his death in 1984, Schaeffer wrote rafts of important books covering theology, apologetics, ethics, and cultural criticism—all collected here. These books, while not technical scholarship (and sometimes a bit swashbuckling), influenced scores of young evangelicals—myself included—to apply Christian truth in the world of ideas and culture. Young evangelicals of the 21st century would do well to read these works as well. (I)

86. Sennett, James F., and Douglas Groothuis. *In Defense of Natural Theology: A Post Humean Assessment*. Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 2005. A commendation of natural theology in light of Hume's famous, but overrated criticisms of such.

87. Sheler, Jeffery L. *Is the Bible True? How Modern Debates and Discoveries Affirm the Essence of the Scriptures*. San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1999. A religion journalist from *US News and World Report* investigates the reliability of both Testaments. Basic, but helpful. (B)

88. Sire, James W. *The Universe Next Door*, 4th ed. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004. A model work on world view comparisons. Very well written with many illustrations from literature. A durable and outstanding work. (I)

89. Sire, James W. *Why Should Anyone Believe Anything at All?* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994. A readable case for Christianity, emphasizing the identity of Jesus. (I)

90. Sire, James W. *Habits of the Mind.* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000. A wonderful book on how a Christian ought to develop the life of the mind. (I)/(A)

91. Sire, James. *Why Good Arguments Fail*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006. A study of the logic and rhetoric of apologetics.

92. Sproul, R. C. *Not a Chance: The Myth of Chance in Modern Science and Cosmology.* Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publ. Group, 1994. An able philosophical critique of the metaphysical status of chance in contemporary naturalism. (I)

93. Strobel, Lee. *The Case for Christ.* Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1998. Strobel takes a journalistic approach by interviewing experts—such as Craig Blomberg, William Lane Craig, and J. P. Moreland—on the historicity and identity of Jesus. The result is an introductory survey of the case for the reliability of the NT and the deity of Christ. For the more developed apologetic arguments, read the people Strobel interviews. (B)

94. Strobel, Lee. *The Case for Faith.* Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000. This follow up to *The Case for Christ* uses the same form of interviewing Christian experts—such as Peter Kreeft, Norman Geisler, and Ravi Zacharias—on apologetic questions. This time objections to faith are in view, such as the problem of evil and evolution. (B)

95. Strobel, Lee. *The Case for a Creator.* Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004. Focuses on scientific arguments for God, especially those of intelligent design. (B)

96. Usry, Glen, and Craig S. Keener. *Black Man's Religion: Can Christianity be Afrocentric?* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996. An apologetic dealing with key concerns of the African American community. (I)

97. Van Voorst, Robert E. *Jesus Outside the New Testament.* Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000. Probably the best contemporary source on this subject. (I)/(A)

98. Wright, N. T. *The Resurrection of the Son of God*. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress Publishers, 2003. A masterful defense of the resurrection by a world-class New Testament scholar.

99. Wright, N. T. *Evil and the Justice of God*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006. Short, generally wise treatment of the problem of evil from the biblical perspective on redemption.

II. RECOMMENDED BOOKS RELATED TO RELIGIOUS PLURALISM AND WORLD RELIGIONS

1. Adler, Mortimer. *Truth In Religion.* New York: Macmillan, 1990. Argues that religions teach different things and thus cannot all be true. (I)

2. Anderson, Norman. *Christianity and World Religions: The Challenge of Pluralism.* Downers Grove: IL: InterVarsity Press, 1985. (I)

3. Berger, Peter L., ed. *The Desecularization of the World: Resurgent Religion and World Politics.* Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999. Challenges the idea that the modern world is becoming increasingly secular in accordance with sociological forces. (I)

4. Clark, Andrew, and Bruce Winter. *One God, One Lord: Christianity in a World of Religious Pluralism.* Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publ. Group, 1992. (I)

5. Corduan, Winfried. *Mysticism: An Evangelical Option?* Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1991. (I)

6. Crockett, William, and James Sigountos, eds. *Through No Fault of Their Own: The Fate of Those Who Have Never Heard.* Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1991. (I)

7. Erickson, Millard. *How Shall They Be Saved?* The Destiny of Those Who Do Not Hear of Jesus. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1996. (I)

8. Fernando, Ajith. *The Supremacy of Christ.* Wheaton, IL: Good News/Crossway Publ., 1995. Excellent defense of Jesus as Lord, based on John 14:6. (B)/(I)

9. Fernando, Ajith. *Sharing the Truth in Love.* Grand Rapids, MI: Discovery House, 2001. Helpful update of his earlier book, *The Christian Attitude Towards World Religions* (Tyndale, 1987). (B)/(I)

10. Gabriel, Mark. *Jesus and Mohammad*: *Profound Differences and Surprising Similarities*. Lake Mary, FL: Charisma House, 2004. Written by an ex-Muslim who taught Islamic history. Makes a strong case for Christianity over Islam.

11. Griffiths, Paul, ed. *Christianity Through Non-Christian Eyes.* Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1990. (I)

12. Griffiths, Paul. *An Apology for Apologetics.* Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1991. Argues that inter-religious apologetics is proper and fruitful—an unpopular view in the world of Religious Studies. (I)

13. Groothuis, Douglas. *Unmasking the New Age.* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1986. (I)

14. Groothuis, Douglas. *Are All Religions One?* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996. Booklet comparing Christianity, Islam, and nondualistic Hinduism. (I)

15. Groothuis, Douglas. *Confronting the New Age.* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988. (I)

16. Halverson, Dean, ed. *Compact Guide to World Religions.* Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House Publishers, 1996. Excellent introductory exposition and apologetic engagement on major religions. (B)

17. Hackett, Stuart. *Oriental Philosophy: A Westerner's Guide to Eastern Thought.* Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1979. Excellent philosophical treatment. (A)

18. Jenkins, Philip. *The Next Christendom.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2002. Argues that Christianity is growing most rapidly in third world contexts, and is taking on new non-Western forms. Also refutes the notion that Christian growth outside of the West has usually been imposed upon unwilling cultures. Compare this book to the earlier *Fire From Heaven* by Harvey Cox. (I)

19. Johnson, David L. *A Reasoned Look at Asian Religions.* Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House, 1985. Good expository and apologetic material. (I)

20. Mangalwadi, Vishal. *The World of Gurus.* Chicago: Cornerstone Press, 1992. (I)

21. Nash, Ronald. *Is Jesus the Only Savior?* Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994. Good critique of John Hick and a defense of exclusivism. (I)

22. Netland, Harold. *Dissonant Voices.* Oakland, CA: Regent Press, 1998; orig. pub. Eerdmans, 1991. Probably the best and most thorough evangelical treatment of the subject of religious pluralism. Moderately difficult but well-written and lucid. (I)

23. Netland, Harold. *Encountering Religious Pluralism.* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001. Elaborates and further develops themes from *Dissonant Voices*, but also contains new material on modernity, postmodernity, and other issues. Clearly written and penetrating. (I)

24. Okholm, Dennis L., and Timothy Phillips, eds. *Salvation: Four Views.* Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995. Four authors debate the proper approach to non-Christian religions. (I)

25. Stackhouse, John Jr., ed. *No Other Gods Before Me? Evangelicals and the Challenge of World Religions*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001. The Hexam and Mouw essays are particularly good.

26. Yandell, Keith. *The Epistemology of Religious Experience*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1993. Philosophical assessment of religious experience claims. (A)

27. Yandell, Keith, *Philosophy of Religion*. New York: Routledge, 1999. Strong analytic approach with an equally strong emphasis on comparative religious philosophy. (I)/(A)

III. RECOMMENDED BOOKS ON NEW RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS

1. Ankerberg, John, and John Weldon. *Encyclopedia of New Age Beliefs.* Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1996. Quite thorough and generally on track. Probably a bit too negative on alternative medicine. Weldon is the primary author. (B)

2. Bowman, Robert. *Orthodoxy and Heresy: A Biblical Guide to Doctrinal Discernment.* Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publ. Group, 1992. Well-informed and clearly written guide to biblical thinking about theologically errant groups. (B)/(I)

3. Chandler, Russell. *Understanding the New Age*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1993. Christian journalist looks at the New Age movement. (B)

4. Clark, David, and Norman Geisler. *Apologetics for the New Age.* Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publ. Group, 1990. Very thorough and philosophical. (I)/(A)

5. Groothuis, Douglas. *Unmasking the New Age*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1986. One of the first worldview analyses of the New Age movement from an evangelical perspective. (I)

6. Groothuis, Douglas. *Confronting the New Age*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988. Oriented toward apologetic engagement and social action. (I)

7. Groothuis, Douglas. *Christianity That Counts.* Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publ. Group, 1995. Collection of essays, many of which address New Age concerns. (B)/(I)

8. Groothuis, Douglas. *Are All Religions One?* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996. Compares Christianity, Islam, and nondualistic Hinduism. (I)

9. Guinness, Os. *The Dust of Death*. Rev. ed. Wheaton, IL: Good News/Crossway Publ., 1994. Still the best assessment of the counterculture, including its embrace of Eastern religion and occultism. (I)

10. Jenkins, Philip. *Hidden Gospels: How the Search for Jesus Lost Its Way*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2001. Critique of exotic reconstructions—often New Age in orientation—of Jesus based on very liberal scholarship. (I)

11. Martin, Walter R. *Kingdom of the Cults*. Rev. ed. Ed. Hank Hanegraaff. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1997. Revision of a classic work after the author's death in 1989. Most of the new work is not done by Hanegraaff. (B)/(I)

12. Miller, Elliot. *A Crash Course on the New Age*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publ. Group, 1989. Excellent overview. (I)

13. Newport, John. *The New Age Movement and the Biblical Worldview*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998. Compendium of materials on just about every aspect of the New Age movement. Little new research. (I)

14. North, Gary. *Unholy Spirits*. Tyler, TX: Institute of Christian Economics, 1988. Emphasizes worldview critique. (I)

15. Partridge, Christopher, and Douglas Groothuis, eds. *Dictionary of Contemporary Religion in the Western World.* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002 (March). Features many articles on new religious movements, (I)

16. Sire, James. *The Universe Next Door*, 4th ed. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004. Excellent chapters on Eastern pantheistic monism and New Age thought. (I)

17. Sire, James. *Scripture Twisting: Twenty Ways Cults Misinterpret the Bible*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1980. (I)

18. Strohmer, Charles. *The Gospel and the New Spirituality*. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2004. Excellent on how to communicate the Gospel to New Age people. (B)

CHARTS AND MAPS

Chronology of the Kings of Israel and Judah

The Tribal Allotments of Israel

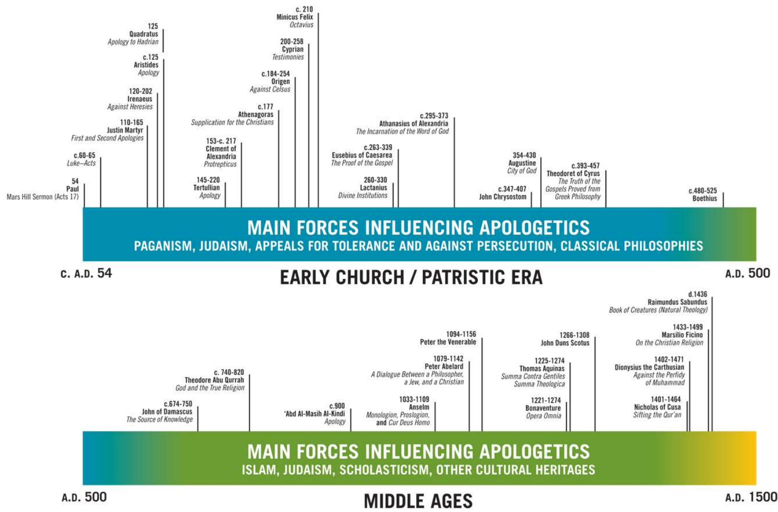
The Kingdoms of Israel and Judah

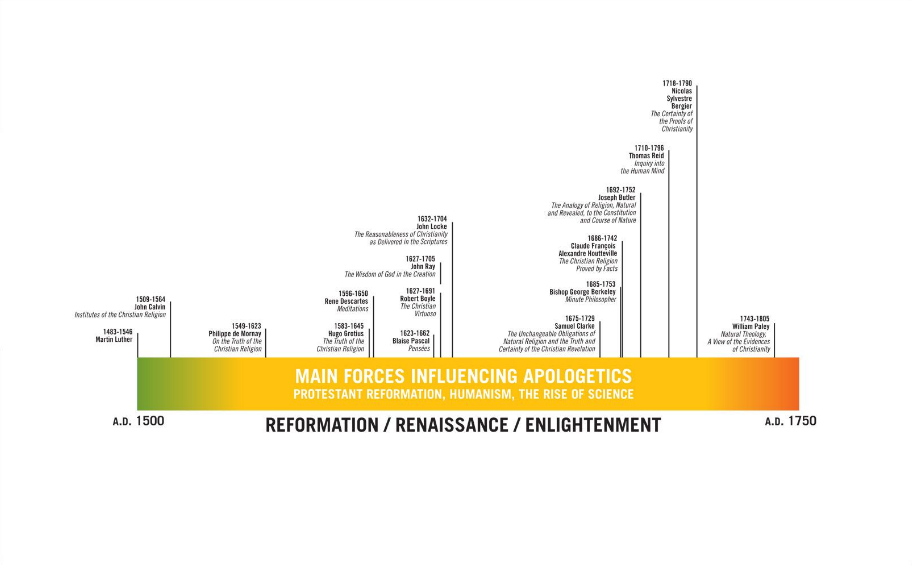
Palestine in the Time of Jesus

The Passion Week in Jerusalem

Paul’s Missionary Journeys

TIMELINE OF APOLOGISTS AND NOTABLE WORKS





TIMELINE OF APOLOGISTS AND NOTABLE WORKS
1483-1546 Martin Luther
1509-1564 John Calvin *Institutes of the Christian Religion*
1549-1623 Philippe de Mornay *On the Truth of the Christian Religion*
1583-1645 Hugo Grotius *The Truth of the Christian Religion*
1596-1650 Rene Descartes *Meditations*
1623-1662 Blaise Pascal *Pensées*
1627-1691 Robert Boyle *The Christian Virtuoso*
1627-1705 John Ray *The Wisdom of God in the Creation*
1632-1704 John Locke *The Reasonableness of Christianity as Delivered in the Scriptures*
1675-1729 Samuel Clarke *The Unchangeable Obligations of Natural Religion and the Truth and Certainty of the Christian Revelation*
1685-1753 Bishop George Berkeley *Minute Philosopher*
1686-1742 Claude François Alexandre Houtteville *The Christian Religion Proved by Facts*
1692-1752 Joseph Butler *The Analogy of Religion, Natural and Revealed, to the Constitution and Course of Nature*
1710-1796 Thomas Reid *Inquiry into the Human Mind*
1718-1790 Nicolas Sylvestre Bergier *The Certainty of the Proofs of Christianity*
1743-1805 William Paley *Natural Theology, A View of the Evidences of Christianity*
MAIN FORCES INFLUENCING APOLOGETICS
PROTESTANT REFORMATION, HUMANISM, THE RISE OF SCIENCE
A.D. 1500
REFORMATION / RENAISSANCE / ENLIGHTENMENT
A.D. 1750

TIMELINE OF APOLOGISTS AND NOTABLE WORKS

1753-1821
Joseph de Maistre
St. Petersburg Dialogues

1759-1844
Bruno Liebermann
Theological Intstitutions

1768-1848
François René de Chateaubriand
The Genius of Christianity; or, Beauties of the Christian Religion

1777-1853
Johann Sebastian von Drey
Apologetics as a Scientific Demonstration of the Divinity of Christianity

1780-1847
Thomas Chalmers
Miraculous and Internal Evidences of the Christian Revelation

1782-1860
Abbé Felicité de Lamennais
Essay on Indifference in Matters of Religion

1783-1853
Simon Greenleaf
The Testimony of the Evangelists

1787-1863
Richard Whately
Introductory Lessons on Christian Evidence

1794-1876
Giovanni Perrone, S.J.
Lectures on Dogmatics

1796-1865
Carl Ullmann
The Sinlessness of Jesus

1796-1867
Abbé Louis-Eugène Bautain
Philosophy of Christianity

1797-1878
Charles Hodge
What is Darwinism and *Systematic Theology*

1799-1877
August Tholuck
The Credibility of the Evangelical History

1801-1890
John Henry Newman
Essays on Miracles

1807-1888
C.F. Keil
Commentary on the Old Testament

1810-1848
Jaime Balmes
Criterion, and *Letters to a Skeptic on Religious Matters*

1813-1855
Søren Kierkegaard
Philosophical Fragments

1818-1888
August Ebrard
Apologetics; or the Scientific Vindication of Christianity

1831-1899
Alexander B. Bruce
Apologetics; or Christianity Defensively Stated

1834-1895
Paul de Broglie
Positivism and Experimental Science

1837-1915
Fulcran Vigouroux
The Bible and Modern Discoveries in Egypt and Assyria

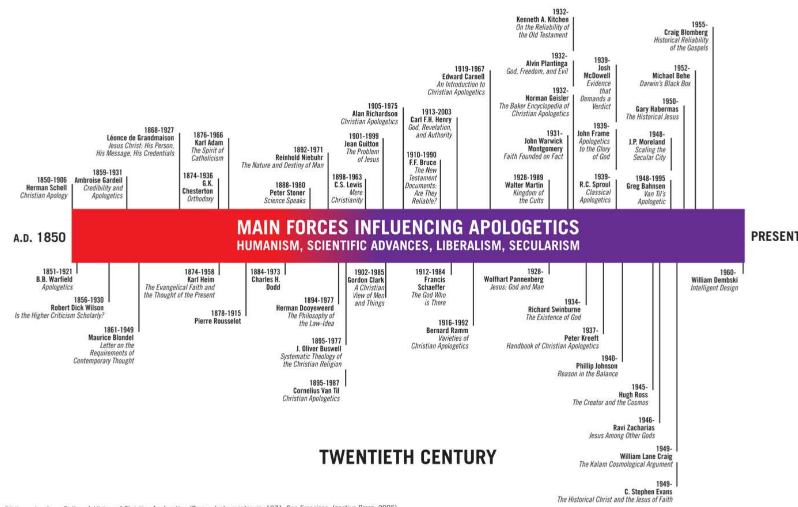
1837-1920
Abraham Kuyper
Principles of Sacred Theology

1844–1913
James Orr
The Bible Under Trial

MAIN FORCES INFLUENCING APOLOGETICS
HUMANISM, DARWINISM, SCIENTIFIC ADVANCES, AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORICAL METHODS

A.D. 1750 — **NINETEENTH CENTURY** — A.D. 1850

TIMELINE OF APOLOGISTS AND NOTABLE WORKS



Bibliography: Avery Dulles, *A History of Christian Apologetics*, (Corpus Instrumentorum, 1971; San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2005).
Kenneth D. Boa and Robert M. Bowman, JR., *Faith Has Its Reasons*, (Colorado Springs: Navpress, 2001).

SELECTED IMPORTANT NEW TESTAMENT ARCHAELOGICAL FINDS

FIND	DISCOVERED	IMPORTANCE
The Pilate Stone Inscription	1961, Caesarea Maritima	Confirmed the existence and office of Pilate
The Delphi, or Gallio, Inscription	1905	Fixed the date of Gallio's proconsulship at A.D. 51-52, providing a way of dating Acts 18:12-17, and as a result, much of the rest of Paul's ministry
Caiaphas Ossuary	1990, near Jerusalem	Confirmed the existence of Caiaphas
Sergius Paulus Inscription	1877, Paphos, Cyprus	Confirms the existence of Sergius Paulus, proconsul of Cyprus encountered by Paul and Barnabas in Acts 13:7
Pool of Siloam	2004, Jerusalem	Site of Jesus' miracle recorded in John 9:1-11
Skeleton of Yohanan	1968, Jerusalem	Only known remains of crucifixion victim; corroborates the Bible's description of crucifixion
Rylands Papyrus P52	1920	Oldest universally accepted manuscript of the New Testament, a small fragment of John's Gospel dated by papyrologists to A.D. 125
Bodmer Papyrus II	1952, Pabau, Egypt	Contains most of John's Gospel and dates from A.D. 150-200
Magdalene Papyrus	1901, Luxor, Egypt	Contains framents of Matthew and has been dated as being earlier than A.D. 70, though there is debate concerning the date
Chester Beatty Papyri	acquired 1931-35, Cairo, Egypt	Three papyri dating from A.D. 200 that contain most of the New Testament
Codex Vaticanus	In the Vatican Library's earliest inventory (1481)	Dated A.D. 325-50 and contains a nearly complete Bible
Codex Sinaiticus	1859, Mt Sinai, Egypt	Codex containing nearly complete New Testament and over half of the Old Testament (the books at the beginning of the Bible appear to have been lost to damage), dated at A.D. 350
7Q5	1955, Qumran, Israel	Possible fragment of Mark that can be dated no later than A.D. 68 which would make it the oldest extant New Testament fragment if confirmed
Galilee Boat	1986, near Tiberias, Israel	The boat, 30' x 8', held approximately 15 passengers and would be like the boats Jesus' disciples used in crossing the Sea of Galilee. Carbon 14 dating places the boat between 120 B.C. and A.D. 40.

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Craig Blomberg, "The Historical Reliability of the New Testament," in William Lane Craig, *Reasonable Faith*, (Wheaton: Crossway, 1994).
Norman Geisler, *Christian Apologetics*, (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1976).
Gary Habermas, *The Historical Jesus*, (Joplin, MO: College Press, 1996).
Walter C. Kaiser Jr., "Top 15 Finds from Biblical Archaelogy," *Contact*, Winter 2006-2006
Josh McDowell, *Evidence that Demands a Verdict*, (San Bernadino: Here's Life, 1972, 1979).
Bruce M. Metzger, *The New Testament, its Background, Growth, and Content*, (Nashville: Abingdon, 1965, 1983).
Randal Price, *Secrets of the Dead Sea Scroll*, (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1996).
Keith N. Schoville, "Top Ten Archaeological Discoveries of the Twentieth Century Relating to the Biblical World, " http://biblicalstudies.info
Richard N. Soulen, *Handbook of Biblical Criticism*, (Atlanta: John Knox, 1976, 1982).

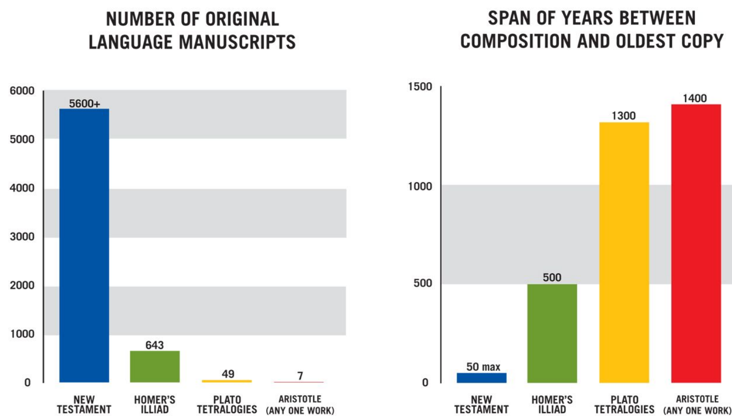
SELECTED IMPORTANT OLD TESTAMENT ARCHAELOGICAL FINDS

FIND	DISCOVERED	IMPORTANCE
Dead Sea Scrolls	1947-56, Qumran, Israel	Provided our oldest copies of almost all books of the Old Testament and confirmed reliability of the transmission process
Taylor Prism	1830, Nineveh, Iraq	Corroborates the campaigns of Sennacherib found in 2 Kg 18:13-19:37; 2 Ch 32:1-12; Is 36:1-37:38
House of David Inscriptions	1993-94, Tel Dan, Israel	Earliest mention outside the Bible of King David, whom some scholars have held to be a fictional character
Cylinder of Nabonidus	1854, Ur, Iraq	Corroborates Belshazzar as last king of Babylon as recorded in Daniel 5:1-30; 7:1; 8:1
Sargon Inscriptions	1843, Khorsabad, Iraq	Confirms the existence of Sargon, King of Assyria, Isaiah 20:1, as well as his conquering of Samaria (2 Kings 17:23-24)
Tiglath-Pileser III Inscriptions	1845-49, Nimrud, Iraq	Corroborates 2 Kings 15:29
Cyrus Cylinder	1879, Babylon, Iraq	Contains a decree from Cyrus that corroborates Ezra 1:1-3; 6:3; 2 Chronicles 36:23; Isaiah 44:28.
Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser	1846, Nimrud, Iraq	Depicts Jehu, son of Omri, oldest known picture of an ancient Israelite.
Moabite Stone	1868, Palestine	Corroborates 2 Kings 3
Ketef Hinnom Amulets	1779, Jerusalem	Contains the Hebrew text of Numbers 6:24-26 and Deuteronomy 9:7. This is the oldest instance to date of Hebrew text of the Old Testament, 7th-6th century B.C.
Seal of Baruch	early-mid 1970's, Jerusalem	Contains the phrase "belonging to Beruch son of Neriah," Jeremiah's scribe, 6th century B.C.
Epic of Gilgamesh	1853, Nineveh, Iraq	First extra-biblical find that appears to reference the great flood of Genesis 7-8
Weld-Blundell Prism	1922, Babylon, Iraq	Contains a list of Sumerian Kings that ruled before and after the great flood; the kings that pre-dated the flood are attributed enormous life spans reminiscent of, though greater than, the lifespans of pre-flood inhabitants of the Bible
Siloam Inscription	1880, Jerusalem	One of the few extant ancient Hebrew writings from the 8th century B.C. or earlier.
Gedaliah Seal	1935, Lachish, Israel	Corroborates 2 Kings 25:22

BIBLIOGRAPHY

E.M. Blaiklock and R.K. Harrison, *The New International Dictionary of Biblical Archaeology*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983).
Walter C. Kaiser Jr., "Top 15 Finds from Biblical Archaelogy," *Contact*, Winter 2006-2006
Josh McDowell, *Evidence that Demands a Verdict*, (San Bernadino: Here's Life, 1972, 1979).
Randal Price, *Secrets of the Dead Sea Scroll*, (Eugene, OR.: Harvest House, 1996).
Hershel Shanks, *Understanding the Dead Sea Scrolls*, (New York: Random House, 1992).
Keith N. Schoville, "Top Ten Archaeological Discoveries of the Twentieth Century Relating to the Biblical World, " http://biblicalstudies.info
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Howard F. Vos, *Archaeology in Bible Lands*, (Chicago: Moody Press, 1977, 1982).

MANUSCRIPT AUTHORITY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT COMPARED TO OTHER CLASSICAL WORKS



Note: Homer's *Illiad* is the best attested ancient work after the New Testament. Plato and Aristotle are used in the graph for how well known they are.

Bibliography: Josh McDowell, *Evidence that Demands a Verdict*, (San Bernadino, CA: Here"s Life, 1972, 1992).

NATURALISM VS. THEISM: WHICH CONTEXT BEST EXPLAINS THE PHENOMENA WE OBSERVE?

PHENOMENA WE OBSERVE	THEISTIC CONTEXT	NATURALISTIC CONTEXT
(Self-)consciousness exists.	God is supremely self-aware/-conscious.	The universe was produced by mindless, non-conscious processes.
Personal beings exist.	God is a personal Being.	The universe was produced by impersonal processes.
We believe we make free personal decisions/choices, assuming humans are accountable for their actions.	God is spirit and a free Being, who can freely choose to act (e.g., to create or not).	We have emerged by material, deterministic processes and forces beyond our control.
Secondary qualities (colors, smells, sounds, tastes, textures) exist throughout the world.	God is joyful, and secondary qualities make the world pleasurable and joyful to His creatures.	The universe was produced from colorless, odorless, soundless, tasteless, textureless particles and processes.
We trust our senses and rational faculties as generally reliable in producing true beliefs.	A God of truth and rationality exists.	Because of our impulse to survive and reproduce, our beliefs would only help us *survive*, but a number of these could be completely *false*.
Human beings have intrinsic value/dignity and rights.	God is the supremely valuable Being.	Human beings were produced by valueless processes.
Objective moral values exist.	God's character is the source of goodness/moral values.	The universe was produced by non-moral processes.
The universe began to exist a finite time ago—without previously existing matter, energy, space or time.	A powerful, previously-existing God brought the universe into being without any pre-existing material. (Here, something emerges from something.)	The universe came into existence from nothing by nothing—or was, perhaps, self-caused. (Here, something comes from nothing.)
The universe is finely-tuned for human life (known as "the Goldilocks effect"—the universe is "just right" for life).	God is a wise, intelligent Designer.	All the cosmic constants just happened to be right; given enough time and/or many possible worlds, a finely-tuned world eventually emerged.
First life emerged.	God is a living, active Being.	Life somehow emerged from non-living matter.
Beauty exists (e.g., not only in landscapes and sunsets but in "elegant" or "beautiful" scientific theories).	God is beautiful (Ps. 27:4) and capable of creating beautiful things according to His pleasure.	Beauty in the natural world is superabundant and in many cases superfluous (often not linked to survival).
We (tend to) believe that life has purpose and meaning. For most of us, life is worth living.	God has created/designed us for certain purposes (to love Him, others, etc.); when we live them out, our lives find meaning/enrichment.	There is no cosmic purpose, blueprint, or goal for human existence.
Real evils—both moral and natural—exist/take place in the world.	Evil's definition assumes a design plan (how things ought to be, but are not) or standard of goodness (a corruption or absence of goodness), by which we judge something to be evil. God is a good Designer; His existence supplies the crucial moral context to make sense of evil.	Atrocities, pain, and suffering just happen. This is just how things are—with no "plan" or standard of goodness to which things ought to conform.

COMPARISONS OF NEW RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS

	AUTHORITY	GOD	MAN	CHRIST	SALVATION	FUTURE HOPE
LDS	The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons) has four primary works (the "Standard Works") which are authoritative: *The Bible* (preferably the KJV), *The Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants*, and *The Pearl of Great Price*. Joseph Smith is considered to be the latter-day prophet who has re-established the true church with his teachings.	There are many gods and the Trinity is comprised of three separate beings, two with physical bodies and one with a spirit body. The Father is an exalted man who was granted rule over our world. He himself has a father and mother and also has a wife. He is the creator of all the spirits of those who will eventually be born on earth.	The Fall of Adam and Eve was not actually a serious sin, since it was necessary for opening the way to perfection. Humans do commit sins, but they can overcome that tendency and live lives that please the Father.	Jesus was the eldest of the Father's spirit children before being born into this world. He was conceived through physical union between the Father and the virgin Mary. He was a man who lived a perfect life, was married and had children, and was exalted to god-hood in his resurrection.	Christ's death canceled the penalty of death, but did not actually purchase salvation. Though grace plays a role in salvation, it only comes into play after we do all we can to merit eternal life.	The future life is made up of three realms, plus hell, though it is not clear that many besides the devil and his angels will spend eternity in hell. Some hold that hell also includes anyone who has specifically rejected LDS teaching, as well as LDS apostates. The other realms include the telestial kingdom, the terrestrial kingdom, and the celestial kingdom. Only the celestial kingdom is actually "heaven," open only to Mormons.
WATCHTOWER SOCIETY (JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES)	The New World Translation of the Bible, a translation produced by the JW organization, deliberately reinforces certain doctrinal beliefs of the organization. The organization also teaches that one cannot understand the *Bible* without its help.	God is unitarian, not trinitarian, and is creator of the earth. The doctrine of the Trinity, according to this group, is a Satanic doctrine.	Humans are made in God's image, and they are a combination of a body and the "life force" given by Jehovah. Humans do not "have" souls as something distinct from the body, and at death they simply go to sleep until the resurrection.	Before becoming a man, Jesus was Michael the archangel, the first creation of Jehovah. Christ is "a god," but not God, and in his earthly life was merely a perfect man. He was made immortal in his resurrection.	Jesus' death did not pay for humans' sin, but only opened the way to salvation. Salvation is merited by following the teachings of the JW organization.	Three possible destinies await human beings. Those who are finally unrepentant will be destroyed in the lake of fire—hell is thus a temporary flash of punishment after which the wicked cease to exist. The redeemed are divided into two groups. The "little flock" (144,000) will live in heaven, sharing the divine nature of Christ and, in effect, becoming gods. The "other sheep" live on a redeemed earth (Paradise) forever.
CHRISTIAN SCIENCE (CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST, SCIENTIST)	*The Bible* is authoritative, but only as interpreted by Mary Baker Eddy, especially through her book, *Science and Health with Key to Scriptures*.	God is infinite Mind. God is the Father-Mother. The Trinity is only a trinity of attributes, not of persons.	Humans, like God, are also mind. Matter, sin, disease, and death are unreal.	"Christ" is the divine or spiritual element of God. The man Jesus was possessed of the Christ spirit. He came to show us the way to attain the Christ spirit for ourselves.	Salvation is gained through enlightenment as to the true nature of humans. All are eventually saved, but it is good to attain that enlightenment during their earthly sojourn.	There is no actual heaven or hell, but humans will progress even after this earthly sojourn to a higher form of spiritual consciousness. Only mind and spirit are good, and in fact, it will become clear that they are all that really exists.
SCIENTOLOGY	Spiritual authority is found in the writings of L. Ron Hubbard, especially, *Dianetics*. Hubbard claimed that the sources for this book included various eastern traditions as well as Native American shamanism.	Scientology claims to have no dogma and claims that God is what God is to each person. Hubbard's own discussions about God are essentially a combination of Judeo-Christian monotheism with Hindu polytheism and pantheism.	Humans are partly god-like themselves, since man is part god. Humans are basically good, with one nature divided into two parts—the physical and the spiritual. Within every human lies a Thetan spirit, a spirit that is eighty trillion years old, and which survives death to be re-implanted within another person. The ultimate goal is to achieve this divinity completely.	Jesus plays little role in Scientology.	Humans are caught in a web of reincarnations, which can only be ended through the process of "auditing," a kind of spiritual therapy. This therapy enables them to eliminate the accumulation of "engrams" which humans acquire through the course of each individual existence and even the aggregate of former existences. These engrams often develop as a result of maltreatment at the hands of parents and others and can only be eliminated through auditing.	When one develops "clarity" and then passes through progressive levels of development, one can achieve true knowledge of his Thetan spirit, join the intergalactic Thetan collective, and cease the cycle of reincarnation.
WICCA	There is no common scripture in this tradition, only intuitive convictions that characterize its various groups and forms.	The deity is a polarity, with a horned male god and a Mother goddess. Wiccans claim that this brings balance, though in actuality many female Wiccans reject the male deity as inferior.	Humans have an inner divinity that connects them with god/goddess. Humans, and the world in general, are extensions of god's essence (panentheism). All the world is divine.	Jesus plays little role in most Wiccan traditions, though some co-opt him as a supporter, while others see him as an enemy.	There is no real sin in Wicca, so no real redemption. "Do what you will if it harm none" is a major theme. Joy is found in finding god in the phenomena of this life, such as food and sex. The predominantly feminine forms often see maleness as the problem of the world.	

COMPARISONS OF WORLD RELIGIONS

	DOCTRINE OF GOD	HUMAN PREDICAMENT	WAY OF DELIVERANCE	ULTIMATE GOAL
BUDDHISM	Essentially atheistic at core, Buddha himself did not emphasize the gods, though some forms of Buddhism practice devotion to specific deities; in some cases the "deities" are departed Bodhisattvas—great figures of Buddhist history.	Humanity is in state of suffering; this suffering arises from a desire, any kind of desire, even the desire for good things; desire is the root of all human problems.	Follow the "Eight-fold path"; it includes right understanding, right speech, right effort, and right mindfulness (meditation and concentration); this practiced over a lifetime with the right intensity leads to elimination of desire, which is the key to deliverance (moksha); there are variations in different Buddhist traditions, but this was the teaching of Gautama.	Release from suffering by entering a state of non-existence (moksha) as an individuated human being (nirvana); to cease to exist as an individual is the highest goal.
HINDUISM	Many gods, but the most important are Brahma (impersonal reality), Shiva (death and reproduction), Vishnu (love and play); gods not sovereign over events in the world, but subject to the same cosmic forces as humans are, such as karma; along with the common gods recognized by most Hindus, many locations have their own unique deities; at the same time, "Atman (humanity) is Brahman (ultimate reality)"—all is One.	The human predicament is existence itself; humanity lives with the illusion (maya) of perceiving the world as it seems to be rather than as it really is (Brahman, or the One); moral retribution (karma) follows us through multiple incarnations (samsara).	Understanding the human predicament through disciplines such as yoga, devotion to one of the gods (especially Shiva), and through a flash of knowledge; knowledge brings release from karmic cycle of reincarnation (samsara); often, men leave their families in their later years to become hermits, working off their karma by ascetic practices.	Release from existence by achieving non-existence (moksha) and an entering into oneness with the One (Brahman) ceasing to exist as an individuated human being (nirvana); one becomes like a drop of water that falls into the ocean; this can be achieved quickly for those who achieve enlightenment, though eventually it will be the experience of all.
ISLAM	"No God but Allah"; a unitarian, monotheistic faith which sees Allah as determining every specific event that happens in the world; Allah is virtually co-terminous with his Word, part of which is found in the Koran.	Humans are finite in contrast to the infinite sovereignty of Allah; they are foolish and need instruction, which comes from the Koran; they are also sinners, such sin being especially seen in violations of Muslim taboos or prohibited behavior and failure to do the will of Allah perfectly.	Embrace the Five Pillars (daily recitation of creed, prayer, giving alms, pilgrimage to Mecca, fasting during Ramadan); complete and utter devotion to Allah; final salvation is reserved only for the most diligent of Muslims.	Future resurrection of the righteous unto eternal bliss in a heavenly Paradise; all of the physical pleasures that one may not have access to in this life will be available in Paradise; infidels spend eternity in a most torturous hell.
JUDAISM	"The Lord is God, the Lord is One"; monotheistic faith in which God is maker of all things and the Lord of Heaven and Earth; contemporary (Conservative and Reform) Judaism tends to see God as not exercising dominant sovereignty over the world.	Humanity is sinful, but not so blinded by sin that they cannot be instructed in the way of righteousness.	Follow the teachings of Torah, especially as it relates to Sabbath, food laws, and holy days (among the Conservative and Orthodox); practice the faith with its traditions; many contemporary Jews (especially in the Reform and Conservative synagogues) are inclusivists, believing that salvation can be found in many religions; Kabalistic Judaism (mysticism) calls for a series of spiritual experiences that eventually allows one to see God.	Future state of resurrection in an earthly Paradise centered in the Holy Land (Orthodox); or a state of spiritual bliss after death (Reform); most Jews have no clear doctrine of eternal punishment, though some hold to the annihilation of the wicked.
CHRISTIANITY	Monotheistic, trinitarian belief; Father, Son and Spirit are equal and eternal and sovereign over all; God is love and is also holy; he is both transcendent and immanent, but is never dependant upon the world; his true nature is most easily seen in the person of his Incarnate Son, Jesus.	In their natural condition, humans are dead in trespasses and sins; they require a specific work of the Holy Spirit to rescue them; they cannot be saved by their own goodness and efforts.	Receive the gift of God's grace by trusting in Jesus Christ alone for salvation, which he purchased with his shed blood; this initial experience of justification is followed by a life of fellowship with other Christians and faithfulness to the Lord.	Immediate entering into the spiritual presence of God at death for believers; future resurrection of the body at the Second Advent of Christ; new heavens and new earth in an eternal realm of peace and righteousness for believers; eternal punishment in hell for the finally impenitent.

HEBREW KINGS CHRONOLOGY

TEXT	DATE (B.C.)	KING	NATION	SYNCHRONIZATION	LENGTH	NOTES
1 Kg 12:1-24 1 Kg 14:21-31	930-913	Rehoboam	Judah		17 years	
1 Kg 12:25—14:20	930-909	Jeroboam I	Israel		22 years	
1 Kg 15:1-8	913-909	Abijam	Judah	18th of Jeroboam I	3 years	
1 Kg 15:9-24	910-869	Asa	Judah	20th of Jeroboam I	41 years	
1 Kg 15:25-31	909-908	Nadab	Israel	2nd of Asa	2 years	
1 Kg 15:32—16:7	908-886	Baasha	Israel	3rd of Asa	24 years	
1 Kg 16:8-14	886-885	Elah	Israel	26th of Asa	2 years	
1 Kg 16:15-20	885	Zimri	Israel	27th of Asa	7 days	
1 Kg 16:21-22	885-880	Tibni	Israel	27th of Asa	6 years	overlap with Omri
1 Kg 16:23-28	885 885-880 880-874 880	Omri	Israel	27th of Asa 31st of Asa	12 years	made king by the people overlap with Tibni official reign = 11 years beginning of sole reign
1 Kg 16:29—22:40	874-853	Ahab	Israel	38th of Asa	22 years	official reign = 21 years
1 Kg 22:41-50	872-869 872-848 869 853-848	Jehoshaphat	Judah	4th of Ahab	25 years	coregency with Asa official reign beginning of sole reign Jehoram is coregent
1 Kg 22:51—2 Kg 1:18	853-852	Ahaziah	Israel	17th of Jehoshaphat	2 years	official reign = 1 year
2 Kg 1:17 2 Kg 3:1—8:15	852 852-841	Joram	Israel	2nd of Jehoram 18th of Jehoshaphat	 12 years	 official reign = 1 year
2 Kg 8:16-24	848 848-841	Jehoram	Judah	5th of Joram	8 years	beginning of sole reign official reign = 7 years
2 Kg 8:25-29 2 Kg 9:29	841 841	Ahaziah	Judah	12th of Joram 11th of Joram	1 year	nonaccession-year dating accession-year dating
2 Kg 9:30—10:36	841-814	Jehu	Israel		28 years	
2 Kg 11:1-21	841-835	Athaliah	Judah		7 years	
2 Kg 12:1-21	835-796	Joash	Judah	7th of Jehu	40 years	
2 Kg 13:1-9	814-798	Jehoahaz	Israel	23rd of Joash	17 years	
2 Kg 13:10-25	798-782	Jehoash	Israel	37th of Joash	16 years	
2 Kg 14:1-22	796-767 792-767 793-782	Amaziah	Judah	2nd of Jehoash	29 years	 overlap with Azariah coregency with Jehoash
2 Kg 14:23-29	793-753 782	Jeroboam II	Israel	15th of Amaziah	41 years	total reign beginning of sole reign
2 Kg 15:1-7	792-767 792-740 767	Azariah	Judah	27th of Jeroboam II	52 years	overlap with Amaziah total reign beginning of sole reign
2 Kg 15:8-12	753	Zachariah	Israel	38th of Azariah	6 months	
2 Kg 15:13-15	752	Shallum	Israel	39th of Azariah	1 month	
2 Kg 15:16-22	752-742	Menahem	Israel	39th of Azariah	10 years	ruled in Samaria
2 Kg 15:23-26	742-740	Pekahiah	Israel	50th of Azariah	2 years	
2 Kg 15:27-31	752-740 752-732 740	Pekah	Israel	52nd of Azariah	20 years	in Gilead; overlapping years total reign beginning of sole reign
2 Kg 15:32-38 2 Kg 15:30	750-740 750-735 750-732 750	Jotham	Judah	 2nd of Pekah	16 years	coregency with Azariah official reign reign to his 20th year beginning of coregency
2 Kg 16:1-20	735-715 735	Ahaz	Judah	17th of Pekah		total reign
2 Kg 15:30 2 Kg 17:1-41	732 732-723	Hoshea	Israel	12th of Ahaz	9 years	20th of Jotham
2 Kg 18:1—20:21	715-686	Hezekiah	Judah	3rd of Hoshea	29 years	
2 Kg 21:1-18	697-686 697-642	Manasseh	Judah		55 years	coregency with Hezekiah total reign
2 Kg 21:19-26	642-640	Amon	Judah		2 years	
2 Kg 22:1—23:30	640-609	Josiah	Judah		31 years	
2 Kg 23:31-33	609	Jehoahaz	Judah		3 months	
2 Kg 23:34—24:7	609-598	Jehoiakim	Judah		11 year	
2 Kg 24:8-17	598-597	Jehoiachin	Judah		3 months	
2 Kg 24:18—25:26	597-586	Zedekiah	Judah		11 years	

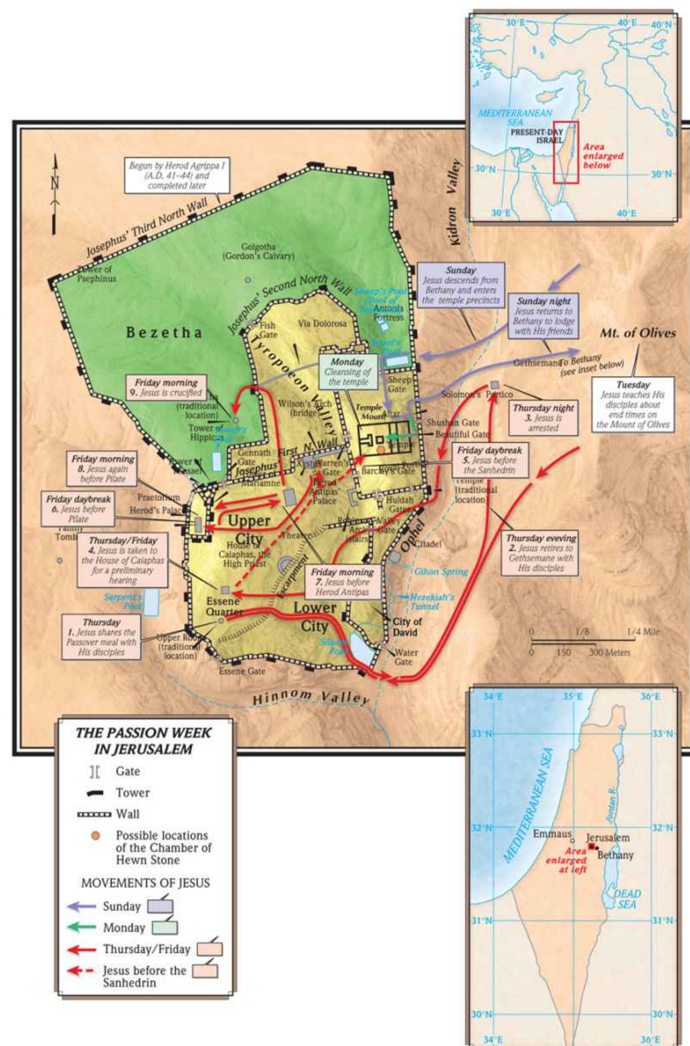


THE TRIBAL ALLOTMENTS OF ISRAEL
JOSH 13:8–19:49
City
City (uncertain location)
Mountain peak
35°E
36°E
33°N
32°N
31°N
MEDITERRANEAN SEA
Sidon
TYRE
Damascus
Abana River
ARAM
Pharpar River
Mt. Hermon
Ijon
Dan
Tyre
Litani River
Beth-anath
Kedesh
Lake Huleh
Yiron
Hazor
ASHER
Merom
NAPHTALI
EAST MANASSEH
Acco
Cabul
Capernaum
Aphek
Mishal
Nahalal
Hannathon
Rimmon
Rakkath
Sea of Galilee
Achshaph
ZEBULUN
Hammath
Golan
Ashtaroth
Mt. Carmel
Kishon River
Chesulloth
Helkath
Daberath
Jabneel
En-haddah
Sarid
Tabor
Mt. Tabor
Yarmuk River
Jokneam
Endor
Lo-debar
Megiddo
Shunem
Edrei
Dor
ISSACHAR
Jarmuth
Jezreel
Taanach
Beth-shan
Ramoth-gilead
En-gannim
Dothan
Ibleam
Jabesh-gilead
WEST MANASSEH
Socoh
Samaria
Tirzah
Jordan River
Mt. Ebal
Zaphon
Gerasa
Shechem
Penuel
Mahanaim
Pirathon
Mt. Gerizim
Succoth
Jabbok River
AMMON
Yarkon River
Aphek
Janoah
Joppa
Gath-rimmon
Tappuah
Shiloh
GAD
EPHRAIM
Ophrah
Jehud
Jazer
Lod
DAN
Upper Beth-horon
Bethel
Amman
Gittaim
Shaalbim
Mizpah
Naaran
Gilgal
Beth-nimrah
Gezer
Chephirah
Gibeon
Ramah
Jabneel
Aijalon
Jericho
Abel-shittim
Heshbon
Baalath
Gibbethon
Chesalon
Kiriath-jearim
Adummim
Ashdod
Ekron
Zorah
Eshtaol
Jerusalem
Beth-hoglah
Bezer
Mt. Nebo
Timnah
Beth-shemesh
BENJAMIN
Medeba
Bethlehem
Gath
Tekoa
Kedemoth
Ashkelon
Beth-zur
REUBEN
Lachish
Mareshah
Hebron
DEAD SEA
Jahaz
Eglon
Dibon
Gaza
JUDAH
Juttah
En-gedi
Aroer
Arnon River
Eshtemoa
N. Besor
Gerar
Ziklag
Jattir
Bethul
Ashan
Arad
Sharuhen
Kabzeel
MOAB
Beersheba
Hormah
Kir-hareseth
Hazar-shual
Baalah
SIMEON
Eltolad
Ezem
Zered River
Tamar
Arabah
EDOM
0 10 20 30 40 Miles
0 10 20 30 40 Kilometers


THE KINGDOMS OF ISRAEL AND JUDAH
1 KGS 12
City
Capital city
City (uncertain location)
Mountain peak
Israel
Judah
International roads
Local roads
MEDITERRANEAN SEA
PHOENICIA
ARAM
GESHUR
ISRAEL
AMMON
PHILISTIA
JUDAH
Negeb
MOAB
EDOM
Eastern Desert
Wilderness
Jeraboam built a sanctuary
Political capital of Israel from Omri onward
Jeraboam built a sanctuary
DEAD SEA
Sea of Galilee
Beirut
Sidon
Tyre
Damascus
Dan
Hazor
Samaria
Shechem
Bethel
Jerusalem
Hebron
Beersheba
Gaza
Joppa
Jericho
Kadesh-barnea
International Coastal Highway
King's Highway



PALESTINE IN THE TIME OF JESUS
City
City (uncertain location)
Decapolis city
Decapolis city (uncertain location)
Administrative capital
Mountain peak
Major roads
Other roads
First Procuratorship
Territory of Antipas
Territory of Phillip
Syrian territory
Coponius was named the first prefect and established the Administrative capital at Caesarea Maritima
MEDITERRANEAN SEA
PHOENICIA (TYRE)
ITUREA
ABILENE
GAULANITIS
BATANEA
TRACHONITIS
AURANITIS
GALILEE
SAMARIA
JUDEA
IDUMEA
PEREA
DECAPOLIS
NABATEA
Eastern Desert
Esdraelon Valley
King's Highway
Sidon
Tyre
Damascus
Caesarea Philippi (Panias)
Mt. Hermon
Cadasa (Kedesh)
Gischala (Gush Halav)
Ptolemais (Acco)
Capernaum
Bethsaida
Sea of Galilee
Gergesa (Kursi)
Gamala
Hippos
Tiberias
Jotapata
Sepphoris
Nazareth
Geba
Xaloth (Chesulloth)
Mt. Tabor
Mt. Carmel
Dora
Legio (Megiddo)
Caesarea Maritima (Strato's Tower)
Raphana
Canatha
Mt. Hauran
Abila
Gadara
Adraa (Edrei)
Bostra
Scythopolis (Beth-shan)
Ginae (Jenin)
Pella
Dion
Aenon
Salim
Gerasa (Jerash)
Sebaste (Samaria)
Mt. Ebal
Neapolis (Shechem)
Mt. Gerizim
Amathus
Coreae
Alexandrium
Apollonia
Antipatris (Aphek)
Joppa
Ephraim (Ophrah)
Gedor (Gadara)
Lydda
Archelais
Philadelphia (Amman)
Jamnia
Azotus (Ashdod)
Emmaus (Nicopolis)
Jericho
Cyprus
Jerusalem
Bethany
Mt. Nebo
Esbus (Heshbon)
Medeba
Hyrcania
Mesad Hasidim (Qumran)
Ascalon (Ashkelon)
Machaerus
Betogabris (Beth-guvrin)
Hebron
Callirrhoe (Zereth-shahar)
DEAD SEA
En-gedi
Gaza
Masada
Arad
Raphia
Beersheba
Malatha
Khirbet Tannur
Arabah
Jordan R.
Jabbok R.
Yarmuk R.
Arnon R.
Zered R.
Abana R.
Pharpar R.
Litani R.
Yarkon R.
Kishon R.
N. Besor
35°E
36°E
33°N
32°N
31°N
0 10 20 30 40 50 Miles
0 10 20 30 40 50 Kilometers


THE PASSION WEEK IN JERUSALEM
Gate
Tower
Wall
Possible locations of the Chamber of Hewn Stone
MOVEMENTS OF JESUS
Sunday
Monday
Thursday/Friday
Jesus before the Sanhedrin
N
Begun by Herod Agrippa I (A.D. 41–44) and completed later
Josephus' Third North Wall
Josephus' Second North Wall
Golgotha (Gordon's Calvary)
Bezetha
Fish Gate
Via Dolorosa
Antonia Fortress
Tyropoeon Valley
Wilson's Arch (bridge)
Temple Mount
Altar
Temple
Sheep Gate
Shushan Gate
Beautiful Gate
Barclay's Gate
Warren's Gate
Huldah Gates
Gennath Gate
First N. Wall
Herod Antipas' Palace
Tower of Hippicus
Praetorium
Herod's Palace
Upper City
Theatre
House of Caiaphas, the High Priest
Escarpment
Essene Quarter
Upper Room (traditional location)
Essene Gate
Lower City
City of David
Water Gate
Ophel
Citadel
Gihon Spring
Hezekiah's Tunnel
Serpent's Pool
Hinnom Valley
Kidron Valley
Mt. of Olives
Gethsemane
To Bethany (see inset below)
Solomon's Portico
Sunday
Jesus descends from Bethany and enters the temple precincts
Sunday night
Jesus returns to Bethany to lodge with His friends
Monday
Cleansing of the temple
Tuesday
Jesus teaches His disciples about end times on the Mount of Olives
Thursday
1. Jesus shares the Passover meal with His disciples
Thursday eveving
2. Jesus retires to Gethsemane with His disciples
Thursday night
3. Jesus is arrested
Thursday/Friday
4. Jesus is taken to the House of Caiaphas for a preliminary hearing
Friday daybreak
5. Jesus before the Sanhedrin
Friday daybreak
6. Jesus before Pilate
Friday morning
7. Jesus before Herod Antipas
Friday morning
8. Jesus again before Pilate
Friday morning
9. Jesus is crucified
(traditional location)
0 1/8 1/4 Mile
0 150 300 Meters
30°E 40°E 40°N 30°N
MEDITERRANEAN SEA
PRESENT-DAY ISRAEL
Area enlarged below
34°E 35°E 36°E 33°N 32°N 31°N 30°N
MEDITERRANEAN SEA
Jordan R.
Emmaus
Jerusalem
Bethany
Area enlarged at left
DEAD SEA


PAUL'S MISSIONARY JOURNEYS
City
Paul's first missionary journey
Paul's second missionary journey
Paul's third missionary journey
Paul's voyage to Rome
0 100 200 300 Miles
0 100 200 300 Kilometers
N
Paul spends two years preaching the gospel as he awaits his appeal to Nero
Luke joins Paul
Paul restores life to young Eutychus
Paul and Barnabas mistaken for gods
Paul resumes his missionary travels
Paul speaks to the Areopagus
Ship lost in storm
Proconsul Sergius Paulus converted
Porcius Fetus sends Paul to Rome to appeal to Caesar
Jerusalem Conference A.D. 49
Rome
Three Taverns
Forum of Appius
Puteoli
Pompeii
ITALIA
ADRIATIC SEA
Brundisium
Tarentum
TYRRHENIAN SEA
Messana
Rhegium
Sicily
Syracuse
Sytris Minor
Malta
MACEDONIA
THRACE
Amphipolis
Neapolis
Berea
Thessalonica
Larissa
Delphi
Olympia
ACHAIA
Athens
Sparta
AEGEAN SEA
Cyclades Islands
Troas
BLACK SEA
Byzantium (Istanbul)
Heracleia
Sinope
BITHYNIA AND PONTUS
Ancyra (Ankara)
Tavium
GALATIA
Parnassus
Adramyttium
ASIA
Ancyra
Sebaste
Pergamum
Ephesus
Tripolis
PHRYGIA
CAPPADOCIA
Archelais
COMMAGENE
Seleucia
Cremna
Lystra
PAMPHYLIA
Derbe
CILICIA
Tarsus
Cnidus
LYCIA
Myra
Rhodes
Antioch
Euphrates R.
Salamis
Cyprus
Paphos
SYRIA
Phoenix
Crete
Cauda
Lasea
Fair Havens
Salmone
MEDITERRANEAN SEA
Sidon
Caesarea Maritima
Antipatris
Jerusalem
JUDEA
Syrtis Major
Cyrene
CYRENAICA
Alexandria
EGYPT
Memphis
Nile R.

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